

# Philippines

## "It is their goal to make money"

The majority of early migrants from Lemery were women who left to work in Italian households as domestic workers or caregivers. Many were wives and mothers who had made the decision to be separated from their loved ones in order to take care of the economic futures of their families. Roger, 38, is the husband of a migrant worker in Rome. His wife Rose has been working abroad for over 15 years, even before they were married. He worked as a seaman for ten years and he and Rose met while they were both home for vacation in the Philippines. After getting married, they decided that it would be best for Roger to stay at home to take care of their daughter.



As a former migrant himself, he understands the situation of his wife abroad as a foreign worker. He says, "if you are looking at work, all the things we encounter in different countries are difficult. Their positions are really hard over there. Their work has no time schedule, they focus on how they can make money and they feel that they should not be wasting time when they can be working. They take on part-time jobs even though they are already working, as long as they have time they can work. They don't waste time because as long as they can get paid, they will do it. That's the system in Rome because it is their goal to make money." Most Filipino migrants in Italy have multiple jobs in order to maximize their time.

Roger's wife comes from a family of migrants. Rose and her siblings were sponsored by their aunt who was already in Italy. Now there are at least six people in her family who live and work in Rome. Roger comes from a family of fisherfolk. Generations of his family as well as others from Lemery have long depended on the sea for their livelihoods. He states that the majority of families in Lemery either rely on income coming from Italy or from fishing. Roger and his wife used to run a deep sea fishing operation with about 30 employees but between the cost of gasoline, employee wages, and the unsure nature of obtaining catch, they closed the business. He explains that the fishing industry in Lemery has been affected by two important events: the first being the capsizing of a major passenger ship in 2008, which affected the regulations and mobility of larger vessels (as Roger's business was in deep sea fishing, this affected him more than the smaller boat operations); and the establishment of factories near Lemery, which have contaminated the nearby seawater, thus affecting the local fishing community. The loss of a major livelihood contributes to the continual emigration of people from Lemery. The depletion of resources and the various impacts on local livelihoods cause people to turn to the few things they know will make them money; with the existing networks in the area, most rely on migration to Italy.

Roger is waiting for his papers to be processed in order to be reunited with his wife. He recognizes the difficult working conditions of the Philippines, particularly in Lemery. Therefore, he and his wife think that it would be best to live in Italy to be able to save and have a better life with their daughter. So far they have plans of permanently living in Italy because of the lack of progress he sees in the work and life situation in the Philippines. "For example, when we live there [Italy] we are going to focus on investing; once there we will save. We can't stay here [the Philippines] for the rest of our lives. Yet it depends on what we decide to invest in just in case we don't stay there."

---

**The Philippines is one of the largest labour export countries in the world 10 million Filipinos are working abroad. Italy has the second largest Filipino migrant population after the UK with 128,000 permanent residents, 84,000 temporary workers and an estimated population of 20,000 irregular workers. The feminization of migration from the Philippines is evident: and of the 26,000 Filipinos in Rome, 16,000 are women. A response to the demand for domestic helpers and caregivers due to the integration of Italian women into local labour market, most Filipina migrants work in domestic and care work. 77 percent of remittance senders from Italy are women.**

---