



## Gender, remittances and Local Rural Development: The Case of Filipino Migration to Italy

### Facts and Figures

#### Filipino Migrants in Italy

- In 2006, approximately 128,080 Filipinos lived in Italy. Of these, 23,108 are permanent residents, 84,972 are legal temporary migrants and 20,000 are irregular migrant workers (Commission of Filipinos Overseas).
- Some estimate the number of Filipinos living in Italy is as high as 200,000.
- Italy has the largest population of Filipinos of any European country.
- Many Filipinos choose Italy because of similarities in culture and religion, and not only because of the potential economic benefits.
- Conditions in Italy, including rising personal wealth, labour segmentation and female participation in the labour market create opportunities for Filipinas in such fields as domestic service.
- 63% of all Filipinos in Italy are women (Italian Institute for Statistics)
- 60-70% of Filipino men and women in Italy are employed in the service sector, with a majority of these being women.
- Filipino migrants (both men and women) are generally well-educated, most have finished high school, and some have University-level education.

#### Remittances: Utilization and Impacts in the Philippines

- US\$44 million is sent annually from Italy by Filipino migrants, which makes it the 4<sup>th</sup> largest source of remittances.
- Generally, Filipino women migrants send between €300 and €400 a month, which corresponds to about half their average salary (€600/month)
- Monthly remittances transfers represent on average 25% to 50% of monthly family income.
- Women tend to privilege investment in their children, particularly in education, and many of them only invest in property when those basic necessities are met. Men, however, are more inclined to invest in consumer goods, property or other household assets.
- After meeting daily expenses, remittances are often used to buy agricultural land, new farming equipment or are invested in housing.
- When men migrate, they often form a new family abroad and begin remitting less to the Philippines.
- Female migration is perceived as an act of “self-sacrifice” with the objective of promoting the well-being of others, while male migration is seen as a normal aspect of their role as heads of household and financial providers.

#### How Remittances are Changing Gender Roles in Filipino Families

- Remittances can lead to a reassignment of traditional gender roles in the household. Women recipients have more economic independence and more decision-making capacity.

- More women are investing in agricultural land, which is a departure from traditional Filipino norms, under which men own land and pass it to their sons upon their death.
- In remittance-recipient households, the organization and distribution of agricultural labour changes from subsistence agriculture to productive agriculture. Women who are no longer involved in agriculture are often freed to take paid labour or pursue education.

### **Negative Effects of Remittances**

- There is growing income inequality between families who receive remittances and those who do not. Families who do not receive remittances often struggle to compete with families who have improved their situation through remittances, for example by purchasing new farming equipment.
- Among recipients of remittances, there is a greater dependency on bought food, which is often less nutritional, rather than local agricultural produce,
- Migrants, both women and men, can accrue debt by trying to meet the remittance expectations of their families.