

# **BRIEF ON MAINSTREAMING MIGRATION INTO DEVELOPMENT PLANNING FROM A GENDER PERSPECTIVE**



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# **BRIEF ON MAINSTREAMING** **MIGRATION INTO DEVELOPMENT** **PLANNING FROM A GENDER** **PERSPECTIVE**



United Nations Entity for Gender Equality  
and the Empowerment of Women

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

UN Women extends sincere appreciation to Ms. Maria Eliza Omictin-Diaz for the development of this brief, which was done in close collaboration with the Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO), the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW) and the Sub-Committee for International Migration and Development (SCIMD) led by the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) with the CFO, Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC), Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines (ULAP), Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA), Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) and the National Reintegration Center for OFWs (NRCO).

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As part of the universal mandate to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women, United Nations (UN) Women actively supports the promotion and protection of the rights of women migrant workers and safe migration for women at the global, regional and country levels. Around the world, a record number of women are now migrating to seek work and better opportunities. Even though migration may provide benefits for women, it also poses a lot of risks, including unfair treatment, exploitation, and vulnerability to different forms of violence. This is especially true for women working in the informal sector such as domestic and care workers. Migration policies and practices have been slow to recognize these risks and to take steps to make the process safe for women. In the Southeast Asia region, the feminization of migration is most visible and usually associated with out-going flows of migrant women, particularly from Indonesia and the Philippines, where women make up 62-75 per cent of workers who are deployed legally on an annual basis.<sup>1</sup>

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) affirms that migration is not a gender-neutral phenomenon. Its General Recommendation No. 26 notes that to examine the impacts of migration to women, female migration has to be studied “from the perspective of gender inequality, traditional female roles, a gendered labour market, the universal prevalence of gender-based violence and the worldwide feminization of poverty and labour migration.”<sup>2</sup>

True to its commitment, the Philippines employs a comprehensive structure and system that handles the various issues and concerns of migrants at every stage of the migration cycle. For this reason, Philippines is regarded internationally as a ‘model.’ The country has the most feminized stream of migration in Southeast Asia, and has developed a harmonized set of analytical concepts and tools/ checklists to efficiently mainstream gender concerns into development planning, including migration-related programs and projects.

This brief discusses how migration is mainstreamed into the Philippines development framework, particularly from a gender perspective. This requires mainstreaming migration and development (M&D) issues in every phase of the development planning cycle. In general, mainstreaming migration into the country’s development framework takes place in the following six phases: (1) Situation Analysis (2) Strategic Goals and Priorities Identification (3) Action/Program Planning (4) Resource/Budget Sourcing and Planning (5) Implementation and (6) Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E). Each step provides entry points for migration mainstreaming from a gender lens.

The present brief describes each of the required phases. In addition, the document highlights the key role of the commitment of all stakeholders and the need for a meaningful involvement and participation of migrants, especially women migrant workers, in ensuring the sustainability and success of a gendered M&D mainstreaming.

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1 UN Women (2011) Gender, Migration and Development – Emerging Trends and Issues in East and Southeast Asia. Bangkok: UN Women.

2 <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/cedaw.pdf>

## Background

Scholars and policy makers have long recognized the growing importance of migration for development. In fact, United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) recognize the positive contribution of migrants to inclusive growth and sustainable development, and call for governments to adopt sound migration policies to facilitate safe, orderly and regular migration for all (United Nations, August 2015). This represents a considerable shift in the migration and development (M&D) discourse: the dominant concern is no longer whether migration can benefit migrants and their countries of origin, but rather how policies and programs can better facilitate the M&D nexus (Nicolas, 2014).

The Philippines has a significant stock of overseas Filipinos (OFs), numbering about 10.44 million or 10 per cent of the country's population, scattered in more than 200 countries and territories around the world. Data from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) show that personal remittances from OFs reached US\$26.9 billion in 2014, thus weighing in on the Philippine economy's steadfast performance. It is also being credited as a vital source of foreign exchange reserves and balance of payments (BoP) and one of the most concrete benefits of migration.

The country also has the most feminized streams of migration in Southeast Asia, with almost half of all migrants being women (Piper, 2009), who independently seek employment overseas. The remittances sent by women migrant workers pay off debts incurred in seeking jobs abroad and, more importantly, support the family's daily subsistence, some occasional luxuries and education for their children. Furthermore, these remittances provide means for their families to invest, usually for purchase of land, construction or renovation of houses or to start up small businesses.

Nonetheless, translating migrants' remittances into broader development gains depends largely on policy choices- both in countries of origin and of destination. Thus, to take full advantage of M&D's actual and potential gains, government intervention is crucial in the management of migration. Given the multifaceted nature of M&D, integrating migration into national development strategies and development planning processes (GMG, 2010) represents the most efficient practice/strategy,

## Mainstreaming M&D into Development Strategies and Plans from a Gender Perspective

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) affirms that migration is not a gender-neutral phenomenon and that to "understand the specific ways in which women are impacted, female migration should be studied from the perspective of gender inequality, traditional female roles, a gendered labour market, the universal prevalence of gender-based violence and the worldwide feminization of poverty and labour migration" (CEDAW, General Recommendation No. 26). Gender mainstreaming was adopted as a global strategy to achieve gender equality at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, through the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA).

The Philippines, having pledged its commitment to CEDAW, has enacted Republic Act No. 9710 (RA 9710), known as the Magna Carta for Women, mandating all Philippine government offices and

instrumentalities to adopt gender mainstreaming as a strategy to attain women empowerment and equality for women and men. This law also mandates government entities to integrate the gender and development (GAD) perspective in development planning processes and in the various stages of a project cycle.

To further facilitate gender mainstreaming, the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW) produced the *Women's Empowerment, Development and Gender Equality Plan 2013-2016*, (*Women's EDGE Plan*), a companion document to the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2011-2016. In the view of PCW (2014), gender mainstreaming entails "assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences

an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetrated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.” This includes annual GAD budget allocations for all national government agencies and all local government units (LGUs). The mandate calls for the adoption and application of a gender perspective framework for all concerned sectors, including that on migration. True to this commitment, the Philippine Government has developed a harmonized set of analytical concepts and tools/checklists to efficiently mainstream gender concerns into development planning, including migration-related programs and projects (NEDA, PCW, ODA-GAD Network, 2010).

## Context and Framework

The Philippines’ management of migration has been regarded internationally as a model, and praised for its comprehensive structure and system with government agencies (DFA, DOLE, Department of Finance), including migration-related offices (POEA, CFO, OWWA and NCRO), mandated to handle the various issues and concerns of migrants at every stage of the migration cycle. However, though these migration-related agencies focus on migration, there is still a need to integrate M&D issues in other government offices, especially those that deal with macroeconomic and financing policies that take charge of the bulk of investment resources (Wickramasekara, 2015), such as trade, labor and finance. Migration mainstreaming should involve the whole government organization and there should be stronger coordination across different agencies to effectively boost migration’s development benefits such as remittances and their related economic effects, as well as their social and cultural effects (Wickramasekara, 2015; GMG, 2010).

As stated in the Global Migration Group (GMG) Handbook (2010), the most appropriate manner to ensure a systematic approach to mainstreaming M&D issues into the country’s planning frameworks (i.e., the PDP, Women’s EDGE Plan, Provincial Development and Physical Framework Plan) is using a gender perspective. Such an approach will

Mainstreaming migration concerns into development planning from a gender perspective recognizes that both women and men migrate and that their migration experience may differ significantly. It highlights gender issues and gender relations affecting women and men in the migration process. It also situates the gender equality framework into migration-related policies and plans, programs, laws, legislations, budgets, and institutional structures, at both the local and national levels. From this approach, gender equality is the overarching development goal, and mainstreaming constitutes the strategic and institutional process to achieve that goal (GMG, 2010; UN, 2002).

(a) ensure that migration is seen as impacting on all aspects of human development; (b) allow migration to be embedded in the broader development strategy, fostering coherence rather than the piecemeal approach; (c) help identify gender gaps in existing government legislations and policies; and (d) facilitate funding and resource mobilization.

Aside from the aforementioned national and local development plans, the following strategies may serve as tools or entry points for mainstreaming M&D from a gender perspective: (a) a dedicated coordinating body mandated to coordinate across government offices (i.e., SCIMD); (b) policy statement on migration (i.e., A Social Contract with the Filipino People); (c) relevant government agencies; (i.e., OWWA, POEA, CFO); and (d) migration profiles. Following the mandates on GAD Planning and GAD Budgeting wherein there are already established guidelines, tools and checklists for gender mainstreaming, it is expected that gender perspective has been mainstreamed or integrated into these development plans and into different government agencies, including the different sectors, such that on migration.



## Development Planning Phases

Mainstreaming migration into the country's development framework, particularly from a gender perspective, requires mainstreaming M&D issues in every phase of the migration process. In general, the development planning cycle consists of the following phases: (1) situation analysis; (2) strategic goals and priorities identification; (3) action/program planning; (4) resource/budget sourcing and planning; (5) implementation; and (6) evaluation and monitoring. Each step provides entry points for migration mainstreaming from a gender lens.

Inclusive and multi-stakeholder consultative processes and mechanisms are inherent to the planning cycle and necessitate the active participation of relevant government agencies, diaspora associations, women's groups, and migrants, especially women migrant workers, as well as their families. Likewise, capacity building and development activities have to be undertaken in order to equip implementers and stakeholders with the needed gender equality perspective and rights-

### Phase 1. Situation Analysis

This phase involves gender analysis to explore and understand gender issues affecting women and men differently. It particularly focuses on the gender dimension of migration issues, i.e., how they affect women and men differently in every step of the migration process and how they result in inequalities as well as identifying the hindering and/or enabling factors that cause inequalities. A situation analysis includes the assessment of existing programs, laws, strategies and mechanisms, and their impact on development. Creating and utilizing sex-disaggregated data and statistics (i.e., migration profile, remittances, skills, returning

based approach, technical skills and know-how, and updated and evidence-based knowledge and grounding (GMG, 2010).

The preparatory phase requires securing a mandate (e.g., executive orders, ordinances and the like) for migration mainstreaming and creating a "core team/working group" to undertake the M&D mainstreaming into the different phases of development planning (GMG, 2010). To ensure that the gender perspective is in place, it is important that the mandate is gender-responsive, with members of the "core team/working group" consisting of both women and men, ideally gender focal points. The GMG handbook's general phases in development planning provide suggested entry points to ensure that migration mainstreaming in development planning is gender-responsive. The following phases are also applicable to development planning in the Philippine context, at the national, sub-national or local levels.

migrant workers, etc.), for one, are of utmost importance. Multiple issues put women at greater risk of maltreatment, abuses, injuries and even death. To address them, relevant data needs to be gathered concerning women accessing credit and other forms of assistance, types of livelihood and income-generating projects for reintegration that tend to stereotype women's reproductive roles and the nature of jobs stereotypically open to women migrants, especially the poor and low-. Thus, the importance of gender analysis for gender mainstreaming, as well as the need to engage the help of gender expert/s should not be discounted.

### Phase 2. Strategic Goals and Priorities Identification

The important gender and migration issues identified in Phase 1 should be addressed and mainstreamed into national, sub-national, local, sectoral and medium-term government plans. Phase 2 consists mainly of: (a) articulation of migrant women's gender equality goal, strategy and objective; and (b) incorporation of gendered migration outputs and outcomes to address the aforesaid goal/s and objective/s. The identification and formulation of M&D goals should always take into consideration

gender equality goals, their strategic importance and their alignment with development goals and targets vis-a-vis the PDP Mid-Term Update, or the LGUs Development Councils. The key questions to ask are: (a) Does the goal pay attention to both women and men? (b) Do migrant women, especially women migrant workers, feel that they are part of the government's vision and mission? (c) Do the goals include a broader commitment to improving gender equality?

The Philippine Plan for Gender-Responsive Development (PPGRD), gender equality and

women's empowerment framework serve as a guide for formulating outputs and outcomes.

### **Phase 3. Action/Program Planning**

Drawing from the list of gender equality goals and priorities, gender-responsive interventions are formulated specifying the target participants or beneficiaries, the responsible government agencies and partners, timeframe/schedules of activities, and budget allocation including assessing and setting up enabling mechanisms (i.e., pertinent gender-responsive laws and policies, institutions, interest groups, funds and other resources). The key questions to ask now are: (a) How do these programs and policy interventions affect women and men differently? (b) How can these programs and policy interventions effect gender equalities and women's empowerment? (c) Would these interventions benefit women and men equally without any constraints? Or if there are constraints, how are these addressed? (d) Would these interventions pave the way for a more enabling environment and reduce barriers towards gender equality? Interventions may be organized in broad thematic areas or sectoral issues, such as social protection and welfare services, diaspora engagement, trafficking, remittances, return and reintegration, repatriation, brain-drain and deskilling, among others. They should be done within the national and local development planning

processes or, if pursued separately be consistent with national and local plans. At this point, Phases 1 to 3 may be encapsulated in a draft M&D action plan (GMG, 2010) from a gender perspective consisting of the following: (a) agreed strategic goals and priorities; (b) recommended program interventions to address a particular M&D goal; (c) supporting requirements (e.g., the implementation of existing policies, changes in policy/legislation, technical assistance), if needed; (d) timeframe; and (e) stakeholders involved.

Interventions may involve formulating new policies or merely reorientating or refocusing these from a gender perspective. These policies may be in the form of enticing women migrant workers into the formal financial system which will require enabling mechanisms, (i.e., appropriate information, simple, accessible and affordable remittance channels, gender sensitive office hours, location and facilities) so that women migrant workers and their families/remittance recipients are able to benefit from their use. In essence, policy formulation should always take into consideration the differential effects of policies on women and men and promote the positive potentials of migration towards women's empowerment.

### **Phase 4. Resource/Budget Sourcing and Planning**

The costing/budgeting and allocation of resources/funds to program interventions are highly critical to the success of mainstreaming gender-responsive M&D into development planning. In a nutshell, the Philippine government formulates an "investment plan" taking into consideration prioritizing and planning, scheduling of programs, and resource generation both from domestic and foreign sources. As provided by Republic Act No. 7192 (RA 7192), or the Women in Development and Nation Building Act, priority areas for funding include those that promote gender equality and women empowerment, strengthen women's and men's participation in development activities and utilize structures and mechanisms for integrating GAD concerns. Budgeting will ensure that these program interventions in particular, and mainstreaming in

general, will be effectively carried out across the different development planning phases.

The budget for the implementation of these M&D programs and policy interventions may be sourced from: (a) national government funds specifically from GAD budget of departments or agencies; (b) LGUs budget allocation or GAD budget; (c) international organizations; (d) migrant and OFs diaspora associations; and (e) other private and civil society groups. The Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines (ULAP) has documented the experience of Quezon Province in the use of its GAD funds or various M&D efforts. This could serve as a model for effectively streamlining M&D into the existing GAD plans and programs of an LGU.

The Province of Quezon is home to thousands of overseas Filipinos (OFs), more than half of whom are women. It ranks first in terms of donations from the OFs. Its Provincial Government has a strong GAD advocacy and program. The Provincial Gender and Development Office (PGADO) is headed by a woman who is both a GAD and M&D Champion. The recognition of the interrelatedness of M&D and GAD issues paved the way for the formal creation of a committee on M&D and was the result of the participants' feedback on its training programs and activities. "With the use of data for gender analysis and planning, we were able to clearly paint the picture of migration and its effects on women and the family. Thus, we decided to fund M&D activities through the GAD funds," said PGADO Chair Ofelia Palayan.

This underscores the importance of gender analysis where cross-cutting gender and migration issues were easily identified. The Provincial Government of Quezon used its GAD existing data for gender analysis and planning which enabled them to identify gender issues (i.e., feminization of Quezon's overseas Filipinos where some cases of violence against women surfaced), and to provide a gender-responsive intervention/s by tapping its allotted GAD budget. Finally, any M&D-related initiatives must be perceived not as an extra workload. As ULAP stated: "The mainst reaming effort did not have to duplicate or develop new programs, but focused on streamlining existing gender-responsive programs across agencies and offices to directly address M&D needs (ULAP, December 2015).

## **Phase 5. Implementation**

At this stage, the office or agency responsible for implementation is now able to translate gender-responsive M&D interventions into a doable day-to-day guide, wherein implementing strategies, roles, functions and accountabilities are clearly defined, and the schedules and allotted resources are judiciously tracked and coordinated. Again, the challenge is how well the implementing agency/office has incorporated the changes to the agency's system which allow them to sustain the strategies and interventions. Needless to say, the

leadership of implementing agencies/offices must be fully supportive of gender-responsive migration mainstreaming and should be willing to commit sustained technical expertise and resources for the program interventions and activities. It is also important that migrant women participate in the process (GMG, 2010). It is logical that GAD Focal Points from different national government departments and LGUs ensure that gender perspective is not lost or watered down or assumed to have been considered in migration mainstreaming.

## **Phase 6. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)**

A gender-responsive monitoring and evaluation system uses gender equality and women empowerment indicators to track performance. Monitoring is done regularly to provide feedback on progress vis-a-vis the expected results and allow necessary adjustments on the field. Evaluation, on the other hand, is a systematic process often undertaken at the end of the program cycle. The Harmonized Gender and Development Guidelines (2010) came up with a checklist for monitoring and evaluating projects which should serve as a guide to government offices, evaluators, and other

interested stakeholders. It is also imperative to "think SMART" which means indicators must be specific, measurable, accurate, relevant and time-bound.

What is crucial is being able to assess whether the program interventions have made a difference on the lives of migrant women, especially women migrant workers, in relation to the five levels of gender equality and women's empowerment (welfare, conscientization, access, participation, and control) (NEDA, PCW, ODA-GAD Network, 2010).

Finally, the sustainability and success of a gendered M&D mainstreaming is anchored on the commitment of all stakeholders and on a meaningful involvement and participation of migrants, especially women migrant workers, their families and communities.

The main challenges are:

- being able to provide more coherence and institutional coordination between and among the national and local government offices, as well as the different conflicting interests of the many other stakeholders; and
- ensuring that all of the migration mainstreaming initiatives, or even M&D discussions, integrate the gender perspective at all times explicitly.

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