

OFFICE OF PROGRAMME EVALUATION

**EVALUATION OF THE IOM INFORMATION PROGRAMME IN
THE PHILIPPINES**

April 1999



IOM International Organization for Migration

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A preliminary project proposal intended to promote information on migration and trafficking among Overseas Filipino Workers and potential migrants was finalized in September 1996. The project officially started in April 1997 for an initial duration of 14 months thanks to a financial contribution of the Belgian and Finnish Governments, respectively of USD 159'744 and USD 25'440. It was implemented in close collaboration with a Belgium-Philippines bilateral project against trafficking. An internal evaluation of the project was requested in 1998 by SRO Manila and RAO at Headquarters.

Concerning the project document, the preliminary project proposal is the only reference and can be considered poorly designed. Among other things, it was too general, especially as regards the objective and project purposes, with no specific results, or indicators, and the general strategy and presentation of the context was vague. It is important to stress that poor project design is not good for IOM's credibility and its capacity to implement such projects, whatever the perceived success might be, and hypothetically reduces the interest of a broader range of potential donors. Moreover, due to the vagueness of the preliminary project proposal, it would be hazardous to state that the project scope and implementation strategy are fully relevant to the situation in the Philippines. The project was found to be of relevance to IOM global mandate and to three of the six IOM service areas in which IOM aspires to play a lead role.

In order to compensate for the weaknesses of the project document and to give a better reference to the evaluation exercise, the effectiveness of the project implementation has been examined from different angles. Briefly, the choice of well-known radio stations and of famous anchorpersons was a positive element in implementing this kind of information dissemination. Major criticism concerns the briefness of the first broadcast (15 minutes). Some guests had the impression that the topics debated were not adequately covered and that problems were raised but no solution examined. However, they also acknowledged that the information format was currently the best way to raise these concerns in the Philippines. The communication strategy was elaborated and refined through the organization of two formal Consultative Committee meetings, grouping the major partners of the project as well as external participants. All the main partners, including the donors, confirmed their satisfaction with the formal arrangements for project implementation. It is also worth underlining the very interesting parallel activities that were conducted during project implementation in order to reach the provinces more effectively: organization of an 'information caravan', distribution of 20,000 leaflets, performance of a short play on the theme of trafficking, organization of Basic Orientation Seminars, printing of more than 10,000 leaflets for distribution in the schools and communities.

At the level of project efficiency, it can be concluded that the results justified the costs incurred. Before implementation of main activities, a preliminary financial analysis

was made and appropriate expenditure levels were ascertained. In addition, the expenses made versus the planned results of an activity were regularly evaluated by the Coordinating Committee. The use of local resources was also promoted.

A 'change in attitude' is commonly expected from an information programme. For this reason, the sustainability of the project is an important concern. During the evaluation many interviewees raised the question "what next?", "what follow-up activities are planned?". On the basis of available material, it would appear that no integrated follow-up activities or programmes have really been explored.

Not having any precise reference in the project document, the impact analysis is affected in the same way as the analysis of other evaluation concerns. It is virtually impossible to draw conclusions of the project's impact on the global population of Overseas Filipino Workers. In addition, most OFWs do not face major problems abroad. As far as potential migrants are concerned, most Filipinos could fall into this category. It would thus be difficult to measure the impact without a broader survey. It is however possible to state that the impact was positive if we target the analysis on potential migrants in the communities or in the schools reached by the project, and if we consider that communities and schools are the right places to reach a maximum of potential migrants.

At the partners level, the creation of the Consultative and of the Coordinating Committees was crucial to the success of the project, especially given their conflicting views. It is recognized that collaboration with IOM has been globally successful and joint implementation of activities was a result of such a positive impact. It is worth making reference here to a potential impact on foreign governments, especially if we consider migration and trafficking of Filipinos as part of their concerns. However, apart from the donors, there was no evidence that a foreign government had increased awareness of the problems as a result of the IOM information program.

Special mention should be made of the professionalism of IOM Manila's operational management during the implementation. In addition, the level of the financial and administrative management was good. However data collection on the project activities should be improved. Gender aspects were given careful attention.

Overall, there is no doubt that this project has been implemented successfully. However, particular attention should be paid to the recommendations and lessons learned contained in this report which could certainly enhance the success of future IOM initiatives or broaden interest in them, and with a minimum investment (see Sections 5 and 6).