



# ***Migrant Philanthropy: The Benevolence of Overseas Filipinos***

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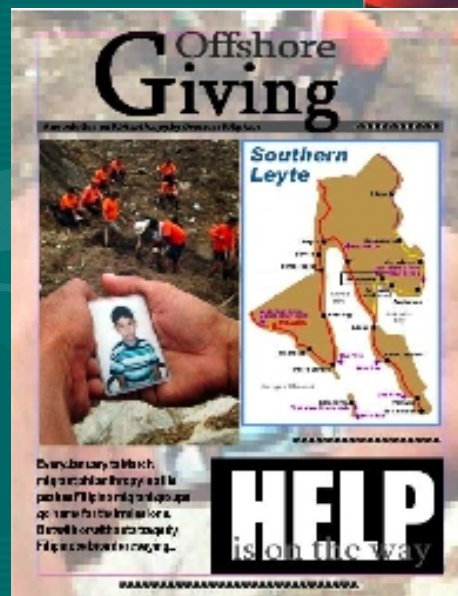
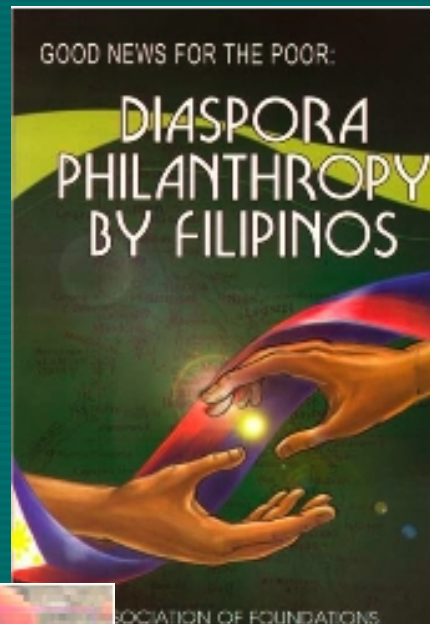
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Pursuing Efficiency and Meaning  
by Changemakers:  
The Second National Conference on  
Filipino Migrant Philanthropy

August 19-20, 2007

USF - Thomas Aquinas Research Complex

Hosted by the Institute for Migration and Development Issues



# Stories

## 1. The OFW family story

*Maria Luisa Tayco (balik-domestic worker in Singapore), founder of Pinokyos Welfare*

- *Founded a charity for poor Pinoy kids in 1999 that is among the most trusted by Singaporean donors. Pinokyos Welfare is made up of domestic workers*
- *Won a Rotary Club of Singapore award (2002)*
- *Tried to reintegrate in the country since 2006; received donations and was even deep in loans while dabbling with being an entrepreneur and a mother; Just returned to Singapore*
- *Admittedly does need help to balance her priorities and to make the right decisions*
- *You can't stop her from helping others*





## Pinay DH to launch own CD

A Filipino domestic helper is aiming to pump more money into a foundation she established for underprivileged children in her hometown of Ballesteros, Cagayan, by launching a CD of songs she mostly composed and sang.

The launch of Thelma Unite's album, *From Hong Kong With Love*, will be held on March 12 at Chater Garden in Central, from 11am to 7pm.

The CD contains 10 songs, seven of which were composed by Unite herself. The three others were composed by singer Gary Valenciano and wife, Angeli; Canadian Enrol Lee and Dave Magalong.

The centerpiece of the album is "Sunday Life," Unite's original composition, which talks of the activities Filipino domestic helpers typically engage in during their only day off during the week.

There is also a song about the

perennial problem of loans among Filipina domestic helpers working abroad. Unite says the song titled "Problema Mo, Kalimutan," is dedicated to a friend who was left holding the bag, so to speak, after a person who had asked her to act as guarantor for a loan suddenly disappeared.

Unite says the album has two messages. First, that people who encounter problems must carry on and continue their journey through life happily and cheerfully. Another is that OFW families must not rely totally on their relative's earnings abroad. "Work out your own problems, get a life and get a job," she says.

Unite is the founder of Care@Unite Foundation, a registered charity organization in Hong Kong that provides financial and educational assistance to 19 elementary school children in Ballesteros.

Her foundation has also donated computers she herself put together, as well as books and other equipment, to



28 schools and 13 institutions in the same municipality.

Her album is distributed by Gusi Records in the Philippines and will be available starting this month at Philippine Bible Society outlets in the country.

The launch will feature the special participation of the Filipino Community Services and Information Network.

# More stories

## 2. The Overseas Filipino volunteer

### Thelma Unite (domestic worker in Hong Kong)

- Formed Care@Unite Foundation to send education aid to over-40 public schools in her hometown of Ballesteros, Cagayan

- Is a singer also; launched a CD with songs fit for the overseas worker (e.g. to families receiving money: 'don't rely much on our padala')

# More stories



Key? The connection with the brother-in-law of LPF executive director Gerard Rikken, FACSPS president Mr. Rufino Ignacio (he gave a bigger grant to the brother-in-law's group than to the nonprofit of sister Remy Rikken, Pilipina Inc.)

3. A neighborhood Filipino group in the US as the top supporter of a homeland-based nonprofit for the disabled

- Loving Presence Foundation (Bislig City, Surigao del Sur)

- Major funding partner: Filipino-American Community of South Puget Sound (FACSPS), Olympia, Washington state, USA

- 2003-2008 grant in support of LPF's programs for the disabled in Bislig City (and in neighboring Surigao del Sur towns)

- Mix of local and overseas donors: lesson in counterparting

# *More stories*

## *4. The Pinoy abroad for 'new politics'?*

- Vice Mayor Alfredo Tesalona in Lubang, Occidental Mindoro*
  - Long-time president of award-winning group Lubang Looc International (based in the US) which has been supporting two municipal hometowns*
  - Gave up his green card prior to 2007 elections; With no connections locally, he won as vice mayor*
  - Tries his best to inject new politics and, more importantly, to address Lubang's basic development issues (e.g. income, population growth). "This job is never easy."*







# ***Thesis statement***

**Philanthropy by migrants,  
while an obvious resource  
for development  
stakeholders, tests resource  
seekers to win the trust of  
your overseas compatriots –  
as gauged from your  
sincerity to the cause.**

# *Filipinos' international migration*



- *Stock estimates (2008): 8.1 million overseas Filipinos in 220 countries*
  - *Temporary contract workers: 3.6 million*
  - *Permanent residents: 3.9 million*
  - *Undocumented migrants: 0.6 million*
- *Feminization of Filipinos' int'l migration: more women departing as temporary contract workers and permanent residents (the latter including spouses)*





NCR



Southern Tagalog



Central Luzon

- *Spatial distribution:*
  - Homeland. Overseas Filipinos and their households are more in areas with less poverty incidence, and which are near centers or agencies involved in international migration (e.g. Nat'l Capital Region, Central Luzon, Southern Tagalog)

Saudi Arabia



USA

- *Spatial distribution:*
  - Hostlands. Saudi Arabia (for temporary contract workers) and the United States (for permanent residents and undocumented migrants) are the top destination countries for Filipinos



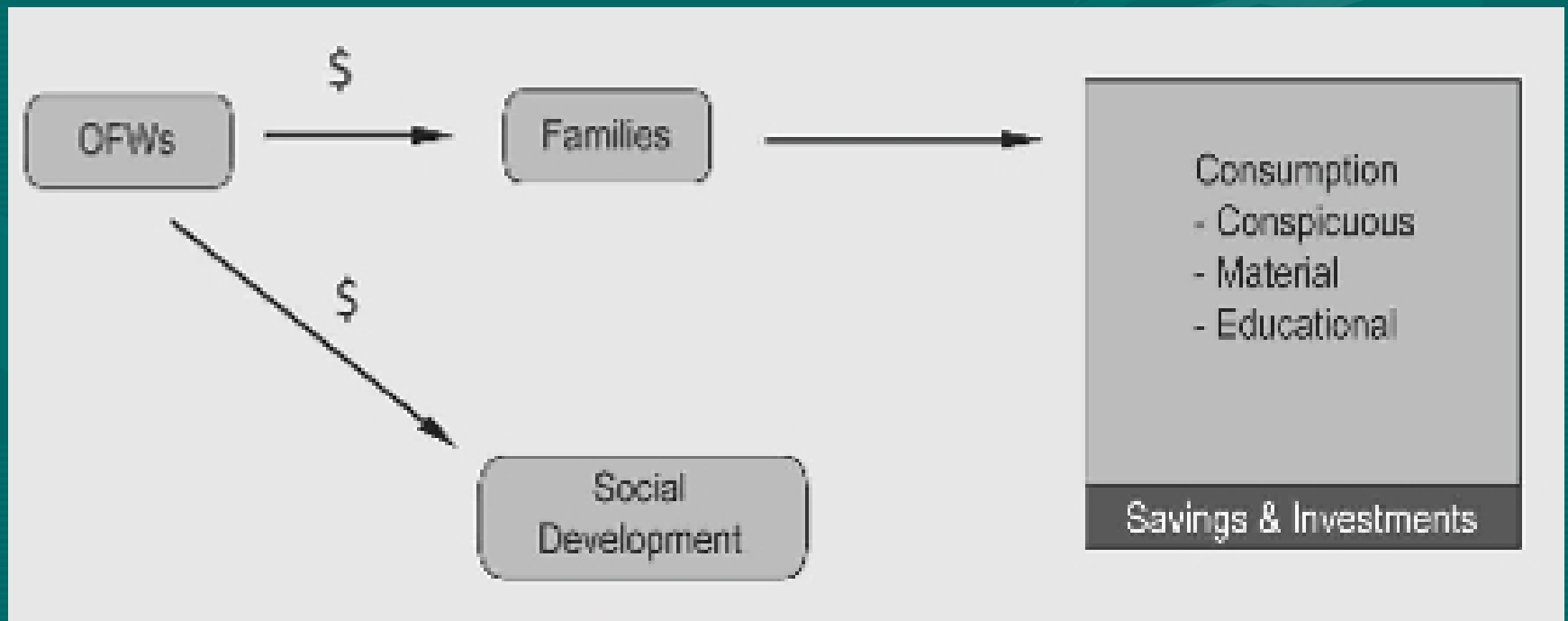
- *Remittances*
  - *1975-2009: over-US\$145 billion*
  - *Major driver of Philippine economic growth*
  - *Still rose even with a global economic crisis*



# *The uses of remittances*

*Eugene Gonzales, 2005: (existing remittance use by migrant families illustrated below)*

*Daily needs, savings, investment, and philanthropy (also in Manuel Orozco, 2004)*

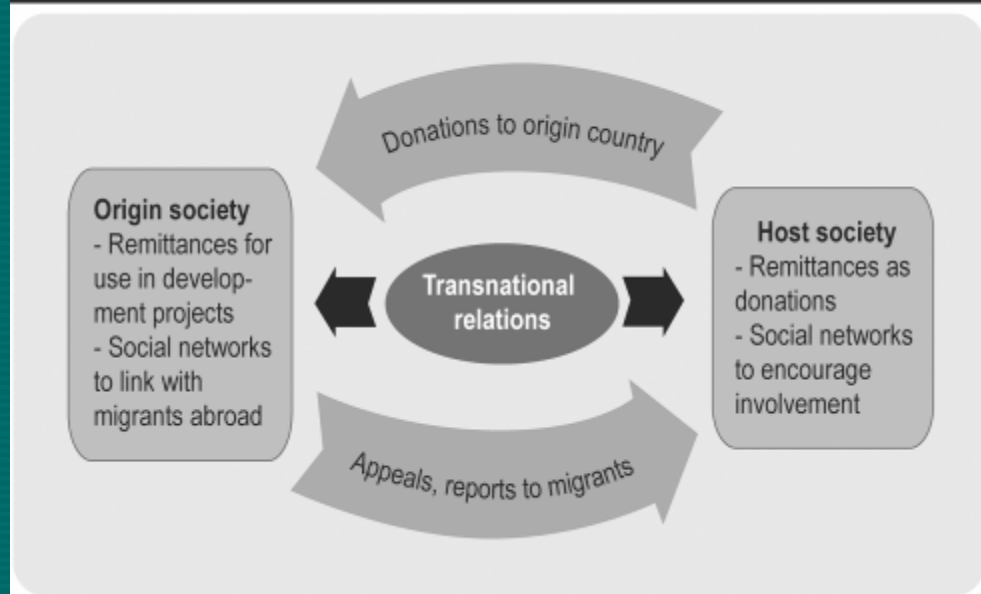




# Pinoy migrant philanthropy 101

- Definition. *The act of migrants to give back donations and development aid to their home country as a way to forge transnational ties (Jeremiah Opiniano, 2002)*

Figure 1: Migrants' transnational philanthropy model (Opiniano, 2002a)



## Who gives?

- \* *Temporary contract workers—probably fewer in volume since most of their income is remitted to their families; have lesser disposable incomes; still they form groups (despite being, e.g. domestic workers)*
- \* *Immigrants—proven to give more in volume since they enjoy higher incomes and pension benefits in host countries; favorable immigration conditions make them productive in host countries; form many groups*
- \* *Undocumented migrants – don't expect them to give, unless they course it through Filipino groups*

# ***Pinoy migrant philanthropy 101***

**World's most distributed migrant philanthropy phenomenon**



***46 countries!  
--could be more***

Source: IMDI (2006)

# Pinoy migrant philanthropy 101

## ***Causes they support***

- *Education and health  
(most popular)*
- *Others*
  - *Relief operations*
  - *Infrastructure*
  - *Children and/or women*
  - *Cooperatives; microfinance*
  - *Environmental protection*
  - *Livelihood and enterprise dev't*
  - *Disabled persons*
  - *Indigenous peoples*
  - *Agriculture*
  - *Others*

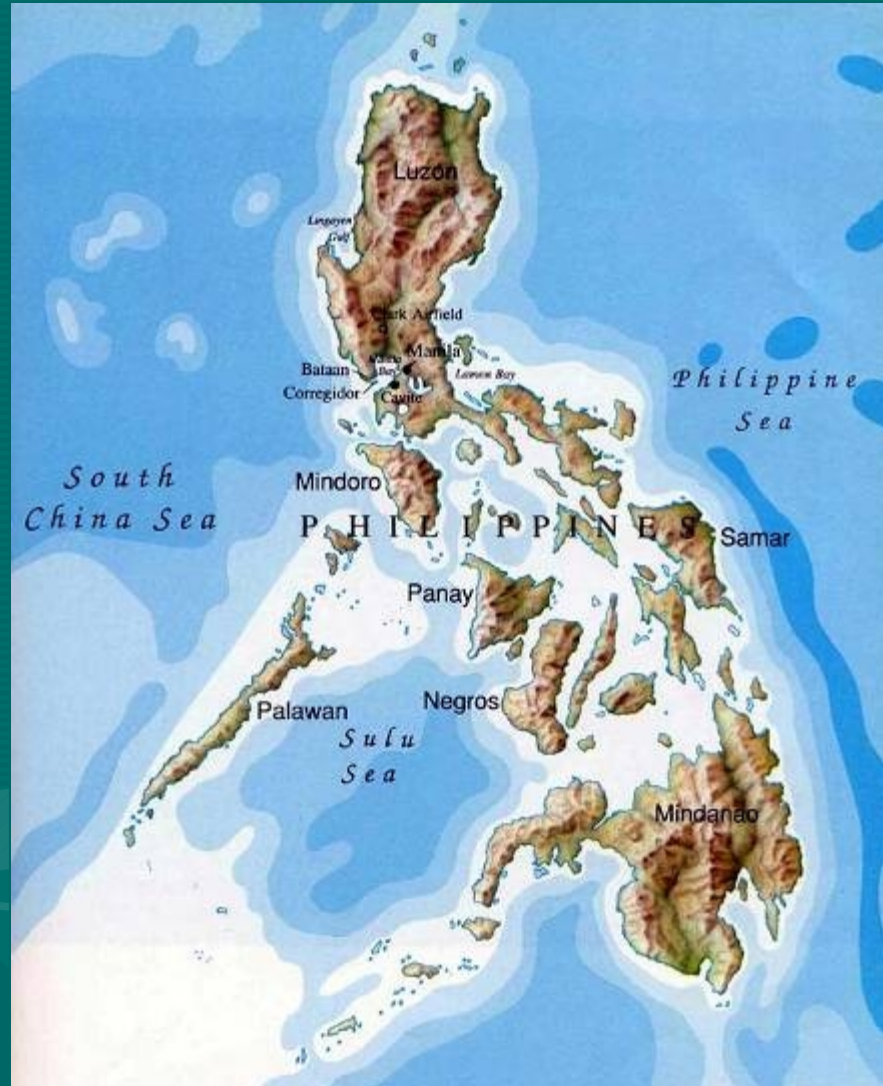




# *Pinoy migrant philanthropy 101*

*Where  
Filipinos  
abroad came  
from (73% -  
ADB, 2005)*

*Not to a  
'national'  
cause?*

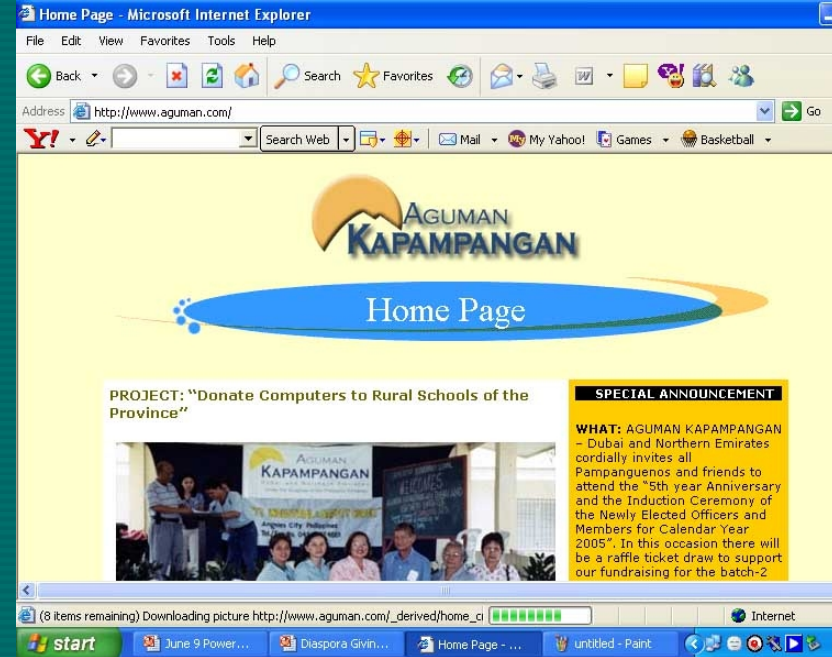


*Of 30.8M  
poor  
Filipinos,  
78.8%  
reside in  
rural areas  
(Habito,  
2005)*

**Who benefits? RURAL AREAS!**

# *Pinoy migrant philanthropy 101*

- *Scale: US\$218M of cash donations alone passing through banks (2003 data from the Bangko Sentral)*
- *Scale: a product of small scale giving lumped altogether, and of individual philanthropy*
  - *Hometown associations*
  - *Community/area-based groups in host countries*
  - *Registered charities, foundations, nonprofits in host countries*
  - *Professional associations*
  - *Alumni associations*
  - *Other types of groups (sports clubs, cultural clubs, groups helping Filipinos in host country, Filipino businesses abroad, Church groups, sister city groups)*



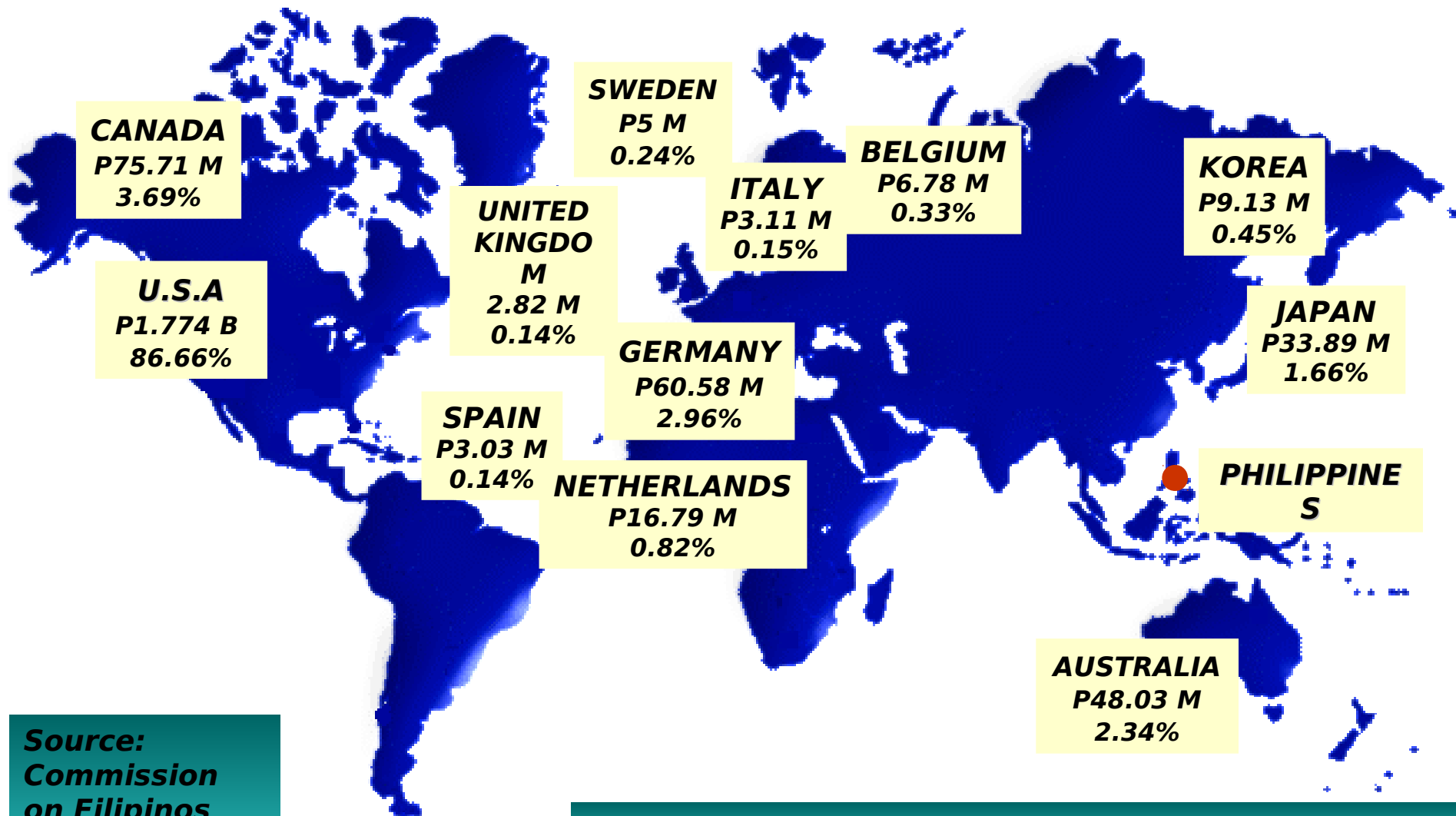
# *Total donations since groups' founding (IMDI informal survey)*

- *Philippine Maharlika Folklore Tanzgruppe Kaiserslautern eV (Germany)* *\$25,001-50,000 (11 years)*
- *Vriendschap voor de Filippijnen (Belgium)* *\$25,001-50,000 (4 years)*
- *Vereniging Haarlemmermeer-Cebu (The Netherlands)* *\$1-3 million (14 years)*
- *Metro Infanta Foundation (US)* *\$250,001-500,000 (10 years)*
- *Save-a-Tahanan, Inc. (US)* *\$75,001-100,000 (20 years)*
- *Deutsch-Philippinische Freundschaftsgruppe (Germany)* *\$25,001-50,000 (11 years)*

*Food for thought: Are migrants' philanthropic endeavors worthy of counterpart support from other donors?*



# MIGRANT DONATIONS THROUGH LINGKOD SA KAPWA PILIPINO (LINKAPIL), 1990-2006



Source:  
Commission  
on Filipinos  
Overseas  
(2007)

**TOTAL AMOUNT OF ASSISTANCE = P2.05 B**

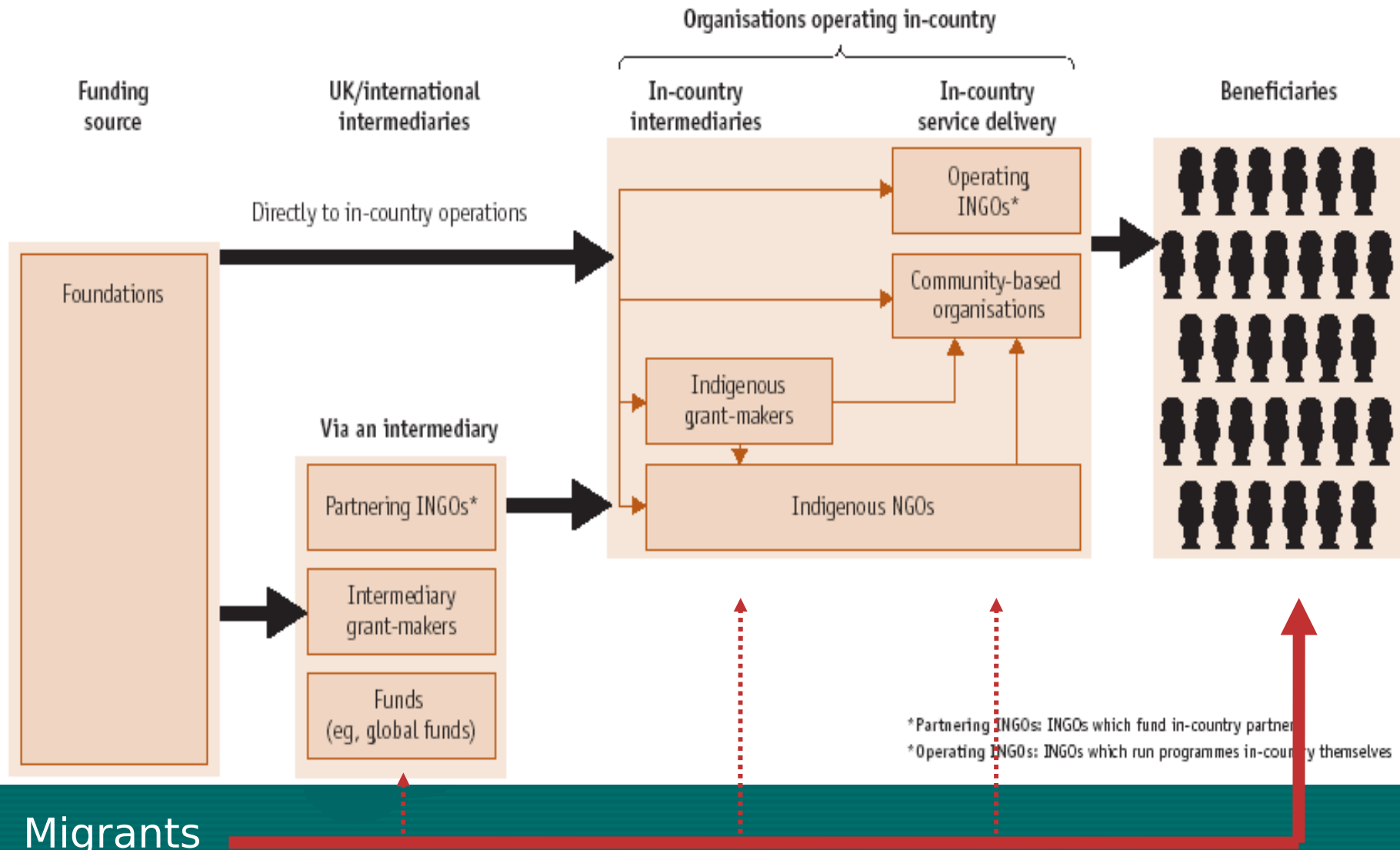
# *Range of diaspora giving*



**Figure 1: Schematic diagram of the range of donations from Filipinos abroad**

# 'Direct' development financing

Figure 8: Funding routes from UK foundations to destination organisations





# ***Pinoy migrant philanthropy***

## ***101***

- Some dynamics of migrants' philanthropy
  - *Donor-directed*
  - *Can be informal or formal (informal especially through hometown associations)*
  - *Giving starts with the family (through the remittances sent to family members in the Philippines)*
  - *Joining groups abroad with projects for the Philippines a part-time involvement for a nearly all donors abroad*
  - *Migrants are 'well-meaning amateurs' in social development work (Shawn Powers, 2006)*
  - *Donors are struck by experiences in host countries (e.g. governance, abiding by rules, efficiency of services for the people, presence of structures and programs that cannot be seen in the Philippines)*
  - *Can be easily swayed by what people/media tell them*
  - **Most important: They are away from the Philippines**

# *Linking Pinoys abroad to broader dev't issues*

## *Basic questions*

- 1. How many of you know how many families, households, and constituencies have a relative working or residing abroad?*
- 2. Do nonprofits/NGOs/foundations believe there is a correlation between migration-related issues and household decision making, or migrants' capacity to participate in development initiatives?*
- 3. How many of these nonprofits/NGOs/foundations are aware, and have integrated into their work, the issues and concerns of overseas Filipinos and their households within their constituencies?*
- 4. How many even see the need to include overseas Filipinos' concerns in their advocacies?*

Ildefonso Bagasao, 2007

# *Linking Pinoys abroad to broader dev't issues*



*“A serious plan to link overseas Filipinos and their families should involve nothing short of endeavoring to know their needs and concerns, not only financial but also social. We have to be aware about some of the huge social costs of international migration, such as family problems brought about by long absence or separation, that have preceded all these remittances and benefits being received by their family members. Knowing your customer (KYC) here does not only refer to its regulatory meaning (in banking and financial parlance), but also entails knowing the needs of the one who sends, as well as those who make the spending decisions.”*

*Ildefonso Bagasao, 2007*

# *Caring for migrants, for their dollars*

*Why should we care about remittances / international migration?  
(Dilip Ratha of the World Bank)*

- Remittances are large, counter-cyclical (i.e. still rise amid home countries' economic problems), pro-poor*
- Monies directly target the poor than official aid or foreign direct investment*
- Financial institutions and civil society organizations can make money while doing good for the poor, and for the development of poor countries*
- From Jeremaiah: It is because international migration is the Philippines's next important socio-economic development issue, while we try to continue mitigating the costs it brings.*



# Synergy?

- *Filipinos' motivations for leaving the Philippines (whether temporarily or permanently)*
- *Overseas Filipinos' dreams for the homeland*
- *The issues being addressed by civil society organizations operating in various sectors*



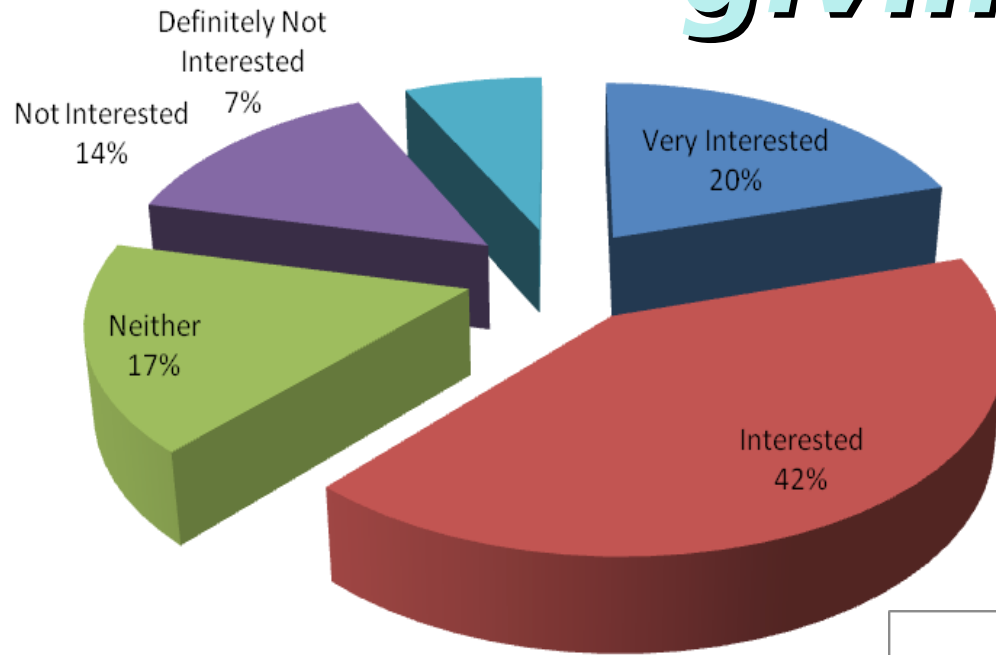
# *These drive overseas migration, don't they?*



- *Unemployment and underemployment*
- *Poverty and inequality*
- *Weak governance and corruption*
- *Political instability*
- *Armed conflicts*
- *Natural disasters*
- *Deteriorating educational systems*

*Fernando Aldaba, 2007*

# ***Will Pinoys abroad consider giving?***

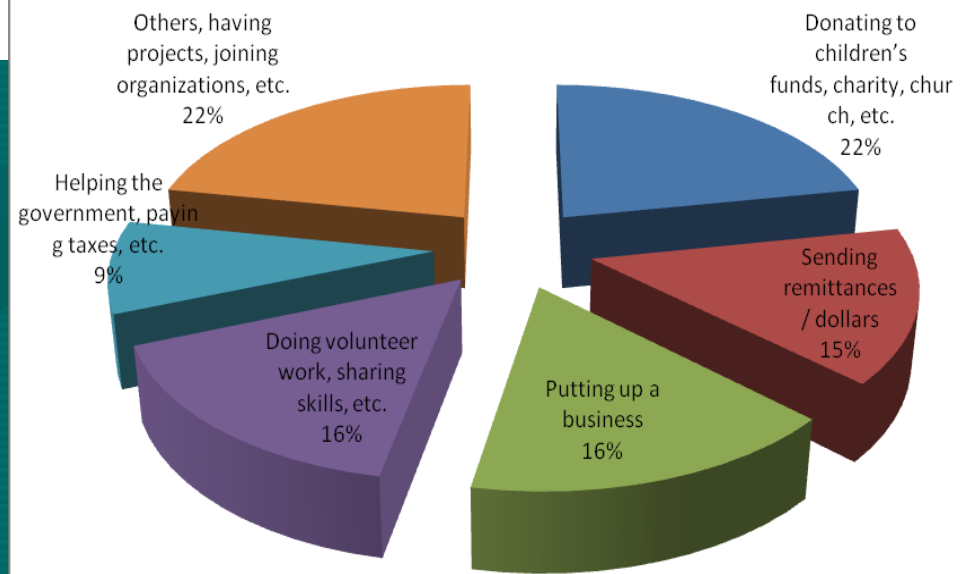


## ***Interested to donate to community development activities?***

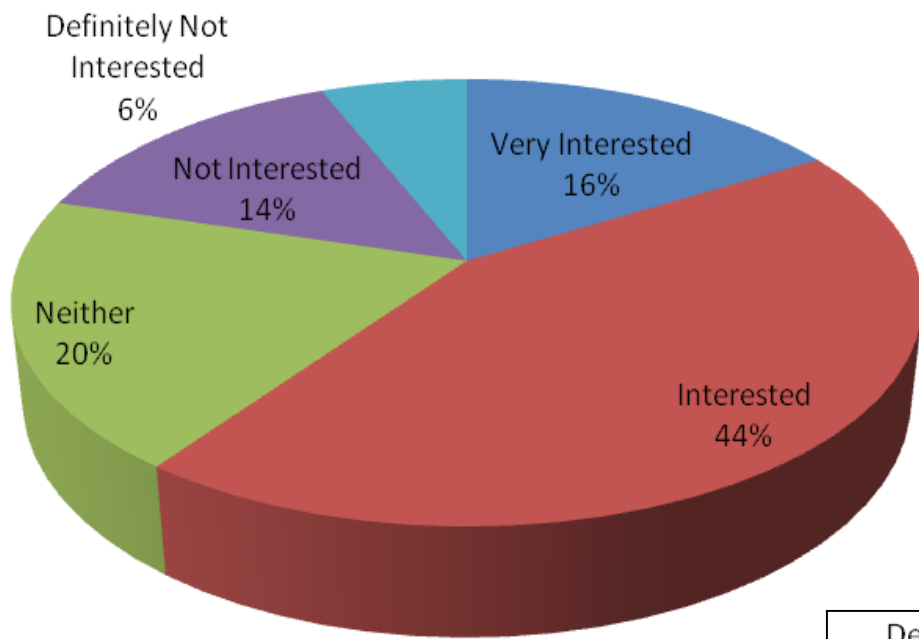
Nationwide survey of OFWs (n=1,150)  
Asian Development Bank, 2004

## ***Community development activities of OFWs in Singapore (mostly domestic helpers)***

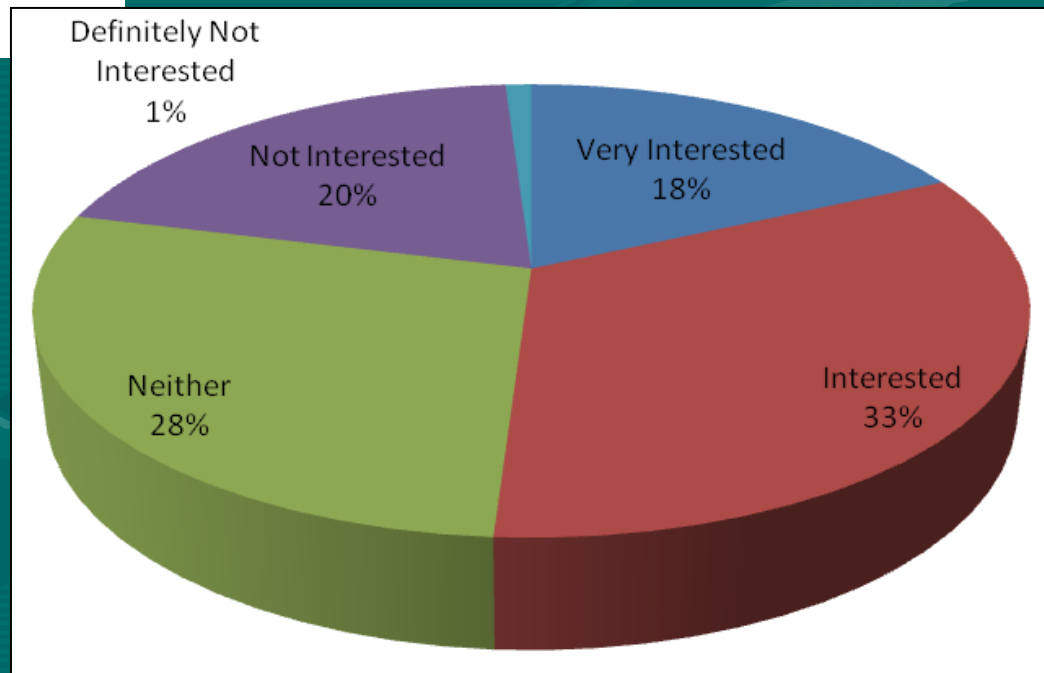
Asian Development Bank, 2004 (n=55)



# ***Will Pinoys abroad consider giving?***



***Survey of Filipino remitters  
from Italy (n=225)  
-- mostly domestic helpers***



***Survey of Filipino remitters from Malaysia  
(n=288) -- mostly domestic helpers***

Both in separate studies done by the Economic Resource Center for Overseas Filipinos (ERCOF) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), 2010-forthcoming



**Table : Preferred use of donations (n=152)**  
**by Filipinos in Malaysia**  
 Multiple answers accepted

| <b><i>Preferred use of donations</i></b>  | <b><i>F</i></b> | <b><i>%</i></b> |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|
| <i>Needy Filipinos i.e. typhoon, poor, disabled, elderly, homeless, etc</i>   | 86              | 57              |
| <i>Children – abused, disabled, special, street</i>   | 26              | 17              |
| <i>Livelihood Projects</i>  | 21              | 14              |
| <i>Family / Families left behind of overseas workers / Family first</i>   | 15              | 10              |
| <i>Others, Displaced families in , Badjaos without work roaming around, schools in rural areas, abused OFWs, etc.</i> | 8               | 5               |
| <i>Unemployed</i>   | 6               | 4               |
| <i>Church</i>   | 4               | 3               |

**Table : Preferred use of donations (n=145)  
by Filipinos in Italy**  
Multiple answers accepted

|   | <i><b>F</b></i> | <i><b>%</b></i> |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|
| <i>Children (e.g. abandoned, street children)</i> | <i>35</i>       | <i>24</i>       |
| <i>“Charity”</i>                                  | <i>29</i>       | <i>20</i>       |
| <i>Church</i>                                     | <i>18</i>       | <i>12</i>       |
| <i>Livelihood program</i>                         | <i>11</i>       | <i>8</i>        |
| <i>Town activities</i>                            | <i>8</i>        | <i>6</i>        |
| <i>Disaster victims</i>                           | <i>7</i>        | <i>5</i>        |
| <i>Disabled</i>                                   | <i>7</i>        | <i>5</i>        |
| <i>Others, e.g. unemployed, youth, etc.</i>       | <i>30</i>       | <i>20</i>       |
| <i>Total</i>                                      | <i>145</i>      | <i>100</i>      |

Economic Resource Center for Overseas Filipinos (ERCOF) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), 2010-forthcoming

**Table: Foreign and local sources of development aid**  
IMDI and PhilDHRRA, 2010--forthcoming

|  |    |      |
|--|----|------|
| Funding sources  |    |      |
| <i>A. Foreign donors</i>   |    |      |
| <i>Bilateral government funding (Official development assistance with local counterpart)</i> | 34 | 73.9 |
| <i>Northern NGO or international NGO (based abroad or with a Philippine office)</i>          | 24 | 52.2 |
| <i>Northern or international foundation (based abroad or with a Philippine office)</i>       | 5  | 10.9 |
| <i>B. Local donors</i>   |    |      |
| <i>National government agency / government-owned and controlled corporation</i>              | 13 | 28.3 |
| <i>Local government unit(s)</i>  | 19 | 41.3 |
| <i>Filipino grantmaking /operating foundation</i>  | 11 | 23.9 |
| <i>Filipino corporation / corporate social responsibility office</i>                         | 6  | 13.0 |
| <i>Filipino NGO with grants or sub-contracted projects</i>                                   | 17 | 37.0 |
| <i>Filipino Church group</i>   | 2  | 4.3  |
| <i>Filipino individuals / families</i>   | 11 | 23.9 |
| <i>C. Overseas Filipino donors</i>   |    |      |
| <i>Individuals</i>   | 3  | 6.5  |
| <i>Organization/group</i>  | 3  | 6.5  |

**Table: Views on possibly serving and seeking support from overseas Filipinos**

IMDI and PhilDHRRA, 2010--forthcoming

|   | <i>F</i> | <i>%</i> |
|---|----------|----------|
| Does your NGO / foundation / cooperative think there are no opportunities for the group if it serves overseas Filipinos?                |          |          |
| Yes   | 4        | 8.7      |
| No  | 30       | 65.2     |
| <i>Don't know</i>   | 11       | 23.9     |
| <i>No response</i>  | 1        | 2.2      |
| Does your NGO / foundation / cooperative think there are no opportunities for the group if it receives support from overseas Filipinos? |          |          |
| Yes   | 1        | 2.2      |
| No  | 35       | 76.1     |
| <i>Don't know</i>   | 8        | 17.4     |
| <i>No response</i>  | 2        | 4.3      |
| No  | 26       | 56.5     |
| <i>No response</i>  | 1        | 2.2      |



**Table: Views on possibly serving and seeking support from overseas Filipinos**

IMDI and PhilDHRRA--forthcoming

|  | <i>F</i> | <i>%</i> |
|--|----------|----------|
| Does your NGO / cooperative / foundation know where the overseas Filipinos are in their communities of operation?  |          |          |
| Yes  | 26       | 56.5     |
| No   | 19       | 41.3     |
| No response  | 1        | 2.2      |
| Does your NGO / cooperative / foundation know how to tap overseas Filipinos and their families in the communities they operate for possible donations and/or social investments? |          |          |
| Yes  | 19       | 41.3     |
| No   | 26       | 56.5     |
| No response  | 1        | 2.2      |



# Conclusion

*Just who are they?*

- *Domestic workers*
- *Drivers for diplomats*
- *Seafarers*
- *Nurses and doctors*
- *Oil riggers*
- *Spouses of foreigners*
- *‘TNTs’ (undocumented migrants)*

“If one does not understand the donor as a migrant, then you will never sense the hardships behind the money they’ve earned abroad —nor will you unleash the fullest potentials of migrant philanthropy or international migration in general.”

# *Biggest gain from OFs: Values being 'remitted'*

- *The most important 'resources' from overseas Filipinos*
  - *Remaining hope for the country amid rising hopelessness that Filipinos' overseas migration breeds*
  - *Hard work, industry, diligence, enduring odds*
  - *Reminders they give us: trust, sincerity*





# Conclusion

*They may be 'well-meaning amateurs' in development work, but Filipinos abroad remind us of the essence of doing private action for the public good —that doing and sustaining actions are not all about money.*

It is about a **collective desire**, amid the limited resources that we have, that change in the Philippines can still happen. Being part of that collective desire is a challenge being posed unto all Filipino worldwide.





# Remittances are billions worth of directly-flowed trust



# ***Migrant philanthropy and trust***

## **Circulation of trust**

