

# **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**



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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).

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).

## 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

(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

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