

# GUIDE ON MAINSTREAMING MIGRATION INTO DEVELOPMENT PLANNING FROM A GENDER PERSPECTIVE



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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 guide, 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).

Additional guidance and inputs were provided by Ms. Ryce Chanchai, Programme Specialist, UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific and Ms. Jenna Hennebry, International Migration Research Centre, Ontario, Canada. UN Women specially acknowledges the inputs and support of Ms. Marilen Soliman, National Project Officer – Migration, UN Women Philippines.

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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 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 these benefits for women, it also poses a lot of risks, including unfair treatment, exploitation, and vulnerability to different forms of violence, especially in the informal sector such as domestic and care workers. Migration policies and practices have been slow to recognize these risks and 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 women migrants, particularly from Indonesia and the Philippines, where women made 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.

Mainstreaming migration and development (M&D) issues into government policies in the Philippines at the national and local levels is a concerted effort of the various government agencies and civil society organizations. This has resulted in the inclusion of numerous migration-related provisions in the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2011-2016, and integration of several M&D-related concerns in the PDP’s recent mid-term update.

This Guide discusses how migration is mainstreamed into the Philippines development framework, particularly from a gender perspective. This requires mainstreaming 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.

To ensure that gender equality gaps are addressed in developing policy and program interventions, this guide also utilized the Philippine Commission on Women’s (PCW) Women’s Empowerment, Development and Gender Equality (EDGE) Plan 2013-2016 and the Philippines’ Harmonized Gender and Development Guidelines and Checklists.

It should be noted that the sustainability and success of a gendered M&D mainstreaming is hinged on the commitment of all stakeholders and on the meaningful involvement and participation of migrants, especially women migrant workers, their families and communities.

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>

## I. 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).

Remittances, in the form of money and goods sent by migrants to their families, represent one of the most tangible benefits of migration. Equally important are social remittances resulting from migration, such as transferred knowledge and skills, and new ideas and beliefs, which may contribute to the development of migrant households and communities. Similarly, adopting a human development perspective, rather than a purely economic one, the emerging consensus aims at improving the overall quality of life and on the range of opportunities and capacities open to women and men. Indeed, development is more aptly framed as enabling the enjoyment of the full range of human rights, including women's human rights, and the rights of the migrants and their families all throughout the migration experience (Petrozziello, 2013).

The importance of remittances is exemplified through the Filipino case study. The Philippines has a significant stock of overseas Filipinos, 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, whose personal remittances reached US\$26.9 billion in 2014 according to data from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas. Moreover, the Philippines has highly feminized streams of migration in Southeast Asia, with almost half of all migrants being women (Piper, 2009).

The remittances sent by migrants provide daily sustenance, some occasional luxuries for migrants' families, education for their children, the means to pay

off debts incurred in seeking jobs abroad, as well as funds for the purchase of land, the construction or renovation of houses and the startup of small businesses. According to Petrozziello (2013) migrant women send a larger proportion of their earnings compared to male migrants; female family members are the most likely recipients of remittances and also typically those managing their spending. On the other hand, the non-material rewards of migration for migrant women, particularly for women migrant workers, include opportunities to live abroad and experience other cultures, the sense of autonomy and freedom and economic empowerment which persists even when the women return home permanently (Tharan, 2009).

Amid global economic crises, the Philippine economy has remained steadfast primarily due to overseas remittances which serves as a vital source of foreign exchange reserves and balance of payments. However, the policy choices in countries of origin and destination determine whether the migrants' remittances (economic, skills, knowledge) can really be translated into broader development gains. Thus, it is worth noting that government intervention is crucial in the management of migration to take full advantage of M&D's actual and potential gains. Given the multifaceted nature of the migration and development nexus, any such intervention is best undertaken in a systematic way, such as integrating migration into national development strategies and development planning processes (GMG, 2010).

## II. Purpose of the Guide

This Guide is intended as a quick reference for policy makers and development planners from government agencies and other stakeholders (both at the national and local levels) in integrating migration issues into development plans using a gender lens. It will serve as a compact reference material as well for other stakeholders, i.e., international organizations, NGOs, civil society and the private sector, working in the gender, migration and development field.

This Guide highlights gender-responsive migration mainstreaming into development planning

It covers migrant women in general, with particular focus on women migrant workers, given their vulnerability to violence, exploitation and discrimination, among others, throughout their migration journey.

While purposely not a comprehensive guide, this can serve as a starting point to further explore and develop a more in-depth handbook on mainstreaming migration into development strategies from a gender perspective.

## III. National and Local Migration Mainstreaming Initiatives

Mainstreaming M&D issues into government policies in the Philippines at the national and local levels is a fairly recent effort. The NEDA and the CFO are at the forefront of this effort, along with other government agencies and civil society organizations. The initiative has resulted in the inclusion of 60 migration-related provisions in the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2011-2016 and integration of several M&D-related concerns (e.g., providing overseas Filipinos enabling environment for investments and calling on overseas registration and voting) in the recent PDP 2011-2016 Midterm Update (CFO Letters to NEDA's Secretary, 17 December 2013 and 3 May 2013).

Running parallel to the integration of M&D concerns in the PDP is the initiative to establish a coordinating mechanism among migration- and development-focused government agencies. This is in response to the need for coordination between and among

and has since served “as a platform that provides policy coherence (between national and sectoral development policies) and promotes institutional coordination”<sup>i</sup> (NEDA Memorandum, September 2013; NEDA Resolution No. 01 Series 2014).

A related development was the reorganization of the various statistical agencies with the creation of the Philippine Statistical Authority (PSA) under Republic Act No. 10625 (RA 10625), otherwise known as the “Philippine Statistical Act of 2013.” The PSA “shall plan, develop, prescribe, disseminate and enforce policies, rules and regulations and coordinate government-wide programs governing the production of official statistics, general-purpose statistics, and civil registration services” and “shall primarily be responsible for all national censuses and surveys, sectoral statistics, consolidation of selected administrative recording systems and

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