

Situation Analysis of Outbound and Return Migration and Local Institutional Mechanisms to Support Migrants in La Union, Ilocos Sur and Nueva Ecija



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**Economic and Social Empowerment of Migrants, Including Victims of Trafficking
Returned from the European Union and Neighbouring Countries**

Situation Analysis of Outbound and Return Migration and Local Institutional Mechanisms to Support Migrants in La Union, Ilocos Sur and Nueva Ecija

By Geoffrey M. Ducanes

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Situation Analysis of Outbound and Return Migration and Local Institutional Mechanisms to Support Migrants in La Union, Ilocos Sur and Nueva Ecija

Introduction

The provinces of Ilocos Sur, La Union, and Nueva Ecija are important source areas of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs). Collectively the 3 provinces accounted for more than a twentieth (5.4 percent) of total OFWs in the country in 2010 even if they only made up 3.7 percent of total population.¹ The 3 provinces receive a large amount of remittances; combined, the 3 provinces (out of 78) received 4.1 percent of the total remittances that came into the country in 2009, or more than Php18 billion.²

Overseas migration plays a very important, even if still underappreciated, role in the socio-economic life of these provinces. OFWs comprised 4.2 percent of total working age population (defined as those 15 years old and above) in the 3 provinces, of which 39 percent were college graduates. This means that 12.5 percent of all college graduates in the 3 provinces were working outside the country. Remittances from abroad, which is a direct outcome of migration (both temporary and permanent), made up 14.3 percent of total household income in the 3 provinces. Bulk of household savings in the 3 provinces (57 percent of total in 2009) came from households that received at least some amount overseas remittances. Overseas migration clearly plays an important role in easing labor market pressure in these localities, in shaping the aspirations of people, and, through remittances, supporting household standard of living.

Despite such obvious importance of migration and remittances for the 3 provinces, they have not yet been fully integrated in the localities' development plans. Overseas workers, some with skills and

valuable experiences acquired from abroad, and their remittances are under-recognized and under-utilized. But in addition, while there are systems in place for their support and protection, in many areas they remain inadequate.

More than 60 percent of the OFWs from the 3 provinces are women and many find employment in domestic work and other lower-skilled, highly-vulnerable jobs. Bulk are in their 20s and 30s, most likely married, and supporting a household back home.

Potential overseas workers remain vulnerable to unscrupulous recruiters and traffickers, for example. And despite some noteworthy efforts, migrant returnees are still not getting adequate support. Part of the problem is lack of information, which this paper seeks to help address. In this paper we provide a situation analysis of the overseas migration situation in Ilocos Sur, La Union, and Nueva Ecija and the existing policy framework and institutional mechanisms supporting migrant workers in these provinces.

The paper proceeds as follows. The next section gives a brief profile of the 3 provinces, looking in particular at population features, and the poverty, human development, economic, and employment characteristics of the province. The third section examines the trends and patterns of overseas migration and remittances in Ilocos Sur, La Union, and Nueva Ecija, especially in comparison to the overall Philippine trends and patterns. The fourth section reviews the migration-related institutional mechanisms in the 3 provinces. The final section gives recommendations and concludes.

Profile of the Provinces

The three provinces under consideration present interesting differences in terms of income poverty, inequality, and human development. Ilocos Sur has

¹ Labor Force Survey April 2010.

² Family Income and Expenditures Survey 2009.

relatively low and declining income poverty, low and declining inequality, as well as relatively high human development. La Union, in contrast, has high and increasing income poverty, high income inequality, but also high human development – higher even than Ilocos Sur's. Meanwhile, Nueva Ecija has high and increasing income poverty, relatively high and increasing inequality, and also low human development. We give a more detailed profile of the three provinces in the following sub-sections.

Ilocos Sur

Population, land area

Ilocos Sur is one of four provinces of Region 1 (Ilocos Region) and is comprised two cities (Vigan City and Candon City), 32 municipalities, and 768 barangays. As of 2007, the province had a population of 632 thousand. From 1960 to 2007, average annual

growth rate of population in the province was 1.8 percent, slower than the overall population growth in the country (2.6 percent) and only slightly faster than population growth in the entire Ilocos region (1.7 percent). Looking only at the most recent period – 2000 to 2007 – average annual population growth has gone down to 0.9 percent.

By 2015, population of the province is expected to reach 750 thousand, and by 2020 to be at 800 thousand. The five biggest localities in Ilocos Sur, apart from Candon City (population of 56 thousand in 2007) and Vigan City (47 thousand), are the municipalities of Narvacan (42 thousand), Santa Cruz (36 thousand), Tagudin (36 thousand), Cabugao (34 thousand), and Bantay (33 thousand). Ilocos Sur has a land area of 2,596 square kilometers, making it the second smallest of the four Ilocos provinces in that respect.

Table 2.1.1 Population of Ilocos Sur 1960-2007

Municipality/Province	1960	1980	2000	2007
Ilocos Sur	338,058	443,591	594,206	632,255
Alilem	3,594	4,599	6,353	6,217
Banayoyo	3,252	5,037	6,728	7,149
Bantay	15,833	22,282	30,519	33,174
Burgos	5,804	8,364	11,175	11,459
Cabugao	17,791	24,424	31,459	33,847
Candon City	27,780	36,802	50,564	56,270
Caoayan	11,045	14,070	17,199	18,914
Cervantes	7,063	9,617	14,195	14,116
Galimuyod	4,670	6,576	8,879	10,310
Gregorio del Pilar	2,164	3,080	4,134	4,308
Lidlidda	1,972	2,736	4,022	3,798
Magsingal	13,437	19,177	25,580	27,615
Nagbukel	2,874	3,539	4,671	4,764
Narvacan	26,872	30,682	38,435	41,578
Quirino (Angkaki)	4,318	5,283	7,130	7,866
Salcedo (Baugen)	6,005	8,302	10,409	10,704
San Emilio	3,582	4,398	6,717	6,920
San Esteban	4,269	5,504	7,174	7,779
San Ildefonso	2,601	3,640	5,584	6,670
San Juan (Lapog)	12,654	17,443	23,146	23,808
San Vicente	7,094	8,488	10,877	11,907

Santa	10,214	11,359	13,918	14,059
Santa Catalina	8,414	9,761	12,537	13,284
Santa Cruz	16,954	23,027	34,433	35,906
Santa Lucia	12,197	17,344	22,363	23,872
Santa Maria	16,313	21,308	26,396	28,002
Santiago	8,213	11,843	15,876	16,806
Santo Domingo	13,685	17,728	24,520	25,888
Sigay	1,371	1,741	2,375	2,453
Sinait	15,170	19,050	24,070	24,896
Sugpon	1,968	3,018	3,513	3,936
Suyo	4,704	6,454	9,685	10,943
Tagudin	18,191	23,432	34,427	35,791
Vigan City	25,990	33,483	45,143	47,246

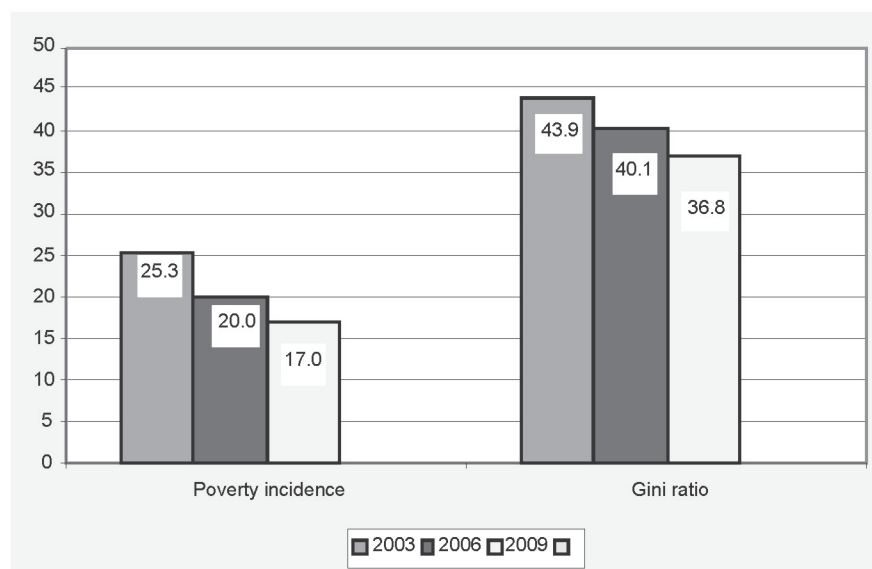
Source: National Statistics Office

Poverty, human development

In 2009, population poverty incidence in Ilocos Sur was estimated at 17 percent, lower than the national average of 26.5 percent. Poverty incidence in Ilocos Sur has gone down from 25.3 percent in 2003 and 20 percent in 2006. Ilocos Sur has the second lowest poverty incidence in Ilocos Region, trailing only Ilocos Norte (12.4 percent). Ilocos Sur has relatively low income inequality. The Gini ratio of per capita income in Ilocos Sur in 2009 was 38.6, a little higher than Ilocos Norte's (36.4), but lower than La Union's (49.7), and Pangasinan's (42.7). Inequality in Ilocos Sur declined from 2003 to 2009..

Ilocos Sur scores well in terms of the human development index (HDI). The HDI is a composite of three sub-indices: on life expectancy; on education; and on per capita income. Based on the computations of the Human Development Network, a UNDP-affiliated non-government organization based in the University of the Philippines, Ilocos Sur had the 19th highest human development level among all provinces in the country in 2006 (20th if including Metro Manila). Among Ilocos provinces, however, Ilocos Sur ranked only third in terms of HDI, following Ilocos Norte (7th), La Union (10th), and ahead only of Pangasinan (20th). Ilocos Sur scored well in terms of primary and secondary enrollment rate.

Figure 2.1.1. Poverty and Inequality in Ilocos Sur, 2003 to 2009



Source of basic data: FIES 2009; Poverty incidence figures from NSCB

Industry, Establishments, Employment

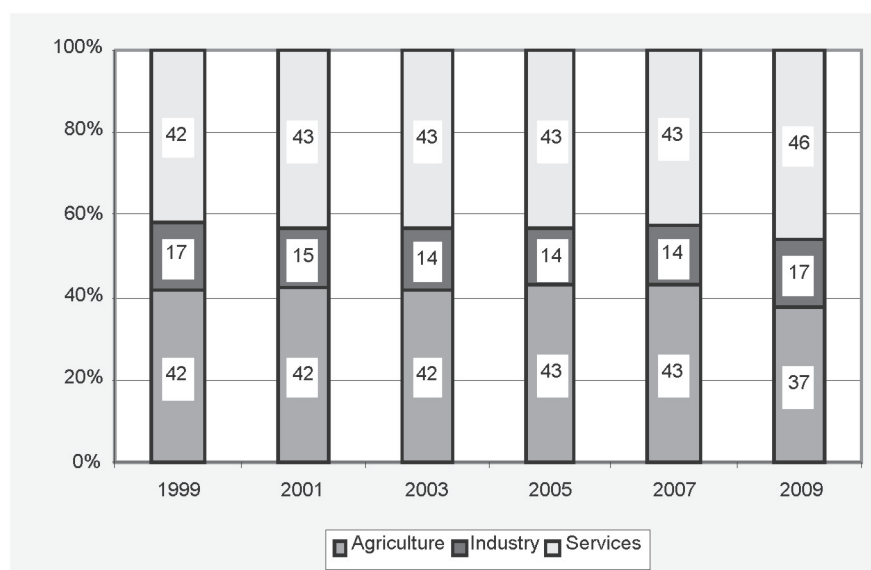
Official measures of economic output (GDP) are available only at the regional level.³ Assuming the economic output of Ilocos Sur mirrors that of the region as a whole, Figure 3 shows the likely economic breakdown of the province. Economic output in the Ilocos region is dominated by the services and agriculture sector, which together have comprised 83-86 percent of total output of the province in the past decade. Within services, trade and real estate, those that are

³ Except for Guimaras and Palawan which made preliminary attempts at computing province-level GDP in collaboration with NSCB

tourism-related are the main engines of the economy. The industrial sector has failed to take off in the region, accounting for no more than 17 percent of total output in any given year in the past decade.

Local employment in the province follows closely the pattern of regional output, with agriculture and industry providing employment to bulk of the labor force. In 2010, according to the LFS, 48 percent of workers in the province were employed in agriculture, 41 percent in services, and only 10 percent in industry. The most common forms of employment were the growing of crops (31 percent), retail trade (14 percent), public administration (7 percent), and construction (7 percent).

Figure 2.1.2. Contribution to Regional GDP by sector, Ilocos Region



Source of basic data: NSCB

La Union

La Union is another of the four provinces of the Ilocos Region and is comprised of one city (San Fernando City), 19 municipalities, and 576 barangays. As of 2007, the province had a population of 721 thousand. From 1960 to 2007, average annual growth rate of population in the province was 1.9 percent, slower than the overall population growth in the country (2.6 percent) but faster than population growth in the entire Ilocos region (1.7 percent). Looking only at the most recent period – 2000 to 2007 – average annual population growth has gone down to 1.3 percent.

By 2015, population of the province is expected to exceed 900 thousand, and by 2020 to top one million. The five biggest localities in La Union, apart from San Fernando City (population of 115 thousand in 2007), are the municipalities of Bauang (70 thousand), Agoo (58 thousand), Rosario (49 thousand), Naguilian (45 thousand), and Aringay (43 thousand). La Union has a land area of only 1,498 square kilometers, making it the smallest of the four Ilocos provinces in that respect.

Table 2.2.1. Population of La Union 1960-2007

Municipality/Province	1960	1980	2000	2007
La Union	293,330	452,578	657,945	720,972
Agoo	21,093	34,849	51,923	57,952
Aringay	17,572	27,524	41,422	43,438
Bacnotan	15,859	24,800	35,419	38,743
Bagulin	4,407	7,009	11,857	12,521
Balaoan	17,401	25,197	33,786	36,829
Bangar	16,381	23,715	31,491	33,335
Bauang	26,142	41,859	63,373	69,837
Burgos	2,124	4,149	6,748	8,261
Caba	9,517	14,114	19,565	20,927
Luna	18,595	25,081	32,259	35,372
Naguilian	19,528	29,304	43,501	45,232

Pugo	5,484	7,780	13,442	18,265
Rosario	18,045	29,331	43,497	49,025
San Gabriel	7,546	10,248	14,909	15,803
San Juan	14,516	20,362	30,393	32,952
Santo Tomas	14,929	22,610	31,204	33,604
Santol	6,125	7,836	11,202	11,712
Sudipen	7,926	10,796	15,099	15,949
Tubao	12,304	17,604	24,773	26,402
San Fernando City	37,836	68,410	102,082	114,813

Source: National Statistics Office

Poverty, human development

In 2009, population poverty incidence in La Union was estimated at 30.6 percent, higher than the national average of 26.5 percent. Poverty incidence in La Union has gone up from 22 percent in 2003 and 26.4 percent in 2006. La Union is the poorest province in the Ilocos Region, trailing Ilocos Norte (12.4 percent), Ilocos Sur (17 percent), and Pangasinan (25 percent). Except for La Union, all the other Ilocos provinces experienced a decline in poverty from 2006 to 2009.

La Union suffers from high income inequality. The Gini ratio of per capita income in La Union in 2009 was 49.8, much higher than Ilocos Norte's (36.4), Ilocos Sur's (38.6), and Pangasinan's (42.7). Since 1997, La Union, in fact, has had the highest inequality among the four provinces of the Ilocos Region. Inequality in La Union increased from 2006 to 2009, similar to Pangasinan, and unlike Ilocos Norte and Ilocos Sur, which experienced inequality declines in the period.

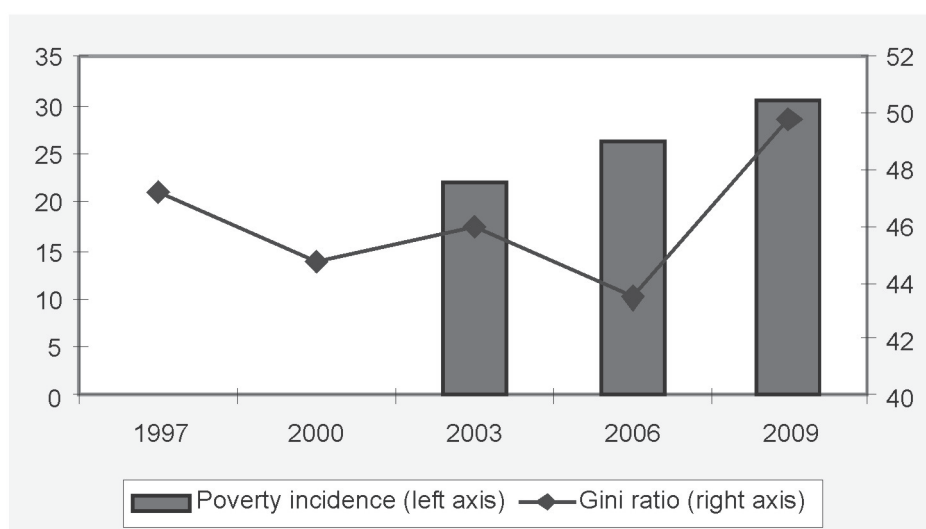
As opposed to income poverty, La Union scores very well in terms of the human development index (HDI). Based on the computations of HDN, La Union had the 10th highest human development level among all provinces in the country in 2006 (11th if including Metro Manila).⁴ La Union scored especially well in terms of life expectancy at birth (74.6 in 2006), at which it ranked first among all provinces.

It was also above average in terms of education and mean income.

Industry, Establishments, Employment

As another province of Ilocos Region, the same point could be made about La Union's economy that has been made about Ilocos Sur: it is dominated by agriculture and services and its manufacturing sector has not taken off. Local employment in the province follows closely the pattern of regional output, with agriculture and industry providing employment to bulk of the labor force. In 2010, according to the LFS, 43 percent of workers in the province were employed in agriculture, 42 percent in services, and only 15 percent in industry. The most common forms of employment were the growing of crops (28 percent), retail trade (15 percent), construction (10 percent), farming animals (6 percent), and fishing (6 percent).

Figure 2.2.1. Poverty and Inequality in La Union



Source of basic data: FIES 2009; Poverty incidence figures from NSCB

⁴ The 9 provinces ahead of La Union were Benguet, Rizal, Cavite, Bataan, Laguna, Pampanga, Ilocos Norte, Batanes, and Nueva Vizcaya.

Nueva Ecija

Nueva Ecija is one of seven provinces of Region 3 (Central Luzon) and is comprised of five cities (Cabanatuan, Gapan, Palayan, San Jose, Science City of Muñoz), 27 municipalities, and 849 barangays. As of 2007, the province had a population of 1.85 million, making it the third most populous province in Central Luzon, following Bulacan (2.8 million) and Pampanga (2.2 million). From 1960 to 2007, average annual growth rate of the population was at 2.4 percent, only slightly slower than the overall population growth in the country (2.6 percent) and also slower than population growth in the entire Central Luzon (2.9 percent).

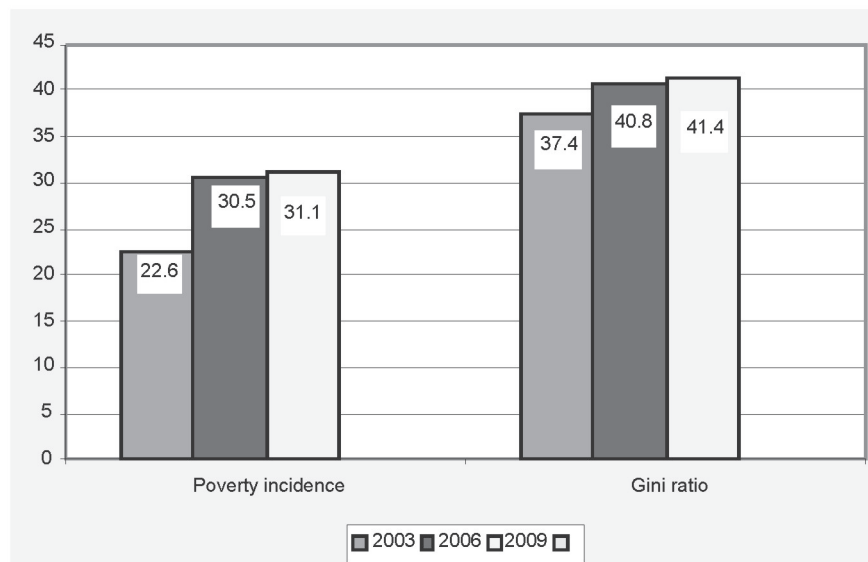
From 2000 to 2007, average annual population growth was at 1.5 percent, lower than the national average of 2 percent. The five biggest localities in Nueva Ecija are the cities of Cabanatuan (259 thousand in 2007) and San Jose (122 thousand), the municipality of Talavera (105 thousand), the city of Gapan (99 thousand), and the municipality of Gumba (96 thousand). Nueva Ecija has a land area of 5,751 square kilometers.

Poverty, human development

In 2009, population poverty incidence in Nueva Ecija was estimated at 31.1 percent, much higher than the national average of 26.5 percent. Poverty incidence in Nueva Ecija has gone up from 20.6 percent in 2003 and 30.5 percent in 2006. Nueva Ecija has the highest poverty incidence in Central Luzon by a significant margin, followed by Aurora (24.2 percent). Nueva Ecija has relatively high income inequality. The Gini ratio of per capita income in Nueva Ecija in 2009 was 41.4, higher than Bulacan's (37.1), Pampanga's (35.8), and Tarlac (38.4) but lower than Bataan's (42.3), Zambales's (42.4), and Aurora's (43.5).

Nueva Ecija scores relatively poorly in terms of the human development index (HDI). Based on the computations of HDN, Nueva Ecija had only the 44th highest human development level among all provinces in the country in 2006. Among Central Luzon provinces, Nueva Ecija ranked last in terms of HDI, trailing Bataan (4th), Pampanga (6th), Bulacan (11th), Tarlac (16th), Zambales (22nd), and Aurora (37th). Nueva Ecija performed especially poorly in terms of per capita income.

Figure 2.3.1. Poverty and Inequality in Nueva Ecija



Industry, Establishments, Employment

As was stated previously, official measures of economic output (GDP) are available only at the regional level. Unlike Ilocos Region, industry plays a big role in the economy of Central Luzon. Industry comprises more than 40 percent of the gross regional domestic product of the region. But agriculture still plays a very important role in the region, as well, especially for Nueva Ecija, which has consistently been the top rice producing province in the country.

In terms of employment, Nueva Ecija is still largely dependent on agriculture and services. In 2010, according to the LFS, 40 percent of workers in the province were employed in agriculture, 48 percent in services, and only 12 percent in industry. The most common forms of employment were the growing of crops (38 percent), retail trade (16 percent), land transportation (9 percent) – Nueva Ecija is well-known for tricycle sidecar fabrication and tricycles proliferate in the province, and construction (6 percent).

Migration and Remittances

Ilocos Sur

Migration

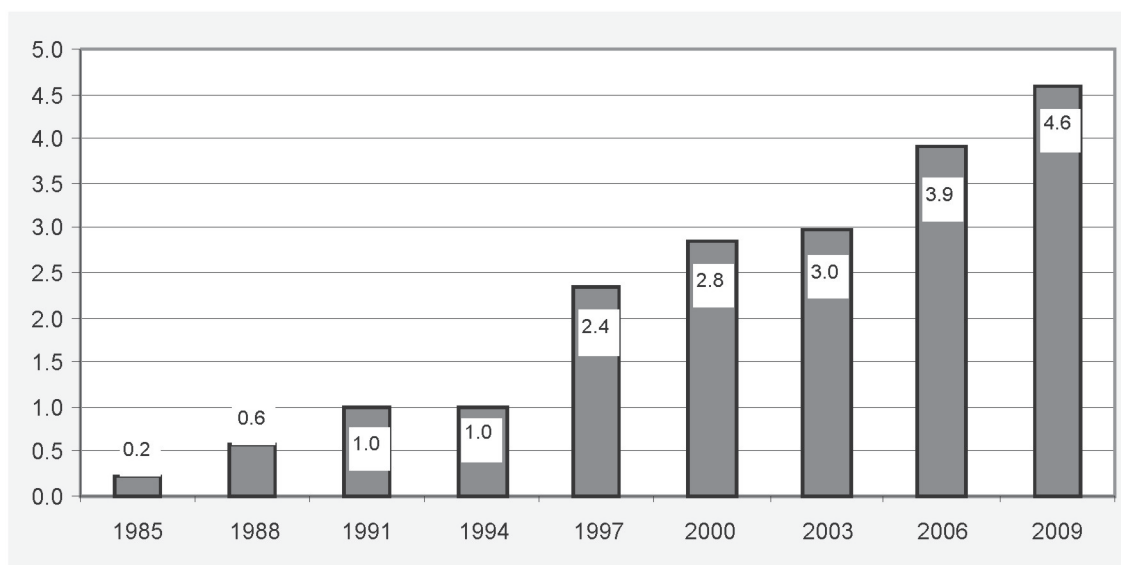
Migration and the remittances it brings is an important and still underappreciated part of Ilocos Sur's economy. In 2009, based on the FIES, Ilocos Sur households received about Php4.6 billion in remittances from overseas Filipinos, comprising about a fifth of total household income in the province (Figures 3.1.1 and 3.1.2). From 1985 to 2009, remittances to Ilocos Sur have been growing at a strong 13.5 percent per year.

While there is recognition that remittances play an important role in the Philippine economy as a whole and for the Ilocos region, they are even more important particularly for Ilocos Sur. Ilocos Sur has the second highest percentage of families which depend on remittances for at least 50 percent of their household income (following La Union, another Ilocos province). There were 11.9 percent such families in Ilocos Sur in 2009, compared to 10.8 percent for Ilocos region as a whole and 5.6 percent for the entire country. Ilocos Sur also has the third highest percentage of families that depend on remittances for at least 25 percent of

their household income at 20.7 percent, following only Ilocos Norte (31.4 percent) and again La Union.

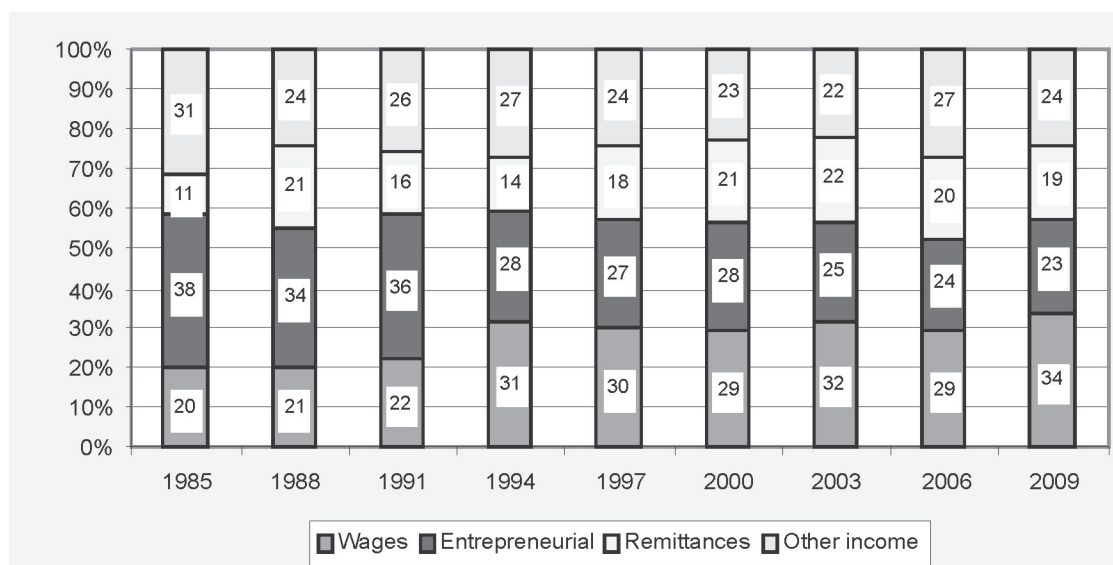
Most of the household savings in the province come from remittance-receiving households. In 2009, Ilocos Sur households were estimated to have saved Php2.6 billion of their total income. Of these amount, Php1.4 billion or 53.2 percent were from remittance-receiving households, and only P1.2 billion or 47.8 percent were from non-remittance receiving households.

Figure 3.1.1. Foreign Remittances to Ilocos Sur (Php Billion)



Source of basic data: FIES various years

Figure 3.1.2. Contribution to Total Household Income of Various Income Sources, Ilocos Sur



Source of basic data: FIES various years

**Table 3.1.1. Percent of Households
Dependent on Foreign Remittances**

Region	Remittances as % of income	
	25%	50%
Ilocos	21.9	10.8
Ilocos Norte	31.4	11.4
Ilocos Sur	20.7	11.9
La Union	26.8	13.2
Pangasinan	18.8	9.8
Cagayan_Valley	13.2	4.9
Central_Luzon	16.9	9.0
CALABARZON	16.1	8.4
MIMAROPA	6.7	2.8
Bicol	7.5	3.2
Western_Visayas	11.9	4.8
Central_Visayas	10.0	5.1
Eastern_Visayas	7.8	3.5
Western_Visayas	6.1	2.2
Northern_Mindanao	7.5	4.4
Southern_Mindanao	5.4	2.3
Central_Mindanao	7.5	3.3
NCR	12.9	6.2
CAR	11.2	5.3
ARMM	4.9	1.5
CARAGA	6.3	3.4
Philippines	11.7	5.6

Source of basic data: FIES 2009

The most detailed nationally-representative survey of OFWs is the Survey of Overseas Filipinos (SOF), which is conducted by the National Statistics Office every year coinciding with the October round of the Labor Force Survey. The SOF collects information on overseas workers who have left the country within the past five years from the date of the survey, including their total, their socio-economic characteristics, the amount of remittances in cash or in kind they send, and their mode of sending. The unit of analysis of the SOF is individual overseas worker. Remittances figures in the SOF pertain to the six-month period April to September and are available for each reported overseas worker in the household.

The SOF contains information on the province of origin of the overseas worker and thus, could be used for comparing the profile of Ilocos Sur OFWs against other OFWs.⁵ But because there are concerns about the representativeness of the SOF, especially as it pertains

to information about remittances, to avoid the potential misuse of data, the NSO has ceased releasing more recent micro data sets of the SOF after 2003. The most recent micro data set made available by the NSO is for 2003.⁶

Because it is the best available data to situate overseas migration from Ilocos Sur within the broader regional and national context, in what follows we use the SOF 2003 to construct a profile of the OFWs, keeping in mind the data concerns noted above and the relative datedness of the data set. We just note that comparing the SOF 2003 results with results of more recent SOFs for the Ilocos region published in the NSO website (<http://census.gov.ph/data/sectordata/datasof.html>), it appears the profile of OFWs from the region have not changed by much over the period 2003-2010.

Of the total OFWs from the country, 9 percent are estimated to originate from the Ilocos region (Table 3.1.2). The Ilocos region has the fourth highest share among all regions, following only Metro Manila (18.2 percent), CALABARZON (18.1 percent), and Central Luzon (12.1 percent). Of the total OFWs from Ilocos region, Ilocos Sur accounts for 18.9 percent, less than Pangasinan (51.5 percent) but more than La Union (18.4 percent) and Ilocos Norte (11.3 percent), but

Table 3.1.2. Share in Total OFWs

Region	% Share
Ilocos	9.0
Cagayan_Valley	6.0
Central_Luzon	12.1
CALABARZON	18.1
MIMAROPA	1.2
Bicol	3.2
Western_Visayas	10.2
Central_Visayas	5.3
Eastern_Visayas	1.9
Western_Visayas	1.9
Northern_Mindanao	2.8
Southern_Mindanao	2.7
Central_Mindanao	3.0
NCR	18.2
CAR	2.1
ARMM	1.4
CARAGA	1.0
Total	100.0

Source of basic data: SOF 2003

⁵ By using the micro data set as opposed to the results published by the NSO which only have regional breakdown.

⁶ For example, see Ducanes, G. 2010. *The Case of the Missing Remittances in the FIES*. UPSE Discussion Paper No. 2010-04.

proportionately more than its share in the population of the region (15.9 percent based on Census 2007).

Table 3.1.3. Share in Total OFWs in Ilocos

Region	
Province	% Share
Ilocos Norte	11.3
Ilocos Sur	18.9
La Union	18.4
Pangasinan	51.5
Total	100.0

Source of basic data: SOF 2003

OFWs from Ilocos Sur are more likely than OFWs in general to be female, to be single, and to be the son

or daughter or son-in-law or daughter-in-law of the household head (Table 3.1.4). Of the total OFWs from Ilocos Sur, 68 percent are female, compared to roughly half for the country as a whole and 59.9 percent for the Ilocos region, according to the SOF. Close to three-fourths of OFWs from Ilocos Sur are in their twenties and thirties, higher than the national and Ilocos averages. Less than half of OFWs in Ilocos Sur are married, much less than for the country as a whole and for Ilocos region (about 62 percent in each). This means that Ilocos Sur has an atypically large share of single people migrating (44 percent). Almost two-thirds of OFWs from Ilocos Sur are either the children or the children-in-law of the household head, much higher than for the country as whole (46 percent) and for Ilocos region (50 percent).

Ilocos Sur OFWs are better-educated on average than the average worker from the province. Of the total

Table 3.1.4. Profile of OFWs, Ilocos Sur

Group	Philippines	Ilocos Region	Ilocos Sur
Sex			
Male	49.9	40.2	32.3
Female	50.1	59.8	67.7
Total	100	100	100
Age Group			
<20	2.0	1.4	1.9
20s	29.1	30.5	32.6
30s	36.5	36.7	40.3
40s	21.9	20.7	14.0
>=50s	10.4	10.7	11.2
Total	100	100	100
Marital Status			
Single	33.5	31.4	44.0
Married	61.5	61.3	48.7
Others	5.1	7.3	7.3
Total	100	100	100
Relationship to HH head			
Head/spouse	44.6	41.5	29.2
Son/daughter_inc._in_law	45.8	49.7	65.2
Others	9.6	8.9	5.6
Total	100	100	100

OFWs from Ilocos Sur, 21 percent are college graduates, 24.6 percent college undergraduates or vocational graduates, and 35.9 percent are high school graduates (Table 3.1.5). Even in 2010, the share of college graduates in Ilocos Sur's adult population (21 years old and above) was only 18.6 percent based on the Labor Force Survey. But compared to OFWs in general, Ilocos Sur OFWs are not as well-educated, especially in terms of the share of college graduates (35.9 percent for all OFWs).

The most common areas of destination of OFWs from Ilocos Sur are Asia, the Middle East, and Europe. Based on the SOF of 2003, 96 percent of OFWs from Ilocos Sur go to other Asian countries (52.5 percent), to the Middle East and North African region (22.9 percent), and to Europe (20.8 percent). Some popular countries of destination are Taiwan, Hong Kong (China) and Greece.

Table 3.1.5. Educational Attainment of OFWs, Ilocos Sur

Education level	Philippines	Ilocos Region	Ilocos Sur
No grade	0.3	0.0	0.0
Elementary undergrad	1.5	1.7	0.0
Elementary grad	3.7	4.5	5.5
HS undergrad	5.3	6.6	13.0
HS grad	24.5	37.2	35.9
Post secondary	4.7	3.3	5.8
College undergrad	24.2	24.3	18.8
College grad	35.9	22.5	21.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: SOF 2003

Table 3.1.6. Region of Destination of OFWs, Ilocos Sur

Region	Philippines	Ilocos Region	Ilocos Sur
Asia and the Pacific	39.2	47.6	52.5
Middle East and North Africa	32.2	24.7	22.9
US and Canada	12.7	9.9	2.0
Europe	9.8	10.4	20.8
Latin America and Caribbean	1.0	0.0	0.0
Other region	0.4	0.7	1.8
Country not reported	4.6	6.8	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: SOF 2003

Majority of OFWs from Ilocos Sur are employed in services and production work, primarily as domestic helpers. Based on the SOF from 2002 to 2003, anywhere from 52 percent to 80 percent of Ilocos Sur OFWs were in services work and 12 percent to 32.6 percent were in production and related work. In 2003, 52.1 percent of Ilocos Sur OFWs were in services work, 32.6 percent were in production work, and only 5.7 percent were in professional and technical occupations (Table 3.1.7). Compared to OFWs for the country as a whole, a much smaller share of Ilocos Sur OFWs are in professional and technical occupations and a much bigger share are in lower-level employment, consistent with the difference in educational profiles discussed earlier.

Table 3.1.7. OFWs by Type of Occupation, Ilocos Sur

Occupation	Philippines	Ilocos Region	Ilocos Sur
Professional and Technical	17.1	6.7	5.7
Administrative and Executive	2.2	0.7	0.0
Clerical and Related	2.9	0.3	0.0
Sales	1.2	1.9	0.0
Service	32.9	51.8	52.1
Agricultural and related	0.3	0.4	0.0
Production and Related	35.7	33.2	32.6
NEC	0.5	0.7	0.0
No work	7.2	4.2	9.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: SOF 2003

Among OFWs from Ilocos Sur in 2003, about three-fourths were reported to have sent remittances, slightly higher than the national average of only 69.1 percent (Table 3.1.8). Nearly all (97.5 percent) reported sending their remittances through formal means, either through banks or door-to-door services (Table 3.1.9). Only 2.5 percent reported sending their remittances through friends or co-workers.

Table 3.1.8. OFWs by whether they Sent

Status	Philippines	Ilocos Region	Ilocos Sur
Sent	69.1	72.4	73.5
Not sent	27.5	21.8	26.5
No response	3.3	5.8	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: SOF 2003

Table 3.1.9. Remittance Mode of OFWs, Ilocos Sur

Mode	Philippines	Ilocos Region	Ilocos Sur
Bank	68.9	58.2	84.3
Agency/local office	2.2	1.3	0.0
Friends/Co-workers	1.7	1.3	2.5
Door-to-door	22.1	31.3	13.2
Others	0.6	0.4	0.0
Not reported	4.6	7.4	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Using a different data set, the combined FIES 2006 and the January 2007 LFS, one may classify the Ilocos Sur OFWs as to where they belong among the per capita income decile groups, or whether they belong to rich or poor families.⁷ What comes out is that the large majority of OFWs from Ilocos Sur belong to the richest deciles: more than a quarter (27.2 percent) are from the richest tenth of the population ; 17.3 percent are from the ninth decile; 32.1 percent belong to the sixth to eighth deciles; and only 10.2 percent belong to the bottom three deciles (in fact, only the third decile), what are normally considered the poor income groups.

La Union

Migration

As in Ilocos Sur, and perhaps more so, migration and remittances play a crucial if still underappreciated

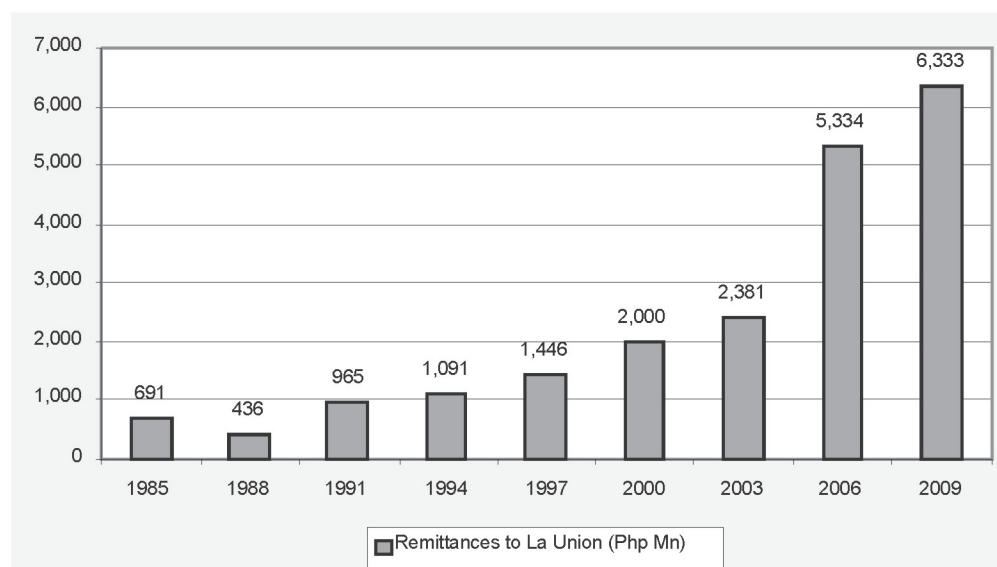
Table 3.1.10. OFWs by National Per Capita Income Decile, Ilocos Sur

Income Group	Philippines	Ilocos Region	Ilocos Sur
First (Poorest)	0.6	0.7	0.0
Second	1.5	0.4	0.0
Third	2.2	2.7	10.2
Fourth	3.0	4.5	7.3
Fifth	5.2	7.0	6.0
Sixth	8.1	15.5	16.1
Seventh	9.8	11.4	3.2
Eighth	15.0	19.0	12.8
Ninth	22.9	20.5	17.3
Tenth (Richest)	31.7	18.3	27.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

part La Union's socioeconomic life. In 2009, based on the FIES, La Union households received about Php6.3 billion in remittances from overseas Filipinos, comprising about a fifth of total household income in the province (Figures 3.2.1 and 3.2.2). From 1985 to 2009, remittances to La Union have been growing at a robust 9.7 percent per year. In some years (1985 and 2006), remittances even exceeded the contribution of entrepreneurial income to total household income in the province.

There is evidence migration and remittances play an even more important role in La Union compared to the Ilocos region or even the Philippines as a whole.

Figure 3.2.1. Foreign Remittances to La Union (Php Mn)



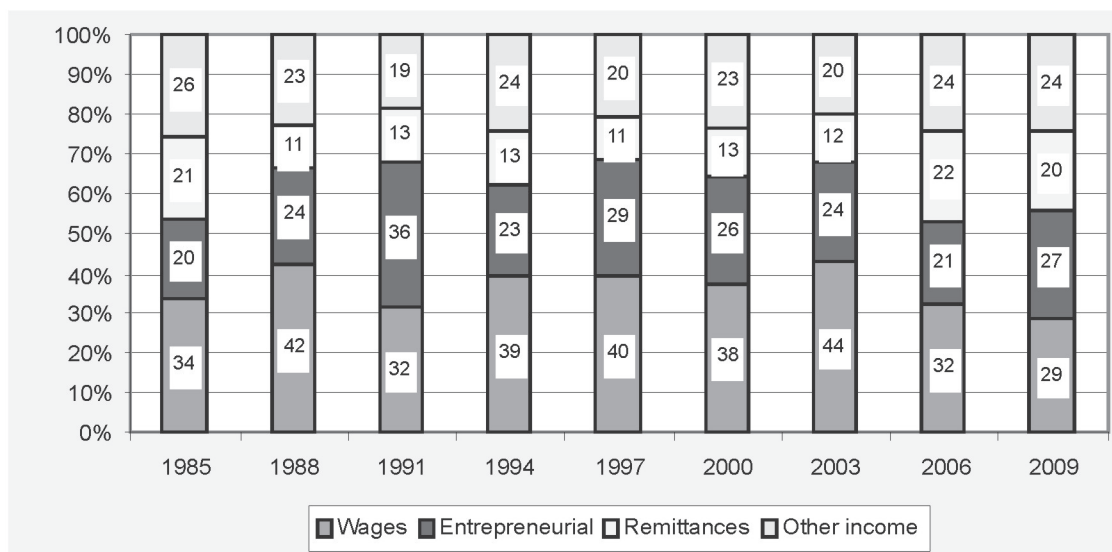
Source of basic data: FIES various years

⁷ This could give information on who among the population (whether the rich or the poor) are able to migrate, but also, alternatively, whether migration does indeed lead to social mobility. Panel data is needed to distinguish between the two.

La Union has the highest percentage of families which depend on remittances for at least 50 percent of their household income. There were 13.2 percent such families in La Union in 2009, compared to 10.8 percent for Ilocos region as a whole and 5.6 percent for the entire country. La Union also has the second highest percentage of families that depend on remittances for at least 25 percent of their household income, following only Ilocos Norte (31.4 percent).

Most of the household savings in the province also come from remittance-receiving households. In 2009, La Union households were estimated to have saved Php8.2 billion of their total income. Of this amount, Php5.9 billion or 72.3 percent were from remittance-receiving households, and only P2.3 billion or 27.7 percent were from non-remittance receiving households.

Figure 3.2.2. Contribution to Total Household Income of Various Income Sources, La Union



Source of basic data: FIES various years

Table 3.2.1. Percent of Households Dependent on Foreign Remittances

Region	Remittances as % of income	
	25%	50%
Ilocos	21.9	10.8
Ilocos Norte	31.4	11.4
Ilocos Sur	20.7	11.9
La Union	26.8	13.2
Pangasinan	18.8	9.8
Cagayan_Valley	13.2	4.9
Central_Luzon	16.9	9.0
CALABARZON	16.1	8.4
MIMAROPA	6.7	2.8
Bicol	7.5	3.2
Western_Visayas	11.9	4.8
Central_Visayas	10.0	5.1
Eastern_Visayas	7.8	3.5
Western_Visayas	6.1	2.2
Northern_Mindanao	7.5	4.4
Southern_Mindanao	5.4	2.3
Central_Mindanao	7.5	3.3
NCR	12.9	6.2
CAR	11.2	5.3
ARMM	4.9	1.5
CARAGA	6.3	3.4
Philippines	11.7	5.6

Source of basic data: FIES 2009

In what follows, we use the SOF to get the profile of OFWs in La Union. As previously stated, the most recent data for which this is possible is 2003. Implicitly, we are assuming that there has not been much change in the profile of OFWs from La Union, since that period, which seems to be the case when comparing regional results. As a validation of the results obtained using the SOF and other data sets, we also use the results of the survey done in 2010 by Kanlungan Centre Foundation, Inc. for its La Union Overseas Filipino Worker Mapping Project. The Kanlungan mapping project covered 8 municipalities and 157 barangays within those municipalities. Municipalities included in the mapping were Agoo, Aringay, Bauang, Burgos, Naguilian, Pugo, San Gabriel, and Sudipen. Kanlungan counted 5,013 OFWs in these municipalities, though its definition of OFWs is broader and includes both those who are on-site and those who are returnees.

Profile of OFWs

OFWs from La Union are more likely than OFWs in general to be female, to be married, and to be the household head or the spouse of the household head (Table 3.2.2). Of the total OFWs from La Union, 63.3 percent are female, compared to roughly half for the country as a whole and 59.9 percent for the Ilocos region, according to the SOF. [This corresponds closely with the results of the Kanlungan mapping which found 62.5 percent of OFWs in the eight municipalities being female.]

About two-thirds of OFWs from La Union are in their twenties and thirties, roughly similar to the national and Ilocos averages. [The Kanlungan mapping found 59 percent to be in their 20s and 30s.] About two-thirds of OFWs in La Union are married, higher than for the country as a whole and for Ilocos region (about 62 percent in each). [The Kanlungan mapping found the share of married OFWs at 69 percent.] More than half of OFWs from La Union are either the household head or the spouse of the head, much higher than for

the country as whole (44.6 percent) and for Ilocos region (41.5 percent). For the country as a whole and for Ilocos region, OFWs are more typically the children or children-in-law of the household head.

La Union OFWs are better-educated on average than the average worker from the province. Of the total OFWs from La Union, 23 percent are college graduates, 35.3 percent college undergraduates or vocational graduates, and 32.2 percent are high school graduates (Table 6). [The Kanlungan mapping found almost the same share of college graduates among OFWs (22.7 percent), but had a much higher share of OFWs who are vocational graduates and who have no formal schooling.] Even in 2010, the share of college graduates in La Union's adult population (21 years old and above) was only 15.2 percent based on the Labor Force Survey. Compared to OFWs in general, La Union OFWs are not as well-educated, especially in terms of the share of college graduates (35.9 percent for all OFWs).

Table 3.2.2. Sex of OFWs

Group	Philippines	Ilocos Region	La Union
Sex			
Male	49.9	40.2	36.7
Female	50.1	59.8	63.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.00
Age Group			
<20	2.0	1.4	0.0
20s	29.1	30.5	31.8
30s	36.5	36.7	35.7
40s	21.9	20.7	21.9
>=50s	10.4	10.7	10.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Marital Status			
Single	33.5	31.4	25.3
Married	61.5	61.3	67.3
Others	5.1	7.3	7.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Relationship to HH head			
Head/spouse	44.6	41.5	51.8
Son/daughter_inc._in_law	45.8	49.7	35.4
Others	9.6	8.9	12.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source of basic data: SOF 2003

The most common areas of destination of OFWs from La Union are Asia and the Middle East. Based on the SOF from 1997 to 2003, anywhere from 70 percent to 90 percent of OFWs from La Union go to other Asian countries and to the Middle East and North African (MENA) region. The most common countries of destination are Hong Kong (China) and Saudi Arabia. Based on the 2003 SOF, 57.8 percent were in Asia and the Pacific, 31 percent in MENA, 7.4 percent in US and Canada, and 1.9 percent in Europe. [The Kanlungan mapping was roughly consistent, finding the most popular destinations to be Saudi Arabia (18.6 percent share), Hong Kong – China (16.3 percent), Singapore (10.7 percent), United Arab Emirates (7.3 percent), Taiwan (5.8 percent), Canada (5 percent), and the United States (4.5 percent).]

Majority of OFWs from La Union are employed in services, primarily as domestic helpers. Based on the SOF from 1997 to 2003, anywhere from 56 percent to 72 percent of La Union OFWs were in services work and 26 percent to 31 percent were in production and related

work. In 2003, 61.2 percent of La Union OFWs were in services work, 27.4 percent were in production work, and only 5.8 percent were in professional and technical occupations. [Based on the Kanlungan mapping, 56.5 percent of the OFWs found work as domestic workers, 7 percent as laborers, 3.5 percent as factory workers, 2.8 percent as seafarers, and 2.7 percent as caregivers.] Compared to OFWs for the country as a whole, a much smaller share of La Union OFWs are in professional and technical occupations and a much bigger share are in lower-level employment, consistent with the difference in educational profiles discussed earlier.

Among OFWs from La Union in 2003, nearly four-fifths were reported to have sent remittances, higher than the national average of only 69.1 percent (Table 3.2.6). Nearly all (95 percent) reported sending their remittances through formal means, either through banks or door-to-door services (Table 3.2.7). Only 2.6 percent reported sending their remittances through friends or co-workers, and 2.4 percent through still other modes.

Table 3.2.3. Educational Attainment of OFWs, La Union

Education level	Philippines	Ilocos Region	La Union
No grade	0.3	0.0	0.0
Elementary undergrad	1.5	1.7	0.0
Elementary grad	3.7	4.5	5.6
HS undergrad	5.3	6.6	3.8
HS grad	24.5	.2	32.2
Post secondary	4.7	.3	4.1
College undergrad	24.2	24.3	31.2
College grad	35.9	22.5	23.0
Not reported	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source of basic data: SOF 2003

Table 3.2.4. Region of Destination of OFWs

Region	Philippines	Ilocos Region	La Union
Asia and the Pacific	39.2	47.6	57.8
Middle East and North Africa	32.2	24.7	31.0
US and Canada	12.7	9.9	7.4
Europe	9.8	10.4	1.9
Latin America and Caribbean	1.0	0.0	0.0
Other region	0.4	0.7	0.0
Country not reported	4.6	6.8	2.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source of basic data: SOF 2003

Table 3.2.5. OFWs by Type of Occupation

Occupation	Philippines	Ilocos Region	La Union
Professional and Technical	17.1	6.7	5.8
Administrative and Executive	2.2	0.7	0.0
Clerical and Related	2.9	0.3	1.8
Sales	1.2	1.9	0.0
Service	32.9	51.8	61.2
Agricultural and related	0.3	0.4	0.0
Production and Related	35.7	33.2	27.4
NEC	0.5	0.7	0.0
No work	7.2	4.2	3.8
Total	100.00	100.0	100.0

Source of basic data: SOF 2003

Table 3.2.6. OFWs by whether they Sent Remittances or Not

Status	Philippines	Ilocos Region	La Union
Sent	69.1	72.4	78.9
Not sent	27.5	21.8	21.1
No response	3.3	5.8	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source of basic data: SOF 2003

Table 3.2.7. Remittance Mode of OFWs

Mode	Philippines	Ilocos Region	La Union
Bank	68.9	58.2	65.2
Agency/local office	2.2	1.3	0.0
Friends/Co-workers	1.7	1.3	2.6
Door-to-door	22.1	31.3	29.8
Others	0.6	0.4	2.4
Not reported	4.6	7.4	0.0
	-	-	-
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source of basic data: SOF 2003

If one classifies the La Union OFWs as to where they belong among the per capita income decile groups, using the combined FIES 2006 and LFS 2007 data sets, what comes out is that the large majority of OFWs from La Union belong to the richest deciles: nearly a quarter (24.5 percent) are from the richest tenth of the

population ; 19.4 percent are from the ninth decile; 45.3 percent belong to the sixth to eighth deciles; and only 5.1 percent belong to the bottom three deciles, what are normally considered the poor income groups.

Table 3.2.8. OFWs by National Per Capita Income Decile, 2006

Income Group	Philippines	Ilocos Region	La Union
First (Poorest)	0.6	0.7	1.5
Second	1.5	.4	1.8
Third	2.2	2.7	1.8
Fourth	3.0	4.5	3.6
Fifth	5.2	7.0	2.0
Sixth	8.1	15.5	18.3
Seventh	9.8	11.4	12.8
Eighth	15.0	19.0	14.2
Ninth	22.9	20.5	19.4
Tenth (Richest)	31.7	18.3	24.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source of basic data: SOF 2003

OWWA Data on Registered Overseas Workers by Locality

Based on records of the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA), there were 29,122 OWWA-registered OFWs in La Union as of April 2011 (Table 3.2.9). Of this total, 26,037 (89.4 percent) were land-based and 3,085 (10.6 percent) sea-based. OWWA-registered OFWs do not include unregistered overseas workers and registered overseas workers who fail to renew their OWWA membership. The actual number of OFWs from La Union is thus expected to be higher. Consistent with the figures presented earlier, majority of OWWA-registered OFWs were women (58.2 percent), but especially when looking at only at land-based OFWs (71.9 percent women). As might be expected, sea-based OFWs were predominantly men (97.8 percent).

The localities that were the top sources of OWWA-registered OFWs were San Fernando City (18.1 percent of total), Bauang (10.9 percent), Naguilian (7.4 percent), Agoo (6.5 percent), Bacnotan (5.8 percent), and Balaoan (5.8 percent), closely mirroring their share in the population. In all municipalities, women OFWs outnumbered men, but especially in Burgos, Santol, San Gabriel, and Batulin, which all had women comprising more than 70 percent of OWWA-registered OFWs. In contrast, Agoo almost had an equal share of male and female OWWA-registered OFWs. The localities which had a disproportionately large share of OWWA-registered OFWs relative to their population share were Sudipen (ratio of OFW-share to population share of 1.22), Naguilian (1.18), San Fernando City (1.14), Balaoan (1.13), and San Juan (1.11).

Table 3.2.9. OWWA-registered OFWs by Locality and Sex

Locality	Land-based			Sea-based			Grand Total	% share
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total		
Agoo	674	959	1,633	248	7	255	1,888	6.5
Aringay	462	852	1,314	229	3	232	1,546	5.3
Bacnotan	509	913	1,422	251	7	258	1,680	5.8
Bagulin	61	191	252	16	1	17	269	0.9
Balaoan	473	1,100	1,573	100	2	102	1,675	5.8
Bangar	348	801	1,149	86	1	87	1,236	4.2
Bauang	1,120	1,692	2,812	354	7	361	3,173	10.9
Burgos	36	205	241	8	3	11	252	0.9
Caba	208	489	697	128	3	131	828	2.8
Luna	441	839	1,280	141	1	142	1,422	4.9
Naguilian	716	1,221	1,937	220	5	225	2,162	7.4

Pugo	141	366	507	29	1	30	537	1.8
Rosario	506	1,037	1,543	126	3	129	1,672	5.7
San Fernando City	1,916	2,800	4,716	550	9	559	5,275	18.1
San Gabriel	112	406	518	47	0	47	565	1.9
San Juan	472	851	1,323	151	2	153	1,476	5.1
Santol	65	252	317	6	1	7	324	1.1
Santo Tomas	351	588	939	109	1	110	1,049	3.6
Sudipen	190	542	732	51	0	51	783	2.7
Tubao	256	518	774	111	2	113	887	3.0
(Not stated)	109	249	358	56	9	65	423	1.5
Total	9,166	16,871	26,037	3,017	68	3,085	29,122	100.0

Source: OWWA

Problems in Recruitment and On-site

There is no official estimate of the number of irregular overseas workers who have come from La Union. According to the Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO), about 14.6 percent of total OFWs (excluding permanent migrants) were in an irregular status as of 2009. If one simply assumes that the same percentage applies to La Union, and assuming in addition that the list of OWWA-registered OFWs in La Union is a comprehensive list of regular OFWs from the province, then the estimated irregular workers from the province would be about 5 thousand. One can easily argue, however, that this estimate is likely on the high side as irregular migration is much less common in the typical destination areas of La Union overseas workers, such as Saudi Arabia, Hong Kong (China), and Taiwan.⁸

The Kanlungan mapping provides other indicative estimates of the extent of irregular migration from Ilocos Norte. Of the little-more-than 5 thousand current or former OFWs Kanlungan covered in its survey, at least 7 percent left on a tourist visa, and a little more than a percent left on either a student visa or some unspecified visa. Though there are mechanisms in some countries through which a tourist visa (and a student visa) can be converted it time into a regular working visa, this is uncommon and the likelihood is that those who left on a tourist visa eventually became irregular workers and may even have been trafficked. Irregular workers are more likely to encounter problems because they are usually accorded limited rights in the destination countries, especially in the workplace, and typically have little or no recourse to legal remedies in cases where they suffer wrongdoing.

⁸ Although Singapore, another popular destination area for overseas workers from La Union has a high share of Filipino irregular overseas workers (46.5 percent) as estimated by CFO.

Based on the Kanlungan mapping as well, the most common problems encountered overseas by OFWs from La Union are maltreatment (experienced by 4.4 percent), illegal termination (4.1 percent), contract violation (2.3 percent), health-related problems (2 percent), and non-payment (0.9 percent). Roughly two-thirds of the OFWs reported not having encountered any problems.⁹ But there were also 9 respondents who reported having experienced sexual abuse while working overseas. It should be noted, however, that Kanlungan's questions on problems encountered referred to any time in the past, so that it is possible that majority of these problems occurred many years ago before more recent reforms implemented by POEA and DOLE.

Nueva Ecija

In 2009, based on the FIES, Nueva Ecija households received about Php7.3 billion in remittances from overseas Filipinos – higher than what either Ilocos Sur or Nueva Ecija received - though it comprised a smaller share of the total household income of the province at only 10 percent (Figures 3.3.1 and 3.3.2). From 1985 to 2009, remittances to Nueva Ecija have been growing at a strong 10.9 percent per year.

About 10 percent of families in Nueva Ecija in 2009 depended on remittances for at least one-fourth of total household income. It should be noted, however, that this is low relative to the Central Luzon region as a whole, where 16.9 percent of households relied on remittances for at least one-fourth of their income, and even the country as a whole where the figure was 11.7 percent. Nueva Ecija also had 5.7 percent of its households depending on remittances for at least half of

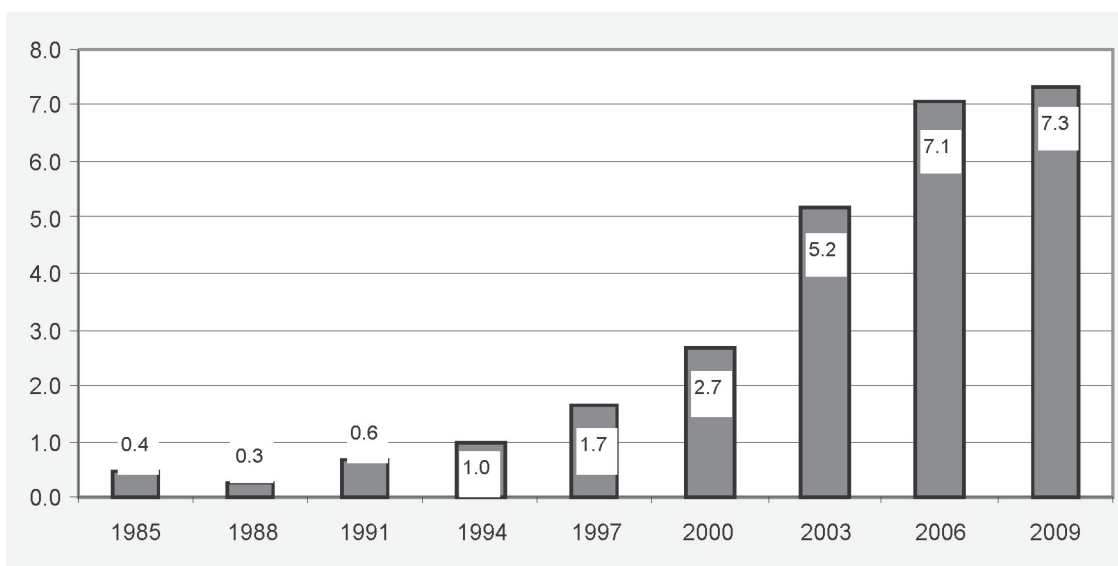
⁹ Kanlungan was careful to note that these OFWs may simply be keeping the problems they encountered to themselves, possibly out of "shame".

their total household income, again low by the standard of the region (9 percent) but about the same as the country (5.6 percent).

Half of the household savings in the province also come from remittance-receiving households. In 2009, Nueva Ecija households were estimated to have saved Php14 billion of their total income. Of this amount, Php7 billion or 49.4 percent were from remittance-receiving households, and the rest were from non-remittance receiving households.

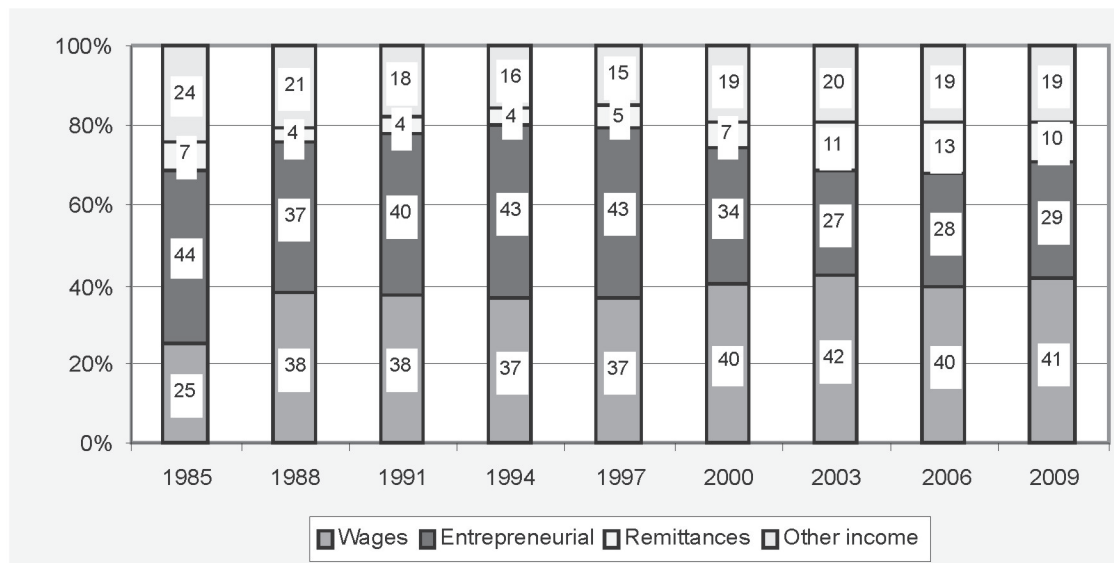
Central Luzon, to which Nueva Ecija belongs, is the home of 12.1 percent of total OFWs in the country (Table 3.1.2). Central Luzon has the third highest share among all regions, following only Metro Manila (18.2 percent) and CALABARZON (18.1 percent). Of the total OFWs from Central Luzon, Nueva Ecija's share is 15 percent, lower only than Bulacan's (34.6 percent) and Pampanga's (20.2 percent), and proportionately less than its share in the population of the region (19 percent based on Census 2007).

Figure 3.3.1. Foreign Remittances to Nueva Ecija (Php Billion)



Source of basic data: FIES various years

Figure 3.3.2. Contribution to Total Household Income of Various Income Sources, Nueva Ecija



Source of basic data: FIES various years

Table 3.3.1. Percent of Households Dependent on Foreign Remittances

Region	Remittances as % of income	
	25%	50%
Ilocos	21.9	10.8
Cagayan_Valley	13.2	4.9
Central_Luzon	16.9	9.0
Bataan	21.5	9.9
Bulacan	15.9	9.3
Nueva Ecija	10.4	5.7
Pampanga	21.7	10.9
Tarlac	19.7	10.3
Zambales	16.0	9.1
Aurora	16.1	6.1
CALABARZON	16.1	8.4
MIMAROPA	6.7	2.8
Bicol	7.5	3.2
Western_Visayas	11.9	4.8
Central_Visayas	10.0	5.1
Eastern_Visayas	7.8	3.5
Western_Visayas	6.1	2.2
Northern_Mindanao	7.5	4.4
Southern_Mindanao	5.4	2.3
Central_Mindanao	7.5	3.3
NCR	12.9	6.2
CAR	11.2	5.3
ARMM	4.9	1.5
CARAGA	6.3	3.4
Philippines	11.7	5.6

Source of basic data: FIES 2009

Table 3.3.2. Share in Total OFWs in Central

Luzon	
Province	% Share
Bataan	8.8
Bulacan	34.6
Nueva Ecija	15.0
Pampanga	20.2
Tarlac	12.3
Zambales	7.7
Aurora	1.4
Total	100.0

Source of basic data: SOF 2003

OFWs from Nueva Ecija are more likely than OFWs in general, or than OFWs in Central Luzon, to be female. Nearly 6 out of every 10 OFWs from Nueva Ecija are women, compared to close to half and half for the country as a whole and to Central Luzon, where there were in fact more male compared to female OFWs (Table 3.3.3). OFWs in Nueva Ecija were most likely to have been married, although the province also had a much higher share of single OFWs compared to the rest of the region. Nueva Ecija OFWs are typically young, with nearly 70 percent of them below 40 years of age, significantly higher than the Central Luzon average (64 percent).

Nueva Ecija OFWs are better-educated on average than the average worker from the province. Of the total OFWs from Nueva Ecija, 34 percent are

Table 3.3.3.

Profile of OFWs, Nueva Ecija

Group	Philippines	Ilocos Region	La Union
Sex			
Male	49.9	52.2	41.0
Female	50.1	47.8	59.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Age Group			
<20	2.0	3.0	6.7
20s	29.1	24.6	25.9
30s	36.5	36.4	36.6
40s	21.9	22.6	17.4
>=50s	10.4	13.4	13.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Marital Status			
Single	33.5	24.8	34.9
Married	61.5	68.9	53.9
Others	5.1	6.3	11.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Relationship to HH head			
Head/spouse	44.6	49.4	42.4
Son/daughter_inc._in_law	45.8	43.4	44.4
Others	9.6	7.2	13.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source of basic data: SOF 2003

college graduates, 33.9 percent college undergraduates or vocational graduates, and 20.8 percent are high school graduates (Table 3.3.4). Even in 2010, the share of college graduates in Nueva Ecija's adult population (21 years old and above) was only 14.8 percent based on the Labor Force Survey. Compared to OFWs from Central Luzon in general, Nueva Ecija OFWs are better-educated, especially in terms of the share of college graduates and college undergraduates/vocational graduates (28.2 percent and 24.9 percent, respectively for Central Luzon).

The most common areas of destination of OFWs from Nueva Ecija are the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and Asia and the Pacific.. Based on the SOF of 2003, 43 percent of OFWs from Nueva Ecija go to MENA, while 27.5 percent go to other Asia and Pacific countries. The most popular destination country for Nueva Ecija OFWs is Saudi Arabia.

The largest share of OFWs from Nueva Ecija are in production and related work, although the share of those in professional and technical work, as well as those in services work is also large. Based on the 2003 SOF, nearly half of Nueva Ecija OFWs were in production and related work, 23 percent were in professional and technical work, and 20.3 percent were services work (Table 3.3.6). The share of OFWs in professional and technical work is larger in Nueva Ecija compared to the country as a whole and Central Luzon (17.1 percent and 15.2 percent, respectively).

Among OFWs from Nueva Ecija in 2003, nearly two-thirds were reported to have sent remittances, slightly lower than the national average of only 69.1 percent (Table 3.3.7).¹⁰ A large majority (78.6 percent)

¹⁰ A substantial number of respondents for Nueva Ecija did not answer the question on remittances.

Table 3.3.4. Educational Attainment of OFWs, Nueva Ecija

Education level	Philippines	Central Luzon	Nueva Ecija
No grade	0.3	0.7	2.1
Elementary undergrad	1.5	2.1	0.0
Elementary grad	3.7	5.8	4.4
HS undergrad	5.3	5.7	4.5
HS grad	24.5	32.7	20.8
Post secondary	4.7	3.8	2.2
College undergrad	24.2	21.1	31.7
College grad	35.9	28.2	34.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source of basic data: SOF 2003

Table 3.3.5. Region of Destination of OFWs, Nueva Ecija

Region	Philippines	Ilocos Region	La Union
Asia and the Pacific	39.2	34.7	27.5
Middle East and North Africa	32.2	40.3	43.1
US and Canada	12.7	13.1	6.6
Europe	9.8	5.8	4.4
Latin America and Carribean	1.0	0.3	0.0
Other region	0.4	0.4	0.0
Country not reported	4.6	5.3	18.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source of basic data: SOF 2003

Table 3.3.6. OFWs by Type of Occupation, Nueva Ecija

Mode	Philippines	Central Luzon	Nueva Ecija
Professional and Technical	17.1	15.2	23.0
Administrative and Executive	2.2	2.9	0.0
Clerical and Related	2.9	4.3	4.4
Sales	1.2	0.7	0.0
Service	32.9	25.6	20.3
Agricultural and related	0.3	0.0	0.0
Production and Related	35.7	41.7	49.9
NEC	0.5	1.3	0.0
No work	7.2	8.4	2.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source of basic data: SOF 2003

reported sending their remittances through formal means, either through banks or door-to-door services (Table 3.3.8). Only 2.8 percent reported sending their remittances through friends or co-workers.

Classifying the Nueva Ecija OFWs as to where they belong among the per capita income decile groups, using the combined FIES 2006 and LFS 2007, what

we get is that the large majority of OFWs from Nueva Ecija belong to the richest deciles: almost a fourth (24.2 percent) are from the richest tenth of the population ; 22.6 percent are from the ninth decile; and 23.7 percent belong to the eighth decile; and only 3.6 percent belong to the bottom three deciles - what are normally considered the poor income groups.

Table 3.3.7. OFWs by whether they Sent Remittances or Not

Status	Philippines	Central Luzon	Nueva Ecija
Sent	69.1	72.1	65.6
Not sent	27.5	23.0	18.5
No response	3.3	4.9	16.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source of basic data: SOF 2003

Table 3.3.8. Remittance Mode of OFWs, Nueva Ecija

Mode	Philippines	Central Luzon	Nueva Ecija
Bank	68.9	68.9	66.5
Agency/local office	2.2	2.2	0.0
Friends/Co-workers	1.7	1.7	2.8
Door-to-door	22.1	22.1	11.1
Others	0.6	0.6	0.0
Not reported	4.6	4.6	19.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source of basic data: SOF 2003

Table 3.3.9. OFWs by National Per Capita Income Decile, Nueva Ecija

Income Group	Philippines	Central Luzon	Nueva Ecija
First (Poorest)	0.6	0.3	0.0
Second	1.5	1.3	1.7
Third	2.2	1.3	1.9
Fourth	3.0	1.0	2.4
Fifth	5.2	3.2	3.1
Sixth	8.1	7.1	4.8
Seventh	9.8	9.8	15.8
Eighth	15.0	16.6	23.7
Ninth	22.9	28.2	22.6
Tenth (Richest)	31.7	31.3	24.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source of basic data: FIES 2006 and LFS Jan 2007

Migration-related Institutional Mechanisms

Local Government Units

a. Ilocos Sur

Ilocos Sur, despite the evident importance of migration and remittances to its economy, but like almost all other provinces in the country, has yet to fully integrate migration and remittances in its development plans. That is not to say that it has not undertaken any steps to help migrants and potential migrants. The local government of Ilocos Sur has recently created (through an Executive Order) a Provincial Inter-Agency Committee Against Trafficking (PIACAT), whose job is to coordinate efforts to fight trafficking in the province, and includes as members provincial government officials as well as civil society representatives. The province is also in the process of creating a provincial task force for migrants whose aim is to provide assistance on the return and reintegration of migrant workers. Previously, the provincial board of Ilocos Sur has passed resolutions providing assistance to OFWs in distress, including those who were displaced as a result of the recent problems in the Middle East, and requiring a minimum age (25) and minimum wage (US\$400) for applicants applying for jobs abroad.

b. La Union

The provincial government of La Union and some of its municipal local government units are widely recognized as among the most dynamic in the region (and the country) and have been the recipients of numerous governance awards.¹¹ The forward-looking nature of the province's leaders is manifest in the province having a Provincial Development and Physical Framework Plan for CY 2008-2018 (PDPFP 2008-2018) and a Provincial Executive-Legislative Agenda for 2011-2013 (PELA 2011-2013) that were developed through a participatory process involving not only different government units and agencies but also the private sector.

Though extensive and forward-looking in many areas, however, both the PDPFP 2008-2018 and the PELA 2011-2013 are almost totally silent on the topic of overseas migration and remittances, despite their importance for La Union. In the PDPFP, for instance,

the only mention of overseas employment was as part of a general strategy to address unemployment and limited job openings in the local economy. Specifically, the PDPFP proposes

- to provide referral and placement services for local and overseas as well as private and civil service employment

through Jobs Fair and Employment Facilitation Programs. There are no specifics as to how this is to be achieved. The only mention of migrants in the document is the concern about the inflow of migrants from other provinces into La Union. A quick review of the PELA indicates no mention at all of overseas migration and remittances despite the crucial role they potentially could play in efforts to reduce poverty and increase investments.

The provincial government, however, has had programs and initiatives in support of overseas workers and their families. The Provincial Board has passed a resolution seeking to set up a migrants' desk and appoint a migrants' officer in all municipalities in the province.¹² There is only very partial success towards this end so far, however. [We discuss the problems encountered in the implementation of this in the section on DOLE and the possible solutions later.] The provincial government also lends its support both directly and indirectly through the work done in the Anti-Illegal Recruitment and Trafficking Council by line agencies like the provincial arms of Philippine National Police and the Department of Justice, the Provincial Social Welfare Department Office, and other agencies and through its participation in the La Union Inter-Agency Council for Migrants Concern, a committee composed of parish, government, non-government, civic society, and private groups catering to the needs of overseas workers in La Union. In addition, the provincial office provides support to Bannuar ti La Union (more on this group and the service they provide later in the section on NGOs), an association of migrant returnees and families of migrants still working overseas, in the form of free office space and some money for microlending.¹³

It is thus not the case that the local government has neglected the concerns of OFWs and their families, but rather that the explicit programs of government are not commensurate with their importance as a share

¹¹ For instance, in March 2011, the Regional Development Council awarded La Union the prize of Cleanest, Greenest, and Safest Province in Region 1.

¹² Resolution No. 263-2010 authored by Board Member Ruperto Rillera.

¹³ The office space includes an electric fan and the amount of money provided was Php50,000.

of the population of the province and their actual and potential contribution to the La Union economy.

c. Nueva Ecija

Similar to Ilocos Sur and La Union, Nueva Ecija has yet to fully integrate migration and remittances in its development plans though it has taken some steps as well to support migrants and potential migrants. This includes the passing by the Provincial Board of an ordinance in 2008 establishing the Nueva Ecija Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking in Persons and its support of line agencies and civil society organizations like Batis Center for Women (more on Batis below). The provincial government has also provided some financial assistance to workers displaced by recent problems in the Middle East (Libya, Syria, Egypt, etc.). Some municipalities, on their own, have also passed ordinances aimed at helping vulnerable potential migrants, most notably the municipality of Cuyapo and the city of Palayan, which passed their own Anti-Trafficking in Persons ordinances. In the case of Cuyapo, among the members of the municipal-level anti-trafficking agency are the Mayor, the Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officer, the Municipal Planning and Development Officer, the Municipal Administrator, the Municipal Health Officer, the Chief of the local Philippine National Police, the presidents of the League of Barangays and the Sangguniang Kabataan, the gender and development focal point for the province, as well as NGOs or faith-based organization that are known to advocate for and help women, children, and OFWs. In the case of Palayan City, the members of the agency are the city-equivalents of the members enumerated in the case of Cuyapo, with the notable addition of a representative from the City Prosecutor's Office.

Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE)

DOLE mainly serves OFWs through its attached agencies POEA and OWWA (more on this below). Operationally, DOLE is more directly involved in OFW concerns through the Public Employment Service Offices (PESO), which are under its technical supervision, though they are maintained mainly by LGUs. The PESO is a non-fee charging multi-employment service facility established pursuant to Republic Act No. 8759 (PESO Act of 1999), which aims to provide a venue where people could explore various employment options simultaneously and at the same time serves as a referral and information center for the various services and programs of DOLE and other government agencies.

In the three provinces, the PESO also serves as the OFW help desk or migrant desk. Republic Act 10022 mandates the creation of a migrant desk in all LGUs to provide “information to their constituents on all the processes and aspects of overseas employment”, including information on overseas job orders and licensed recruitment agencies in good standing (obtained from the POEA). In some municipalities within the provinces, the same practice is observed of assigning the migrant desk with the PESO; but in most of the others, there are still no migrant desks.

In a locality where the volume of overseas migration is high and where the desire to migrate is strong, such as in the three provinces under consideration, a migrant desk obviously serves an important purpose. To potential migrants, it has the potential to substantially reduce the search and information costs of finding overseas work and should reduce the incidence of illegal recruitment and trafficking (by guiding applicants to genuine jobs and to legitimate recruiters). To returnees, it provides an avenue where to find alternative employment whether domestic or overseas that fit their skills.

An important issue that needs to be examined is whether there should be a dedicated migrant desk rather than simply assigning the tasks envisioned for a migrant desk officer to an existing PESO worker who may already be too busy with other work and who may not have the expertise on migration or the necessary network needed to perform the job effectively and efficiently. Certainly, given the migration and remittance profile of the three provinces discussed in Section 3, these provinces (but especially La Union and Ilocos Sur) should seriously consider having dedicated migrant desks.

Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA)

The POEA has three regional offices in the country and 10 regional extension and satellite offices. One of the three regional offices in the country is located in San Fernando, La Union, which is the most easily accessible for OFWs and aspiring OFWs from La Union and Ilocos Sur.¹⁴ The POEA satellite office in Pampanga, meanwhile, is the one closest to Nueva Ecija. The POEA offices conduct pre-employment seminars to help departing workers avoid illegal recruiters and traffickers, facilitates paper processing by allowing OFWs who are returning to their overseas jobs to have their relevant papers verified and processed

¹⁴ The other regional offices are in Cebu City and Davao City

nearer where they live instead of having to go to the POEA main office in Manila, and putatively attends to grievances of workers who are victims of illegal recruitment and trafficking.

Having a POEA office in the province or at least in the same region is without doubt helpful to potential migrants and vacationing workers by reducing the transportation and time costs of processing documents. Some problem areas still need to be addressed by POEA, however.

In the area of medical examination, for example, the POEA should be clearer about the acceptability to foreign employers of the list of DOH-accredited hospitals and clinics it provides to applicants. For example, in the case of La Union, in the current list of accredited hospitals, two are based in the province, which – Lorma Medical Center and La Union Medical Diagnostic Center, Inc. It turns out, however, that some destination countries, particularly those in the Middle East (where many of the La Union OFWs go), do not accept the medical certification given by many of these DOH-accredited medical centers including those in La Union. Gulf countries are reported to accept only medical certification from medical centers that are members of the Gulf Cooperation Countries-Approved Medical Centers Association (Gamca), which are mainly based in Makati City. This has resulted in some applicants having to pay for two medical examinations, not to mention additional transportation and time costs. The POEA should work with the Department of Foreign Affairs to try and convince receiving countries to accept medical certification from all the DOH-accredited medical centers. If not, it should be clear in informing potential OFWs where they should get their medical certificates depending on their destination country.

Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA)

The regional office of OWWA for the Ilocos region is also in San Fernando, La Union. The regional office serving Nueva Ecija is based in San Fernando City, Pampanga. Based on the records of OWWA, it had 158,733 members in the Ilocos region as of April 2011, of which 17,956 were from Ilocos Norte, 29,397 from Ilocos Sur, 29,123 from La Union, and 82,257 from Pangasinan.

On peak season, according to OWWA La Union, the office serves from 50 to 100 clients per day. OWWA is tasked with promoting the welfare and wellbeing of OFW members and their dependents, including the reintegration of OFW returnees. Membership to

OWWA is secured by paying a US\$25 contribution fee that is effective until the expiration of the contract for those whose contracts were processed in the POEA. For those who enrolled in OWWA voluntarily in their job site, the membership is effective for two years but can be renewed by making another contribution. There is a standard package of services offered by OWWA: healthcare, disability, and death benefits; education and training programs for members and their dependents; repatriation in cases of emergency or distress; and a reintegration program.¹⁵ OWWA's reintegration program has economic and psycho-social components. The economic component includes skills training, credit facilitation, lending, and preparation for livelihood projects or community-based income generating project. The psycho-social component includes the organizing of OFW family circles and the provision of counseling services. According to the OWWA La Union office, there were 76 family circles organized with the help of OWWA in Region 1.

Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and TESDA

DTI has both a regional office (serving Region 1) and a provincial office in San Fernando, La Union. It has provincial offices in Vigan City, Ilocos Sur and Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija. The agency provides no services specifically targeted to OFWs or their families. But according to the DTI regional office, it offers its regular programs to OFWs usually upon the request of OWWA, in particular training on entrepreneurship and enterprise development, business plan preparation, business counseling, marketing assistance, and others. To facilitate the setting up of businesses, the DTI together with other agencies have set up a one-stop shop for business registration where the potential investor can swiftly obtain a business name, SSS registration, tax registration, and other requirements.

DTI, however, is not the only agency providing training to OFWs. TESDA is one other agency providing OFW skills and entrepreneurship training as well as skills accreditation for potential OFWs. TESDA, in coordination with OWWA, offers a scholarship program for OFWs and their dependents called the Skills for Employment Scholarship Program, a voucher program, which allows the qualified applicants to enroll in any one-year technical or six-month vocational TESDA-registered program. One condition is that the chosen program should be supportive of

¹⁵ See <http://www.owwa.gov.ph/wcmqs/faq/#fundsourc> for more detailed descriptions of all the programs.

the requirements of land or sea-based overseas work. Among the other programs of TESDA for OFWs are the Free Assessment Service of TESDA (FAST), which is an assessment, training and certification services for household workers, and an English language review class for OFWs, wishing to work or transfer to English-speaking countries.

The take up of training by OFWs is quite poor, however, whether via TESDA or via DTI. For example, in the case of DTI Regional Office in La Union, in the past year only about 960 OFWs (or their families) availed of training on entrepreneurship in the regional office, which is less than one percent of the number of OWWA-registered OFWs in the region. No information is collected on how many actually went into business and how many failed or succeeded if they did go into business.

It is unfortunate that the huge sum of remittances that go into the three provinces are underutilized for investments that could generate more local jobs. Some attribute this to the cultural values. In the case of the Ilocanos – some people say Ilocanos simply prefer to save money in banks rather than in other possibly more productive activities. On the other hand, it is probably true that though there are differences in the degree of entrepreneurship across places, there are entrepreneurs everywhere. In fact, there are notable small success stories of entrepreneurs in the three provinces: in handicrafts and food production – empanada, for example – in La Union; walis and handicrafts in Nueva Ecija; cacao farming and tetrapack recycling in Ilocos Sur.

A new model for utilizing remittances needs to be explored in the provinces. Perhaps one such model is a move away from the idea that the OFWs themselves or their families also have to be the entrepreneurs, and a move towards the idea of OFWs mobilizing their savings to provide funding to entrepreneurs through loans or co-investments. This is not to preclude the possibility that some OFWs themselves could be successful entrepreneurs. At present, there is a huge gap in the lending market that needs to be filled. On one end are the banks which provide loans at relatively low interest but to which access is difficult because of requirements (collateral, tax declarations, etc.) and on the other end are lenders who provide easier access but charge exorbitant interests (so-called 5-6 loans). Such a set up discourages entrepreneurship. Needless to say, even for such undertaking, the OFWs and their families will still require some training on financial literacy and risk assessment. There are some success stories already, however, with this model, such as in the case of Bannuar ti La Union and ASKI (both to be discussed later).

Another model that can be pursued is for the local government unit to access OFW savings by issuing LGU bonds targeted to them for infrastructure and other urgent needs. This potentially accomplishes two things: it hastens the completion of much-needed LGU projects while at the same time increasing the earnings of OFWs from their savings. Because of the taxing power of government, this is a low-risk investment for OFWs that should earn them more in interest compared to if they simply place their money in an ordinary bank savings account, which is the typical practice.

Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD)

The DSWD serves as co-chair of the Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking (IACAT), and as such is one of the lead agencies in the government's anti-trafficking drive. Among the services DSWD offers is a recovery and reintegration program for trafficked persons, aimed at providing for the psychosocial, social, economic, and legal needs of trafficked victims. The DSWD also runs centers that provide temporary shelters to deportees, repatriated migrants and other displaced persons while they are being prepared for eventual return to their places of origin.

There appears to be a need to improve the referral system for trafficking cases. Concerns about privacy and shame on the part of trafficking victims, leads them, in some cases, to seek the help of NGOs instead of DSWD.¹⁶ These victims approach NGOs because they have established reputations helping trafficking victims and have a more extensive network on the ground. This is unfortunate because DSWD has access to more resources to help trafficking victims redress their grievances and help them get back on their feet. A better mechanism must be put in place to allow such victims to access DSWD assistance, and for DSWD to ensure them that their privacy will be respected. In the three provinces considered here (and in some of the municipalities), the Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking are relatively new. Perhaps the referral system will develop (and can be helped to develop) over time.

¹⁶ Other members of IACAT are the Department of Justice (DOJ), which serves as chair; Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), DOLE, POEA, PNP, Bureau of Immigration, Philippine Commission on Women, and NGO representatives.

Non-government Service Providers

Kanlungan Centre Foundation, Inc.

Kanlungan is a non-government, non-profit organization providing services to actual and potential OFWs and their families, on problems they encounter during recruitment, in the workplace, and upon return, including illegal recruitment, contract violations, and trafficking. According to its website, the Kanlungan office in San Fernando, La Union receives more than 20 cases of distressed migrants and their families every day. Kanlungan established its Community Extension Services Program in San Fernando, La Union in 1996, which sought to organize migrant returnees and their families and to get the LGUs to recognize them as a distinct sector. To this end, Kanlungan was instrumental in forming Bannuar ti La Union (more on this group later).

Kanlungan also undertook local economic development projects in La Union, with the aim of boosting the local economy and generating local employment. Among the activities it undertook was the training of OFW families on the proper utilization of remittances and on entrepreneurship. Kanlungan, with the help of Bannuar, undertook the extensive La Union OFW Mapping Project referred to in the previous section. Kanlungan appears to be winding down its operations in La Union, however.

Bannuar ti La Union (Bannuar)

Bannuar is an organization of migrant returnees and the families of current OFWs whose chief aims are to promote the rights and entitlements of OFWs, prevent illegal recruitment and trafficking, and train returnees and their families on entrepreneurship and financial management skills. Bannuar has a province-wide membership of about 3,000. As already mentioned, Bannuar is provided an office by the provincial government of La Union, and in exchange, Bannuar submits an annual accomplishment report.

In the municipality of Naguilian alone, considered the most successful of Bannuar's chapters, Bannuar has about 1,600 members. Among the services offered by Bannuar Naguilian chapter is the manning of a migrant's desk in the municipal office to receive returnees or families of OFWs, hear their concerns, and then refer them to the proper agencies for assistance. The office is provided by the municipal government. Bannuar also engages in anti-illegal recruitment and anti-human trafficking advocacy in barangays. Bannuar has engaged in various local economic development projects, of which the most successful to date is the

microfinance lending project called Urnong Mo Tulong Mo of Bannuar Naguilian. This microlending project was started in 2002 and now has a capitalization of Php2.2 million, from an initial capitalization of only Php13,000 and the infusion of a loan of Php300,000 from the local government, and a grant of Php300,000 from the Foundation for a Sustainable Society, Inc. Bannuar's and Bannuar members' experiences in livelihood projects have been mixed and includes the establishment of grocery (successful and started with soft loan from OWWA), production of vegetable noodles (ongoing and started with training by DTI), tilapia and prawn raising (unsuccessful), native chicken raising (unsuccessful), hog-raising (unsuccessful), bag-making from Zesto packs (stopped), production of dishwashing detergent, and the production of paper.

According to Bannuar officers, among its projects this year and next are capacity building for municipal officers and including migrants desk officer, the formation of migrants' desk at the barangay level, the study and development of agri-based enterprises, and training of Bannuar members on paralegal, organizing, and case handling.

Though the membership of Bannuar is growing, it is still relatively small relative to the population of OFWs and returnees in La Union. For instance, as mentioned earlier, there were 29,122 current members of OWWA from La Union. Including returnees and families of migrants, the current membership of Bannuar is probably not even 10 percent of potential members. There is still room to expand membership, especially to current OFWs and their families.

Other NGOs and organizations in La Union

In addition to Kanlungan and Bannuar, La Union also has LUIMCO or the La Union Inter-agency Council for Migrants Concern. LUIMCO is led by the Diocesan Desk for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People of San Fernando, and similar to Bannuar, also aims to provide training for municipal officers providing service to OFWs and their families. Another small organization catering to OFWs, returnees, and their families is Taberna Overseas Worker Association (TAO) which has about 33 members and is based in Barangay Taberna in the municipality of Bauang.¹⁷ TAO aims to help OFWs and returnees manage their resources and provide them livelihood projects, in addition to being a vehicle for

¹⁷ See Villarama, N. (undated) *The role of transnational communities in local development*. Powerpoint presentation.

information dissemination for OWWA and POEA policies.

Batis Center for Women

Batis Center for Women is a non-government non-profit organization dedicated to helping women migrants, especially those that are in distressed situations. Batis undertakes community organizing of distressed women migrants in Nueva Ecija and Ilocos Sur (and Bulacan), which it has identified among the top source provinces of undocumented migrants based on POEA data, and at the same time as the main origin areas of women who have previously sought the assistance of Batis.¹⁸ Batis provides its clients airport assistance, temporary shelter, medical assistance, legal assistance, educational assistance, reintegration assistance, and social entrepreneurship training. Batis is also very active in working with local government units in Nueva Ecija and Ilocos Sur and encouraging them to help the returned migrant workers access existing government programs and services. The advocacy of Batis has been instrumental in the creation of the Inter-Agency Committee Against Trafficking in Ilocos Sur and in the plans to set up a Task Force on Migrants in the province.

Ilocos Sur League of Civil Societies

The Ilocos Sur League of Civil Societies (ISLCS) consists of non-government organizations and private sector groups in the whole of Ilocos Sur. It has an office in the Provincial Planning and Development Office of the province. Among the services the ISLCS provides is counseling (or emotional therapy) for distressed migrants. According to the chairman of ISLCS, they receive about 3-4 distressed migrants for counseling every month.

Alalay sa Kaunlaran, Inc.

Alalay sa Kaunlaran, Inc. (ASKI), which is based in Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija but has a presence in the entire Ilocos Region as well as Central Luzon, helps facilitate the productive return of Filipino migrants working in Singapore through a partnership with Singaporean institutions, such as the Ministry of Manpower and the National University of Singapore.¹⁹ Filipino workers in Singapore, both professionals and domestic helpers, are given expert advice on possible business ventures should they decide to come home.

One programme under the partnership is called ASKI Realize Your Dreams, which targets professional contract workers. Under this programme, professional contract workers are asked to share their goal or target project after their contract in Singapore has expired. ASKI Singapore, with the help of a Singapore entrepreneurship expert, then helps the workers formulate, plan, and act on these goals. Another programme is the ASKI Business for Families, which targets domestic helpers to help them, through business coaching and mentoring, “identify, organize and establish a business” for themselves and their families back in the Philippines. ASKI is considering plans to expand these programs to Italy and Dubai. OFWs can also invest in ASKI after becoming a member in any of ASKI’s products, which include ASKI Microfinance, ASKI Mutual Benefit Association, and ASKI Marketing Cooperative.

Summary and Recommendations

Overseas migration plays an important role in the social and economic fabric of the 3 provinces under consideration, a fact not yet given full recognition by the provinces themselves. One of every 20 adults in the three provinces is working overseas. One of every 8 college graduates from the three provinces is employed abroad. Remittances comprise 14 percent of total household income in the three provinces and most of the savings in these provinces come from remittance-receiving households. Such facts imply migration and remittances merit explicit consideration of OFWs in the three provinces’ and their municipalities’ development plans.

OFWs from the three provinces are typically young, female, employed in the services sector mainly as domestic helper or in other low-skilled work, and based mostly in the Middle East and other Asian countries. Such a profile means overseas workers from these provinces are more vulnerable than the average to possible exploitation and abuse. Thus, in addition to including OFWs explicitly in their development plans, the LGUs should provide better mechanisms for the protection of OFWs prior to departure and reintegration upon return.

The huge amount of remittances that go into the province is underutilized for investments that could generate more jobs. It mainly goes into low-earning savings accounts in banks. Though there are some success stories of OFW returnees themselves becoming successful entrepreneurs, they are few and far between. Perhaps new models for utilizing remittances need to be explored in the province.

¹⁸The information about Batis from this section are from Cruspero, B. 2011. *Spreading Our Wings*. <http://batiscenterforwomen.wordpress.com/>

²⁹See <http://askiglobal.com/>

One possibility is to mobilize OFW savings to provide funding to entrepreneurs (not necessarily OFWs) through loans or co-investments. This way OFW money can fill the gap between banks on one end, which provide loans at relatively low interest but to which access is difficult because of requirements (collateral, tax declarations, etc.), and usurers on the other end, who provide easier access but charge exorbitant interests (so-called 5-6 loans). For such undertaking, the OFWs and their families will still require some training on financial literacy and risk assessment.

Another model that can be pursued is for the local government unit to access OFW savings by issuing LGU bonds targeted to OFWs for use in infrastructure and other urgent needs of the LGU. This potentially accomplishes two things: it hastens the completion of much-needed LGU projects while at the same time increasing the earnings of OFWs from their savings. Because of the taxing power of government, this should be a low-risk investment for OFWs. The national government already does this through the issuance of OFW bonds. The LGUs should be able to benefit the same way.

Though mechanisms for the protection of OFWs exist, and many government agencies provide some services to OFWs and their families, there is room for improvement. Setting up the migrants desk is a must for the provincial LGUs, and even in some municipalities where the volume of overseas migration is high and where the desire to migrate is strong. This has the potential to substantially reduce the search and information costs of finding overseas work and should reduce the incidence of illegal recruitment and trafficking. The migrant desk should be a dedicated desk rather than simply an add on to another plantilla position. A good model to follow for provinces and municipalities may be the one in the municipality of Naguilian in La Union, where the person assigned to the migrant desk is a member of an NGO (Bannuar in this case) that already has a track record of attending to migrant concerns.

The provision of services by specific government line agencies also can be improved some more. For instance, the POEA should be clearer as to which medical centers applicants should go to for their medical clearance. Though there is a list of DOH-accredited medical centers for OFWs, apparently this is not accepted by all destination countries. To avoid wasteful medical exam repetitions, the POEA should inform applicants beforehand, where they should go, or

better yet work towards ensuring that DOH-accredited hospitals become acceptable to all destination countries. There may also be a need to further streamline the OWWA services application process, which some criticize as being too stringent and requiring too many documents.

Though OWWA and its partners DTI and TESDA provide livelihood training for OFWs, there is no record of how many actually go into business, and of those, how many in fact succeed. There is a need to monitor such information, as a means to obtain information as to how the training can be improved, and also to guide other OFWs. It appears only a small number of OWWA's members avail of livelihood and other training. Efforts to encourage members to avail of such training should be intensified, especially training on financial management.

DSWD, which is tasked with helping trafficking victims, should provide the necessary training for its officers in charge of trafficking concerns, and forge better links with NGOs so that they can work together better in helping victims of trafficking. NGOs have the advantage of having a wider network and a significant presence in many barangays. The DSWD has access to resources and links with other government offices.

The three provinces benefit from the presence of active and dedicated non-government organizations that are concerned with overseas migration, return, and trafficking issues, such as Kanlungan and Bannuar ti La Union (in La Union) and Batis (in Ilocos Sur and Nueva Ecija). These organizations, often in partnership with the LGUs and government agencies, have played an important role in organizing OFWs and in advocating for the establishment of formal mechanisms to help migrant returnees and trafficking victims. Bannuar, which is an organization of former and current migrants and their families, is a good model that may be worthwhile for other provinces (and municipalities) to follow.

This is not to say that there is no more scope for the expansion of the services of these organizations. For instance, Bannuar despite its presence in many barangays in La Union, probably captures less than 10 percent of potential members. Most of those that are not yet fully captured are current OFWs and their families, who are in a good position to contribute by providing financial resources to La Union, but also by helping new and potential OFWs – by informing their local network about job openings, for instance, and by helping those coming to the countries where they are

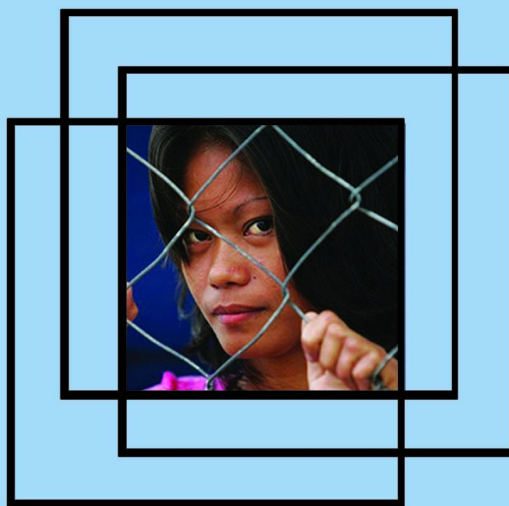
based in adjusting to the working and living conditions there.

Better information dissemination about migration, its benefits but also its possible downsides, should likewise be pursued. One way to do this is through the inclusion of migration in student curricula, especially in areas where the incidence of migration is high. Migrant organizations and government agencies focused on migration concerns (POEA, OWWA) can be tapped for the purpose of discussing migration issues to students.

Migration is seen by many as a partial and perhaps temporary solution to the lack of employment opportunities in the country. For sure, migration has allowed many to change their lives for the better. But a good number of migrants still do not get the full benefits of the hard work they spent overseas, either because they do not have a well-thought out return and reintegration plan, or they do not have access to formal institutions to help in their economic and social reintegration. It is even worse for some who, in their desire to migrate, become victims of trafficking. OFWs have the potential to contribute significantly to the economic development of their origin areas. Their explicit inclusion in the development plans of the localities will be a big step towards realizing this potential contribution. Needless to say, the development plans should contain measures to ensure the proper reintegration or returning OFWs and the protection against exploitation and trafficking of potential OFWs.

Situation Analysis of Outbound and Return Migration and Local Institutional Mechanisms to Support Migrants in La Union, Ilocos Sur and Nueva Ecija

This report presents a brief profile of three Philippine provinces — La Union, Ilocos Sur and Nueva Ecija — particularly at their population features, and the poverty, human development, economic and employment characteristics. It also examines the trends and patterns of overseas migration and remittances, especially in comparison to the overall Philippine trends and patterns. Likewise, it reviews the migration-related institutional mechanisms in the three provinces, and forwards recommendations to effectively support returning migrants.



International Labour Organization
Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
United Nations Building, Rajdamnern Nok Avenue
Bangkok 10200, Thailand

