This case study looks at how to foster vertical coherence in migration management for development from the local to the national levels through the establishment of a regional committee on migration and development (CMD). A CMD can serve to link up local, regional and national actors working in migration management and build synergies and collaboration between and among the various projects, activities and services provided. This can serve to optimise the benefits of migration for national and local development and reduce its negative effects. This is particularly important when a plethora of different actors at different levels all have a role and stake in migration management which can lead to overlaps, ineffectiveness and misuse of resources.

Indeed while it is local and regional authorities that are at the forefront of managing migration for local development, often they lack the know-how, support, resources and competencies to be successful. At the same time, while traditionally it is at the national level that policies and laws on migration and development are established, a lack of coordination with local and regional authorities leads to a lack of insight into what the real needs and opportunities are on the ground. By bringing the national, regional and local levels together through a coordination mechanism at the regional level, national policies can be refined and local implementation can be supported, and thus policy coherence assured in order to enhance the effectiveness of all actions and policies.

**CONTEXT**

The establishment of the CMDs in the regions of Bicol, Calabarzon and Western Visayas in the Philippines as a strategic coordination mechanism is a direct reflection of the growing number and expanding profile of overseas Filipi-
From around 5 million overseas Filipinos in the early 2000s, the recent data (2013) on stock of overseas Filipinos is estimated at 10.2 million. This has been mirrored by a corresponding increase in government structures (at the national, regional and local levels) that have been required to accommodate and manage this.

In the Philippines, various government agencies implement programmes and services for overseas Filipinos. These include the Department of Labour and Employment and its attached agencies such as the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration, Overseas Workers Welfare Administration, and the National Reintegration Center for Overseas Filipino Workers, which are responsible for providing pre-departure, on-site and return programmes respectively to overseas Filipino workers or those whose stay overseas are contingent with work or employment contracts.

On the other hand, the Commission on Filipinos Overseas implements programmes and services for Filipino emigrants or permanent residents overseas while the Department of Foreign Affairs is in-charge of forging bilateral and multi-lateral agreements relevant for the promotion of interests and protection of the rights of migrants overseas, as well as in providing legal, psycho-social and other forms of assistance while a Filipino is overseas.

With the growing number of programmes bridging the migration and development nexus, other government entities such as the National Economic and Development Authority, Departments of Trade and Industry, Tourism, Agriculture, Interior and Local Government, and Education, and Cooperative Development Authority, among others, were involved. Through them, the programmes and services expanded from migration management, pre-departure and onsite services, and safe migration (more commonly considered as the process of managing migration processes) to reinforcing reintegration, building and securing migrants/families’ assets, and creating political, social and economic opportunities (more commonly considered as migration and development nexus). Except for the CFO, all these agencies are with their respective regional offices that implement their programmes and services within the locality of their jurisdiction.

To avoid unnecessary overlap and policy incoherence, it therefore became clear that there was a need to ensure multi-level coordination in migration management among this plethora of actors. Indeed, globally, while laws and policies are created at the national level for managing migration, it is at regional and local level that these are expected to be successfully implemented.

The Calabarzon region, the top source region of Filipino emigrants to Europe and the Middle East and the centre for economic zones of manufacturing and information technology industries, pioneered the CMD to respond to the clamour of both the government agencies and the migrants and their families to coordinate efforts relevant to migration and development. Bicol ranked 8th as source region of overseas Filipinos and overseas Filipino workers in the Philippines and is one of the regions with a high rate of poverty and unemployment although has recently won awards related to improved infrastructure, governance and economic growth.

Recognizing this, Calabarzon (Region IV-A) pioneered the creation of the Committee on Migration and Development (CMD) – first as an adhoc committee in 2010 and which later evolved into a special committee in 2013¹ - to coordinate the formulation, implementation, monitoring, assessment and evaluation of plans, policies, programmes and projects related to migration between the national and local levels. Building on the initiative of Calabarzon, the same strategy was adopted in

¹ Calabarzon Regional Development Council Resolution Nos. IV-A-5-2010 and IV-A-09-2013
RATION AND DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE (JMDI).
Thus, since 2015 and supported by the JMDI, CMDs have also been established in Western Visayas and Ilocos regions, and in the process of being set up in Central Visayas and Northern Mindanao. Thus, since 2015 and supported by the JMDI, CMDs have also been established in Western Visayas and Ilocos regions, and in the process of being set up in Central Visayas and Northern Mindanao.

**OVERVIEW OF THE PRACTICE**

Firstly, it is important to note that the CMDs have been established or housed in different manners depending on the political context and most suitable manner in which to ensure their institutionalization and sustainability. In the most successful cases, the CMDs have been integrated into the regular structure of the Regional Development Council’s (RDC) Social Development Committee. The RDC is the highest planning and policy-making body in the region. It serves as the counterpart of the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) Board at the sub-national level. It is the primary institution that coordinates and sets the direction of all economic and social development efforts in the region. It also serves as a forum where local efforts can be related and integrated with regional and national development activities. The RDC thus provides a single planning body whose main concern is the overall socio-economic development of the region. With a specific committee on M&D within the RDC, the issues, concerns and recommendations of migration linked with development initiatives are discussed through a multi-stakeholder approach.

Performing a wide array of functions and responsibilities, the CMD aims to, among others: (a) Formulate and recommend planning guidelines and policy directions geared towards mainstreaming M&D in development process; (b) Coordinate M&D efforts of the national/regional/local governments and the private sector to promote complementarity of plans, programmes and projects, in consultation with migrant groups; (c) Identify and initiate policy research and other special studies to enhance and harness the skills and resources of the migrant workers and families in collaboration with academia and research institutions; and (d) Provide technical assistance to enhance the capacities of the local planners in the formulation of programmes, resource mobilisation and setting-up of database responsive to migration and development concerns.

The CMDs take a multi-stakeholder and multi-level approach including national, regional and local actors though these will be different in each CMD according to the needs, dynamics and contexts at all levels. In addition to the aforementioned agencies, other members include government entities with specific services for migrants and their families – from welfare to economic services, from social security to training and skills development. The local governments – usually the provinces and highly urbanized cities and capital towns or municipalities – through their local chief executive or the planning office, are also represented in the CMD to provide inputs on the local context and needs.

Giving essence to its multi-stakeholder approach, non-governmental organizations, migrant groups, OFW family organizations, faith-based groups, private sector, academia and the league of local planning and development coordinators are also represented. Veering away from the traditional practice that migrants and their families are clientele or beneficiaries of government programmes, it is the CMDs that put migrants and their families at the centre by ensuring their crucial and active participation in the CMD. The involvement of migrants, their families or organizations in the CMD, either as member or as chair of the Committee, empowers the migrants as critical primary stakeholders participating in the local dialogue, policy and programme formulation, and governance processes on M&D. It also ensures they are part of the dialogue and decision making process, and that they get involved and support development initiatives. Moreover, it ensures that development
initiatives and migration management responds to true needs.

Such collaboration also changed the perception of migrants towards government services. The Co-chairperson of the Bicol CMD remarked, "When I was working abroad, I did not want to engage with the local government because of the bad perception that they are corrupt and inefficient. But I realized that I need them to establish my business. When I began to engage with them, especially when I became a member of the CMD, I discovered that there are indeed several programmes and services.”

Another added value of the participation of migrants and their families in the CMDs is that the referral pathways among government agencies were enhanced as migrants, particularly the Migrants Coordinating Group in Western Visayas, became actively involved in responding to cases submitted to them online and referring them to concerned agencies (which became easier and faster since the majority of these agencies are also members of the CMD), consulting the families through the migrant coordinator per province, and offering advice and help.

Thus, the CMD model creates a kind of ‘network’ of various stakeholders, each of them with their respective M&D programmes, who meet every quarter, and are able to plan their respective activities as a regional entity, looking to create synergies and capitalize on human and financial resources for more effective management. For example, in Calabarzon, the state universities and colleges are helping the local governments to generate migration data; the CSOs are providing the capacity building and mentoring to the municipalities (Local Government Unites or LGUs); and the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) is monitoring the progress and development.

Such division of labour and complementarity offers better management and enhanced impact of programmes. CMDs also help address pressing issues and challenges at the regional and local level that pose challenges for migrants by raising these issues to the appropriate entity for action or redress. An example of this is the lack of accredited hospitals in Bicol to process medical examinations for work overseas resulting in multiple expenses as the prospective migrants need to travel to Metropolitan Manila for such purposes. Through the CMD, local hospitals are now being assisted by the Department of Health to ensure they acquire the necessary accreditation to localize this process.

Moreover, given that the CMD is housed under the Regional Development Councils (RDCs), usually within the Social Development Committee of the RDCs, policy making, programming and monitoring of M&D programmes, projects and services are thus easily linked and mainstreamed as cross-cutting issues across areas such as investment, health, employment, education and skills development. This linkage allows Philippine entities to view migration not only as an employment or remittance

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2“Referral pathways” is the process by which a case/grievance/complaint is referred/addressed/transfered/attended to from one entity to the other. The case/grievance/complaint usually involves a prospective, current or returning migrant and the report/case/complaint could be raised by a migrant family, CSO or organization. It is akin to a manual of operation. Depending on the nature of the case or the profile of migrant, there are several agencies/organizations that need to respond/address/cater to such case/grievance/complaint.
generating strategy but also as an issue that affects skills and education policies, among others. Thus, the CMDs have helped the regional offices implement national programmes at the local level faster and at the same time,

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

- Refer to JMDI Case Study #16 “The Transversal Integration of Human Mobility in Local Planning”
- Or refer to My JMDI Toolbox on Migration and Local development that is accessible here: [http://www.migration4development.org/en/resources/toolbox/training](http://www.migration4development.org/en/resources/toolbox/training)
  
  - Core module: Introductory module on migration and local development — Topic 4: The role of local authorities in the empowerment of migrant communities — Topic 5: Adoption of a human rights-based approach to migration and development in a local context.
  - Module 1: Managing the link between migration and local development — Topic 2: Local development and migration: coordination, synergies and policies
  - Module 3: Empowering migrants at the territorial level — Topic 1: Strengthening migrants’ agency as protagonists in local development—Topic 2: What are the services for migrants and their families
  - Module 5: Increase the impact on development through integration and reintegration policies. Theme 2: The role of local authorities in facilitating the integration of migrants.

have brought local concerns and issues to the national level for policy reforms, programme action, or budget allocation, as appropriate. “When the CMD was created, it is easier for us to target the beneficiaries of our programmes and services at the local level. Through discussions during CMD meetings, we know which migrants and families’ needs and cases to respond to and prioritize because they need our help more”, said one regional officer of the National Reintegration Center for OFWs.

Finally, the regional CMD structure also inspired smaller M&D committees/councils/working group at the provincial, city and municipal level; thereby bringing M&D policies and programmes to the grassroots level. For example, in Batangas province, the 34 cities and municipalities have their respective local CMDs. These local committees usually supervise the operations of the Migrant Resource Centres, which serve and operate as a one-stop resource centre on migration, wherever available.

**KEY LESSONS LEARNED**

**THE PRESENCE OF A LEAD ENTITY IS VITAL TO ENSURE SUCCESSFUL MULTI-LEVEL COORDINATION**

Experience shows that having a lead entity to drive the entire process of coordinating among stakeholders at any level is crucial. These lead entities take on a pivotal role whereby they are able to gather and coordinate among all actors and follow up on and ensure their cooperation. That said, one of the difficulties faced is the decision of who should lead and the possible tensions or disagreements this can evoke.

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3 Migrant Resource Centers are one-stop resource centers in a certain locality (mostly found in province or city) managed/ supervised by the local government in cooperation with regional offices of migrant-serving agencies, civil society and migrant groups. It serves as a venue for community education, information dissemination, capacity building and trainings, referral of cases/complaints/grievances, etc. A smaller version of an MRC is sometimes called an OFW desk at the local level.
To resolve this difficulty, one region opted for a tripartite leadership with one representative from the NEDA (to bring into the CMD the development initiative), DOLE (to take care of the labour migration and management component) and the migrants/families’ organization (to make the CMD more responsive to its primary stakeholder).  

ENSURING CLEAR ASSIGNMENT OF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES AVOIDS OVERLAP AND ENSURES A SMOOTH IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

To achieve this, agreement on the process and actions to be taken by each actor must be agreed upon before starting out. The lead entity can also serve to support this clarification of roles. In this case, NEDA as the CMD secretariat drives the process of multi-stakeholder coordination and collaboration and steers synergies among the members while maintaining their respective mandates and responsibilities. At the local level, as in the case of Legazpi City CMD, representing academia is Bicol University which is primarily responsible for conducting research on M&D and providing capacity building; the Diocese of Legazpi-Social Action Center is primarily responsible for organizing the migrants and their families; and the city government provides the additional technical and financial support to the CMD members and ensures that local legislations are in place to allow migrant representation in the CMD.  

MULTI-LEVEL COORDINATION CAN ENHANCE VERTICAL POLICY COHERENCE FOR ENHANCED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT IMPACT PROCESS

While a national response to migration management for development is crucial, this must be aligned with local realities since persisting inequalities exist not only among different countries but also within countries, thus necessitating an integral and bottom-up approach from the local level. Multi-level coordination thus allows local authorities to feed their expertise and knowledge into regional and national policy-making for more responsive and pertinent national policies that can, in turn, be successfully implemented at the local level.

ESTABLISHING COMMITTEES ON MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT CAN STRENGTHEN EFFORTS TO MAINSTREAM MIGRATION INTO DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

Given that migration is affected by and affects all levels of governance, many different actors can and should be involved in migration management across the various governance sectors. To support horizontal policy coherence at any governance level, committees on migration and development can serve to bring all the relevant actors together to coordinate and support their respective response to migration. In the case of the Philippines for example, even other agencies are involved in the committees which are not directly responsible for providing services to migrants and their families, but whose programmes and services are affected by and do affect migration. For example, the local offices of the Department of Agriculture provide agriculture-based entrepreneurial opportunities for migrants and their families. The Cooperative Development Agency is also involved in order to bring technical support to migrant cooperatives.

RECOMMENDATIONS

SUPPORT THE CONTINUOUS OPERATION OF CMD AND IMPLEMENTATION OF ITS WORK PLAN THROUGH SEPARATE FUND ALLOCATION

Since the CMD is created through RDC resolutions, its institutionalization and sustainability at the local level is
WHAT IS THE JOINT MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE?

The JMDI is a programme led by UNDP in partnership with IOM, ITC-ILO, UN Women, UNHCR, UNFPA and UNITAR. It focuses on the local dimension of migrants’ contribution to development. The JMDI supports civil society organizations and local authorities seeking to contribute to linking migration and development. To achieve this, the JMDI is currently supporting 16 on-going projects funded in eight target countries: Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Morocco, Nepal, Philippines, Senegal and Tunisia that all efficiently link migration to local development. This series of case studies seeks to highlight the challenges, good practices and lessons learnt from these projects.

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STRENGTHEN THE INVOLVEMENT AND PARTICIPATION OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN THE CMD TO BROADEN THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF M&D PROGRAMMES

At present, there are patches of partnerships between LGUs and the private sector but not on a large or regular scale. For example, the CMD in Western Visayas held a “private sector forum” with a view to gaining more interest and support from the chambers of commerce, private companies, etc. especially those with businesses related to migration. The CMD in Bicol proposes to have an inventory of migrants or former migrants who have investments or businesses. The mapping may provide an opportunity to create a chamber of commerce specific to migrant investors which could lead to a more institutionalized and regular collaboration within the CMD.

generally assured. How active, dynamic and efficient it will be in the long term will depend on the role and participation of the members, and the availability of funding and resources. While minimal budget is required for its operations (mostly for meetings, planning, research, personnel), the realization of its objectives, implementation of its work plan, and maintenance of the network need resources that, when not available, will frustrate the members, particularly the migrants, and will affect its efficiency.

Implemented by