

**INFORMATION CAMPAIGNS ON SAFE MIGRATION AND  
PRE-DEPARTURE TRAINING**

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A list of all those who kindly gave their time to be interviewed is in Appendix three.

## Table of Contents

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations	3
Summary	4
1. INTRODUCTION	7
Some Definitions	8
Objectives	9
Research Methodology	10
Structure of the Report	16
2. COUNTRY REPORT: SRI LANKA	17
Trends and Patterns	17
Legal Framework	19
Key Actors	20
Information Campaigns in Sri Lanka	22
Pre-Departure Orientation Training Programmes in Sri Lanka	25
Conclusion	28
3. COUNTRY REPORT: THE PHILIPPINES	30
Trends and Patterns	30
Legal Framework	30
Key Actors	32
Information Campaigns in the Philippines	36
Pre-Departure Orientation Training Programmes in the Philippines	40
4. COUNTRY REPORT: BANGLADESH	47
Trends and Patterns	47
Legal Framework	48
Key Actors	49
Information Campaigns in Bangladesh	50
Pre-Departure Orientation Training Programmes in Bangladesh	55
Conclusion	59
5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	60
Summary	60
Recommendations	64
BIBLIOGRAPHY	70
APPENDICES	72
Appendix 1: List of participants in the Needs Assessment Workshop	72
Appendix 2: Organogram of MEWOE	74
Appendix 3: List of Interviews, visits, and meetings	75
Appendix 4: Examples of Posters	78

## List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ACILS	American Centre for International Labour Solidarity (Sri Lanka)
ACFFTU	All Ceylon Federation of Free Trade Unions
BAIRA	Bangladesh Association of International Recruitment Agencies
BCCP	Bangladesh Centre for Communication Programmes
BIMT	Bangladesh Institute of Marine Technology
BMET	Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (Bangladesh)
BOESL	Bangladesh Overseas Employment and Services Limited
BOMSA	Bangladesh Obhibashi Mahila Shromik Association (Women's Migrant Workers Association)
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
BSP	Banko Sentral Pilipinas (Philippines Central Bank)
CENWOR	Centre for Women's Research (Sri Lanka)
CEDAW	All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CFO	Commission on Filipinos Overseas
CMA	Centre for Migrant Advocacy (Philippines)
COPPA	Comprehensive Orientation Programme for Performing Artists (Philippines)
DC office	District Commissioner's Office (Bangladesh)
DEMOS	District Employment and Manpower Offices (Bangladesh)
DFA	Department of Foreign Affairs (Philippines)
DfID	Department for International Development (United Kingdom)
DOLE	Department of Labour and Employment (Philippines)
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
MFA	Migrant Forum in Asia
MSC	Migrant Services Centre (Sri Lanka)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OFW	Overseas Filipino Worker
OLAMWA	Office of the Legal Assistant for Migrant Workers' Affairs (Philippines)
OWWA	Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (Philippines)
PDOS	Pre-Departure Orientation Seminar
PDOT	Pre-Departure Orientation Training
PEOS	Pre-Employment Orientation Seminar
POEA	Philippines Overseas Employment Authority
POLO	Philippines Overseas Labour Office
RA 8042	Republic Act – 8042 (Philippines)
RMMRU	Refugee and Migratory Movement Research Unit (Bangladesh)
SAMReN	South Asia Migration Resource Network
Shosti	Shosti Somaj Kallan Sangatha (Peace and Social Welfare Organisation)
SLBFE	Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment
TESDA	Technical and Skills Development Authority (Philippines)
ToT	Training of Trainers
TNO	Thana Nirbahi Office (Bangladesh)
TTC	Technical Training Centre (Bangladesh)
UP	Union Parishad (Bangladesh)
VTA	Vocational Training Authority
WARBE	Welfare Association of Repatriated Bangladeshi Employees
WWEC	Working Women's' Education Centre (Bangladesh)

## Summary

It is now widely recognised that migration is one of the most significant global phenomena and challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This is especially relevant to Bangladesh, as a major supplier of labour to the world market. The economy of Bangladesh relies heavily on remittances, which dwarf foreign direct investment and development assistance.

In recent years, both government and civil society in Bangladesh have realised these facts and several important steps have been taken to improve the governance of migration. There remain many challenges ahead and much room for improvement. One of the most pressing problems facing migrants and the good governance of migration is widespread lack of awareness about the complexities of migration.

It has been recognised by academic studies and in the experiences of other major migrant sending countries that initiatives to disseminate information about these issues and properly train migrant workers can significantly reduce the negative effects and enhance the positive outcomes of migration.

The twin tasks of wide dissemination of information about how to process migration for those who want to migrate and training of those who are already in the process of migration are enormous. This report looks into Sri Lanka and Philippines' experiences in safe migration information campaigns and in the area of pre-departure orientation training. This provides an assessment from which examples of good practice and lessons have been identified.

In Sri Lanka, information campaigns on safe migration include community-level interventions, drama, talk shows and discussion programmes in mass media and consultations with returnees which are carried out by the government, NGOs, trade unions and church groups. The role of NGOs is limited more or less to providing prospective migrants with information and finding a solution to the problems of returnees.

As far as Pre-Departure Orientation Training is concerned, the Sri Lankan Government provides two - three weeks compulsory PDOT for female housemaids combining skills training on household management, language and general orientation. Although a public-private partnership has emerged in Sri Lanka where recruitment agents supplement some of the government's training under the guidance and monitoring of the government, NGOs in Sri Lanka feel alienated from this system.

The study in the Philippines reveals that the country has an institutionalised information campaign run by the government through press, television, radio and person to person contact. NGOs in the Philippines are also involved in information campaigns often in collaboration with the government, or based on a government model.

The Filipino PDOTs conducted by designated government institutions primarily aim to prepare migrants for the journey and inform them about how they can benefit from migration. Whilst in the majority of trainings, lectures, discussions and videos are the most common methods, these have been designed as much as possible to be effective in the time allotted. In order to expand training

programmes to reach the maximum amount of migrants, the Government of the Philippines has involved NGOs and recruitment agencies in pre-departure training and information campaigns. Recruitment agencies and NGOs benefit from this partnership financially, in their influence on policy and with their ability to attract migrants to their organisations.

It was found from the Bangladesh experiences that the Government of Bangladesh has made some investment in information campaigns through mass media. However, due to the sporadic nature of such interventions no tangible results can be observed. Migrant associations and civil society organisations play an important role in information campaigns through the production of materials such as training modules, drama, documentary and audio visual materials but those are not disseminated on a wide scale.

In Bangladesh, a two-hour PDO programme is conducted by the government using a lecture-based method for outgoing migrants who have completed their formalities and are going abroad on a group-visa. Specialised training NGOs, migrant associations and private recruitment agencies have also involved themselves in PDOTs. Recently, skills training programmes for female migrant workers have been undertaken by the Bangladesh Association of Private Recruitment Agencies (BAIRA) in collaboration with specialist training NGOs. International organisations have played a supportive role in training programmes in Bangladesh, by providing funding and help in developing materials. However, their role must be brought into a wider institutionalised framework to avoid overlapping.

Based on the above findings the study puts forward the following recommendation for improving the state of information campaign and pre-departure orientation training for labour migrants in Bangladesh:

Information campaigns on safe migration should be a continuous process and should be carried out on a wider scale. Following the model of Sri Lanka and the Philippines, community level programmes should be designed which will create mass awareness through the capacity building of community leaders. More information campaigns through the mass media such as drama, documentary and films are also required. There is a need to create positive ideas about female migration and to make people aware of the potential pitfalls of illegal migration.

The existing pre-departure orientation training should be broadened in its scope and improved in quality. This study also assumes the need for special PDOTs for vulnerable groups. Professional trainers should be appointed and the period of training, curriculum and methods should be adapted to make PDOTs interesting and useful to migrants.

Most importantly, both information campaigns and pre-departure briefing services should be conducted under a broad national institutional framework. It should replace current project based, multiple agency approaches. A common, all encompassing programme, such as that in the Philippines should be designed under the leadership of BMET and all stakeholders should be involved in that process. Once the programme is chalked out, the government should make its commitment and international organisations should be encouraged to provide assistance to implement particular components.

The government, NGOs, civil society organisations, private recruitment agencies, research bodies and international organisations - all have specific roles and responsibilities in implementing the plan of action. The government should create opportunities for NGOs and the private sector so that they can all play a role by using their experience, contacts and expertise in this sector. This will also help develop a system of cooperation and collaboration among the various groups operating in this field.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### Objectives

Migration has been identified as one of the major socio-economic challenges that will require serious engagement on the part of the global community in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Experts have recently highlighted the fact that since the 1980's remittances sent by migrant workers have played an even greater role in sustaining the economy of Bangladesh than the garments sector. About thirty-five percent of foreign exchange is earned through remittances sent by migrant workers. However, this share can be made much higher if this sector is well governed.

Over the years, migration has become an extremely complex process and the migrant labourers of Bangladesh experience extreme hardship and exploitation at every stage of migration. Successive governments have taken various legislative measures to streamline the sector. Past experience suggests that legal steps are only effective when the necessary information is made available to potential migrants, their families and common people. However, so far there has not been any formal and credible mechanism to provide information on safe migration procedures. Lack of formal sources of information has made potential migrants easy prey to fraud and cheating by unscrupulous recruitment agents. The working and living conditions of migrant workers in receiving countries are also greatly compromised by their lack of knowledge about their rights and duties.

It is important for Bangladesh that the rights of migrant workers are not abused, and that they receive fair remuneration for their hard work. Successive governments in Bangladesh have taken steps to protect the rights of migrants and reduce their hardship. The aim of this research is not to unduly criticise or undermine the good work and positive steps taken by the government and other organisations in Bangladesh. Rather it is to build on that and recognise that alongside bilateral and multilateral agreements with receiving countries, the protection of migrant workers can be enhanced through better training programmes and information dissemination about migration.

The Philippines, and to a lesser extent, Sri Lanka have been acknowledged as leaders among developing migrant sending countries in terms of their progressive pre-departure policies. These countries have benefited enormously from their good governance of labour migration and have identified pre-departure orientation training programmes and other forms of mass information campaigns as some of the most effective tools in protecting the rights of migrant workers and curbing fraudulent practices during this process.

Bangladesh, on the other hand, has only realised the importance of better governance of migration in the last few years. A new Ministry on Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment has been formed by the government with the aim of protecting and promoting international labour migration as well as looking after long term expatriate Bangladeshis' welfare and rights. However, as the government and different research studies suggest, a huge information gap exists in the labour migration process. The government alone cannot meet the needs of information dissemination among all the common people as well as all aspirant migrant workers.

In Bangladesh formal sources of information on the international labour market, placement and recruitment procedure and assessment of costs and benefits of migration are not of sufficient scale



or quality. As a result, aspirant migrants and their families often turn to informal agents and returnee migrants for information.

In organising programmes to ensure safe migration it is of immense importance that Bangladesh learns from the experiences of other countries. From examples of good practice and the experiences of new and innovative policies, some lessons and recommendations can be drawn up for the Bangladeshi context.

### **Some Definitions**

#### *Pre-Departure Orientation Training (PDOT)*

'Pre-departure' for migrant workers begins long before the actual journey. It comprises three stages:

- Pre-migration when the decision to migrate is thought about and taken,
  - Recruitment and contract signing,
  - Pre-leaving, when preparations are made for the journey and move.
- (CARAM Asia, 2002:2.2)

In this paper 'pre-departure orientation training' (PDOT) refers to trainings, which aim to provide practical knowledge and protection skills to those who are in the middle of processing migration. This includes measures and strategies that could be used by the migrants to maximise the benefits of migrations and reduce potential dangers. PDOT seeks to sensitise the migrants about the cultural milieu and legal rights and obligations in the destination country.

It should be mentioned in this context that PDOT does not usually include skills training, which may be aimed at teaching migrants or non-migrants vocational skills. In the Philippines PDOT is known as Pre-Departure Orientation Seminars (PDOS). Sri Lanka however combines PDOT with skill-development training.

#### *Pre-Employment Orientation Training (PEOS)*

Pre-Employment Orientation Training (PEOS) refers to a type of information campaign, usually aimed at young people to raise their awareness about migration in general. PEOS in the Philippines often takes the form of what is known in Bangladesh as 'community-based awareness raising'. In Bangladesh pre-employment training usually refers to skills-training for specific jobs.

#### *Information Campaigns*

Information campaigns can be defined as ways of disseminating information through various types of media. In the context of migration information campaigns contain information on issues that may have an impact on migrants at the pre-departure stage, during migration, in the destination country and/or in the post-return phase. It aims at increasing knowledge about migration and its potential benefits and dangers amongst a particular group.

The most common forms of media for information campaigns are the print media (newspapers, magazines, posters, books or booklets, brochures and pamphlets) broadcast media (TV and radio) and the Internet. In this study, information campaigns also refer to community-level programmes to increase the awareness of people about migration. In this regard, person-to-person contact through normal conversation or lectures, meetings, seminars and workshops constitutes a vital channel of information dissemination.

## **Objectives**

The objectives of this study are twofold: research objectives and policy objectives. Again, research objectives are divided into two sub-sections i.e. information campaigns and pre-departure training. Those are as follows:

### *Research Objectives*

#### Information Campaigns

- To distinguish between mass awareness campaigns and targeted pre-departure training programmes in Sri Lanka and the Philippines.
- To learn the methods and techniques used in information campaigns.
- To identify types of support materials used in information campaigns.
- To evaluate the nature of partnerships between government and NGOs and migrant support groups in information campaigns.
- To understand techniques of coverage in hard to reach areas.

#### Pre-Departure Orientation Training

- To analyse pre-departure training programmes in Sri Lanka and in the Philippines.
- To identify information required by the migrants and mechanisms of dissemination.
- To analyse the techniques used in providing training.
- To examine the methodology of imparting training and the duration of such trainings.
- To assess the content of trainings
- To identify types of support materials used in trainings.
- To evaluate the nature of partnerships between government and NGOs and migrant support groups in conducting trainings.
- To compare the training programme management structures of private and public sector organisations in both countries.
- To learn the methods used to keep in contact with the migrants after the trainings
- To understand techniques of coverage in hard to reach areas
- To assess the evaluation and monitoring mechanisms used in both countries.

The policy objective of this research is to ensure better protection of human rights and labour rights of the Bangladeshi migrants. For this the policy objectives are:

- To develop comprehensive knowledge of problems faced by other countries so that they can be avoided in Bangladesh.
- To recommend ways of replicating examples of good practice from other countries.

- To recommend a framework that could be espoused by the government to ensure better information dissemination by the public and private sectors and NGOs.
- To recommend policies for rolling out pre-departure training programmes across Bangladesh.

## Research Methodology

The research was conceived as a collaboration between three researchers; a lead researcher overseeing the project, providing methodological expertise, project design and guidance supported by two secondary researchers, one to visit the Philippines and the other, Sri Lanka. Visits and interviews in Bangladesh were conducted by the two secondary researchers together. In addition a research assistant was employed to help administer the project and organise workshops, interviews and visits. The research assistant also played a role in carrying out interviews in Bangladesh, as well as translating and evaluating different publicity and training materials.

In addition to this core team, local partners were sought in the Philippines and Sri Lanka. These were found through the international networks of migration research and advocacy groups of which RMMRU is a member. In Sri Lanka the local partner was Migrant Services Centre. Mr. David Soysa, Executive Director of MSC is one of the core group members of South Asia Migration Resource Network. In the Philippines, Migrant Forum Asia (MFA) was chosen as the local partner. RMMRU is one of the three partners of MFA in Bangladesh. The local partners helped to collect training materials, literature on the subject, arrange and facilitate interviews, and provide guides and translators where necessary. These organisations were vital to this part of the research, providing local expertise, considerable experience in this field and effective logistical support for research.

The composition of the research team proved to be very significant. Both the secondary researchers are trained in migration. One did his Masters in Migration Studies at the University of Sussex. The other co-researcher obtained her Masters in Forced Migration from the University of Oxford and is currently a PhD scholar at the Migration Research Centre at the University of Sussex, UK. One secondary researcher and the research assistant were Bangladeshi and another secondary researcher was British. All interviews in Bangladesh were conducted in Bangla or English, depending on what the interviewee felt most comfortable with, Bangla training and publicity materials were assessed and summarised in English. In Sri Lanka and the Philippines all interviews were conducted in English or in local languages with the help of a translator.

Brainstorming and planning meetings of the research team were held regularly throughout the research period. In the initial meeting<sup>1</sup> the overall objectives of the research were agreed upon, a timetable and a plan of action for Bangladeshi research drawn up. The next meeting<sup>2</sup> was held a few days later to plan for a needs' assessment workshop to be held in Dhaka.

Visits were made to government, private and NGO training centres. BMET was visited several times, for interviews with senior staff<sup>3</sup>, training centre staff and to observe a training session<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> 25.08.05

<sup>2</sup> 04.09.05

<sup>3</sup> 06.09.05

BAIRA was also visited and an interview was conducted with senior management<sup>5</sup>. Training sessions and interviews with staff were also conducted with WARBE <sup>6</sup>and BOMSA<sup>7</sup>. Shosti was visited and an interview conducted there<sup>8</sup>. The experience and advice of senior civil servants from the MOEWOE, BMET and Home Ministry was also sought in the Safe Migration Forum dinner<sup>9</sup>. A list of interviewees can be found in the annex.

The Needs' Assessment Workshop<sup>10</sup> was attended by many NGOs, government officials and representatives from international organisations. It provided the research team with an opportunity to introduce the research and hear the opinions of other stakeholders. Interviews and visits to stakeholders on an individual basis eventually proved more effective for gathering important information.

After the Needs' Assessment Workshop, another meeting was held to draw from the lessons of the workshop<sup>11</sup>. On the basis of this, the experience of research in Bangladesh and a review of current literature, a plan was drawn up outlining the aims and objectives of the field visits. Terms of reference for the work to be conducted by the local partners were finalised and the arrangements for the field visits made. A budgeting meeting was also held<sup>12</sup> to allocate funds for the next stage of research. A daylong workshop was held for the researchers where<sup>13</sup> research and methodological issues for fieldwork were discussed and finalised. In that workshop, questionnaires were designed for the relevant actors in the two countries.

Field visits were conducted in mid-October, and lasted 10 days<sup>14</sup>. With the help of the local partners, interviews were arranged and information materials collected before the field visits started. Using the prepared questionnaires and general research guidelines, information was collected through interviews in both countries with government officials, international organisations, NGOs, recruitment agencies, interested business stakeholders, journalists, religious groups and migrants. (A list of interviewees can be found in the annex). Interviews with such a diverse range of people were not uniform and the questionnaires were used entirely in some interviews and not at all in others. The aims of the research were contained in a separate document, drawn up from brainstorming meetings, to help with the less structured interviews whereas the questionnaires were used in the structured and semi-structured interviews. It was necessary to conduct different types of interviews as the interviewees varied greatly, some had many thoughts and questions of their own, some had pre-prepared materials and others were less forthcoming.

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<sup>4</sup> 12.09.05

<sup>5</sup> 30.08.05

<sup>6</sup> 07.09.05

<sup>7</sup> 29.09.05

<sup>8</sup> 16.11.05

<sup>9</sup> 30.08.05

<sup>10</sup> 15.09.05

<sup>11</sup> 18.09.05

<sup>12</sup> 12.10.05

<sup>13</sup> 15.10.05

<sup>14</sup> 16.10 – 26.10.2005

The diverse range of interviews helped provide a balanced and nuanced view of these complex and often controversial issues. Many of the debates surrounding the preparation of migrants were identified and brought out by discussing the issues with people of differing viewpoints.

### *Philippines*

In the Philippines, Migrant Forum in Asia (MFA) provided support for the project. MFA is an Asian network of organisations and draws upon great experience in migration issues and in training programmes. Their network of members provided a good starting point for research and good relations with government, recruitment agencies and NGOs made research easy. MFA and its members are also responsible for some of the best publications in the Philippines on this issue. Staff at ILO Manila also provided valuable insights and assistance. Attendance of a University of the Philippines, IOM and World Health Organisation workshop on Health and Migration provided good background information and contacts in the Philippines. A visit to the Scalabrini Migration centre library and interview with academic staff there also yielded valuable information and access to publications.

In the Philippines, government officials from the Department for Foreign Affairs, Department of Labour and Employment, Overseas Workers' Welfare Administration and Philippine Overseas Employment Administration were all consulted. A member of ILO staff who has the unique position of also having worked in POEA for 19 years was interviewed. Many NGOs from a range of political/religious and ideological backgrounds were visited, training sessions observed and staff interviewed. Several recruitment agencies were visited, and their training sessions were observed. Staff from one of the banks that sponsor awareness-raising material and are involved in the transfer of remittances were interviewed. Two journalists, one from radio and one from print media were also interviewed. A list of interviewees can be found in the annex.

Interviews were all conducted in English by the researcher, usually accompanied by a guide from Migrant Forum in Asia. The guides were very knowledgeable and provided the researcher with good background information and context about the different organisations visited. They were encouraged to ask their own questions in the interviews as their well-informed, local perspectives were greatly valued.

There were several limitations to this study as the short timeframe of the field visit and research allowed only limited interviews. In the Philippines all the interviews were conducted in the Metro Manila area. From the literature it was found that the vast majority of training and information providing institutions and organisations are located in this region. (In fact this is one major criticism of the Filipino system in the literature).

There are so many different agencies and organisations involved in PDOS and PEOS in the Philippines that it was impossible to cover them all. More time might have allowed for a greater geographical and organisational spread of the research.

It was not possible to do any interviews or meetings with actual migrants or returnees; this might have provided interesting data to compare with the current interviews. However, given the time constraints, the trainers and managers of the training and information dissemination programmes were the priorities for interview.

## *Sri Lanka*

The preparatory work for the field visit entailed finding a suitable partner for the job in Sri Lanka. After initial correspondence, the Migrant Services Centre (MSC) agreed to work as a partner in Sri Lanka. MSC contacted relevant government institutions, NGOs, associations and International organisations and arranged appointments with the relevant persons.

In Sri Lanka, officials from the training, research and sociology department of SLBFE were interviewed. A senior retired SLBFE official was also interviewed to cross-check the findings. A number of NGOs, Church groups, trade unions and NGO forums were also visited and interviews were conducted. Visits to SLBFE training centres and NGO training centres were made to sit in on training sessions. Informal chats with NGO officials and instructors also helped generate information. A senior research fellow at the Marga Institute was interviewed and she provided valuable inputs from her research background. The ILO office in Sri Lanka was visited for the purpose of the study. All interviews and sources consulted are listed in the annexe and bibliography.

During the fieldwork in Sri Lanka, various methods were used to collect information. These included formal and informal interviews, participant observation and focus group discussion.

The study required detailed interviews with government officials responsible for the training and pre-departure orientation of migrant workers in Sri Lanka. These interviews were conducted using a semi-structured questionnaire. Informal interviews with instructors and training officers at the training centres were also taken to formulate a realistic view of the implementation of government policies relating to pre-departure training and orientation.

A number of persons involved in NGOs, research institutes, women's organisations, NGO forums and international organisations were also interviewed to get a wider perspective and evaluation of programmes. Most of the meetings were arranged by MSC prior to the researchers' arrival in Sri Lanka, some were arranged and conducted at short notice during the fieldwork.

SLBFE training centres in the Kegalle district were visited to observe the training infrastructure, methods and modules of the training. Informal meetings with instructors and the manager of the centre gave useful insights into SLBFE pre-departure training.

A pre-departure briefing session in an MSC training centre in Kegalle was also observed. This provided an opportunity to discuss existing facilities, gaps and requirements with organisers and trainers. Attendance of a monthly meeting of returnees in Kandy, organised by a Migrant association provided contact with returnee migrants and interesting access to their ideas and opinions.

While observing the training session, focus group discussions were conducted with some of the participants. Female returnees were asked to make an evaluation of the training and information campaigns available for them in Sri Lanka. The women also shared their experiences and problems confronted abroad.

There were some limitations in conducting fieldwork in Sri Lanka. First of all there was a definite timeframe for the study. The visit to Sri Lanka was carried out a few weeks ahead of the national election in Sri Lanka. The government officials were very busy and reluctant to make time for interviews. Only a few of them were available for interview.

Only a limited number of centres were visited for the purpose of the study. It was not possible to go to other centres owing to time constraints and bureaucratic complexities in seeking permission.

A focus group discussion was only possible with females owing to the cooperation received from particular organisations and the scheduling of the fieldwork. No recruitment agents were interviewed in Sri Lanka. They could have provided the study with a different perspective on information campaigns and pre-departure training. This might have provided a different view from those of the government and NGOs. Owing to time constraints and lack of good relations between agencies and NGOs, this was not possible.

#### *Secondary data and Information*

Several regional or international studies and collaborative research projects have already been conducted on information dissemination, campaigns and training programmes. These were consulted as secondary sources and for background information. An internet search revealed further sources, from governments and the press.<sup>15</sup>

In the Philippines, the University of the Philippines, ILO, IOM and World Health Organisation workshop on Health and Migration provided good background information. A visit to the Scalabrini Migration centre library and interview with academic staff there also yielded valuable information and access to publications.

Secondary sources of information for Sri Lanka comprise mainly modules, reports and articles published by the Sri Lankan Government and international organisations such as IOM and ILO. Data and information was also collected from the Centre for Women's Research (CENWOR) library in Sri Lanka. ILO Colombo provided some online materials.

A brief overview of the literature consulted in this study is presented below:

The Gender Promotion Programme of ILO has prepared an ***Information guide on Prevention, Discrimination, Exploitation and Abuse of Women Migrant Workers***. The guide comprises six booklets which cover different stages of the migration process and the corresponding activities, policies and practices of the main bodies that affect the mobility and employment of women and men within and outside their countries of origin: government, the business community, the private sector, civil society groups and families. Three booklets of the guide are relevant to pre-departure training and dissemination of information. The booklet on decision-making and preparing for employment abroad highlights the kind of accurate and realistic information and assistance services that potential migrants should have to properly decide on employment abroad. Booklet 3 on Recruitment and the journey for employment abroad describes what governments, social actors and migrants themselves can do to prevent the malpractices of fraudulent recruitment agents. Booklet 4, which focuses on working and living abroad, raises awareness of the working and living

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<sup>15</sup> Such as Ali 2004, GENPROM 2001, Nimalika 2000, Morshed 2001 etc.

conditions of women migrants in the destination countries and provides guidelines on how to improve their situation. The module is prepared with a view that individual and institutional users will adapt the materials according to their specific national and socio-cultural contexts, needs and purposes.

The Asian Migrant Centre, Asia South Pacific Bureau for Adult Education and Migrant Forum in Asia's 2001 publication, ***Clearing a Hurried Path: Study on Education Programmes for Migrant Workers in Six Asian Countries*** is a collaborative research project conducted by a network of migration researchers and organisations to evaluate training programmes and services for migrant workers across Asia. The research seeks to identify important government and non-governmental actors, assess their goals, methods and capacity to draw up general lessons on good practice and the way forward. It covers three sending countries: India, Indonesia, and the Philippines, and three receiving countries: Hong Kong, Japan and South Korea.

Sari/Equity's ***Sub Group Meeting on "a regional mass-awareness Toolkit on Safe Migration"*** from July 2005 is the report of a meeting of the Regional Action Forum on Fostering Safe Migration. It provides an interesting look at some regional initiatives on this topic. It includes sections on actions in different South Asian countries, proposed actions and organisations involved in information campaigns and promoting safe migration.

The manual ***The Forgotten Spaces*** was published by CARAMAsia in 2002, it concentrates on the mobility and HIV vulnerability of migrants in the Asia Pacific region. While it focuses on migrant workers, it takes the user through the whole migration process, expressing how each stage of migration impacts on the next stage. Pre-departure is one of the seven booklets of the manual which reflects the personal conflicts and contradictions in decisions and policies, at the individual and structural levels. This module highlights the importance of the period long before potential migrants make a decision. It spells out the need for community-based activities, mass-scale activities, advocacy with the stakeholders, trainings and research in order to implement a comprehensive pre-departure programme.

RMMRU published a book in 2002 called ***Beyond the Maze, Streamlining the Recruitment Process in Bangladesh***. This was the result of a long research and consultation process and a workshop involving many representatives from interested organisations, the private sector and government. The book draws together important recommendations from the workshop and the authors' research to produce a strategy paper for the Government of Bangladesh. The book includes the strategy paper, along with the proceedings of the workshop and suggestions and comments on the strategy paper from several knowledgeable sources. This is complemented by important data and a copy of the Immigration Ordinance of 1982. This current research builds on the comprehensive guidelines set out in the strategy paper, updates them to the current context and adds further research into the cases of Sri Lanka and the Philippines.

In his report ***Pre-departure Orientation Programme: Study of Good Practices in Asia*** Masud Ali (2004) presents a comparative picture of migration trends, institutional and regulatory mechanisms and the state of pre-departure orientation in Bangladesh, the Philippines and Sri Lanka. The study was undertaken with a view to reviewing the effectiveness of pre-departure orientation programmes in protecting vulnerable migrants in the above three countries. Based on both primary and secondary sources of information the study provides a good overview and



synthesis of preparatory activities offered by the government, Private Sector and NGOs for the migrant workers of the above mentioned countries. Masud Ali's study was a useful background source for this study. It provided a good comparison of the three countries using ILO and other UN bodies' frameworks to identify programmes that could be described as 'good practice'. The study recommends that more research be carried out in this field. This research hopes to make specific policy recommendations to build on the broad conclusions in Masud Ali's research.

***Sri Lanka: Good Practices to Prevent Women Migrant Workers from Going into Exploitative Forms of Labour*** is one of a series of studies commissioned by the Gender Promotion Programme of ILO (GENPROM, 2001) to enhance the knowledge base and develop practical tools for protecting and promoting the rights of female migrant workers. The research focuses on the situation of women migrant workers in the receiving and sending countries. It also illustrates the legislative framework, good and bad practices initiated and implemented by the government, NGOs and private sector for migrant workers in Sri Lanka. The research provides useful insights into the pre-departure trainings, briefing and awareness campaign activities conducted by the Sri Lankan Government, NGOs and private sector.

Maruja Asis' (2005) recent paper: ***Preparing to Work Abroad, Filipino Migrants' Experiences Prior to Deployment***, published by Philippine Migrants Rights Watch, Manila, is her latest study of pre-departure training programmes and complements extensive work she has done from 1992 and 1998. This paper aims to analyse migrants' responses to the training and information they received before deployment to get some 'feedback' on the system. Unfortunately the research was conducted before recent institutional changes in the administration of PDOS and PEOS in the Philippines. It does provide good material on the wishes of migrant workers, an excellent analysis of the choices and options open to them and a good overview of the system.

### **Structure of the Report**

The report comprises of five sections, firstly an introductory section including objectives of the study, sources of information and research methodology. This is followed by individual country reports. There are three country reports, one each from Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and the Philippines.

Each country report starts with a brief background of nature and extent of migration from the country concern. This is followed by a legal framework of those countries regarding migration. Then it concentrates on experiences of government, NGOs, media and private sectors in respect to information campaign. It attempts to describe the roles and relationships between of these organisations. This is followed by a discussion on pre-departure orientation trainings provided by different actors. Section 5 attempts to draw conclusions from countries experience.

## 2. COUNTRY REPORT: SRI LANKA

Sri Lanka is reputed for adopting policies for ensuring safe migration and implementing measures to provide migrants with practical information through systematic training. This section presents brief overview of labour migration from Sri Lanka. It will look into the pre-departure orientation trainings and information campaign organised by the government, NGOs and private sector. It is important to mention in this connection that all types of migrants are not discussed here.

### **Trends and Patterns**

The history of labour migration from Sri Lanka may be traced back to the mid-twentieth century when academics and professionally qualified persons found their way to the West in search of a better livelihood. At that time, migration was propelled by push factors such as slow economic growth in Sri Lanka and pull factors like demand for qualified professionals in the USA, Australia and European countries. However, the nature, type and destination of labour migration from Sri Lanka have undergone qualitative and quantitative changes over the turn of the century.

Currently, the term 'labour migration' in Sri Lanka mostly indicates migration of skilled and unskilled men and women to the Middle East and South East Asian countries. Contract labour migration started during 1970s when oil-rich Middle-Eastern countries opened their labour markets to foreigners whom they needed for infrastructural development of the country. In the same period, with the change of the leftist government, a market oriented new economic policy was introduced in Sri Lanka. The new economic policy encouraged migration and opened up opportunities for the private sector to participate in processing migration.

The 1980s and 90s witnessed further changes in migration patterns and destinations. There was a sharp decline in the number of skilled migrants from Sri Lanka to the Middle East during this period and unskilled Sri Lankan labour migrants for domestic and other unskilled works replaced them. By the end of 1970s, doctors, engineers, accountants, managers, scientists, technologists and navigators constituted only two percent of the total migrants. During the same period, new labour markets were opened for Sri Lankans in South East Asia since the region experienced considerable economic growth and shortages of semi-skilled labour in its industrial sector.

### *Motivation*

The principal factors which motivate male migrant workers are economic well-being and lack of lucrative employment opportunities within the country. As far as women are concerned, the demand for unskilled or low-skilled female workers in labour-receiving countries combined with the social, economic and policy factors within Sri Lanka influenced or forced them to respond to the opportunities abroad. A study carried out by Kanti Yapa (cited in GENPROM 2001) on the decision making process of international labour migration with special reference to the Sri Lankan housemaid concludes that the decision by women to migrate for employment to foreign countries is very much an individual and personal one. Factors such as financial need, the need to build a house, need for better education of children, the need to pay off debts or the need to escape from problems at home prompt them to migrate.

### *Scale*

According to a government estimate of 2002, a total of 1,040,000 Sri Lankans were employed abroad (SLBFE 2003). Annually, over 100,000 Sri Lankan workers join foreign labour markets. A look at government records suggests that over three decades the number of labour migrants increased considerably and comprises nine per cent of the total labour force of the country. In 1975 the total number of recorded migrants was only 1,039, in 1996 it had reached 162,576. Official records show that from 1998 to 2002 labour migration from Sri Lanka increased by 27.46 percent. However, there are problems with these statistics since they do not cover all the migrants. A section of workers go abroad using their social networks while some migrants use unauthorised routes for migration. A large number of migrants who went abroad prior to the formalisation of the registration procedures are also excluded from the official figures (Dias and Jayasundere, 2003: 2; interview with NGOs).

Over time, the number of people migrating through official channels has increased. There are now more than 500 licensed recruitment agencies in Sri Lanka. In 1992 only an estimated 35.8 per cent of migrant workers travelled through official channels and through the recruitment agencies. According to an estimate of SLBFE, the number recruited by licensed recruitment agents continued to rise and they accounted for 154,716 or 74% in the year 2004.

### *Destination*

Sri Lankan migrants mostly go to the countries in the Middle East and South East Asia. Middle-Eastern countries such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, UAE, Lebanon, Oman, Bahrain, Jordan and Qatar receive more than ninety percent of Sri Lankan migrants. Others go to South and South East Asian countries such as the Maldives, Singapore, South Korea, and Hong Kong. The biggest single destination is Saudi Arabia. Recent reports in the media reveal that countries such as Italy, Greece and Cyprus offer employment to female domestic workers.

### *Feminisation of Sri Lankan migrant Labour force*

One of the discernible features of Sri Lankan labour migration is that 65 percent of the migrants are women (Fernando, 2000). This is the only country in South Asia which has no restrictions or ban on female labour migration for unskilled jobs such as domestic work. In spite of traditional norms of child nourishment and family commitment that hinder women working abroad, Sri Lanka witnessed 70 percent women migrants working abroad as housemaids during the mid 90s. Large numbers of women also found jobs in garment factories overseas since they had experience of working in the same kind of factories within the country.

SLBFE estimates a decrease of percentage female migrants working as housemaids from 53.26% in 2002 to 48.57% in 2003. During the same period, male migration has increased from 34.61% to 35.48% (SLBFE 2003). Looking at the general profile of the migrant workers, data from 1994 shows that more married persons seek employment in foreign countries, with 78.9 percent of female and 68.3 percent of male migrants married.

### *Skill level*

SLBFE classify migrants according to their skills and jobs they perform abroad. These categories include professional, middle level, clerical and related, skilled, unskilled and housemaids. 1975 records show no unskilled migration from Sri Lanka whereas in 1985, 9,024 persons were recorded in unskilled category. This implies that over a period of one decade significant changes have occurred as far as migrants' skill level is concerned. SLBFE statistics presents housemaids as a separate and distinct category. In 2002, housemaids made up 53.23 percent of the total migrant work force.

### *Geographical Distribution*

Migrant workers of Sri Lanka come from all districts of the country, including the war torn areas of Northern Province. Nearly 20 percent of migrants come from Colombo. Among other areas, Kandy and Kurunegala districts are worth mentioning for producing large number of migrants.

Initially, migrants were mostly from urban areas, especially female migrants. At present, however, the majority of women working abroad are from rural areas, with 34 percent from urban areas.

### **Legal Framework**

Although labour migration from Sri Lanka became an important feature of the Sri Lankan economy in the 1970s, it was not until the mid 1980s that the Government of Sri Lanka was able to enact laws and policies for regulating and managing labour migration. The Employment Agencies Act No.37 of 1956 proved inadequate to regulate private recruitment agencies when large-scale migration of workers began in the late 1970s.

The law that applies to all categories of migrant workers came into being in 1985 with the enactment of SLBFE Act No. 21 of 1985. In fact, the Act repealed Foreign Employment Agency Act No. 32 of 1980 and was amended by Act No.4 of 1994. The law primarily provides for the establishment of SLBFE and sets out its function and general power. The Act sets out strict rules and regulations relating to foreign employment agencies. It also provides for collection of data on migrant workers. However, the Act covers only those who are registered with SLBFE or with employment agencies, registered with SLBFE. Large numbers of workers who migrate through unrecorded sources are not eligible for the various protection measures under the Act.

Sri Lanka has ratified the 1990 UN International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, the ILO Convention Concerning Migration for Employment, Revised 1949 (No. 97), Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100). It has also ratified the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). However many civil society organisations and NGOs feel that ratification of treaties and enacting laws is not enough. They insist that the Sri Lankan Government should ensure proper implementation of these laws for the protection and welfare of migrant workers.

## **Key Actors**

### *SLBFE*

The Sri Lankan Bureau of Foreign Employment (SLBFE) is a Public Corporation established by Act 21 of 1985 and amended by Act 4 of 1994. It falls under the purview of the Ministry of Employment and Labour. The main objectives of SLBFE include promotion, development and regulation of foreign employment and provision of protection and welfare for both migrant workers and their families. Among other objectives: setting standards for and negotiating contracts of employment, entering into agreement with relevant foreign authorities and formulation and implementation of model contracts of employment that ensure fair wages and standards of employment are important. A ministerial advisory committee provides policy guidelines to SLBFE.

According to Section 15 (o) of the Act, SLBFE should offer training and orientation to outgoing migrants in collaboration with licensed recruitment agencies. However, training was made compulsory only in 1996 when the government adopted an economic liberalisation policy 'with a human face'.

Section 53 of the Act requires SLBFE to establish and maintain an Information Data Bank on all Sri Lankans employed abroad and return migrants. Its information Technology Division provides information on the activities of SLBFE and employment agencies and functions as a job bank. Any interested person can apply for employment to this job bank and information on applications and procedures is disseminated through Post Offices all over the country. The division also manages SLBFE website ([www.slbfe.lk](http://www.slbfe.lk)) which is discussed later.

### *Foreign Missions Abroad*

Sri Lankan foreign missions provide protection and welfare services to Sri Lankan migrants in the host country. Services include: shelter and medical services for runaway workers, repatriation, issuing passports and legal services. Labour attaches are appointed in migrant receiving countries where more than 25,000 migrants are employed to follow up complaints or referrals from employment agents. Embassies are also entrusted with the task of promoting further employment in the receiving countries. In certain Middle East destinations, the labour attaches have taken the initiative to introduce a registration scheme for Sri Lankan sponsors who engage in direct recruitment, often paying a national to obtain the visa and travel clearance.

### *NGO and Civil Society Organisations*

Besides the government, a number of NGOs, Trade Unions, Migrant Workers' Associations, and International organisations are also involved in promoting and safeguarding the interests of migrant workers in Sri Lanka.

Migrant Services Centre (MSC) is one of the pioneer NGOs, formed in 1994 with the aim of solving specific problems confronting women migrant workers. They have designed a series of activities to strengthen decision-making and to help migrants obtain their rights and to build a sense of solidarity with other oppressed and exploited groups. Migrant Services Centre is affiliated with the

All Ceylon Federation of Free Trade Unions (ACFFTU), which has taken a multi pronged approach to advocate for social justice and to mobilize migrant resources towards economic empowerment.

MSC receives patronage from the Trade Union, The National Workers Congress (NWC). One of the principal aims of NWC is to create safety net for the benefit of migrant workers through migrant worker's associations. MSC has established branch associations in six high migration areas to build migrant alternatives mainly in the form of soft loans for entrepreneurship. These bodies operate at grassroots level in six locations- Deniyaya, Matugama, Hatton, Kegalle, Gampaha and Seeduwa to offer counselling and training activities, encourage alternatives to migration and to set up and monitor self employment projects and skill development programmes.

A number of women's organisations and human rights organisations are also working in the area of migration. However, they have different focuses and interests. For example, some of them are working towards prevention of sexual harassment; some provide pre-departure orientation while there are others who work only on health issues. In order to bring all of these organisations into a common platform and to ensure better coordination, A Migrant Workers' Action Network (ACTFORM) was formed in 1999. Currently, 32 NGOs are member of this Network. Apart from activities performed by its members ACTFORM has its own programmes such as counselling services and awareness programmes. Other activities include collection and dissemination of information, monitoring the implementation of state policy, lobbying and advocacy on policy and policy reform, research and legal assistance to migrants.

The American Centre for International Labour Solidarity (ACILS) is another actor in the NGO sector working for the migrant workers. The aim of the organisation is to create labour solidarity and increase the bargaining power of migrants. ACILS provides financial support to its partners such as MSC and ACTFORM to hold training, meetings, workshops and other activities.

Besides NGOs and Trade Unions, some church groups are active in Sri Lanka. The Salvation Army, a Christian charitable organisation, has awareness campaigns and counselling on HIV/AIDS, STDs and health issues which also cover prospective as well as returnee migrants. The HIV/AIDS related work of the Salvation Army began in 1992. The main focus of recent programmes has been providing care and support to HIV/AIDS patients and their families.

### *International Organisations*

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) and International Organisation for Migration (IOM) are the two key international agencies working on migration related issues in Sri Lanka.

ILO has a wide range of activities regarding migrant workers of Sri Lanka. ILO advocates for implementation of rights of migrant workers through the ratification of ILO Conventions. It provides technical, financial and logistical support (such as fees for resource persons, venue etc) to the government and NGOs to conduct training and orientations for prospective migrants.

IOM has a wide range of activities that includes awareness programmes, research and publication of dissemination materials. It works in collaboration with the government, NGOs and other international organisations.

From the above discussion, it appears that over the last three decades Sri Lankan labour migration has increased in such magnitude that government has become interested in formulating policies for further promotion of this industry. Besides, a protective regime combining NGOs and Trade Union groups has also emerged whose main objective is to uphold the dignity and human rights of migrants. To what extent these conflicting interests are manifested in information campaigns and pre-departure orientation training for migrant workers will be discussed in the rest of the chapter.

## **Information Campaigns in Sri Lanka**

### *Government*

The Sri Lankan Government has recognised information campaigns as an important tool for ensuring better protection of Sri Lankan workers abroad. SLBFE has a welfare and sociology wing which mainly works with the objective of reducing the costs of migration. Recently this section has been entrusted with the task of promoting safe migration, planned migration and family friendly migration. In order to implement these three principles, SLBFE has undertaken various programmes at the community level and in the mass media.

### *Information Campaigns through the Mass Media*

Since Sri Lankan migrant workers have the option of avoiding the recruitment agents and reaching their destination through direct negotiations with a sponsor, SLBFE can only warn them through the mass media about the hazards of finding a job placement through private channels.

Currently, SLBFE broadcasts a two hour radio programme every Sunday from 10:30 AM to 12:30. Migrant workers in the destination countries can directly participate through telephone while the programme is on and can discuss their problems. The first hour of the programme is open for prospective and returnee migrants residing in Sri Lanka.

The Sociology department of SLBFE has produced a two-hour film on safe migration that has recently been broadcast on a national channel. SLBFE is expecting that private channels will also broadcast it shortly. They are planning to show the film, breaking it up into several episodes.

### *Community Awareness*

SLBFE's grassroots level awareness-building programmes are targeting prospective migrants and their family members left behind. This programme aims to educate prospective migrants, civil society and local leaders on the negative sides of migration as well as about how they can take better-informed decisions about migration. Issues such as child protection, financial management, how the spouses should manage their everyday lives, and sexual health are addressed. This village-to-village programme targets populations at the sub-divisional level across all parts of the country. Awareness is also created on how to complete all formalities of migration and how to get in touch with SLBFE. SLBFE community awareness programmes are not only targeted at migrants, but also at the wider population in the locality, the police and community leaders. Areas are selected on the basis of migration trends. Flip charts, posters and booklets are used in awareness campaign programmes.

SLBFE runs an awareness programme for school teachers to reduce the drop-out rate of migrant workers' children. All community programmes are conducted by SLBFE officers. The community awareness programme run by SLBFE, going from village to village, provides a reference model and example for others who want to provide similar awareness-raising events.

### *Website*

The Ministries relating to migration in Sri Lanka have impressive and up-to-date websites, with a great deal of information for migrants, potential migrants, recruitment agencies, employers and others. SLBFE has a website ([www.slbfe.lk](http://www.slbfe.lk)) where they put job advertisements and have a 'job bank'. The 'job bank' is a different concept to that of 'job advertisements'. Advertisements are for the recruitment agencies and the 'job bank' is for the prospective migrant workers. The website includes lists of registered agencies, so that migrants can find out if their agency is currently registered.

### *13<sup>th</sup> Day of Pre-departure Training*

SLBFE has adopted a large-scale information campaign programme for the family members and spouses of outgoing migrants. Pre-departure migration skill-training for Middle East-bound migrants is designed for 12 days. On the 13<sup>th</sup> day, spouses of trainees are invited to attend a whole day orientation at the training centre to address the common problems that arise due to the migration of a family member; this is an effective way of involving migrants' families.

It appears from the above discussion that over the last decades SLBFE have introduced significant measures to inform people about the pros and cons of migration. Considerable financial resources have been mobilised to facilitate communication between the prospective migrants and SLBFE. SLBFE has set an example by involving its sociology division which designs various information campaigns for migrants and provides feedbacks to PDOT. While making a self-evaluation, an SLBFE sociologist commented that although it is difficult to erase the social stigma attached to female migration, the community awareness programmes have successfully done that. SLBFE receives positive responses and appreciation from migrant families and community in their attempt to run an awareness-raising programme.

### *International Organisations*

International Organisations do not organise pre-departure orientation or information campaigns as such. They usually limit their activities to providing financial and technical support to government and NGO efforts in this regard.

ILO does not conduct any pre-departure trainings or information campaigns of its own but contributes by providing technical support to the government and NGOs by for example paying for resource persons, through research and developing modules for training. The Gender Promotion Division of ILO has developed an information guide to prevent the discrimination, exploitation and abuse of women migrant workers to be used by the government and NGOs.

Recently IOM has undertaken some anti-trafficking activities. IOM also publishes country-specific booklets for outgoing migrants and training materials to be used by the trainers.



## NGOs

NGOs are encouraged by the Sri Lankan Government to carry out information campaigns for the outgoing migrants. However, NGOs' information campaigns mostly highlight the negative consequences of migration, as they believe that migration for employment should be the last option for a Sri Lankan. Most of the activities of NGOs working with migrant workers revolve around providing information and training on self employment, protection against harassment and so on.

### *Media Campaign*

MSC conducts 20 minute TV discussions on issues pertaining to migration and a radio discussion with returnees. These programmes aim at making aspirant migrants aware about the pitfalls of migration and inform them of how they can avoid the negative consequences of migration. MSC uses the assistance of media specialists to make these programmes.

### *Community Awareness Raising*

Many of the services provided by ACTFORM members for prospective migrant workers focus on awareness raising. ACTFORM runs its awareness programme in four districts in Sri Lanka. Issues not usually covered with regards to migration such as insurance claims and abortion are addressed. Human rights issues are also discussed in the awareness programme to teach people their rights.

ACTFORM offer counselling and outreach programmes to migrant workers once a week. The intention of the network is to bring together non-governmental organisations with representatives of SLBFE and other relevant ministries. Women come from all over the country to discuss their problems and find solutions. Sometimes ACTFORM receives complaints about abuses or fraud from the migrant workers.

ACTFORM has produced simple and effective posters to give information about safe migration. These cover dos and don'ts, avoiding illegal recruiters, photos of fraudulent recruiters and information about government programmes.

ACTFORM members meet once a month to coordinate their policies, advocacy stance and activities. In this way the activities of NGOs are coordinated to be more effective and avoid overlapping.

The Salvation Army offers some awareness-raising programmes on HIV/AIDS and general health. The Salvation Army has an extensive Training of the Trainers (ToT) programme for its workers who are expected to return to their own areas and campaign on health issues. Recently, the Salvation Army trained monks on health issues as they have authority and influence over people.

NGOs follow innovative methods and techniques in information campaigns. They involve returnees in meetings, orientation and discussion and provide prospective migrants an opportunity to ask questions. However, almost all the NGOs interviewed have admitted that they cannot always undertake and implement programmes according to the needs of the target audience. Coordination by one central authority can sometimes create constraints. NGOs in Sri Lanka have financial

constraints and they complain about the bureaucratic burden that funding agencies impose on them and the lack of freedom they have to act, as all their programmes are tightly budgeted for specific activities.

## **Pre-departure Orientation Training Programmes in Sri Lanka**

### *Government*

The Sri Lankan Government has recognised the need for pre-departure orientation and information for safe migration for the migrants, especially those who are leaving the country for the first time. Pre-departure orientation programmes undertaken by the Sri Lankan Government and NGOs are focused primarily on protecting migrants from abuse and exploitative situations. In 1996, pre-departure training was made compulsory for domestic workers and a training certificate became a mandatory requirement for registration with SLBFE.

SLBFE is the key agency in Sri Lanka to provide pre-departure training to the out-going migrants. SLBFE has 30 training centres all over the country, except in the war-torn districts of the Northern Province. In high migration areas it has more than one centre. Each year SLBFE trains 50,000 migrant workers.

SLBFE provides a compulsory training programme for women seeking employment for the first time as housemaids both in the Middle East and in non-Middle-Eastern countries. It offers a 12 day programme for Middle East-bound workers and 21 days for those who will go to non-Middle-Eastern countries. One-day refresher training programmes are organised for repeat migrants.

There are programmes available for those who lack literacy skills. Outgoing migrants are interviewed at the time of enrolment for skills training programmes. If they are found to be lacking basic literacy, SLBFE provides them with an 18 day literacy training programme. After completion of that 18 day programme, they can join the 12 or 21 day programmes. Middle East-bound workers are provided with training in Arabic and others are provided with basic literacy training in English.

Apart from the housemaid training programme, SLBFE offers a two week training programme for those who are going to Korea in the unskilled category. The training curriculum includes Korean language, culture, financial management and personal health. SLBFE has introduced this training because all Sri Lankan leaving for Korea for labour migration require a language proficiency certificate.

In addition to training for domestic workers, the SLBFE also provides training for sewing machine operators to work in garment factories in the training centres in Kegalle and Ratnapura. This programme is also open to male migrant workers seeking employment in garment factories abroad. A number of participatory techniques are used for the training such as classroom teaching, group work, lecture and other demonstrations.

Male workers are not bound by government statutory provisions to enrol onto any training programme and so their ability to perform expected tasks is dependent on their work experience. Therefore, SLBFE does not have any pre-departure training programmes for male migrant workers. The government has other institutions run by the vocational training authority (VTA) to provide skill-

training for male workers. Sometimes VTA works in collaboration and in coordination with SLBFE. It recently undertook a training programme for nurses in coordination with SLBFE.

The Labour Ministry also runs some training programmes for skill-development in various fields such as carpentry and masonry. The training programmes conducted by other ministries serve the purpose of the wider population; they are not specifically designed for outgoing migrants.

SLBFE has more than 130 trained instructors. Eligible candidates for trainer positions are selected through an interview process. For the Middle East-bound training programmes, applications are invited from those who have at least five years' experience of working in the Middle East. The minimum academic qualification required is an O level. Applicants should be fluent in Arabic and should possess a broad knowledge of Arab culture and customs. Once selected, trainers are attached to a SLBFE training centre to get a one month ToT. Training instructors are appointed on a contract basis.

Trainings are provided free of charge except for a nominal charge for the meals. Six training centres have residential facilities. The annual budget for training is 10 million rupees (US \$102,000). SLBFE spends 30,000 to 40,000 rupees per month to run a training centre which the government provides the funding for.

A national educational institution under the Ministry of Education designs the SLBFE training curricula. It has developed separate modules for each curriculum. However the NGOs have reservations about the expertise and experience of the national educational institute in manpower issues.

During the training programme, specialist lecturers provide information on relevant matters such as banking, childcare and health. SLBFE has incorporated gender-specific issues, especially information on issues of violence and protection against violence into the training by way of the ToT programme for SLBFE trainers. The training provided to women is diverse; it includes cooking and how to use modern equipment, a basic knowledge of English and Arabic, how to make pre-migration arrangements, financial management, including information on banking and savings, core values, as well as strategies to overcome emotional pressure, loneliness, cultural shock, anxiety and psychological breakdown, and reintegration.

What was revealed in earlier research (GENPROM, 2001) and has been confirmed in this research is that there is a need for classifying trainees according to their educational qualification and absorption capacity. According to the instructors, in every training session they find one or more participants who cannot absorb much of the contents.

SLBFE has expressed its satisfaction with the training infrastructure, quality of trainers and methods of training. However, SLBFE feels that the content or syllabus should be revised and further improved.

### *Private Sector*

The SLBFE Act provides that the private sector may conduct pre-departure trainings to supplement SLBFE's works. SLBFE stipulates a number of conditions in its code of conduct for private sector

involvement in pre-departure training. Interested agencies or organisations have to prove their ability to run training programmes and comply with SLBFE conditions to receive permission from SLBFE.

At present, private recruitment agencies run eight training centres in Sri Lanka. SLBFE invites private recruitment agencies to supplement their work because recruitment agents can reach more people through their networks. People know them well and they are easier to contact. SLBFE supply them with the curricula and instructors. Usually SLBFE allows recruitment agencies to conduct trainings in areas where they do not have any office.

However, recruitment agencies cannot issue training certificates, which are required for registration. After completion of all the training formalities, migrants go to SLBFE to collect their certificate. In order to check for fraudulent activities, the government closely monitors trainings provided by the recruitment agencies. The audit section of SLBFE makes surprise visit to the training centres as part of their monitoring mechanism.

### NGOs

The government and NGOs have no partnership or collaboration as far as PDOT is concerned. According to the NGOs working for migrant workers in Sri Lanka, no standardized process has been developed to ensure NGO's participation in PDOT. Some NGOs are running one or two-day PDOTs but compared to the government, their capacity is weak.

NGOs run pre-departure orientation for migrant workers from Sri Lanka independently in order to counter vulnerability and to enhance migrants' decision-making capabilities. MSC claims that it was the first to identify the need for providing migrants with orientation and skill-training. Since then, through the formulation of new policies, the government has taken over that role. Since 1996, MSC has not run any long-term skill-training programme for outgoing migrants. However, there is a wide range of NGOs which cover pre-departure orientation for prospective migrants as well as members of their families.

Government trainings cover those migrants who go through formal channels. As a result a large number who are going abroad via personal contacts or unlicensed agents cannot avail any pre-departure training. With the aim of bridging this gap, MSC organises one-day orientation programmes for prospective migrants who have either decided or who are in the process of making a final decision. The orientation aims at briefing migrants about various aspects of migration. Annually, 150 such programmes are organised by MSC in 26 areas of the country. Through its migrant associations, MSC also runs a two-day package programme which includes briefing and training for female migrant workers. It receives financial support from trade unions. CARAMAsia also provide support for advocacy and pre-departure orientation training.

MSC implements its training programmes through local migrant workers' associations working at the grassroots level. In order to provide orientation to migrant workers any migrant worker association has to comply with MSC conditions of holding it free of charge and of any religious bias. Prospective migrants are mobilised by volunteers who are either ex-migrants or prospective migrants or members of migrant families working with the field officers. Migrant workers'

associations conduct briefings at their own offices while MSC provides technical and financial support such as trainers, travel money and food. Usually orientations are non-residential in nature unless there is an urgent need.

MSC provides information to prospective migrant workers to prepare them for migration and to raise their awareness of illegal practices and other hardships they may face. They have developed their own training module after reviewing existing modules available for training. This module includes: health status, age requirements and medical certification needs, preparing forms and documents for passports, passport-renewals, visas, tickets and registration with SLBFE, including the benefits of registration. The centre also provides information on pre-departure training, insurance and the personal details workers should provide to SLBFE or the Sri Lankan Embassy in the host country. There is no regular system of updating the module. The trainers change and update the contents according to their experience and the needs spelt out by the trainees. Training techniques are mainly lectures and discussion. On average 20 people attend a briefing session. MSC has some ex-SLBFE officers as trainers. During orientation booklets and other materials are distributed.

A few other NGOs in Sri Lanka provide training to migrant women workers in different areas. For example some women's organisations provide training on how to avoid sexual harassment in the workplace. These organisations do not deal exclusively with the issues faced by women migrant workers but include these workers among other disadvantaged people for whom they provide services.

#### *Migrant Associations Abroad*

In Sri Lanka migrants' associations abroad have emerged as an important source of assistance and coordination of migrants' activities. In Cyprus, Sri Lankan migrant workers have an association who organise orientation for newly arrived Sri Lankan migrants. In other countries, migrants' associations help Sri Lankans to find jobs, provide shelter to jobless ones and even them with a ticket to return to their country if they find themselves in a difficult situation.

The Sri Lankan Government has developed its institutional capacity to train migrants who require training. Activities relating to the organisation, control and regulation of PDOT have become the sole responsibility of SLBFE. These programmes have helped to eliminate some of the problems encountered by the migrants in destination countries and to uphold the status of Sri Lankan housemaids. According to the returnees interviewed in Sri Lanka, those who had taken PDOT, had greater self-confidence. It helps to equip outgoing migrants with the necessary skills, expected behaviour, attitudes and the capacity to cope with vulnerabilities. However, they have identified that for many migrants the skills-training was useless because it was not relevant to the types of jobs they were eventually employed in.

#### **Conclusion**

A stocktaking of Sri Lankan information campaigns and pre-departure orientation programmes suggests that in Sri Lanka, the government is the main body to implement such programmes. Private recruitment agencies have assumed a great deal of responsibility in terms of providing training. A public-private partnership has emerged where recruitment agencies execute training

while the government keeps a monitoring role. The role of NGOs on the other hand is more or less limited to providing prospective migrants with information and finding a solution to the problems of returnees. While the government is trying to promote its migration industry, NGOs and trade unions are more concerned with protecting the human rights of migrants. The nature and scope of PDOTs in Sri Lanka has broadened to take more specific needs into account. However, there is yet to emerge any effective collaboration and partnership between the various actors, as has developed in the Philippines.

### 3. COUNTRY REPORT: PHILIPPINES

This is a short overview of the scale and history of migration, as well as laws, policies and institutions relevant to the field, in the Philippines. Further detailed information about some of the background to this study is available in other comprehensive reports such as Asis, 2005, Masud Ali, 2004, Villalba, 2003 and MFA, 2001 and in many other sources, hence why exhaustive descriptions and histories are not necessary here.

#### Trends and Patterns

Originally, Filipino workers mainly went to the Middle East, along with many thousands of Bangladeshis, to work on massive infrastructure projects in newly oil-rich countries. From the 1980's East Asian destinations such as Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, Japan and Korea also attracted Filipino workers, in many different sectors. Today, Hong Kong and Saudi Arabia are still the top destinations for 'overseas Filipino workers' or 'OFW's as they are called in the Philippines. The main destinations of the 'diaspora migrants' (including spouses of foreign nationals) are the USA, Canada, Australia, Japan, Germany and the UK. Undocumented migrants mainly go to Malaysia, Japan and Korea (Villalba, 2003: 6).

Estimates from 1999 place the number of Filipino migrants at around 7.29 million, which is nearly ten percent of the country's population (74.7 million in 1999). Of this total, about 2.98 million (40.8%) are overseas contract workers, 2.37 million (32.5%) are permanent residents abroad - 'the diaspora' - and 1.94 million (26.6%) are classified as 'undocumented' (Villalba, 2003:5). In 2004 overseas Filipinos remitted US\$ 8.5 billion (BSP, 2004); the main sources of remittances are the US, Europe and Asia (Villalba, 2003:7).

#### *The migrants*

One noticeable trend in migration in general, and from the Philippines in particular, has been the 'feminisation' of migration. In 1992, female migrants represented 49.8 percent of new overseas workers; by 1999 this had increased to 64 percent of all newly deployed migrant workers (Villalba, 2003:7).

There are three main categories of OFWs: service workers, production workers and professional/technical workers. Domestic workers make up 74.2 percent of the 'service worker' category. Choreographers, dancers, composers, musicians and singers make up 75 percent of the 'professional/technical workers'. These specific professions are dominated by women, who also make up 30 percent of the 'production workers', working in factories making electronics, as tailors or dressmakers (Villalba, 2003:7).

#### Legal Framework

Labour migration was brought into official government policy in the Philippines in 1974 with the 'Labour Code', or Presidential Decree (PD) 442. This initial law provided for the promotion and protection of migrant workers. Labour migration was seen as a temporary solution for unemployment.

After much advocacy work and activity by NGOs and migrants' associations the government of the Philippines enacted the Republic Act 8042 (RA 8042), also known as the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipino Act. This legislation defines the goals of the state in relation to overseas employment and for the protection of migrants' rights, both in the Philippines and abroad.

The Act recognises the importance of the phenomenon of migration, and the responsibility of the state to help those emigrants who are "in distress". It attempts to lay down basic policies and standards to protect migrants' rights. It also explicitly includes gender-sensitive aspects, recognising the equal rights of men and women under the act (Sec. 2d). The law makes any breacher of migrants' rights liable under criminal law (Villalba, 2003:13).

Other noteworthy elements of the law are the recognition of the need to help poor migrant workers with court costs in prosecuting abusers, the mandatory presence of at least one woman migrant worker on the boards of POEA and OWWA, and the appointment of two representatives of OFWs to the House of Representatives. The Act recognises the role of NGOs as "partners" in the protection of migrants' rights (Villalba, 2003:15).

Migrant workers and their contributions to society are celebrated and respected in the Philippines. There is widespread acknowledgement of the contribution of remittances to the economy by government, civil society groups and the business community. Migrant workers are termed by the government the "new national heroes", which might seem a rather insincere moniker, but tangible policies are in place to support these ideals. Special 'express lanes' and lounges in the airport, good rates for loans from banks, and a wide range of services specifically aimed at migrants workers all support this. Large government involvement in the migration field and interest by the business community in tapping the remittances market show the real interest that is there.

Another recent development that further demonstrates the importance of migrants to the nation is the absentee voting campaign. This has been spearheaded by NGOs and advocacy groups with the help of journalists in print media and radio. It has not been an easy process as migrants often find it difficult to register to vote when they are far from the embassy in the country of destination. Empowering migrants politically, especially in a county where they make up one 10 percent of the population (and a greater proportion of the voting population), is a step which will lead to greater representation of migrant issues in national political debate.

The Philippines is regarded as a prototype for 'sending country' migration policies; many of the government officials interviewed during this research spoke of the visits they had had from other government delegations studying their policies. Other commentators evaluated the Philippines as having done quite well, although they noted the differences between successive governments. One claimed that new regimes want change and new policies rather than building on the gains or successes of the past.

In general the system is characterised by good concepts which are sometimes, owing to lack of resources, political will or mismanagement, poorly implemented. However, the number of migrants has kept increasing despite fluctuations and poor performance in the global economy – it seems the POEA marketing team are doing their job well.



Nonetheless, RA 8042 states that “*the state does not promote overseas employment as a means to sustain economic growth and achieve national development*” (sec. 2b). While this seems not to be the case, according to many observers, the idea behind the clause is that the means of achieving lasting development is the creation of jobs in the Philippines, under the direct jurisdiction of the government of the Philippines, rather than abroad (Villalba, 2003:14).

The confidence that the Philippine Government have in their own capacity to conduct, regulate and monitor PDOT is outstanding. However, coordination between the government and NGOs is vital in order to achieve better geographical coverage, and to reach different categories of migrants.

The Government of the Philippines has set examples of good practice in terms of coordination among government agencies such as POEA, OWWA, and CFO, NGOs, private recruitment agencies and businesses. There is hardly any overlapping in providing PDOT. The task of government lies in monitoring and maintaining the standard of the service.

## **Key Actors**

### *Government institutions and roles*

The Department of Labour and Employment (DOLE) is the main ministry that deals with migration issues. It has two agencies involved in the deployment and welfare of migrants: The Philippines Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) and the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA).

POEA was established in 1982, and reorganised in 1987, to promote, supervise and monitor the conditions of OFWs. Its main activities are identifying and developing overseas labour markets for OFWs, regulating and monitoring recruitment activities and ensuring the well-being of workers at the job site and upon their return to the country.

OWWA was set up to provide welfare assistance to registered overseas workers and their families and to manage a welfare fund. In the last year, more responsibility has been passed from POEA to OWWA, which now has a larger role in ensuring the well-being of overseas workers and ensuring that minimum standards are met. In terms of pre-departure orientation and information campaigns, the dividing line is set between the two agencies upon the signing of a work contract. Before a worker is employed, before he or she signs a contract, they are the responsibility of POEA, who provide information campaigns or pre-employment orientation seminars (PEOS) to help students and job seekers realistically decide if migration is a good option for them. As soon as they have found an overseas job and signed the contract (helped by POEA), they are referred to, and become the responsibility of OWWA, who are responsible for designing and monitoring the pre-departure orientation seminars (PDOS). OWWA now monitor, regulate and accredit PDOS providers, and also conduct their own PDOS for ‘direct hires’ – those who are not hired through agencies. This accounts for 10-20% of total PDOS provision, with the rest being covered by NGOs and recruitment agencies.

The Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) is responsible for protection and assistance to Filipinos abroad. There is a ‘one country team’ approach in the Foreign missions, with the priority being the assistance of nationals; this approach aims to coordinate between staff from different ministries.

The Office of the Legal Assistant for Migrant Workers' Affairs (OLAMWA) deals with all legal problems that Filipino migrants might encounter. One of its important functions is to act as a point of contact between POEA, OWWA, NGOs, law firms, the Integrated Bar of the Philippines and the migrants in destination countries on all legal matters. It also administers a legal assistance fund for migrant workers and maintains an information system on legal matters.

Labour attachés have different roles in different countries. Attachés in Brussels, Geneva and Washington play a more representative or monitoring role to big governments and international organisations based there rather than the 'hands on', welfare role that they might play in Hong Kong or Riyadh.

In the countries of destination DOLE is mainly engaged with the OFWs with a network of Philippine Overseas Labour Offices (POLOs) to take care of the workers. These are connected to the embassies, although they're not always in the same building. They have been in existence since 1974 and there are now 35 offices in 27 countries. They are staffed by a DOLE labour attaché, and sometimes a welfare officer from OWWA. Labour attachés deal with all non-legal issues such as contracts and standards for employers; consular staff deals with any problems relating to criminal justice, and OWWA deal with welfare issues. Not all Filipino foreign missions have welfare officers and labour attachés, but all the major destinations are covered.

DOLE has set up 19 'resource centres' for Filipino migrant workers around the world. They offer a range of services such as shelter for runaways, training and a social venue. In Dubai for example there are active clubs or societies based on regional affiliations or hobbies such as chess, dance or computers. Resource centres use the support of local NGOs and church groups and different interest groups or clubs. Sometimes local migrants' groups provide training to other migrants; this varies from country to country depending on the community in each country.

The Commission for Filipinos Overseas (CFO) is part of the President's Office, and is the government agency which monitors the affairs of Filipino emigrants or 'the diaspora'. They are responsible for training programmes for emigrating Filipinos, data collection and are also involved in information dissemination campaigns.

TESDA – the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority conducts skills-training for certain workers, to give them an official qualification for their area of expertise. These include domestic workers and entertainers. There is also a generic training certification for trades such as carpentry, welding, plumbing etc. TESDA certificates help workers prove their skills and trade when they are abroad. This was set up as a response to clauses in RA8042 which explicitly mention "skills development" as the route out of poverty.

### *The Role of NGOs in migration in the Philippines*

A diverse range of NGOs (including church groups, unions and migrants' associations) have played a major role in advocating for and shaping policy changes. NGO action was particularly inspired by two high-profile cases of abuse of female migrants. The first was Maricris Sioson, an entertainer who was brutally murdered in Japan. This case and the media coverage of it highlighted both the increasing scale of female migration and the vulnerability of many migrants to abuse. This

hardened the opinion of many women's NGOs and of the public towards migration, seeing it as risky and a source of many problems for women and families (Rodriguez, 2005:9).

A seismic shift took place after the execution in Singapore of Flor Contemplacion, a Filipina domestic worker accused of murder in 1995. Many in the Philippines believed that she was not guilty of the crime and that indirectly the Philippine Government was responsible, for sending Filipinas into vulnerable working situations and then lacking the power<sup>16</sup> to assist migrants in trouble (Rodriguez, 2005:13).

Migrante, an international alliance of migrant workers' organisations was able to organise global protests against the disputed case, pressure the Philippine Government into stronger (although ultimately unsuccessful) action immediately and into re-evaluating their policies. It also brought into question the whole policy of sending women abroad to work as domestic workers and entertainers, on the grounds that it caused more harm than good and reinforced gender roles (Rodriguez, 2005:13).

Soon after Flor Contemplacion's execution, RA 8042 was passed, and female migrants' rights' assumed a new importance in policy. Many NGOs were galvanised, having seen the power that they wielded and with their new found recognition in the act as "partners". It also led to the recognition that information, orientation and skills-training programmes needed to be bolstered, especially for vulnerable migrants to help prevent such problems before they arise (Rodriguez, 2005:15).

NGOs, particularly those run by and targeting women, assumed an important role in the design of PDOS and PEOS programmes; a core group of seven NGOs participated with POEA to improve the PDOS. They were subsequently accredited by POEA to provide government-accredited PDOS to the most vulnerable migrants such as domestic workers and entertainers.

NGOs see themselves as best placed to inform migrants about their rights and health issues, they are often critical of the government for its failure to properly implement policies, protect migrants or for their approach to migration in general. They are often critical of the role of recruitment agents in providing PDOS, with the suspicion that the agencies do not really care about migrants' rights.

Currently many migrant workers' organisations and NGOs are advocating for the deletion of the provision in RA 8042 that calls for the eventual deregulation of the 'industry'. They argue that deregulation is not the answer, and that more efficient regulation by the state is needed to ensure proper implementation of policies, minimise corruption and extortion of migrants and ensure proper provision of PDOS by recruitment agencies. Ironically many NGOs themselves resist monitoring by the government, arguing that they are 'partners' and not subject to regulation. Many also alter the official PDOS, according to their political stance and particular focus.

### *The role of the private sector in migration in the Philippines*

One notable feature is in many cases the way in which the migration, and particularly pre-departure, training and publicity are administered under a public-private partnership. Recruitment

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<sup>16</sup> Both politically in the international arena and in terms of institutional capacity

agencies have assumed a great deal of responsibility in terms of providing training, they are accredited and monitored by the government, and often charge the migrants for providing PDOS. Currently they provide the vast majority of the PDOS.

Agencies, NGOs and the government all make sponsorship deals with companies, who provide funding for materials, such as brochures in the case of the government or, in the case of NGOs, provide a space where the PDOS can take place. NGOs and agencies who provide PDOS often allow representatives from banks a slot in the PDOS to talk about remittances and savings and the services that the banks provide. This has helped expand the PDOS scheme by providing an extra source of funding. However, it has been criticised by some owing to the lack of choice migrants may have when only one bank is invited to speak at a PDOS session. Another source of criticism is the amount of time taken by banks in PDOS; some reports allege that bank staff may take one or two hours from a six hour session, although during this research, fifteen minutes was the most commonly observed and reported time.

In other ways recruitment agencies provide much the same services in the Philippines as they do in Bangladesh, finding and arranging to send workers for their clients in destination countries.

#### *International organisations that work on Migration in the Philippines*

IOM and ILO are both active in the Philippines. ILO has a big presence in the Philippines and the Philippines has been an active member of ILO since 1948. ILO's Manila office is the Sub-Regional Office for South-East Asia and the Pacific, so it has regional as well as national functions. ILO's campaigns for decent work and against forced labour have led to actions on improving migration policies, protecting the rights of vulnerable migrants such as domestic workers, setting minimum standards, counter trafficking, and combating child labour. ILO has supported many government and NGO initiatives on migration in the Philippines. They have helped design and implement programmes and studies to assess the impacts of programmes such as the pre-departure orientation seminars.

ILO has played an important role in the Philippines in helping government agencies conduct impact assessments of their policies. This is a valuable contribution because it gives a frank, independent assessment of programmes which may provide either constructive criticism for improvements or approval, helping agencies identify successful policies to be expanded.

IOM appears to play a different role in the Philippines to that in Bangladesh. They have supported the government on a number of initiatives; most recently they have been active in the production of audio-visual aids for the PDOS, public-service announcements and awareness-raising films as well as theatre pieces on labour migration and trafficking.

In the Philippines, while the Government, international organisations, NGOs and recruitment agencies have their differences and debates and are often deeply suspicious of each other, they are forced to work together for mutual benefit. To expand training programmes to cover the maximum amount of migrants, the Philippine government involved NGOs and recruitment agencies in pre-departure training and information campaigns in an institutionalised, monitored way. Recruitment agencies and NGOs benefit from this partnership financially, by gaining influence over policy and increasing their ability to attract migrants to their organisations.

## **Information Campaigns in the Philippines**

In the Philippines there is a relatively clear definition of roles regarding which agency is responsible for information campaigns and training.

### *Government*

There are many types of information campaigns in the Philippines, most originate from or are supported by government. The principal and most institutionalised form of information dissemination is the 'Pre Employment Orientation Seminar' (PEOS) programme. This is a general awareness-raising campaign aimed at a mass audience. It targets young people such as school leavers or university students with the aim of informing them before they consider looking for work. These programmes are administered by POEA, either in their in-house centre or in collaboration with NGOs, schools or universities (in career fairs for example), local government public employment service offices or church outreach programmes. PEOS programmes are always free and voluntary.

The PEOS programme is intended to inform prospective workers on the risks and opportunities of migration. They provide information about the labour market, about the culture of migration and about what to avoid in terms of illegal recruiters. Community awareness raising, visiting communities to put on some form of lecture, discussion or workshop on issues of migration, all form an important part of this programme. This is often a collaborative effort between government and civil society groups, or based on a government model. In these ways, the activities of NGOs are coordinated to be more effective and avoid overlapping.

This government programme also provides a benchmark and example for others who want to provide similar awareness-raising events.

Since 1998 migration issues have been included in the curricula at both elementary and secondary level in schools. This has been administered by POEA in collaboration with the Department for Education and the Department for Foreign Affairs.

POEA has a specific Information and Education division which raises awareness of these issues through information campaigns of different types, for example by supporting public service advertisements, comics, cartoons and radio programmes. POEA jointly produces a weekly radio programme with DZRH Radio, with support from IOM, targeting rural people. The programme runs for fifteen minutes every Sunday and includes dramatised stories about migrants, gives information about illegal recruiters and discusses government policies. Much of the support POEA gives other media outlets is indirect, in the form of collaboration or providing experts, speakers or data. POEA also issues press releases and provides assistance to journalists in the form of reports or data.

The mass media is a powerful tool for information dissemination; print media, radio and television are used to spread important information about migration in the Philippines. TV is not the most common media for information campaigns though; face to face, 'live' contact is preferred as a method of imparting information

POEA and OWWA, often with financial support from private companies, produce many pamphlets, booklets and posters about migration to give migrants country-specific information through brochures and emergency cards (also country-specific) with relevant numbers to call in case of emergency.<sup>17</sup> They also produce a quarterly list of all accredited agencies available free of charge so that migrants can check if their agency is accredited, this is produced in a printed newspaper format and also made available on the website.

POEA has produced effective, simple posters to give information about safe migration. These cover *dos* and *don'ts*, how to avoid illegal recruiters, photos of fraudulent recruiters and information about government programmes.

Ministries relating to migration in the Philippines have impressive and up-to-date websites, with a great deal of information for migrants, potential migrants, recruitment agencies, employers and others. POEA, OWWA, CFO and TESDA all have their own websites with some shared and some individual information.

The POEA website ([www.poea.gov.ph](http://www.poea.gov.ph)) is mainly aimed at giving information to migrants before they leave, but also includes links to other sites, a directory of addresses of embassies, labour attachés, recruitment agencies, medical clinics and data on migration. There is a link to the list of accredited agencies and information about specific countries. It also includes a copy of RA 8042, 'frequently-asked questions' and tips for migrant workers on avoiding illegal recruitment. The OWWA website ([www.owwa.gov.ph](http://www.owwa.gov.ph)) has information for migrants while they are abroad. TESDA also have a well-designed and informative website ([www.tesda.gov.ph](http://www.tesda.gov.ph)).

In the destination countries, embassies and resource centres provide information and promote government information. OWWA also has a 24-hour helpline for migrants in distress. An NGO, which we visited during the research, sometimes tests the helpline to see if it really functions 24 hours a day and has always found that it does.

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<sup>17</sup> POEA publishes a small handbook for migrant workers called the **OFW Guide book**. This is sponsored by two telecommunications companies who have their logos on the front of the booklet and advertisements inside the back cover. It includes lots of useful information for migrant workers, succinctly expressed. Including processing procedure for 'direct/name hire' workers, an OFW 'code of discipline', understanding employment contracts, workers on leave, reduced travel tax for OFWs and their dependents, addresses of POEA regional offices, POLOs, embassies and consulates.

POEA publishes country-specific brochures about countries that many OFWs go to. These are known as **Things you should know about 'X'** (there are seven for the seven top destinations). They are sponsored by a telecommunications and remittances company and look like tourist brochures. They include information about Filipino workers in that country, what they do, the minimum salaries, and the modes of recruitment, which includes the procedures and costs of agencies and direct hire. There is advice about applying for jobs, visas, terms and conditions of employment, and government services. There is also a short section with facts and figures about the country, its culture and its people.

POEA also publishes a brochure called **Planning to Work Overseas?** with 'frequently-asked questions' for potential migrants about recruitment processes, *dos* and *don'ts*, their legal requirements, and illegal practices by recruiters. This brochure is also sponsored by a remittance-sending company which has an advertisement on the back cover.

DOLE, the Department of Foreign Affairs and OWWA publish small **OFW helpline cards** the size of a credit card, which fit into migrants' wallets. They are region-specific and include numbers of OFW help lines in case of emergency in each country, the services available from OWWA and a calendar. Names of welfare officers, addresses of POLOs or embassies, telephone numbers of these offices and e-mail addresses are also published.

The Commission for Filipinos Overseas (CFO) ([www.cfo.gov.ph](http://www.cfo.gov.ph)) have also been involved in information campaigns in various ways. Their “Community Education Programme” (CEP) is an annual information campaign conducted by the CFO in coordination with various government agencies, NGOs, local government units and academic institutions. The programme aims to help prospective migrants make informed decisions regarding working or migrating abroad, as well as generating community involvement in migration issues. It is also an awareness-raising exercise on issues concerning migration, intermarriage, government policies and programmes against illegal recruitment, documentation fraud and trafficking in persons, among others.

*‘The Magbiyahe: Pilipino Style’* Video is produced by CFO and co-sponsored by the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Company (PLDT). It aims to inform passport applicants about the realities of migration and about situations Filipino travellers may encounter when preparing to travel or live abroad. The video is shown to passport applicants at the Department of Foreign Affairs and in its 10 regional offices.

The Migrants’ Advisory Information System (MAIS) is a computer-based information tool that provides information, data and advice to potential migrants. It covers four specific areas: Country Profiles of common destination countries, profiles of migrants’ support groups and welfare organisations overseas, profiles of Filipino organisations overseas and a list of Philippine embassies and consulates.

## NGOs

NGOs’ information campaigns in the Philippines mostly highlight the negative consequences of migration, as many of them believe that migration for employment should be a last resort solution for workers and is often a dangerous option.

Many NGOs are involved in information dissemination or awareness raising in some capacity. One NGO called ‘Kakampi’ runs radio programmes, nationally and internationally, about and for migrant workers. The programmes often have different themes such as legal rights or sexual health and include information, dramas, discussions, interviews, vox pops, letter reading, news for OFWs, on-air counselling and ‘phone-ins’. Kakampi’s programme is quite well-known and has many thousands of listeners. It is produced by the NGO with logistical support from ‘Radio Filipinas’ and some financial support from various government agencies. Kakampi’s radio programme in the Philippines involves a range of activities and goes out to a worldwide audience of Filipinos

Kakampi and other NGOs also run awareness-raising visits to rural areas as their own version of PEOS, and also about issues such as HIV/AIDS, reproductive health and good parenting. These are often conducted in collaboration with local community groups, and take place in community centres, schools or in the open air.

The Centre for Migrant Advocacy (CMA) in Manila hosts a website ([www.pinoy-abroad.net](http://www.pinoy-abroad.net)) which has information for migrants and migrant associations on topics such as the laws in receiving countries. There are discussion boards where people can post and discuss topics. It has also set up an e-group discussion group with 140 subscribers. The subscribers are invited to join the group, although some applications are received. The members are almost exclusively Filipino and most are involved in migrants’ associations or NGOs; they discuss policy and advocacy issues on the

site, which is a good way of linking groups, feeding the concerns of migrants back to the Philippines and sharing information. There have also been cases of missing migrants being traced through the internet group.

Kanlungan Centre Foundation has several publications for migrant workers, such as 'Destination Middle East, A Handbook for Filipino Women Domestic Workers'. This was published in 1997, with financial support from ILO. It includes five sections of information for Filipina domestic workers in the Middle East. The first section has general information about migration history and the feminisation of migration. The second section is about the processes involved in migration, such as recruitment and travel and how to avoid problems during this stage. The third section is about working and living in the Middle East, living conditions, working conditions, common problems and what to do, and how to avoid rape and sexual abuse. The fourth section is about managing oneself and surviving in the Middle East, and contains information about rights, record-keeping, family contact and spiritual issues. Appendices include facts and figures and a phrase book for migrants.

Kanlungan also published a Fast Facts book in 2003 about Filipino migration. This was supported by Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst e.V., a German Christian donor. It is a short booklet with up-to-date information on legal and policy developments affecting labour migration, data, trends, problems and issues, remittances and a chapter about the social costs of labour export.

### *Press*

In the print media, an Overseas Filipino Workers' Journalism Consortium has been set up by journalists to produce stories about migration issues. The aim of this is to produce positive success stories, as well as the usual stories connected to migration which often only focus on tragedies. The consortium's articles also hope to offer migrants advice and guidelines on topics such as savings and entrepreneurship. There are specialised newspapers which contain foreign job advertisements, but also have articles and announcements about safety and correct procedures.

There are newspapers in the Middle East which have special sections or pages for Filipinos; these contain news about the community but not much awareness-raising material owing to censorship in many countries. There are also Filipino-run newspapers in Hong Kong, but these are run as private enterprises, rely on advertising and do not provide much awareness-raising content. Despite a lack of awareness-raising material in these publications, they help maintain a sense of community and belonging, building on the discourse of the migrant workers being an important part of the nation.

As mentioned above, private companies use publicity materials as an opportunity to promote their products. This usually involves sponsoring brochures or posters made by the government in return for having their logo prominently placed on the cover of the publication. Companies involved in this are those that offer products either associated with migration or popular with migrants such as banks, parcel couriers, real estate agents and telephone companies.

ABSCBN run a cable channel for OFWs which is available all over the world, it mainly plays Filipino news and TV programmes but occasionally has some information for the migrants, it is very popular and is run as a private enterprise.

### *Migrants*



One major source of information and awareness raising comes from the migrants themselves. Filipino migrants are active in creating associations in the destination countries; these are often based on regional or religious groupings. Through their use of the media, particularly radio and the internet, but also through newspapers, television and text messaging on mobile phones, OFWs manage to keep in contact with their home country; they are part of Filipino society and participate in it. They can also share their experiences with their families, other migrants or potential migrants.

OFWs and their families are enthusiastic users of e-mail and the internet, which can be used for cheap communication and as a source of information on almost anything. Government websites and others such as MFA and CMA's website provide a wealth of information and options for complaints. Good use of the internet and e-mail allows NGOs and government to work together and closely with migrants both in the Philippines and in the destination countries. Mobile phones are also widely used by migrants to keep in contact with their home, often using cheap text messaging services, which can be sent internationally. Text messages are also used by recruitment agencies to keep in touch with employers and migrants in the destination countries. There are also plans to set up an automatic emergency-call system that can be activated by text message from migrants in distress in destination countries. The use of technology in the quick dissemination and exchange of information has great potential.

#### *International Organisations*

IOM and ILO do not implement information campaigns, but they have been involved in the Philippines in supporting important information campaigns, producing films and radio shows, and also producing booklets and pamphlets.

The contribution of these organisations provides financial support to the government and NGOs involved in information campaigns. The involvement of reputable international organisations also lends weight to the validity of the information. International organisations must continue to be seen as trustworthy and non-partisan to maintain this.

IOM have been involved in producing several audio-visual aids for information dissemination, one "The Power to Choose" is shown during the PDOS in OWWA's centre. It includes interviews with many people and experts, and gives migrants advice about migration and an overview of the scale and importance of migration. More audiovisual presentations and PowerPoint presentations are being developed, these will be used for information dissemination, but also to make PDOS or PEOS presentations more standardised.

#### **Pre-Departure Orientation Training Programmes in the Philippines**

The Philippines has established itself as a pioneer sending country which has the institutional capacity to train its migrants for employment abroad. The institutional framework they have for their PDOT programme uses Government, NGOs and the private sector's networks and capacity.

In the Philippines PDOT modules are developed by a special council set for monitoring and administering the training. This council comprises representatives from the government, NGOs and

the private sector. It is impossible to include everyone who wants to be involved in this process, but an attempt is made to include various stakeholders. The curricula are updated when there are important changes in circumstances or policy.

#### *Government Pre-Departure Orientation Seminars (PDOS)*

OWWA has recently taken over responsibility for the Pre-Departure Orientation (PDOS) programme. This programme is aimed at all migrants, after signing an employment contract, but takes place prior to departure. It is compulsory; an attendance certificate is a requirement for clearance to travel.

OWWA's ambition is to make the PDOS country-specific, currently it is region-specific, with destinations divided into Asia Pacific / The Middle East / and Europe, America and the Trust Territories. OWWA has produced country-specific handouts, sponsored by a mobile phone and cargo company. OWWA's PDOS is four and a half hours long, of which the banks have about 15 minutes. Six banks provide training on remittances and pay for publicity and pamphlets. The bank staff come at the end or at the beginning of the PDOS to talk and distribute brochures.

OWWA has a 'programme manager' in charge of developing the curriculum and ensuring it is implemented. It also administers the registration of PDOS providers, monitoring and evaluation, training of trainers, and production of materials. There is a council of PDOS providers, who help draw up the curriculum and aims of PDOS in consultation with NGOs, agencies and associations.

Once workers have signed their employment contracts, if they are in a category to be trained by OWWA directly, POEA refers them to OWWA for attendance at a PDOS. They then have to choose a date for their PDOS from the available days that remain before they depart. Some require an 'emergency PDOS' which is sometimes arranged if the worker is leaving the next day.

OWWA provides PDOS to certain categories of workers, most migrants however (80-90%) are trained by recruitment agencies and NGOs. 14 accredited NGOs are responsible for providing PDOS for "vulnerable groups" such as domestic workers. The PDOS provided by the government is supposed to be the same as that provided by accredited providers and all the materials are also provided to accredited trainers by the government. Standard modules are imposed on all providers, but many providers change these slightly, or are suspected of not providing them properly.

There are special PDOS types for sectors of the OFWs that have been identified as vulnerable or who have special needs. These are: Seafarers, domestic workers, entertainers, those travelling to particular countries (Kuwait, Iraq, Libya, Korea), and directly-hired workers. The rest go through the general PDOS.

The **general PDOS** covers all migrants apart from those identified as needing special PDOS. It is general, for a mixed audience, it is not country or occupation-specific. It is supposed to be a six-hour session, which covers: travel tips, understanding the employment contract, dos and don'ts in the destination country, values, understanding HIV/AIDS, how to remit money through banks (usually bank staff do this part and contribute some money or a training space to the provider), plans for reintegration, and what to do in a crisis.

**Domestic workers** are very vulnerable due to their conditions of work, which are very different from other occupations. They are usually given PDOS by NGOs, who, it is assumed, care more about them, and will give them a better grounding on their rights.

**Performing Artists** are supposed to have COPPA (Comprehensive Orientation Programme for Performing Artists) which was designed as a five-day programme. Currently it is not being fully implemented and lasts only 2 days. It covers: Contracts, information about the performing business, about marrying foreigners, the nature of the environment they will be working in and values. It has interactive elements to empower them to negotiate in their jobs to make sure they dance or perform, rather than become prostitutes. It is aimed principally at migrants to Japan where most entertainers work.

**'Direct Hires'** are migrants who don't use recruitment agents. They often get jobs while 'on holiday' or travelling to destination countries on tourist visas and then change their visa status once they have found a job. They may also be hired by foreign recruiters directly in the Philippines, or through friends or relatives. They are particularly vulnerable as they cannot sue or hold anyone responsible if their job goes wrong. It is POEA policy that foreign employers cannot employ more than 5 'direct hires', which encourages migrants to go through recruitment agencies. OWWA give 'direct hires' a 4 and a half hour PDOS with an average of 60 attendees a session twice a day.

This group is directly trained by OWWA in their capital region training centre, which is located in the POEA building in Manila. The centre has several large training rooms, equipped with projectors and DVD players. It is well organised and able to handle large numbers of migrants every day. Trainees go through the training, get given brochures, pamphlets and other publicity and then sit and watch the IOM video "The Power to Choose" in a separate large hall which can seat several hundred people at a time.

**Seafarers** have very professional handling, recruitment and training; they are regarded almost as a model of how things should be done. This is because the seafarers unions are very strong.

Migrating to **Libya** entails a special PDOS. Remittances and payment of salaries are always a problem in Libya. Many banks won't operate there due to trade embargos. For political reasons the market has been kept open, and OFWs continued to go to Libya despite the problems

**Korea** is a special market, and has a specific PDOS programme, OFWs there are all factory workers, and there are many industrial accidents. They operate under a work permit system, but many become illegal when they move to better-paid jobs once there. The PDOS for Korea is also conducted directly by OWWA and has up to 1000 people in a session and is only conducted once a week. Another field that might need a special PDOS due to its unique and vulnerable nature is the 'trainees' who go to Japan and Korea.

**Lebanon, Kuwait, Iraq and Israel** all require special programmes because they are or have recently been 'war zones' which entail specific dangers. Kuwait is not currently in conflict, but is a source of many complaints and problems due to the unique system of contracts and legislation they have there. There are many 'run-away's in Kuwait and measures have been taken by DOLE to help migrants; the resource centre there is a four-story building.

There are five associations of registered PDOS-providing recruitment agencies that provide PDOS to migrants. These cover those who do not fall into specific categories allocated to OWWA or NGOs, and accounts for most migrants. Three of the associations are for country-specific providers. There are a total of 156 land-based recruitment agencies and 147 sea-based agencies accredited in the Philippines. Accredited PDOS providers such as NGOs and agencies are allowed to charge 100 pesos (US\$ 1.8) per migrant. Many reported that they 'reinvested' some of that fee in providing some kind of PEOS, which was provided free of charge. Some provide PDOS free or for less than the maximum legal charge, others claim that if they did not charge, migrants would not take it seriously. Critics allege that some organisations use PDOS as an easy way of making money or as a means of gathering membership in the case of NGOs.

All workers who go through legal channels get an 'e-card' which has a number that can be used for data collection and monitoring. Before this, they had ID cards but these often got lost. However, installing readers for e-cards is costly and difficult. At the moment, only departures are monitored by POEA – and they pass the data on to OWWA.

The PDOS certificate that trainees get is valid for 5 years – and is only valid if they migrate to the same region again. If the worker wants to migrate to another region he or she must take the PDOS again. There is a computerised system to keep track of all the workers using their numbers that they are given when they register. This administrative system is expensive but enables monitoring, effective data collection and implementation of policies and policing. This in turn leads to less fraud and abuse of the system and the building of trust between migrants, agencies and the government. Filipino migrants are therefore treated better and are also able to travel as tourists or visitors more freely.

Trainers are trained and accredited by the government; and they are retrained when there is a significant change in circumstances after some time, for example when the curriculum changed recently. The initial training is for three days, with an extra day's training on the new curriculum. The trainers' training is nationally recognised and carried out by OWWA. Trainers do not have to have been migrants themselves, but are expected to be university graduates.

Many of OWWA's own trainers used to be welfare officers abroad, so they also have knowledge about the destinations. Institutional PDOS providers are accredited according to their institutional capacities and integrity (based on the reputation of the owners), and only if they fulfil the facilities and space requirements.

Accredited trainers and PDOS providers are assessed / inspected periodically for their performance. OWWA staff conduct 'spot checks' on training centres; this is currently only done roughly every quarter, as there are only three staff who do this. More staff is needed if monitoring is to be carried out effectively.

The government does not have the resources to train all the migrant workers so the accredited providers fulfil a useful function. OWWA claim they would provide training better themselves but with such numbers of migrants, partners are necessary.

OWWA can revoke the registration of PDOS providers if they are found not to be providing the PDOS correctly. OWWA want the agencies to assume more social responsibility, to realize that well-trained, happy, safe staff also means good business for them.

It is difficult to measure the impact of these sorts of programmes as there are so many variables that may change over time for many different reasons. OWWA hope to monitor them through the welfare officers in the destination countries. There are also plans to conduct 'post arrival' seminars to reconfirm and ensure the information has been understood. But this would not be compulsory and some workers might not be interested. They ask workers to visit the embassy upon arrival at the destination to get further information and make contact.

The PDOS administered by OWWA is aimed at temporary labour migrants. The Commission for Filipinos Overseas (CFO) covers the 'emigrants'; those who go to settle overseas permanently, or marry foreigners. They have their own PDOS to cover this group. Country-specific, pre-departure orientation seminars are conducted for these migrants to address their adjustment concerns in their destination countries. Various topics are discussed such as: Travel regulations, immigration procedures, cultural differences, settlement concerns, employment and social security concerns and the rights and obligations of Filipino migrants.

CFO issues a certificate as proof that the applicant has attended the guidance and counselling session. After receipt of the passport and visa, fiancé(e)s and spouses of foreigners have to register with the CFO prior to their departure. This is covered by a different set of laws (Republic Act 8239 and Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) Order 28-94) which require Filipinos migrating as fiancé(e)s and spouses of foreign nationals to attend the CFO's guidance and counselling programmes as a pre-requisite to the issuance of passports.

The objective of this programme is to help Filipino fiancé(e)s and spouses of foreign nationals make informed decisions regarding their marriage to foreign nationals and to prepare them for the adjustments that might be required in the context of cross-cultural marriages. The course covers migration laws affecting emigrants, welfare and support services available abroad, the rights of migrants overseas, and coping with problematic or difficult domestic situations.

Whilst in the majority of training lectures, discussion and videos are the most common methods; these have been designed to be as effective as possible in the time allotted. Training is often conducted by more than one person, with trainers changing or taking turns to give talks or lead discussions. Bank staff come in to give talks about remittances, which helps break up long sessions and change the style.

The Philippine Government has made pre-departure training mandatory for migrant workers by providing them a certificate without which no travel clearance is issued. There are also plans to organise post-arrival seminars in the countries of destination to ensure the information provided in pre-departure is well understood by the attendees. These will not be mandatory however and it is not known whether migrants will attend.

### *Non-governmental training initiatives*

In the Philippines, NGOs and recruitment agencies play a very important role in PDOT. Although the government, NGOs and the private sector each work with their own specific goals and objectives, they all work in partnership to provide migrants with the information and skills required to make migration a successful venture.

Recruitment agencies have assumed a great deal of responsibility in terms of providing training. A public-private partnership has developed where recruitment agents execute training and the government keeps a monitoring role. Of course, strict monitoring techniques and rules are required to give that partnership a true meaning.

The quality of PDOS provision is quite mixed. For example many NGO workers do not have any experience of being migrant workers themselves, whereas many recruitment agents often do. The NGOs and agencies are often in conflict; the agencies are a source of a lot of fraudulent practices, and often do not provide very good PDOS. The Church and NGOs teach migrants about values and rights whereas the agencies emphasise the responsibilities of the migrants. Then the NGOs accuse the agencies of failing to protect the migrants sufficiently and the agencies accuse the NGOs of 'teaching the migrants to rebel'.

NGOs everywhere have financial constraints and have to comply with the priorities of their donors. NGOs in the Philippines complained about the bureaucratic burden that donors impose on them and the lack of freedom they have to act, as all their funds are tightly budgeted under specific programmes. NGOs in the Philippines are able to earn some income through the provision of PDOS for which they are allowed to charge migrants a set fee.

Accredited PDOS providers (NGOs and agencies) have a variety of facilities available. Agencies often have one or several on-site training rooms and dedicated staff that deal with training; training rooms usually have a projector or television to show information videos. NGOs either use facilities at their centre, or provide training in other places either hired or lent, or use facilities provided by banks in return for advertising. Many NGOs use volunteer staff to augment their permanent staff, and it is reported that many staff performed multiple roles as trainers and administrators. NGOs that provided courses not accredited by the government also had staff that were either experts in their field (such as law, health, gender counselling, or psychology) or used staff with some experience who were not accredited to conduct trainings.

Apart from providing government accredited PDOS, many NGOs provide trainings of their own, to migrants, community leaders, migrants' families, local government officials, the police and a range of other groups.

Sometimes this may reflect the nature of the NGO, for example several women's NGOs offer courses aimed specifically at women, such as gender sensitivity, women's rights courses and sexual health courses. Unlad Kabayan targets return migrants, reintegration and entrepreneurship for development. Others offer specific courses aimed at foreigners' spouses or courses on rights and legal remedies. Kanlungan offers a range of courses to other NGO workers and community leaders to help build capacity among other activists and actors in this field. They also hold courses

for police and local government officials to teach them about the laws and rights they are supposed to uphold, as many of them are not aware of them!

Recruitment agencies usually only offer PDOS, when accredited by the government, but some offer other short training courses for their workers. This may be before employment as a 'pre-application briefing' which is conducted before accepting job applicants and subjecting them to a time-consuming screening process. It is usually a short lecture which covers topics on workplace-specific situations, job descriptions, screening requirements and processes, fees, timetables in hiring. It is often employer- and workplace-specific, and designed to give the prospective migrants a realistic idea of what they may be expected to or will need to do. It is really a way of getting rid of some of those migrants who are not suited to migration or who really don't want to go. It is really done for sound business reasons, because it reduces the amount of administrative work.

After completion of all formalities, some recruitment agencies may offer their workers a short briefing, aimed at informing them about the specific country or company they are going to, giving them personal advice or tips on topics such as the airport procedures, savings etc. This is really up to the individuals involved in the agency, but in one observed case at least, it did provide migrants with another opportunity to learn, reflect and ask questions.

In many of the training sessions there were discussions about 'success' and 'failure' as a migrant and the difference between private and public notions of this is worth noting. Several recruitment agency staff said they were concerned for the migrants, and wanted to help them avoid 'failure' or 'becoming a statistic'. They emphasised the importance of savings; the idea of repeat migration (which is very common in the Philippines) was looked on as a kind of failure. They sold an idealised plan of go abroad, save money, come home and don't go again. Government officials meanwhile mentioned that well-informed, well-skilled migrants were in high demand abroad, and that some employers specifically asked for the same staff to come back again: a measure of 'success'. When migrants are personally asked to go back by the employer they do not need to pass through the hands of an agency, and if they need another PDOS they will be trained free of charge by OWWA as a 'direct hire'. In this way it is advantageous to the agencies to always have new hires and different people; they make more money in fees and PDOS charges.

The Philippines provides an interesting example for sending countries, it has well-developed policies that have been in place for many years now and continuously adjusted and improved. Some of these policies are similar to those in place now in Sri Lanka, some are different; some will be applicable in Bangladesh and some may not be.

#### **4. COUNTRY REPORT: BANGLADESH**

In this section the scale and significance of migration from Bangladesh will be discussed, along with an overview of the steps that Bangladesh has taken over the years to improve governance in this area. The key institutions working in this field will be described and their roles analysed. Then a detailed assessment of the programmes that exist for pre-departure training and information campaigns will be presented.

##### **Trends and Patterns**

Labour migration from Bangladesh started during the British colonial period. In the early 1940s work opportunities on British merchant ships paved the way for migration to Europe, North America and other parts of the world. Pioneer migrants from Bangladesh, who mostly went to the United Kingdom, hailed from the district of Sylhet. Since the 1940s Bangladesh has experienced a persistent flow of people to different countries across the world, although the origin, route and destinations have changed significantly at times. It was not until the mid-1970s that the present form of short-term international labour migration from Bangladesh began. In this period, a substantial number of Bangladeshis started migrating to the Gulf region as a response to the growing demand for labour in these countries following the oil boom. Gradually, such migration expanded to the newly industrialised countries of South-East Asia.

The Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET) which is now under the Ministry of Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment has been maintaining a systematic record of labour migration from Bangladesh for the last thirty years. According to their figures, from 1976 to July 2004, a total of 3,811,447 people migrated with short-term contracts for labour (BMET, 2004). The record also shows that during the 1990s, the average yearly flow of migrants was 200,000 (BMET, 2004).

As far as migrants' level of skill is concerned, BMET has categorised temporary labour migrants into four groups, namely professional, skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled migrant workers. Doctors, nurses, engineers and teachers are regarded as professionals whereas manufacturing or garments workers, drivers, mechanics, and heavy machine operators are considered to be skilled migrant workers. Carpenters, tailors, masons etc. are categorised as semi-skilled; housemaids, cleaners, and all other similar kinds of labourers are classified as unskilled workers (Siddiqui, 2001: 31).

According to BMET records, men comprise more than 99% of the total labour force. While there is a ban on unskilled female labour migration from Bangladesh, it is observed that every year a number of women are going abroad as nurses, garment workers, manufacturing labourers and housemaids. The official estimate only captures those who are migrating in the 'skilled' category. However, research shows that the actual number is much higher than what is recorded since many of them are migrating in irregular or 'illegal' ways (Siddiqui, 2001).

There are 13 Middle-Eastern and North African countries which receive Bangladeshi labour migrants. Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Kuwait, Qatar, Iraq, Libya, Bahrain and Oman are the most common destinations. The largest labour-importing country is Saudi Arabia (1,987,080 in total), followed by the United Arab Emirates (468,302) and Kuwait (374,624) (BMET, 2004). From the late 1980s to 1999 Malaysia became the second largest employer of Bangladeshi



migrant workers. However, following the South East Asian financial crisis, the number of Bangladeshis migrating to Malaysia dropped drastically. Other Asian countries that attract Bangladeshi migrant workers are Singapore and Korea.

In Bangladesh, both legal and illegal channels are operational for migration (Abrar and Malik, 2002). There are more than 700 licensed recruitment agencies in Bangladesh to process migration (BAIRA 2005). Migrant networks work as a channel for further migration, which often reduces the cost and vulnerability of migration through reliable dissemination of information (Abrar and Malik, 2002).

In many cases, people use the help of middlemen rather than contacting licensed recruitment agents and thus increase their vulnerability to being cheated by unscrupulous agents (Abrar and Malik, 2002; ILO 1999). It is also evident that some licensed recruitment agents indulge in fraudulent activities such as forfeiting travel and work documents, sending migrants to non-existent jobs, misappropriation of money and so on (Abrar and Malik 2002). This results in failed migration and losses of migrants in terms of land, money and social capital.

### **Legal Framework**

After the independence of Bangladesh, immigration from the country was regulated and controlled under the 1922 Immigration Act that the country inherited from its pre-Pakistan British colonial past. With the gradual increase in the flow of temporary labour migrants from Bangladesh to the Middle-Eastern countries, the inadequacy of the 1922 Act was felt and major policy changes were envisaged. Accordingly, the Emigration Ordinance of 1982 was promulgated by the then Chief Martial Law Administrator. The 1982 Ordinance focuses mainly on procedural and regulatory issues such as providing licenses to recruitment agents, penalising them in case of breach of contract and so on. In December 2002 the Government framed three rules under the 1982 ordinance-Emigration Rules, Rules of Conduct, Licensing Recruitment Agencies and Rules for Wage Earners' Welfare Fund.

Apart from the 1982 Ordinance, there is a whole range of administrative measures and policy instruments, reviewed from time to time, to deal with the processes of recruitment, licensing of recruitment agents, emigration procedures, minimum standards for wages and service conditions, charges for recruitment, malpractice, as well as an enforcement system.

In 2004 the government framed a policy on labour migration. Over a period of two years a draft policy was formulated and approved by different ministry cabinets. The main feature of the policy is the protection of migrant workers. Pre-departure orientation training and information campaign is seen as crucial in this process.

A few years ago, Bangladesh signed the UN International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, but it is yet to ratify the instrument. The convention ensures the full applicability of human rights legislation for all migrants. The Convention came into force in June 2004.

In the early 1970s, the Bangladesh government did not have any clear-cut policy on either encouraging or discouraging female migration. Bangladeshi women began taking up jobs in the

Middle East either on their own initiative or through agencies. However, since the early 1980's successive governments either completely banned migration of all categories of female workers, except professionals, or imposed restrictions on migration of unskilled and semi-skilled women workers.

In 1999 RMMRU conducted a field-based research on labour migration of women from Bangladesh. The research resulted in a concerted campaign on the part of RMMRU to lift the ban on female migration. Other civil society organisations also joined this campaign. The current government partially lifted the ban in 2003. Six months ago the government completely withdrew its restriction on female migration. Now women are going to the Middle East and South East Asia to work as housemaids. Pre-departure training and information campaigns for safe migration are extremely important if this policy is to continue successfully.

## **Key Actors**

### *Government Ministries*

Labour recruitment from Bangladesh involves various ministries and Government agencies. The Ministries of Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment, Home Affairs, Foreign Affairs, Finance, and Civil Aviation and Tourism are the five most important ministries concerned with international labour migration. Until 2001, the Ministry of Labour and Employment was in charge of international labour migration but in response to the demands of expatriate Bangladeshis and migrant workers, the Ministry of Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment was created in December 2001. The new Ministry has been vested with the power of implementing the rules framed in 2002 under the 1982 Ordinance and promoting, monitoring and regulating migration. Its activities are twofold: to create employment overseas, and to solve the problems of expatriates and ensure their welfare.

Bangladeshi foreign missions are involved in searching for new labour markets for Bangladeshi workers. They also provide consular services to Bangladeshi workers and ensure the welfare of migrant workers.

### *Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training*

The Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET) is the executing agency of the Ministry of Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment with respect to labour migration. It was established in 1976 to ensure maximum benefits for labour export. Currently, BMET is involved in the control and regulation of recruitment agents, collection and analysis of labour market information, registration of job seekers for local and foreign employment, development and implementation of training programmes in the light of specific labour needs in the national and international labour markets, organising pre-departure briefing sessions, and resolving legal disputes.

### *Private Recruitment Agencies*

In the 1970s, recruitment was done by the Government and it was only in 1981 that private recruitment agents took over the task. Private agencies work under a license given by the

Government. They collect information on demands and orders for foreign employment. After taking permission from BMET, the agencies recruit workers according to the specifications of foreign employers and then process their cases. Each recruited person has to be issued a clearance certificate from the immigration department of BMET. Over time, the recruitment agencies have organised themselves under the Bangladesh Association of International Recruitment Agencies (BAIRA), which was formed in December 1984. Currently BAIRA has more than 700 members.

#### *Bangladesh Overseas Employment Services Limited*

In 1984, the Government set up the Bangladesh Overseas Employment Services Limited (BOESL) as a limited company with a direct recruitment role. BOESL provides an example of good practice for other recruitment agencies. It is responsible for less than one percent of the total deployment of Bangladeshi workers but is important in the highly-skilled and professional category.

### **Information Campaigns in Bangladesh**

Very little exists in terms of official institutionalised information campaigns or awareness raising in Bangladesh. The government has been concentrating on setting up the institutions to promote migration and provide training. Labour migration has not received sufficient attention from donors and international organisations. Civil society organisations and NGOs with the support of international organisations have done some good work trying to produce information campaign materials. What information campaigns do exist suffer from a lack of coordination and wide dissemination. A description of government, NGOs and civil society initiatives is provided below:

#### *Government*

In Bangladesh, the government is the most important actor in the field of labour migration. The Ministry of Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment (MEWOE) has been putting regular advertisements in Bangla daily newspapers warning migrants of the dangers of using unlicensed recruiters since the 1990s.

MEWOE has a well-designed, easy-to-use website, ([www.probashi.gov.bd](http://www.probashi.gov.bd)) which covers the various aspects of their activities. It has links to the websites of other agencies such as BMET, BAIRA and BOESL, Bangladeshi foreign missions, downloadable forms for migrants and recruitment agencies, news and announcements, an on-line complaints form, advertisements for jobs, and a lot of other information.

BMET has a website ([www.bmet.org.bd](http://www.bmet.org.bd)), which has recently been updated and improved. This includes a list of licensed recruitment agencies, information on maximum service charges chargeable by recruitment agencies, minimum salaries for different countries and data on migration among other services. It is all in English and whilst it is well organised and contains a lot of data it does not seem to be aimed at giving information to migrants.

The BMET website has a link to the SAMReN website launched by RMMRU. BMET experts provided technical assistance to RMMRU to establish the SAMReN website. This has provided access to all BMET information for better dissemination of migration information.<sup>18</sup>

BOESL has a limited website that needs updating and improving ([www.bdcom-online.com/boesl/](http://www.bdcom-online.com/boesl/))

### *Migrants' Associations*

#### Welfare Association of Returnee Bangladeshi Employees (WARBE)

WARBE has run awareness campaigns in the field since 1997. WARBE provides information and organises awareness-raising talks about migration to garments workers as part of a wider course at the Solidarity Centre's Working Women's Education Centre. Female garment workers have been identified as a group that is vulnerable to traffickers and irregular migration.

The two-hour session includes general information about migration and migration processes such as passports, medical tests, visas, recruitment agents and fraudulent practices. It also covers female migration, why people migrate and the costs of migration. Some attention is also given to the living and working conditions in destination countries.

This information is mostly imparted through a lecture, but there are opportunities for questions and discussion of the topic. About fifty people attend the session, which is given by two staff from WARBE who are both return migrants.

WARBE have been involved in recent regional discussions with SARI/EQUITY to produce a 'mass awareness toolkit' on migration issues. WARBE have also just launched a short docudrama called "*Shuvojatra*" for creating awareness on fostering safe migration.

#### BOMSA

The Association for Female Migrant Workers in Bangladesh (BOMSA) was established in 2000. BOMSA started up with training from RMMRU and began its implementation in the field. Some of the returnee migrant workers interviewed for RMMRU for its female migration research organised themselves into an association with the help of RMMRU. One of the major activities of the association was to form groups of female migrants in different locations across the country. With financial assistance from a University Professor in the United States, Professor K. B. Ward, and institutional support from RMMRU, BOMSA first began its information campaign in two areas – Tongi and Rupganj. Along with the private assistance of Professor Ward, it received IOM support in 2003 and established its own office in Rampura, Dhaka.

BOMSA now conducts advocacy programmes in 11 districts in Bangladesh. Such programmes are usually held at the office of Thana Nirbahi Officer (TNO) or at the DC office. BOMSA invites all the stakeholders such as officials from BMET, BAIRA, migrants' associations and returnees to share their opinions and learn from each other.

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<sup>18</sup> Dr. Nurul Islam, Mr. Sobhan Shikder and Mr. Amir Hossain were in the subcommittee which was established with the aim of preparing SAMReN website.

## *International Organisations*

### ILO

One of the first international organisations in Bangladesh to provide support for migrants' rights is ILO. In 1997 it funded RMMRU's initiatives to identify national responsibility towards migrants. In 1999, it held a training workshop for trade union leaders, to teach them how to uphold the rights of migrants. In the same year it commissioned research on migrant remittances and micro-finance in Bangladesh. Later, it brought in major policy changes in the area of remittance transfer and utilisation. On the basis of this study on pre-departure orientation and information campaign on safe migration, ILO is planning to undertake specific projects for migrant workers.

### IOM

IOM established its office in Bangladesh in the late 1990s. It became involved in migrant workers' issues in 1999 when it was invited to take part in a conference on female migrant workers organised by Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association (BNWLA). As a follow up on the issue it commissioned research by RMMRU and BIDS. In 2001 RMMRU was approached for resources to hold a training workshop on awareness campaigns through community leaders and activists. IOM provided partial funding.

Over the years, IOM has expanded its activities with migrant workers in different ways. It provides institutional support to BOMSA and assistance for WARBE's activities. It extends support in organising rallies to observe World Migrants' Day on 18<sup>th</sup> December.

IOM (2005) has recently published country-specific booklets for the migrant workers of Bangladesh going to Kuwait, UAE, Saudi Arabia and Qatar. These are called: Necessary Information for Migrant Workers. They aim at providing poorly educated migrants some idea about the countries of destination and workplace to make migration easier. The booklets contain general information for all migrants such as the general picture of life abroad, important addresses, necessary documents, rights, health-related issues and systems for sending money back home. A second chapter deals with the country-specific information such as location, weather, language, culture and customs, laws and the addresses of Bangladeshi foreign missions.

IOM and UNAIDS have also collaborated to make a small AIDS awareness booklet for BMET to distribute to migrant workers. This was the result of a larger project "Enhancing Official Pre-Departure Health Orientation" aimed at incorporating a larger health component in the PDOT.

IOM has recently published a training manual (IOM 2005) for *Safe Migration* to be used by Government and non-government training institutions. Five training modules are inserted in the first part of the manual covering pre-departure, post-arrival and re-integration processes of Bangladeshi labour migrants. Each module consists of elaborate information, instructions and suggestions which are to be imparted among trainees through group discussions, flip charts, flash cards and handouts. Special attention is also paid to female migrants, although the modules are not specifically designed for any special category.

## DfID

The Pro-Poor Policy Conference organised by DfID in 2003 highlighted the need for awareness campaigns on safe migration on a global scale. In the same year it organised another conference on remittances and development. It has developed programmes for awareness campaign for the utilisation of remittances in 2005.

## The British Council

The British Council has also been involved in information campaigns on safe migration in various ways. In 2000-2001 it funded RMMRU to conduct workshops, conferences, seminars and training programmes on awareness campaigns on migration. It provides financial and technical support to civil society organisations and research bodies. The British Council also organises film shows on migration to create wider awareness of migration issues.

### *Specialised Research and Training Body*

#### Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU)

The Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU) first identified the need for information campaigns on safe migration in 1998. In 2001, with the initiative of the then interim government, RMMRU prepared a strategy paper and spelled out the importance of information campaigns (Siddiqui, 2002)

RMMRU is a pioneer in developing training modules for pre-departure orientation training, targeting not only prospective migrants but also community leaders and activists to increase awareness about the labour migration process. RMMRU conducted three Awareness Campaign Training Workshops in 2000-2001 with the financial support of the British Council; a fourth was co-funded by IOM. A training manual (RMMRU, 2000) was prepared using a participatory process, involving returnee migrants, bankers, health professionals and legal persons. In its different sections the module covers issues such as conceptual migration issues, cost-benefit analysis of migration, formalities to be completed before migrating, food, accommodation, medical services, socio-cultural norms in the countries of destination, health issues with special reference to HIV/AIDS and gender discrimination, saving and investment opportunities and return and reintegration. It provides country specific information on Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Korea, Malaysia and Singapore. A number of training support materials such as visual aids, and flip charts were prepared with the module. Different techniques are included in the module to make training interesting and participatory, through sharing experiences and participatory discussion for example.

RMMRU helped BOMSA in preparing the documents to conduct information campaigns at the grassroots level. It helped WARBE to develop a wider network at various international forums and to generate awareness on safe migration in the field. Altogether, 30 trainers of WARBE took a four-day residential training from RMMRU. Apart from the members of WARBE, RMMRU trained UP chairmen, members and female returnees on conducting awareness campaigns.

RMMRU lobbied ILO, IOM, DfID among other agencies to expand information campaigns for safe migration. It has also helped to introduce a course on migration in the National Defence College.

It regularly publishes articles in national newspapers on safe migration. RMMRU participates in TV programmes on Bangladesh Television and on private TV channels where relevant ministers are also invited to discuss various migration-related issues.

RMMRU has also produced a short dramatised film and theatre play to raise awareness about trafficking. 'Faad' or 'The Trap' was produced in 2003 and written and directed by Rehana Samdani. It was supported by the British Council under the Higher Education Link programme, and performed as a play by the Theatre Centre for Social Development. It portrays a fictional, but realistic account of a small Bangladeshi village and the potential dangers of traffickers and methods used by some of the characters to avoid them or advise others to be careful.

RMMRU have also produced a documentary on labour migration, called 'Another Horizon' in collaboration with Media Mix. The première of the documentary was held at the British Council and was later disseminated via various international forums. The documentary is available on the RMMRU website.

RMMRU, starting in 2001, produced two modules, one on trafficking and one on migration, to train community leaders, imams, teachers and NGO activists, and returnee migrants in rural areas. These community leaders are often consulted by potential migrants for information or advice, and this innovative idea is one that has great potential for replication on a wider scale.

Part of this initiative, for an information campaign on trafficking, targeted the hard to reach irregular migrants. RMMRU provided expertise in training local NGO staff who then trained community leaders and representatives of local government. Through this it aimed to reach the maximum amount of people through a 'snowball effect'; the community leaders could then impart the information to their communities or provide well-informed advice when consulted. NGO workers were trained in conceptual issues of migration and trafficking, causes and consequences of trafficking, routes and the role communities can play in combating trafficking.

This pilot project showed that small initiatives have the potential to reach a large number of people. In the same way as *dalals* (local leaders) are preferred as a source of information because they are trusted local people, local leaders will be trusted by their community to give advice more than city 'experts'.

Another awareness campaign workshop was organised by RMMRU and funded by the British Council to train local journalists and NGOs about trafficking issues in 2004. In September 2005 RMMRU and IOM jointly ran another training session for journalists funded by the British High Commission. This is another way that small initiatives hope to reach a wide audience.

RMMRU has produced some posters, with financial support from IOM, which contain information on safe migration. These have been distributed to NGOs that work with migrants. There has been no wide-scale dissemination to the target population.

NGO

### SHISUK

SHISUK has undertaken a number of initiatives in the field of community-based awareness raising. This has been carried out through peer educators, training with migrant workers and 'live media' such as theatre. SHISUK includes a large HIV/AIDS awareness component in its campaigns (Masud Ali, 2004:107, Morshed, 2001). Community-based information drives have great potential as a way of reaching out to rural areas.

Most NGOs that are involved in migration issues produce information materials such as brochures and posters and other media. These initiatives have usually been conducted with help or funding from larger international organisations.

#### *Civil Society Initiatives*

Shahidul Alam's 'Migrant Soul' website ([www.migrantsoul.net](http://www.migrantsoul.net)) aims to raise awareness and break down stereotypes about Bangladeshi migrants in general; it was inspired by a heartbreaking documentary about migration to Malaysia. 'My Migrant Soul', directed by Yasmin Kabir, gives a powerful, but quite anti-migration message about the potential dangers of migration.

These initiatives and many others have been conducted by small NGOs with help or funding from larger organisations; what is lacking is coordination and a network or infrastructure to disseminate this information more widely. Research shows that for many migrants *dalals* or family members are the principal sources of information. These sources may be reliable and accurate but are often unreliable and misleading. Better administration and greater political will in the field of information campaigns could roll out these initiatives to a much wider audience.

### **Pre-Departure Orientation Training Programmes in Bangladesh**

#### *Government*

The Bangladesh Government is the most important actor as far as pre-departure training is concerned.

### BMET

BMET is the oldest government agency that conducts training for migrants. Two types of trainings are provided by BMET: skills training and pre-departure orientation briefing. Training is conducted in 14 Technical Training Centres (TTCs) all over the country. These training centres are for training people in vocational trades in demand by employers. There is an Institute of Marine Technology (BIMT) as well. BMET also has 21 District Employment and Manpower Offices (DEMOS). Details of the skills training given to migrant workers can be found in the study on recruitment and placement conducted by C. R. Abrar and Shahdeen Malik (2000).

BMET conducts Pre-Departure Orientation Training (PDOT) for migrant workers who are being processed by licensed recruitment agents with group visas. This training is mandatory for this



group, as the certificate of attendance is required for clearance to leave the country. Migrants who migrate with individual visas or as 'direct hires' are not covered by BMET briefings.

BMET PDOT is a two-hour session; at first, a 10-minute video about Singapore, which highlights some migration issues and dos and don'ts, is screened. The video includes information about laws relating to migration, the responsibilities of the employers, medical tests, conditions of work permits, safety in the workplace, compensation, personal safety, modes of communication, food, entertainment, remittances and employment agreements.

A second short film, made by IOM is also shown. This covers issues relating to Middle Eastern countries, and is in the form of a drama. This aim is to inform migrants about the culture and society of the Middle East. It was not possible to make or obtain a suitable documentary from Middle Eastern countries, due to sensitivity and lack of cooperation from those countries.

The second part of the PDOT involves a lecture given by a senior official from BMET or MEWOE. The lecture is based on a booklet developed by BMET and includes three sections. Part one is about what aspirant migrants are required to do before leaving the country, part two is about what they are required to do after leaving Bangladesh, part three describes the facilities provided by the Wage Earner's Welfare Fund. The booklet also includes quite comprehensive information for migrant workers on many topics. In part one the main issues covered are: Recruitment agencies and emigration certificates, salary conditions and agreements and migration costs. Part two covers registration cards, ID cards, work permits and passports, work environment and rules and regulations in the host country. Part three gives information about the benefits that migrants can avail from the wage earners' fund. Arabic, Malay and English translations are also given for expressions that might be useful for migrant workers.

Important aspects covered in the lecture observed during this research were how to get jobs, how to lodge complaints, expected behaviour and responsibilities in the destination countries, how to prevent HIV/AIDS, values and morality and the dangers of alcohol and drugs. Migrants were also advised to use the booklet given to them, especially to learn a few key words and phrases in the language of the destination country.

About fifty people attended the PDOT observed during this research, and the hall at BMET was about half-full.

Recently, BMET have undertaken a project to train nurses and caterers. They also provide English Language training to skilled migrant workers.

#### Ansar and VDP

Ansar/VDP has recently undertaken training projects for female migrants. This training is aimed at equipping ANSAR VDP members to become domestic workers abroad. They are trained in general awareness about migration and household management such as cooking, cleaning and using modern appliances.

ANSAR VDP has 64 offices in the 64 districts of Bangladesh. Aspirant migrants come to get training at ANSAR Academy at Shafipur, ANSAR VDP members can get training on migration

issues in Rajendrapur. In these training programmes, the number of trainees fluctuates from 300 to 500 and the programmes last for one month. ANSAR VDP has its own trainers to train these aspirant migrant workers. Their trainers give training for the first 15 days, and then trainers from Shosti are sub-contracted to take over for the remaining 15 days.

The training programme starts at 7 am and finishes by 9 pm every day. As a result of this long day, trainees sometimes become restless and bored. Most of the trainees enjoy the practical classes though. ANSAR VDP provides food and accommodation for the trainees and the Shosti trainers.

### *Migrant Associations*

#### BOMSA

BOMSA has gotten involved in orientation, PDOT and skills training since 2001. Such trainings are designed to complement the BMET briefing programme. This programme aims at promoting safe migration and a better life for female migrant and their families.

BOMSA has a one-day orientation programme in 6 districts of Bangladesh. Migrants, their family members or any other person can attend this orientation programme on migration.

Since 2000, BOMSA has been conducting PDOT. Each month it arranges two programmes at its Dhaka office and four others in Manikgang, Narayangange, Gazipur, Comilla or Norshingdi where BOMSA has already developed its network. For trainings outside Dhaka, BOMSA uses the Union Parishad Hall or auditorium. This two-day programme is particularly targeted at outgoing migrants who have already completed all the formalities.

BOMSA has also produced a module (BOMSA 2004a) targeting those who conduct pre-departure orientation for outgoing female migrants. The module is divided into five sessions which cover the working environment, rights of migrant workers and health-related issues. A detailed description of how to complete health-related formalities before migration and how to maintain good health is presented in the last session with a special emphasis on HIV/AIDS. Produced with the support of Action Aid, the manual is expected to complement the government-led effort to provide pre-departure orientation to migrants. Although the booklet is made only for female migrant workers, it would also be helpful for providing information to prospective male migrants.

BOMSA has identified that every year a large number of female migrants leave the country to work as housemaids without receiving any training. They are vulnerable to violence, torture and payment of low wages because of their lack of knowledge and orientation about the work, workplace, and laws and rights in the country of destination. BOMSA's monthly skills training programme is aimed at helping female domestic workers prepare for employment abroad to address these problems.

This skills training is for women who are processing migration or who have already obtained their passport, visa and other documents required for migration. The skills training programme lasts five days. Female migrants come to BOMSA often via its grassroots-level contacts. At the village level it organises information campaign meetings with communities. Prospective or outgoing migrants are advised to attend the skills training at the BOMSA office in Dhaka prior to their migration.

BOMSA has designed a training manual (BOMSA 2004b) for capacity building and skill development of outgoing female migrant workers. Detailed instructions for using household items such as toasters, washing machines, sandwich machines, blenders, pressure cookers etc. are in the manual with illustrations. The manual also contains brief information on Kuwait, Malaysia, Saudi Arab and Libya which are major receivers of Bangladeshi female migrants. The manual does not have any sections on the professionalism of domestic workers, expected behaviour or attitude, or on how to maintain their physical and mental well-being. As a training manual for domestic workers its scope could be extended to other types of household work such as child care and language training.

Usually, a coordinator, two trainers and two resource persons are involved in the two-day skills training. At the initial stage along with returnees, Professor K. B. Ward personally provided training to potential migrant workers. BOMSA has facilities in its headquarters in Dhaka for training. It has household appliances (such as a fridge, vacuum cleaner, washing machine, blender, microwave, coffee machine, pressure cooker etc) for demonstration. Although it is a non-residential training, five to six people can stay in the training centre if needed. BOMSA received the fund for skills training from Manusher Jonno.

#### *NGOs*

##### *Shosti*

Shosti is a training NGO and it works in partnership with ANSAR VDP, BAIRA and Red Crescent. BAIRA gives the responsibility for conducting their training programme to Shosti. Each BAIRA training programme is fifteen days' long. However, Shosti is of the opinion that this fifteen-day training program is not enough to adequately prepare migrant workers.

Shosti is developing a training manual for domestic workers. The module includes topics such as information about the host country, weather, expected behaviour, personal cleanliness, controlling working capacity, how to use a telephone, preparatory works for the journey, rights, health, first aid and important addresses in the country of destination. The module also provides for language sessions about the language of the destination country and preliminary English. The final section of the module contains information on household management such as how to clean rooms, how to use the kitchen and other appliances, and on taking care of the elderly and children.

#### *Private sector*

Female migration from Bangladesh was restricted for a long time, considering the vulnerability of female migrant workers in the countries of destination. However, recently the Government has permitted some recruitment agents to send skilled female workers out of the country if they have shown that they have had adequate training. BAIRA has taken an interest in processing female migrants, and has taken steps to provide them with training.

BAIRA has established a training centre at Kakrail to provide training to domestic workers and nurses for migration. The programme includes physical demonstrations of work to be done in the host country and teaching them dos and don'ts for the destination country. Equipment and furniture

have been set up in the training centre to give trainees some idea about the working environment in the destination country.

BAIRA has delegated the provision of the training to Shosti who are a specialised training organisation (see above). This seems a sensible approach, as BAIRA are a business-oriented organisation and do not have capacity or expertise in training.

## **Conclusion**

The Bangladeshi Government, NGOs and the private sector have recently become aware of the importance of migration and measures that can be taken to streamline the process and maximise the benefits of migration. As the most important actor, the government has taken various initiatives such as skills training, pre-departure orientation briefings and information dissemination through the media. Recently, it has also started providing training to female migrant workers. The content of the two-hour briefing includes dos and don'ts, country-specific information, rights, health etc. of relevance to outgoing migrants. But it should also contain information on how to process migration. Attempts should be made to make the briefing session more participatory.

As far as private recruitment agencies are concerned, no activities are performed by BAIRA or individual recruitment agencies to disseminate information to the would-be migrants and their families. However, BAIRA has recognised the need for training and has built a partnership with Shosti. The role of the private sector in training programmes needs to be examined and expanded. Migrants' associations such as WARBE and BOMSA run training programmes, but these are really for skills training or awareness raising. They lack the capacity to conduct large-scale training programmes. As a research and advocacy organisation RMMRU has gathered various types of information on migration through research, but mechanisms to disseminate information for wider audiences has not yet been developed. The research found that media institutions in Bangladesh have not yet gotten involved in information campaigns for migration in a major way. Some government newspapers and BTV from time to time broadcast advertisements and messages to create awareness about illegal migration. However, private TV channels take no such initiatives.

International organisations have played a supportive role to training programmes in Bangladesh, by providing funds and help in developing materials. Their role must be brought into a wider institutionalised framework to avoid overlapping. Specialised training NGOs could play a major role in providing training to migrant workers. Already Shosti has made links with recruitment agencies through BAIRA and with ANSAR VDP to train some migrant workers. These types of partnerships between government, NGOs and the private sector should be encouraged.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Summary

This paper is an attempt to start a process that will design and implement well-informed policies and programmes to ensure safe migration. This research builds on earlier research work in this field by RMMRU, most notably the 2002 book “Beyond the Maze, Streamlining Labour Recruitment Process in Bangladesh” which presented a strategy paper on reducing the costs of migration and the vulnerability of Bangladeshi labour migrants. The policies and realities of similar schemes in Sri Lanka and the Philippines have been analysed in this research. This provides an assessment from which good practices and lessons have been identified.

This concluding section first analyses the gaps and requirements of information campaigns and training in Bangladesh in the light of the lesson learned from the Philippines and Sri Lanka. The second part of this conclusion describes a plan of action. It also attempts to identify areas of action and agencies or organisations who may take part in the implementation of these policies.

### *Lessons learned from the Filipino System*

#### Information Campaigns

The study reveals that the Philippines has an institutionalised information campaign in their PEOS programme. This programme is run or supported by POEA, and also provides a benchmark and example for others who want to provide similar information campaigns. There is a relatively clear designation of which agency is responsible for information campaigns, training and of which types. In the Philippines, migration stories are regularly in the press and there are special papers for foreign job advertisements. Some journalists however seek to raise awareness in a more calculated informed way and also write positive success stories about migration. In the Philippines TV is not the most common medium for information campaigns, radio is most commonly used. POEA produces a radio programme in partnership with a radio station and NGOs. The programme is usually broadcast on Sundays, and is aimed at rural areas. In the Philippines face-to-face, ‘live’ contact with returnees is preferred as a method of imparting information.

NGOs in the Philippines are also involved in information campaigns, often in collaboration with the government, or base their work on a government model. The presence of institutionalised information campaigns and training programmes gives NGOs a reference point on which to build and improve.

#### Pre-Departure Orientation Trainings

The Philippines has already established itself as a leading sending country which has the institutional capability to provide pre-employment orientation training. Realising the importance of pre-departure orientation training (PDOT), the government has set up separate agencies, POEA and OWWA. The Philippine Government has made pre-departure training mandatory for migrant workers by providing them a certificate without which no travel clearance is issued. The Philippines is planning to organise post-arrival seminars in the countries of destination to ensure the

information provided in pre-departure is well understood by the attendees. These will not be mandatory however and it is not known whether migrants will attend.

The Filipino PDOT primarily aims at preparing migrants for the journey and teaching them about how they can benefit from migration. A typical PDOT curricula contains travel tips, understanding employment, contracts, do's and don't at destination, values, HIV/AIDS, the process of remitting money, plans for reintegration and finding solutions to crises. However, there are some particular employment sectors such as domestic workers and performing artists, which are considered as risky and are therefore provided not only with orientation, but also special skills training. Another notable feature of the Philippine PDOT is that they provide region- (and some country-) specific trainings for migrants.

The Filipino experience suggests that PDOTs are most productive if tailored to particular groups' needs, according to their jobs or country of destination. The provision of tailored trainings for domestic workers, performing artists and other groups prove that, in order to have a tangible effect on improving the chances of potential migrants, general orientation is not enough, profession-specific trainings may yield positive outcomes. Filipino training for migrants heading for problem-stricken countries is another example to follow.

In the Philippines in the majority of trainings lectures, discussion and videos are the most common methods; these have been designed as much as possible to be effective in the time allotted. There is a post titled 'trainer' or 'instructor' to conduct the PDOT. This is a specialised job and requires intensive training for the trainers, who must be university graduates.

In the Philippines, recruitment agencies have assumed a great deal of responsibility in terms of training provision. A public-private partnership has developed where recruitment agents execute the training and the government keeps a monitoring role. Of course strict monitoring techniques and rules are required to give that partnership a true meaning. PDOT modules are developed by a special council for monitoring and administering the training. This council comprises representatives from the government, NGOs and the private sector. It is impossible to include everyone who wants to be involved in this process, but an attempt is made to include various stakeholders.

The Philippines has established an example of good practice in term of coordination between Government, NGOs and the private sector. While the Government, international organisations, NGOs and recruitment agencies have their differences and debates and are often deeply suspicious of each other they understand the importance of working together for mutual benefit. To expand training programmes to cover the greatest number of migrants possible, the Philippine Government involves NGOs and recruitment agencies in pre-departure training and information campaigns. Recruitment agencies and NGOs benefit from this partnership financially, by gaining influence on policy and increasing their ability to attract migrants to their organisations. NGOs in the Philippines are able to earn some income through the provision of PDOS for which they are allowed to charge migrants a set fee. POEA, OWWA, NGOs, private recruitment agencies and CFO coordinate their work with one another. There is hardly any overlapping in providing PDOT. The task of the government lies in monitoring and maintaining the standard of the service.

## *Lessons Learned from Sri Lankan System*

### Information Campaigns

In Sri Lanka, the community awareness programme run by SLBFE, going from village to village, is aimed at raising general awareness about the benefits and potential dangers of migration. The mass media is a powerful tool for information dissemination; print media, radio and television are used to spread important information about migration in Sri Lanka. SLBFE in Sri Lanka broadcasts a two-hour radio programme every Sunday. The Sociology department of SLBFE has been active in producing TV programmes on safe migration that has been recently broadcast on a national channel and will soon also be shown on private channels.

NGOs are involved in community awareness raising, visiting communities to give them some form of lecture, discussion or workshop on issues of migration. MSC conducts TV discussions on migration issues and is also involved in radio discussions with returnees. Some NGOs in Sri Lanka, which work on issues such as HIV/AIDS or gender issues, do some awareness-raising work with migrants. NGOs' information campaigns in Sri Lanka mostly highlight the negative consequences of migration, as they believe that migration for employment should be workers' last resort solution, and is often a dangerous option. ACTFORM in Sri Lanka have produced simple and effective posters to give information about safe migration. These cover dos and don'ts, how to avoid illegal recruiters, photos of fraudulent recruiters and information about government programmes. NGOs in Sri Lanka complained about the bureaucratic burden that donors impose on them and the lack of freedom they have to act, as all their funds are tightly budgeted under specific programmes.

### Pre-departure Orientation Trainings

An overview of the Sri Lankan system of PDOT suggests that PDOT in Sri Lanka mostly evolved from the rising demand for trained domestic workers in the Middle East and the growing calls from human rights organisations to ensure migrants' rights and protection from violence and torture. The Sri Lankan government has also made pre-departure training compulsory for female migrant workers by linking this with registration. The nature and scope of PDOTs in Sri Lanka is being broadened in the context of specific needs.

The national education institute is responsible for module preparation, although their expertise and experience in manpower issues is questioned by NGOs. However, SLBFE has established an example by setting up its sociology division which designs various information campaigns for migrants and provides feedback for PDOT. The modules contain issues such as travel tips, customs and culture in the host country, language, expected attitudes, as well as training on cooking, cleaning, household works and equipment handling. Unlike the Philippines, Sri Lankan training modules have not been updated since its inception. Those in charge of training feel that it should be updated on a regular basis based using feedback from migrants and with the changing requirements in countries of destination. In both Sri Lanka and Bangladesh trainers modify, add and adjust the module during the training according to their experiences if and when they feel necessary.

In Sri Lanka returnee migrants with at least secondary level education are eligible to apply for this position of 'trainer'. Once they are selected they are attached to a training centre for a month or

more for ToT. Training techniques used in Sri Lanka seem more or less capable of drawing the attention of the trainees. Although migrants sometimes feel bored listening to lectures, they also take part in cooking classes and other classes based on demonstrations. SLBFE training centres have a decorated bedroom, living room, kitchen and bathroom to provide trainees with an idea of what a modern house in the destination country might look like. Sometimes pictures are also shown.

The government and private recruitment sector have some sort of collaboration as far as PDOT is concerned. However, NGOs in Sri Lanka feel alienated from the process. According to the NGOs working for migrant workers in Sri Lanka, no institutional process has been developed to ensure NGO participation in PDOS. Some NGOs are running one or two-day PDOT but those are unable to supplement government PDOS.

There is a lack of collaboration and coordination between government, NGOs, international organisations and the private sector in Sri Lanka. NGOs, Trade Unions and church groups work from the rights perspective. The confidence that the Sri Lankan government has in its own capacity to conduct, regulate and monitor PDOT is outstanding. The coordination between government and NGOs is vital to cover more geographical areas as well as different categories of migrants.

#### *Bangladesh: Gaps and Requirements*

##### Information Campaigns

The Government of Bangladesh is trying to play a role in information campaigns. Through newspaper advertisement and television they provide information on how to deal with the administrative processes linked to migration and how to avoid *dalals*. Unfortunately these are not continuous interventions, they are sporadic.

It was seen from this study that migrants' associations play an important role in information campaigns through the production of materials such as WARBE's recent docudrama '*Shubojatra*'. This type of media needs to be disseminated on a wider scale. In a similar way, the association for female migrant workers, BOMSA's door-to-door information campaign programmes are an example of important awareness-raising work. However, with their limited number of staff and funding they can only cover a small section of the migrant community.

As far as private recruitment agencies are concerned, no activities are performed by BAIRA or individual recruitment agencies to disseminate information to would-be migrants and their families.

RMMRU uses different methods for information campaigns, ranging from courses on migration in universities and other educational institutions, TV and Radio programmes on special days and campaigns at the grassroots through community leaders and activists. All these programmes are sporadic, they are not continuous interventions. Through research, RMMRU has identified many of the needs of migrant workers and has developed methods and strategies to disseminate information to them. RMMRU has the capacity to provide these services on a larger scale but lacks the financial strength to do so.



SHISHUK is one of the pioneer NGOs involved in information campaigns on health and migration issues. It has grass-root level contact with migrants and runs community-based awareness-raising drives using innovative techniques. But their area of operation is also limited.

The research found that media institutions in Bangladesh have not yet gotten involved in information campaigns for migration in any major way. Some government newspapers and BTV, from time to time broadcast advertisements and messages to create awareness about illegal migration. However, private TV channels take no such initiatives.

#### Pre-Departure Orientation Programmes

The development of training programmes for migrant workers in Bangladesh in recent years has been rapid. The recognition of the importance of such policies has led to the establishment of a new Ministry of Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment. BMET, acting under the ministry, now trains many migrants and runs a network of training centres. BMET cannot be expected to train all migrant workers; cooperation between government, the private sector and civil society groups is necessary.

Migrants' associations such as WARBE and BOMSA run training programmes, but these are really for skills training or awareness raising. They lack the capacity to conduct large-scale training programmes.

BAIRA, the association of recruitment agents, has recognised the need for training and has set up a partnership with Shosti. The role of the private sector in training programmes needs to be examined and expanded.

International organisations have played a supportive role to training programmes in Bangladesh, with funds and help in developing materials. However, they have so far failed to support any integrated programme with long term goals. Their efforts are mostly project-based. Their role must be brought into a wider institutionalised framework to avoid overlapping.

Specialised training NGOs could play a major role in providing training to migrant workers. Already Shosti has made links with recruitment agencies through BAIRA and with ANSAR VDP to train some migrant workers. These types of partnerships between government, NGOs and the private sector should be encouraged.

#### **Recommendations for Pre-Departure Training Programmes and Information Campaigns in Bangladesh**

This sub-section attempts to identify the most urgently needed information campaigns and pre-departure orientation requirements in Bangladesh. It also points to the specific roles that Government, civil society organisations and the private sector should play for implementing the recommended programmes.

##### *Information Campaigns*

- a. Information campaigns at the community level

Community awareness should be carried out in rural areas (migration prone) through capacity building of community leaders and activists. Using the RMMRU model set out in the 2001 module, local community leaders such as teachers, Imams, UP members, local journalists and NGO workers may be trained on migration issues. This will have a snowball effect as these community leaders return to their communities and impart the information or are consulted for advice.

b. Village-to-village information campaigns

Using community awareness drives of the type undertaken by various organisations in the Philippines and Sri Lanka, village-to-village campaign programmes should be undertaken. These would involve travelling around the country and providing entertaining and awareness-raising 'shows' to village communities. These might involve experience sharing by returnees, discussion, a play or projecting a film about migration issues.

c. Information dissemination through mass media

Information dissemination may take place via TV and radio programmes. Mass media should regularly allocate time slots for programming about safe migration and processing for migration. They can be used to inform people about government bodies and organisations for migrant workers, which will allow them to seek advice from the right sources and follow the correct procedures. This may take the form of public service announcements, spots, jingles and advertisements. Mass media should be encouraged to include information for those migrants who are currently abroad.

d. Information Campaigns through Drama, Film and Documentaries

Information campaigns should also include the production of dramatisations, films and documentaries to raise awareness of the benefits and dangers of migration. A wider and continuous dissemination of existing materials should be ensured. In addition, more entertaining and better quality ones should be developed by NGOs and research and advocacy organisations in collaboration with film and television production companies and television channels.

e. Advocacy Campaigns for Female Migration

An information and advocacy campaign to inform people about female migration and combat taboos and misconceptions surrounding it should be implemented. This would help society view female migration in a rational and realistic way. These may be implemented through the community-based awareness-raising programme and mass media. This would be made possible by insisting that female migrants, as a vulnerable group, are given specialised and mandatory training before departure.

f. Awareness Campaigns against Irregular Migration

Labour migration through irregular channels is a major problem in Bangladesh. These migrants are hard to reach and are not covered by most programmes. An awareness campaign about irregular migration is needed to encourage this group to migrate through official channels. Special radio and television programmes and grassroots-level awareness-raising programmes can be undertaken for this purpose. Posters on the potential dangers of irregular migration and the advantages of regular channels may bring a positive response to this effort.

g. Migration Information in the Education Curriculum

Migration issues should be included in the education curriculum. General information such as the scale and types of migration, and realities in terms of potential benefits and dangers should be taught at primary and secondary level as part of the geography curriculum. The education ministry could design the course outline and collect information and data to incorporate in text books with the help of academics.

#### h. Information Dissemination through Websites

Lists of licensed recruitment agencies, approved medical clinics, accredited training organisations and qualified trainers must be kept and made public on the websites of the government ministries and agencies. Information should be updated and disseminated every six months to NGOs, migrants associations, the press, academia and training centres in printed form.

#### *Pre-Departure Orientation Trainings (PDOTs)*

##### 1. Mandatory PDOT for All Outgoing Migrant Workers

Like Sri Lanka and the Philippines, the Pre-Departure Orientation Programme should be made compulsory for all migrant workers and registration should be linked with PDOT. Migrants who have migrated before should also attend PDOT.

#### Training Period

Mandatory PDOTs should be a minimum of six hours long. Migrant workers should take the training at least a week before their departure.

#### Curriculum

This training curriculum will concentrate on the rights of migrant workers, understanding employment contracts, potential fraudulent practices and information about what to do and who to contact in a crisis. The curriculum should also include travel tips, responsibilities of migrant workers, health problems faced by migrants, understanding HIV/AIDS, making plans for reintegration and effective use of remittances.

#### Curricula Content Identification

The government will provide leadership in identifying issues to be incorporated in the training curricula. Government, NGOs and migrants' associations must be represented in curricula development committees and working groups which design training programmes, curricula and information materials.

#### Methods of Training

The training methodology should comprise of lectures and discussions. Audio visual aids should be used as much as possible to make the session interesting and participatory. A section on do's and don'ts, and cultural values for destination countries could see the group split up if necessary into country- or region-specific groups such as the Middle East, South East Asia, and East Asia. A section on how to remit money through banks and the importance of savings could be provided by bank staff that have expertise in this field.

### Trainers

A cadre of high quality trainers has to be employed for imparting training. A ToT course should be set up to train a group of officially-recognised trainers to provide PDOT to migrant workers. Teachers, NGO activists or return migrants will be given special preference to be trainers. Trainers will also be trained in participatory and innovative teaching methods to enable them to lead engaging and interesting classes.

### Accreditation of Training Bodies

The government should create a monitoring and regulatory division to give licenses, accredit training organisations and regulate the proper implementation of the various official PDOTs. For accreditation, criteria will be set up which will specify the number of trainers, their qualifications, the size of the training rooms, training equipment and the suitability of the organisation.

## 2. Pre-Departure Orientation Training for Vulnerable Groups

Vulnerable sectors, such as domestic workers and female migrant workers and others identified by the government and research bodies, will be given a special training programme. PDOT for this sector should be a minimum of six hours long. Unlike Sri Lanka, PDOT for female migrant workers should not mix skill or language training with pre-departure orientation.

### The Curriculum

The curriculum should include travel tips, understanding employment contracts, the rights and responsibilities of migrant workers, gender awareness, health problems faced by migrants, how to cope with sexual harassment, understanding HIV/AIDS, making plans for reintegration, dos and don'ts in a crisis, psychosocial problems and coping mechanisms. The curriculum could draw on or be based on already existing curricula in Bangladesh, developed by various organisations or on international or foreign curricula.

### Number of Participants

Class sizes should be kept to a maximum of 20 people, to allow quality training and enough time for discussion and questions. All-female classes, and female trainers will allow female migrants to feel comfortable and discuss issues that they might not in the presence of men.

### Methods

Various methods should be used such as lectures, experience-sharing and use of audio-visual aids. A section on do's and don'ts, and cultural values for destination countries could see the group split up if necessary into country- or region-specific groups, although most female domestic workers go to the Middle East. Returnee migrants should be included as resource persons or guest speakers to share their experiences and lead discussions or question and answer sessions after the official training has ended. PowerPoint or overhead projector presentations could be developed on crucial issues such as HIV/AIDS and employment contracts to help standardise training.

### *Institutional Roles*

#### Government

As a general guiding principal, the government should act as a strong leader and take on the role of delegating, monitoring and regulating the implementation of action plans. Policies should be

implemented by various government ministries, private sector organisations and NGOs that have expertise and a good track record in the relevant areas. The private sector and NGOs / migrants' associations both have valuable inputs, but must not be allowed to come into conflict as has happened elsewhere. They must cooperate within a framework that is beneficial to all parties. Government must play a leading role in designing this framework, but should try to involve civil society groups in a consultative process to ensure that all parties have a stake in making the system work.

### *International Organisations*

International organisations can play a vital role with regards to information campaigns. They have played an important financial role, by funding innovative programmes and pilot projects, and these must continue and be expanded. It is important that these International Organisations begin to think in terms of long-term strategies and wide-scale programmes rather than small individual projects.

In the area of pre-departure training, ILO can help in many ways. It can provide access to information, organise field trips and exchange programmes for the trainers. Other international organisations and donors such as the Ford Foundation, DFID, The British Council, high commissions and embassies, UNDP, UNIFEM, UNAIDS and others can also play a valuable role with input into specialised elements of training by providing financial support as part of a consortium.

### *NGOs*

In Bangladesh, in contrast to the Philippines, there are large NGOs with enormous capacity for training and nationwide coverage. The government should encourage NGOs to be the training providers. PDOT would eventually provide NGOs a source of income, thereby further increasing their capacity and power to implement programmes effectively and independently.

NGOs with expertise and experience in training, and national networks of training centres or offices, such as BRAC, TMSS, and Proshika could be used and contracted to implement the trainings. This would bring in professional training standards, establish a national network of training centres, as well as build close contact with and the trust of local communities.

### *Migrant Associations*

Migrants' associations, which have large networks of contacts with migrants and a long experience of working on migration issues such as WARBE and BOMSA, should be involved in the design and consulted. They can also implement community-based awareness raising and contribute to many other types of information campaigns. To effectively implement official government PDOT they must improve their institutional capacity and expertise in this field. These NGOs can also provide experts for training and seminars, and a stream of recruitment for trainers from amongst the pool of return migrants.

### *Recruitment Agencies*

The Recruitment agencies must play a greater role in preparing their recruits for migration. Recruitment agencies may carry out training themselves or sub-contract this work to accredited training institutions or NGOs. Associations of recruitment agencies such as BAIRA must also be involved in the planning and design of the system, curricula for training and information campaigns.

#### *Private Sectors*

Bangladeshi private companies operating in the fields of telecommunications, remittance sending, insurance, banking and cargo and parcel delivery need to get involved in the migration field. Advertising companies could be involved in the design of information campaigns using their expertise in publicity and public relations. This would help to effectively communicate messages, target the information at the desired market and convince people of its value. Public-private partnerships need to emerge between these companies, the government, and NGOs. Companies can advertise their products and services in training centres, remittance handling companies or banks could be given a slot in training sessions in return for providing financial support to NGOs. Companies could also sponsor information materials in return for having their logo on the front of booklets or brochures and advertisements placed in them.

#### *Mass Media*

In addition to workshops and seminars, TV and radio should be encouraged to provide safe migration information through their products. Television and radio production companies and channels could collaborate with the MEWOE, BMET, recruitment agencies and civil society organisations to produce dramas, documentaries, talk shows, jingles, spots and public service announcements. Staff from various media agencies should attend training or events about migration to keep up-to-date with the latest developments. Theatre companies should also collaborate with other organisations to produce plays to raise awareness about migration. These can be used during community-based awareness-raising drives in conjunction with the government or NGOs.

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## APPENDICES

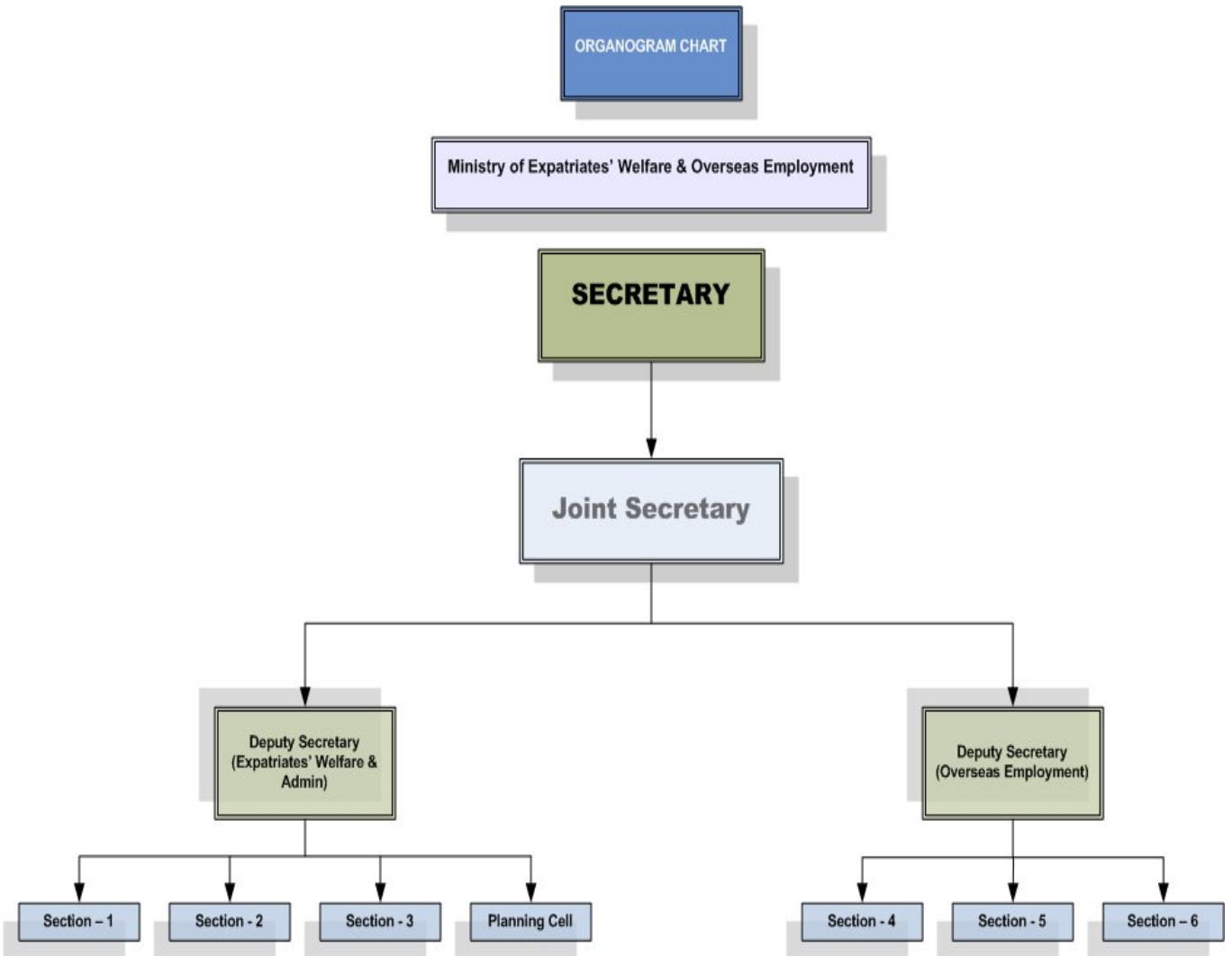
### Appendix 1: List of participants in the Needs Assessment Workshop of the RMMRU research project on Information Campaign on Safe Migration and Pre-Departure Training

BIAM – 15 September 2005

Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training, (BMET)	Mr. Sheik Md.Wahid-uz-zaman, Director General
Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training, (BMET)	Dr Nurul Islam, Director of Research and Computers
Ministry of Information	Mr. Rofiqul Islam Akhand, Deputy Principal Information Officer
Foreign Exchange Division, Bangladesh Bank	Mr. Mazbah Uddin Assistant Director
Bangladesh Obhibashi Mahila Shromik, (BOMSA)	Ms. Afreen Sultana, Coordinator
Bangladesh Obhibashi Mahila Shromik, (BOMSA)	Ms. Sheikh Rumana, General Secretary
Channel-I	Mr. Ahmed Muztaba Zamal
The Daily Star	Mr. Porimol Palma, Staff Reporter
UNFPA	Mr. Nikesh Amit, National Programme Officer, Communications
The British Council	Ms. Tayyeba Nasir, Assistant Director
DFID, Dhaka	Dr. Indranil Chakrabarti, Social Development Advisor
WARBE	Mr. Abdul Mannan, Vice Chairman
WARBE	Mr. Masud Parvez, Vice Chairman
IOM	Ms. Umbareen Kuddus, Project Coordinator
IOM	Mr. Mizanur Rahman, National Programme Adviser.
SHISUK	Ms. Nasrin Amin, Trainer
Bangladesh Association of International Recruitment Agencies (BAIRA)	Mr. Abdul Alim, Executive Committee Member
Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association (BNWLA)	Ms. Salma Rahman Senior Research Officer
Bangladesh Centre for Communication Programmes (BCCP)	Dr. Nazrul Haque, Assistant Director
Bangladesh Overseas Employment and Services Ltd, (BOESL)	Mr. Tazul Islam Chowdhury
BRAC	Mr. Ruhul Amin
ICDDRDB	Dr. Rasheeda Kharan, Assistant scientist

'Social protection by and for temporary work migrants' Project	Md. Azmal Kabir, Lead Researcher
SHOSTI	'Nazrin', Trainer
SHOSTI	'Nahid', Trainer

**Appendix 2: Organogram of MEWOE**  
(<http://probashi.gov.bd/org/organogram.php>)



### **Appendix 3: List of Interviews, visits, and meetings**

#### *Bangladesh*

##### Interviews:

- Mr. Anisur Rahman Khan: Vice chairman – WARBE
- Mr. Abdul Mannan: Vice Chairman – WARBE
- Ms. Sheikh Rumana: General Secretary – BOMSA
- Ms. Lily Jahan: President – BOMSA
- Mr. Md. Amir Hossain: Joint secretary – MEWOE
- Ln. Ali Haider Chowdhury: Secretary General – BAIRA (Also Managing partner - NAC International Recruitment Agency)
- Mr. Momtazuddin Ahmed: Secretary – BAIRA
- Ms. Nahid Sultana: President - SHOSTI

##### Training Session Observations:

- Working Women Education Centre – WARBE Training
- BMET – Government Training
- BOMSA – Female migrants' training

#### *Philippines*

##### Interviews:

- Mr. Alex Custodio: Chief Finance Officer, LBC Development – Eurasia
- Mr. Noriel P. Devandera: Director of Licensing and Regulation, also present, Ms. Fairy Romero and Ms. Franksie Baldoza – POEA
- Ms. Ellene Sana - Centre for Migrant Advocacy (CMA)
- Ms. Ma. Elvira A. Ador: Chief, Planning and Programme Development Division – OWWA
- Ms. Fe Nicodemus: Chairperson (also radio presenter) – Kakampi
- Ms. Julie Javellana Santos: Freelance journalist – Founding member, OFW journalism consortium
- Mr. Francisco “Jun” Aguilar Jr.: President and General Manager - Filipino Migrant Workers, Human Resources International
- Mr. Mariano Dumia: Special Assistant, Office of the Undersecretary for Migrant Workers Affairs - Department of Foreign Affairs
- Dr. Maruja Asis – Scalabrini Migration Centre
- Ms. Merliza M. Makinano: Director, International Labour Affairs Service, DOLE (Used to work for IOM)
- Ms Erlinda G. Arabejo – Head of OWWA Satellite Office
- Ms. Florence May B. Cortina: Officer in Charge – Kanlungan
- Mr. Ramon O. Estrella: Chairman / CEO - ROE Holdings and Management Corporation. (Also: President of United Philippine Manpower Agencies for Israel Association, Inc., Director of the Philippine Association of Service Exporters Inc., Chairman and member of the Ethics Committee of the Philippine Association of Recruitment Agencies deploying Artist, Inc.)

- Mr. Ricardo R. Casco: National Project Coordinator, ILO Manila, (worked in POEA for 19 years)
- Sister M. Bernadette C Guzman, RGS: Executive Director - Centre for Overseas Workers
- Ms. Mildred Yamzon: Member, Board of Trustees and Virginia Pasalo Chairperson - Women in Development Foundation
- Ms. Marivi D, David: administrative officer – Unlad Kabayan, Migrant Services Foundation

#### Informal Meetings

- Mr. William Gois – Migrant Forum in Asia
- Ms. Mabs Licmoan – Migrant Forum in Asia
- Ms. Tatcee Macabuag – Migrant Forum in Asia
- Ms. Maria Angela “Mayan” Villalba: Executive Director - Unlad Kabayan, Migrant Services Foundation

#### Training session Observations:

- Women in Development Foundation – Women’s NGO
- Centre for Overseas Workers – Church based NGO
- OWWA – government agency
- Filipino Migrant Workers, Human Resources International – recruitment agency

#### *Sri Lanka*

##### Interviews

- Ms. Manori Witharana –Solidarity Centre (ACILS)
- Ms. Violet Perera - The Women and Media Collective (ACTFORM)
- Ms. Myrtle Perera, Marga Institute
- Mr. W.M.V. Wansekara, Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment
- Ms. Sharila Daluwatte, ILO, Colombo
- Ms. Herma Wickramasinghe, the Salvation Army
- Mr. R. K.K.M. P. Randeniye, Sociologist, SLBFE
- Ms. Kanti Yapa, ex-Official, SLBFE
- Mr. David Soysa, Migrant Services Centre

##### Informal interviews and meetings

- Mr. Dudley, Migrant Services Centre
- President, Migrants Association in Kegalle
- Mr. Jayanta, MSC
- Trainers at SLBFE training centres

##### Focus Group Discussion

- Returnee female migrants in Kandy

Appendix 4: Examples of Posters from the Philippines

## 10 Ways to Avoid Illegal Recruitment

1. Do not apply at recruitment agencies not licensed by POEA.
2. Do not deal with licensed agencies without job orders.
3. Do not deal with any person who is not an authorized representative of a licensed agency.
4. Do not transact business outside the registered address of the agency. If recruitment is conducted in the province, check if the agency has a provincial recruitment authority.
5. Do not pay more than the allowed placement fee. It should be equivalent to one month salary, exclusive of documentation and processing costs.
6. Do not pay any placement fee unless you have a valid employment contract and an official receipt.
7. Do not be enticed by ads or brochures requiring you to reply to a Post Office (P.O.) Box, and to enclose payment for processing of papers.
8. Do not deal with training centers and travel agencies, which promise overseas employment.
9. Do not accept a tourist visa.
10. Do not deal with fixers.

**Maging Matalino  
Huwag Patokol!  
Labanan ang  
Illegal Recruitment**

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722-11-44 o  
722-11-55**

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Or visit the nearest POEA - Regional Office / Regional Extension Units and POEA Satellite Offices in your area.

Registration is free!

## MIGRANT WORKERS FOR YOUR SAFETY

**Using forged passports is a crime**

**If you plan to work abroad, prepare yourself**

**The Police and the law have an obligation to punish fraudulent job agents**

**You should travel abroad through legal channels**

**Do not introduce a fraudulent job agent to anyone**

**If the wife is abroad, caring for the home and family is the husband's responsibility**

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Regional Extension Units and POEA Satellite Offices in your area.

# BEFORE YOU GO ABROAD TO WORK



Check if your agent is registered with the Foreign Employment Bureau



Register with the Foreign Employment Bureau and obtain your insurance



Make a plan about how to deposit, save and spend your earnings



AUFORUM Action Network for Migrant Workers



Make sure you read the forms given by the agent carefully



Make sure you get a copy of your contract and salary details



Make sure that your family has your address and telephone number abroad before you leave

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## **NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC**

Pictures posted below are **ILLEGAL RECRUITERS**.  
Please do not deal with these persons.



**CARMELITA B. UMALI**  
Brgy. Banga, Talisay, Batangas



**CATHERINE SACLAO**  
a.k.a.  
**CYNTHIA DELA CRUZ**  
Rural Sua,  
Masantol, Pampanga



**FERNANDO LEGASPI RUBIAN**  
Kumintang Ibaba,  
Batangas City