

The Struggle and Development of Migrants Movement: The Philippine Experience

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Presented at the 3rd International Conference on Transborder and Diaspora:
Governance, Survival and Movements.

October 7-8, 2006, Taipei,

Organized by the Graduate Institute for Social Transformation Studies,
Shih Hsin University, Taipei, Taiwan

Introduction

"We dream of a society where families are not broken up by the urgent need for survival. We dream and will actively work for a homeland where there is opportunity for everyone to live a decent and humane life."

These were the words spoken by Filipino migrants in Hong Kong at the height of a campaign against forced remittances. This was imposed by deposed dictator Marcos in 1984 under Executive Order No. 857 which called for the mandatory remittance of 70% of Filipino migrants' earnings to the Philippines through banking channels.

Those words inspired the Filipino migrants in Hong Kong to continue the resistance against any forms of attacks on their rights and welfare which also led to the formation of the United Filipinos Against Forced Remittances which later led to the formation of a progressive and militant alliance of Filipino domestic workers organizations in Hong Kong – the United Filipinos in Hong Kong or UNIFIL, established in 1985.

The campaign against forced remittances was even emulated in other countries particularly by Filipino groups in the United States and Saudi Arabia. Their families, together with the returned migrants (migrant workers who decided to return back to the Philippines) and their advocates in the Philippines joined the campaign until the punitive provision of the forced remittance was removed.

Through this campaign, the labor export policy of the Philippine government was exposed as well as with the root causes of forced migration. While on the other hand, some inspiring lessons were also identified, one of which was that only through united and organized actions can migrants defend and ensure the protection of their rights and wellbeing.

Since then, Filipino migrants' organizations mushroomed in different parts of the globe. Some were transformed into alliances and involved themselves in more militant struggles (participating in protest actions) especially at the height of the series of anti-migrant policies imposed by the government of Hong Kong ranging from wage cut to removal of maternity protection. These policies were implemented on top of the already existing problems of migrant workers such as illegal termination, underpayment and different forms of abuses. It also included issues concerning policies in the Philippines that affect the socio-economic and cultural lives of the Filipino people.

There are now more than 300 Filipino migrant organizations in Hong Kong. of various nature (sports, religious, civic organizations, regional, town or village based self-help groups, etc) According to Hong Kong Immigration record, as of 31 July 2006, there were 229,208 foreign domestic helpers in Hong Kong – 225,643 of them were female and 3,565 of them were male. The number of Filipinos were around 119,000 and 98,000 were Indonesians. The rest were from Thailand, Sri Lanka, Nepal and other South Asian countries.

Most of UNIFIL's 21 member organizations are now part of the global formation of Filipino migrant organizations called MIGRANTE International.

Increased Forced Migration

According to the World Migration Report 2005, "migrants represent 2.9% of the global population. The UN Population Division estimates the migrant population in 2005 at between 185-192 million people – up from 175 million in 2000. Nearly half of them are female. However, the socio-economic and political visibility of migrants, especially in highly industrialized countries, is much greater than this percentage would suggest."

This continuing flow of people seeking jobs outside of their homelands is principally a result of the unabated conditions of poverty, landlessness and unemployment in many

underdeveloped nations. In fact, since 1980, the “push factors” of emigration have intensified. In the said study by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), this trend of economic migration is rooted in extreme poverty and differences in living standards between countries.

In the Philippines, according to the latest labor force survey (LFS) done by the National Statistics Office (NSO). Unemployment went up to 11.7% in the third quarter compared to 10.9% in the same period last year. After six consecutive quarters of decline, the number of jobless Filipinos jumped by 395,000 in July to 4.4 million from 4.0 million in the same month last year.

Unlike in previous quarters when the bulk of new jobs came from agriculture, additional jobs in July came mostly from services, which added 873,000 jobs from its year-ago level. By contrast, agriculture lost 149,000 jobs while employment in industry barely nudged.

As a result of the continued increase in unemployment and underemployment, almost 10% of the population are working and living abroad. The Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) recorded the number of Filipinos deployed abroad in 2005 to 981,677 which is near the promised 1 million jobs of President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo. However, this is through labor export instead of self generating jobs locally.

Table: Filipinos deployed abroad from 2003 to 2005

	2003	2004	2005
BY GLOBAL REGIONS			
MIDDLE EAST	285,564	352,314	393,654
ASIA	255,287	266,609	253,276
EUROPE	37,981	55,116	51,970
AMERICAS	11,049	11,692	11,258
AFRICA	8,750	8,485	9,098
TRUST TERRITORIES	5,023	7,177	7,595
OCEANIA	1,698	3,023	2,859
UNSPECIFIED	46,279	1	135
Deployed Landbased Total	651,938	704,586	733,970
Deployed Seabased Total	216,031	229,002	247,707
GRAND TOTAL	867,969	933,588	981,677

Source: Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA)

<http://www.poea.gov.ph/stats/2005deployment.xls>

Forced Migration Process

In the Philippines, labor exportation is being done in a systematic and institutionalized way. Labor export in the Philippines started as a stop-gap measure during the time of Marcos. He himself later developed it into a labor export program of the government. Thus, those succeeded him in running the government from Aquino to Estrada continuously developed and intensified the labor export program of the government. Even the current President Macapagal-Arroyo openly admitted that the economy cannot absorb migrant workers who are returning home. Instead, she encouraged them to stay abroad and send their remittances to help the ailing economy.

To ensure labor exportation in the Philippines, POEA was established during the time of Marcos. POEA is a government agency under the Department of Labor and Employment or DOLE that serves as the biggest recruitment agency in the Philippines. Its main task is to look for prospective labor market abroad and to document departing Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW). Other role of POEA is to supervise private recruitment agencies.

A Labor Attaché in Hong Kong once admitted in a public forum that the primary task of his office is to ensure overseas employment and to look for a favorable labor market and that his office has no legal power to protect the rights and well-being of Filipinos in Hong Kong.

As a matter of policy, prospective OFW's must pass through the POEA process before they can leave the country. An OFW is not permitted to leave the country without the Overseas Employment Certificate issued by the POEA.

Aside from POEA, there is also another office that supposedly provides welfare services to Filipino migrants. This is the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration or OWWA. But in practice, this office is more interested in collecting fees rather than providing welfare services to Filipino migrants.

Aside from the institutional mechanisms of the government, there also exists Memorandum Circular No. 41 that makes it mandatory for all departing Filipino migrants to pass through recruitment agencies before they can leave the country and work abroad. It resulted in the mushrooming of recruitment agencies that collect large amount of money to the departing

workers as recruitment fees. The Philippine government for the past years has failed to get rid of unscrupulous recruitment agencies.

In short, MC41 does not only intensify labor export, it is also a manifestation of the partnership of the government and private sector in exploiting and extracting revenues from Filipino migrants. It also paves the way for high-ranking government officials to take part in this business of exporting people.

A training center for prospective migrants was also established in the Philippines. The training is being done through TESDA and it offers training courses that supposedly enhance the skills of prospective migrant workers. Recruitment of prospective migrant workers is also being done from the *barangay* (village) level up to the national level.

Currently, the Philippine government is using various forms or processes and agreements in exporting human labor which includes bilateral, regional and multilateral trade agreements. The recent Japan-Philippine Economic Partnership Agreement or JPEPA which leads to the exportation of 1000 Filipino medical workers to Japan every year is a classic example of this. The Philippine government also used to be in the lead in the negotiation at the General Agreement on Trade and Services or GATS within the Doha round framework in the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Thus, considering the abovementioned conditions on forced migration and the systematic and institutionalized labor exportation, Filipino migrants have nothing to rely on in terms of upholding and protecting their rights and well being but through their own organized united strengthens. It is also the same with other nationalities of migrants from other third world or underdeveloped countries which makes organizing of im/migrant workers as a challenge to us all.

Below are brief lessons derived from the Philippine experience in organizing im/migrant workers as well as in building the national, regional and global alliance of Filipino migrant organizations.

Important Components in Organizing Work

Forming an organization must undergo a process or what we call step-by-step organizing. There are two ways in dealing with organizing work. One is to organize those who are willing to organize themselves in their workplace. Second, is to organize the migrants or group of migrants outside their workplace or company that employs them.

To maximize the time and effort of those willing to engage in organizing work, it is recommended to start the work with individuals or group of migrants in their workplaces before reaching out to other migrants in other areas. In essence, they can gather experiences from here and can effectively encourage others or the newly formed migrant organization to do organizing in other locations. Thus, more organizers will learn from such experiences and a wider range of migrants shall be reached.

1. Data Documentation and Research

This process is very fundamental in order to know the situation, condition, issues and problems confronting migrant Filipinos in a particular country. It also gives an insight on the political and economic situation and culture of the host country. Furthermore, it provides an understanding of the economic relations of migrants in countries where they live.

Doing research study to know the conditions of migrant Filipinos is not done in one sitting. It entails a continuous process of knowing and study - a separate plan for investigation and from time to time study of the confirmation/credibility of information gathered.

Continuing study and investigation is important in organizing work, yielding from here a concrete basis to form an organization. It gives us the basis to determine the form or type of mass organization that will be established, whether it is an association of domestic helpers, or migrant health workers, immigrants' organization or the likes of a patriotic organization. Likewise, we can determine the forms of exploitation on migrant Filipinos in a particular country under the US-Arroyo regime and the tactics we can formulate with regards our effort to organize and launch mass campaigns.

In the process of our work, by using social investigation, we can identify those who may be able to extend help in organizing work as well as those elements or individuals who are there to impede the consciousness raising, mobilizing & organizing of migrant Filipinos.

Research studies must include Integration with the masses. It is an important and major form of investigation wherein we are directly in touch and hold discussions with the concerned migrants. In this manner, the organizers can identify the day-to-day problems of the migrants being organized and their way to solve these, things that get their interests and are close to them.

Data documentation is also a form of gathering facts and figures through newspapers, documents of the government's agencies and from books, surveys, interviews, etc.

2. Groups of Contacts of Migrants (GCM)

In the process of launching social investigation and integration among migrants, it can identify those migrants who are relatively advanced, middle and backward. The advanced masses are those active and who regularly participate in political discussions and are willing to learn and deliver from tasked assigned. The "middle" masses are those who attend discussions albeit irregularly and find difficulty to spare time for education and mass actions. The "backward" masses are those whom we cannot expect to attend our discussions and other forms of education activities but who support and believe in our work and struggle.

Those identified as advanced and some middle masses may be grouped together to assist us to reach and integrate with our compatriots and in gathering information relevant to our social investigation.

Three to five individuals may constitute a group of contacts. This is formed in a particular area where there are relative numbers and concentration of migrant Filipinos for example, in a particular building, workers' quarters, blocks and community. This can also be formed inside a factory depending on the number of migrant Filipinos. If there are only a few numbers of migrant Filipinos in one area, factory, shops or workers' quarter, they can be assigned to a specific place that will cover the area of responsibility of the said group of

contacts. The group may also be responsible to identify places of concentration of migrant Filipinos.

It is possible to bond migrants in different places and identify this as a specific area of responsibility (AOR) in the likes of a community, district, municipality and region or based on the categorization of the host country. This aims to determine direct migrants being aroused, mobilized and organized so that we have a focus in our work and we can identify the quantity of those we are avail to organize in our area of responsibility.

3. The Organizing Group of Migrants (OGM)

The grouping of known individuals and contacts does not mean we can already comprehensively form a mass organization if it remains in this level. We need to transform this group of contacts of migrants into an Organizing Group of Migrants (OGM). This OGM is immediately formed after we have reached-out a relative number of contacts who will assist us in our organizing work. Once the OGM is formed, the GCM will then be dissolved because the OGM will take broader tasks. Its major objective now is to establish a mass organization of migrant Filipinos.

The OGM is composed of contacts of "advanced" migrants, meaning they are most active in carrying out assigned tasks and they accept the objective to form a mass organization in a specific area.

The OGM is composed of 3 to 5 individuals, one of which is designated to perform the task of a team leader. A second or a deputy team leader may be assigned. Others may be tasked to do the following responsibilities: education, propaganda, finance, organizing and other important tasks and requirements to form an organization. However, we have to take note that these tasks are the responsibilities of the whole OGM.

The OGM's role is to ensure the formation of an organization and to arouse, mobilize and organize migrants who want to be members of this organization. To realize this, there's a need to launch regular and continuing formal and informal education and reproduction of reading materials that will help them understand the situation and rights of migrant Filipinos as well as the political-economic situation in the Philippines.

The OGM is also responsible in preparing documents required to put-up an organization, such as its Constitution and by-laws and policies, resolutions, and election of officers. Other technical needs including the arrangement of a venue to hold the general assembly are arranged by this group.

The OGM may also form a special group that prepare for the general assembly but this must be supervised directly by the OGM.

Once a formal meeting to form an organization is held, the OGM will no longer have the basis to exist; it is thus dissolved as the operation of the formal organization begins.

In the whole, it is the obligation of those composing the OGM to arouse, organize and mobilize the Filipino migrants in their area of responsibility and to form a mass organization in a specific place that will uphold the interest and struggle of the Filipino people to achieve a national democratic change in the Philippine society.

4. Organizing Committee of Migrants (OCM)

Once there are at least three OGMs formed in a specific area, block or community, it is important that close coordination of these OGMs is ensured in implementing our organizing work. To ensure this, an OCM is thus formed.

It is the responsibility and task of the OCM to serve as the channel of the programs of OGMs and for the coordination of its program of actions.

In order to concretely manage and ensure that the OCM will operate its task to arouse, organize and mobilize migrant Filipinos, the team leaders of the OGMs must compose the OCM.

Take note that in the process of our organizing work and formation of a mass organization, the nature of OCM is merely temporary and is dissolved at the time the OGM's tasked to form a mass organization is fulfilled.

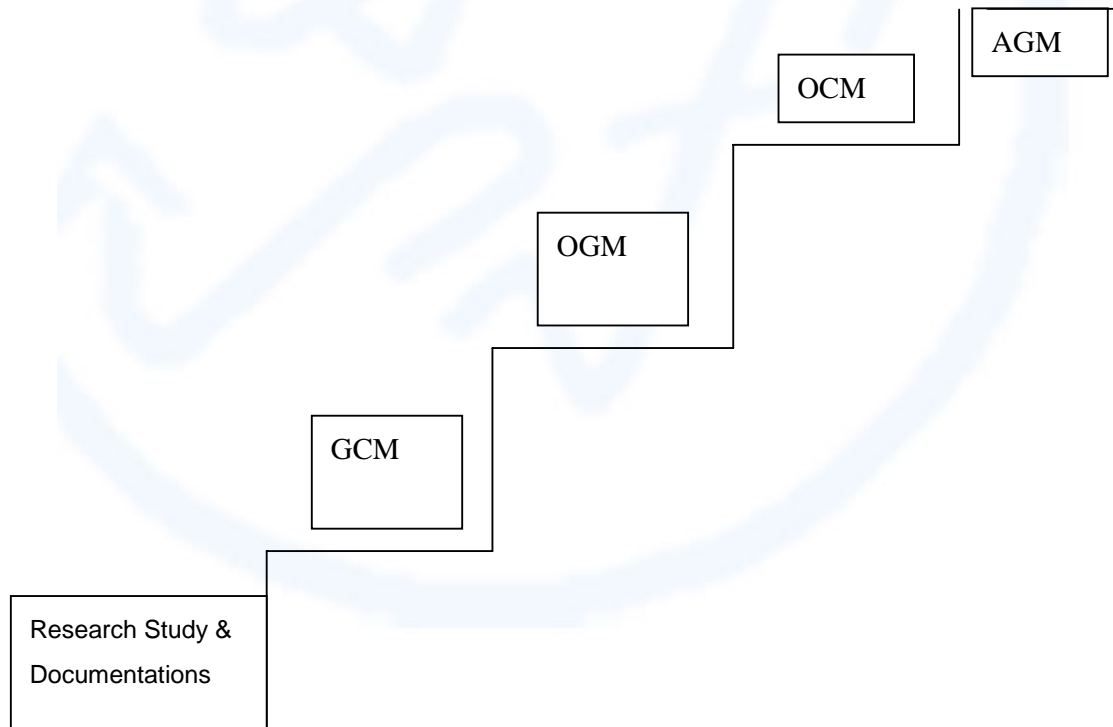
5. The General Assembly

Simultaneous with the launching of a political education for migrants (Philippine national issues affecting peoples lives and rights) and the launching of political mass actions is the preparation for the general assembly of targeted members for the organization.

The basis of unity, objectives of the organization, and provisions with regards to the policies of the organization and the rights and obligations of the membership, must be discussed and unify those who are in the said general assembly.

Proposed resolutions regarding different issues and elections of officers of the organization will also be presented. The general assembly is the highest body inside an organization.

Here is the diagram to illustrate the process:



Brief Development Migrant Organizing and Resistance in Saudi Arabia and Korea

The realization of a dream: Saudi Arabia

It was in 1984, after the establishment of the Asia Pacific Mission for Migrant Filipinos or APMMF, when contact in this country among Filipino migrants was first established. There were around 328,111 Filipinos in this country in 1985 and most of them were working in construction, hospitals, government agencies, and other services-related work.

The primary concern during this period was how to address the very difficult situation of migrant workers in Saudi Arabia, given its very conservative socio-political system. The breakthrough in organizing work in Saudi Arabia debunked the findings of some NGOs who had earlier visited the country and then came out with the conclusion that it was impossible to do organizing work there.

In 1985, APMMF facilitated the formation of volunteer groups of Filipinos in Jeddah and Riyadh. Two migrant groups were formed and these would operate secretly among the migrant workers there, because it the very strict monarchial forbidden any form of social organization aside from Islam.

Kapatiran sa Gitnang Silangan (KGS) in Riyadh, and the Filipino Expatriates, Inc. (FILEX) in Jeddah were launched in 1986. The System of Unity for Social Integration (SUSI) was also established in the Eastern Province during this period. Their members were mostly migrants working in hospitals, banks, transportation, engineering and construction sites. KGS even had its own publication called Kabayan.

In 1989, KUMPARE (Kapulungan at Ugnayan ng mga Migranteng Pilipino sa Arabong Rehiyon) was formed in Jeddah. KUMPARE operationalized its organizing work through camp hopping, initiating discussion groups, and forming core groups in specific areas. Its welfare assistance extended to providing food and shelter and encouraging a sense of belongingness among stranded workers and other victims of labor issues. A Saudi-wide migrant rights and welfare formation called KASAMA-KA was also established in 1992 and it had six organizations under its wing.

In 1992, two full-time organizers of APMMF were sent to Saudi Arabia to do follow-up work and assist in MIGRANTE's organizing and education work. These two organizers were former migrants working in Saudi Arabia and were leaders/organizers before they decided to become full-time organizers. Their work was to continue what they initiated before and to further pursue the organizing work that they had once left behind. Their presence also helped to fill the vacuum that was created by some leaders who decided to return home for good.

The experience and lessons derived from the period of 1984 - 1991 gave impetus to migrant organizations and organizers to expand to other areas in Saudi Arabia, and to build on the initial organizing work that was first established in Riyadh, the Eastern Province, and Jeddah.

Aside from contacting and developing closer ties with the existing migrant organizations in the region, a new formation was established during the early part of this period -- the Association of Dressmakers in the Eastern Province which had a membership of 200 migrant workers. Another organization named Lakas Manggagawa sa Jubail (Workers Strength in Jubail) or LMJ with around 50 members was also established in the Eastern Province at around the same time as the Association of Dressmakers.

The presence of full-time organizers during this period resulted in the conduct of seminar-workshops in organizing and leadership training in Riyadh, Jeddah and the Eastern Province. The seminar-workshops dealt on the process and methods of organizing migrant workers, e.g., how to facilitate contacts and develop them to become part of an organizing group.

Consultations/workshops on secondary-level training, like leadership formation for Saudi-based leaders, instructors' training for organisers, and cooperatives development for some workers were held. Issue campaigns against unjust labor practices were also done, an example of which was the advocacy action for 32 dismissed teachers of the Philippine Embassy School in Riyadh who were later reinstated because of advocacy campaigns staged by migrant groups and supported by migrant institution in the region.

Organizing work in Saudi at this time was vibrant. Migrant workers' organizations were active because many of their members knew the importance of being organized and they participated enthusiastically in the training workshops and in the advocacy campaigns that were conducted. It was, therefore, a great loss when some migrant leaders had to return home due to the expiration of their working contracts. The active members of the Dressmakers Association in the Eastern Province were also forced to return home when their employers decided to close down their factories as a result of the economic crisis and stiff market competition.

By the end of this period, the number of leader/organizers diminished, and some of the migrant organizations established earlier became inactive. These were the Association of Dressmakers in the Eastern Province, the Filipino Expatriates, Inc. (FILEX), and KUMPARE in Jeddah. As a consequence, the Saudi-wide formation called KASAMA-KA would later on become inactive. One of the founding member organizations of MIGRANTE, the Kapatiran sa Gitnang Silangan (KGS), would remain active in Riyadh, while KALMAPI continued to exist in the industrial area.

Despite the Saudi situation, organizing work was initiated among stranded workers who called themselves Migrant Workers Stranded in Riyadh (MWSR). As mentioned earlier, the difficulties of organizing work in Saudi Arabia were even more exacerbated because of the fear that these undocumented workers lived through - they were officially categorized as "criminals" and no institutionalized mechanisms was available for their protection. Fellow migrants who would help them faced grave danger and they could be deported for "coddling criminals".

For years, the plight of these stranded workers was taken up in various advocacy campaigns (regional/international petition signing, protest actions inside the Philippine Embassy and Labor Office as well as in different Philippine Embassies in different countries) and it was only during this period that they were brought together, to organize and mobilize them to act on their situation, and to demand protection from their government -- after all, they paid exorbitant membership and service fees to OWWA and other government agencies so they could be insured or protected from such calumny.

In 1996, as a result of the campaign, they were repatriated back to Manila where they reconvened themselves and affiliated their formation with MIGRANTE International. The ensuing MIGRANTE-led campaign resulted in the release of a US\$10,000 fund by the Department of Foreign Affairs of the Philippine government for a male shelter facility, food and medicines for the stranded workers. It also resulted in the repatriation of 2,000 of them from Saudi Arabia.

During this period, problems on how best to organize migrants in a very conservative country like Saudi Arabia, and how to do organizing work in a situation where there was a fast turnover rate among migrant workers needed to be addressed.

Summing-up of experiences and a drawing of lessons were conducted. It was pointed out that in Saudi, the training of second-liners who could take up the tasks of organizing work had to be done through a learning-while-doing method. This meant that would-be volunteers were encouraged to attend meetings wherein various things were concretely done like in the conceptualization of campaigns, discussion of issues, trouble-shooting to solve organizational problems and other related matters.

Coupled with this on-the-job training, so to speak, there was the need for organizers to focus on assisting existing organizations, on doing expansion work through chapter building, and on more organizing in the industrial-based areas. The key to this was the conduct of regular assessments and learning from the summing-up of experiences.

From issues to organizing: South Korea

In 1999, a campaign launched by some Filipino migrant groups against excessive collections of passport fees and temporary travel document of the Philippine Embassy was held. This happened during the height of the 1997 financial crisis that forced migrant workers in Korea to return home.

The campaign was launched after a series consultations made by APMMF representative who happened to be present in Korea during the announcement of the Philippine Embassy that they will increase the collection of fees. Afterwards, a series of dialogues with the Philippine Embassy officials were held.

The campaign was supported by other migrant groups in different countries and in the Philippines through MIGRANTE International. It forced the Philippine Embassy in Korea to lower its fees for passports and temporary travel documents.

The lessons and experiences after the lowering of fees became more significant and it encouraged the leaders and members of different organizations to continue with their unity and united actions. This led to the formation of KASAMMAKO or Unity of Filipino Migrant Workers in Korea, an alliance of Filipino migrant organizations which was formally established in the same year.

The alliance was originally composed by the Association of Filipino Migrant Workers in Korea (AFILMWOK), Bicol Association, Federation of Filipino Workers in Korea (FFWK), New Era Foundation, Sama-sama sa Korea (SSK).

Almost half of the 27,000 Filipinos in Korea in year 2000 were undocumented migrants, meaning they did not have proper working documents.

The presence of a full-time organizer to coordinate different activities and conduct direct organizing among the undocumented migrants was a very important factor. But this should not be taken as a pre-requisite in organizing migrants. The campaign in 1999 was held without the presence of a full-time organizer. What was important was the courage and unity of migrant workers to oppose and resist anti-migrant policies both by their own government and the government of the host country.

Due to their mobility problem, regular visits among migrants' workplaces and living quarters were held regularly. This provided regular updates on the issues of the day and also served as a venue to do coordination work. For KASAMMAKO leaders, they conducted their regular visits after work and during their day-off.

At present, member organizations of KASAMMAKO expanded from the original five member organization to 10 member organizations. KASAMMAKO continued to launch campaigns against the trainee system, cancellation of passports, crackdown of undocumented migrants, excessive fees and sex trafficking among others. They conducted campaign actions aside

from the day to day welfare and labor related cases that they handled among their member organizations.

From National to Regional and Global Strength

In January 1992, a conference of Filipino migrant organizations from different countries took place that established the Committee for the Unity of Overseas Filipinos (CUOF). It was composed of progressive organizations and institutions that promote and protect the rights and welfare of overseas compatriots and the Filipino people. The CUOF was mandated to prepare for the formation of an alliance of progressive organizations in the Asia-Pacific region. After two months, CUOF was renamed Migrante-APME. However, its implementation was suspended because there was still a need to strengthen and expand the progressive Filipino organizations in the region.

By this time, the national democratic movement in the Philippines was undergoing renewal. Those who instigated the disorientation from within the movement left on their own accord, while a few were suspended. The renewal instilled a better understanding of the situation and the work that must be done among our overseas compatriots. It gave renewed vigor to the patriotic movement overseas.

In 1994, another consultation took place with representatives of progressive Filipino organizations and institutions in the Asia-Pacific, North America and Western Europe in attendance. A decision was taken to transform Migrante-APME into Migrante-International. An Executive Committee was formed to prepare for the convening of the Founding Congress of Migrante-International.

When the Flor Contemplacion (a Filipina who was hanged in Singapore for allegedly killing a lad) issue erupted in 1995, Migrante-International spearheaded the campaign in the Philippines. In close coordination with progressive Filipino organizations in different countries and with different sectors in the country, the campaign was militant and became widespread. It had a strong impact within and outside the country that shook the Ramos regime, as well as the Singapore government that took a beating from the international media. The campaign brought the situation of overseas Filipino migrant workers to the

national and international level. It consolidated the need for an international alliance of progressive Filipino organizations that promote the rights and welfare of overseas compatriots and of the Filipino people.

The Founding Congress of Migrante-International took place in 1996. Migrante-International aims to arouse, organize and mobilize overseas compatriots to fight for their rights and welfare and to support and participate in the movement for social change in the Philippines. It is firmly convinced that the solution to the continuing migration of Filipinos abroad lies in resolving the basic problems of the Filipino people in achieving national freedom and democracy.

At the moment, MIGRANTE International together with its partners in different global regions is working towards building a global alliance of im/migrant and refugees organization of different nationalities in different countries worldwide. Part of the preparation process is the meeting of the convenors groups this coming December in Cebu, Philippines and the founding assembly targeted next year.

This global formation will serve as a global voice and strength of im/migrant and refugees and will surely work actively for a homeland where there is opportunity for everyone to live a decent and humane life.

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