

**Empowering Philippine Women in Europe – Their participation in the Development Processes in Europe and in the Philippines**  
***“The Gender dimensions of migration and development”***

Analysing migration through the perspective of gender will make us realise how challenging it is to try to divide up experiences of migration as forced or voluntary, positive or negative, empowering or restrictive. Migration stories are filled with real-life experiences of women migrants fleeing countries devastated by famine and hunger, toiling 24/7 doing domestic work to support an impoverished family back home, escaping from a violent husband or from a forced marriage, exchanging sex work for the much needed cash, and believing sweet promises of good work and earnings but ending up trapped in slave-like conditions.

It is no denying that migration can lead to some degree of economic and social emancipation for women. It can also result into opportunities of changing traditional gender roles in the society. Migration offers both men and women the opportunity to develop skills to earn a living – sending money to the family back home as the main motivation. On the other hand, migration can also strengthen the traditional gender stereotype of women’s dependency and lack of decision-making power.

It is important to acknowledge from the migration context that the motivation to migrate, the destination, physical security and safety, are partly dictated by the gender of the migrant. Gender impacts on how the migrant contribute to and benefit from her/his final destination. And ultimately how she/he can play a role in achieving both social and economic development.

International labour migration is not new to the Philippines and its colonial history, but the exporting of women workers is. At the end of the twentieth century, Philippine gendered labour migration and its diaspora have become not only the primary means of keeping the Philippine economy afloat, but have also created new conditions and problems which affect the current Philippine social and cultural identities. The magnitude of the feminisation of Philippine migration has never been as significant as it is today. Currently, there are more than 9 million overseas Filipinos worldwide, almost 10% of the total population of the Philippines, dispersed in more than 193 countries and destinations. The Filipino diaspora is the third largest in terms of population.

While women migration has many advantages, it does not come without obstacles and challenges as experienced by Philippine women in the Babaylan network. Within the context of the growing trend of international migration and its feminisation, the women of Babaylan are found in its core.

Like other migrant women in Europe, we encounter a host of problems. National immigration laws and policies prohibit the smooth integration of migrant women; their social and economic contributions are under-valued and under-recognised. They are vulnerable to gender-based violence either within a relationship or in the work place. Language problem is one big obstacle migrants are confronted with in their countries of destination. In addition, the significant lack of policies from the context of migration from both sending and receiving countries does not help migrant women in their daily struggle for a better life. It is an emerging challenge to harness correctly the positive development potentials of migration.

It is against this background that Babaylan embarks on this integrated awareness-raising and capacity building project. This project will focus on the inter-relationship between gender, migration and development. International rights frameworks on migration, refugees, women’s human rights and trafficking will be important starting points in this project.

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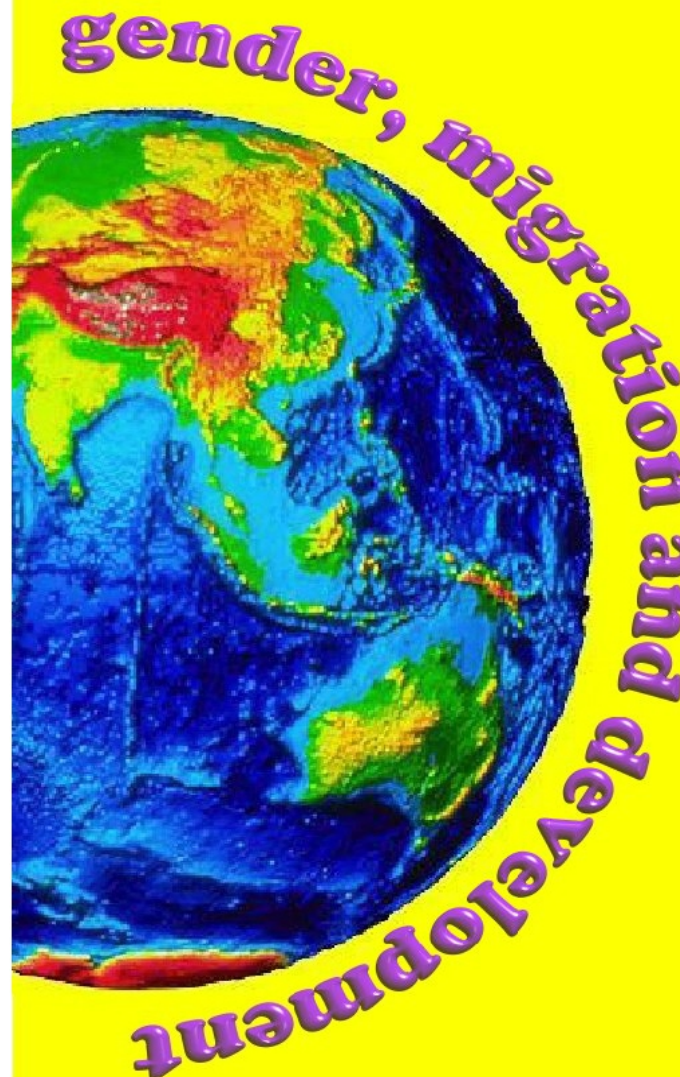
# Babaylan

Philippine Women's Network in Europe

Conference and 15th Year Anniversary

***“gender dimensions of migration and development”***

October 26-28, 2007 Cologne, Germany



**Empowering Philippine Women in Europe: Their participation in the Development Processes in Europe and in the Philippines**  
**“The Gender dimensions of migration and development”**

**Friday, 26 October**

**15.00 - 18.00 Check-in / Registration**

**18.30 – 19.30 Dinner**

**20.00 – 22.00 Opening and welcome**

- Philippine Women's Forum, host organisation

**Presentation of country delegates and guests**

- Marcelina Gschwend, member Babaylan Interim Committee

**Book presentation: In the Olde Worlde: Views of Filipino Migrants in**

**Europe** – Filomenita Mongaya Hoegsholm, member Babaylan Interim Committee, Founding Chairperson Babaylan Denmark

**Presentation of Results of Survey: Coming of Age**

- Babaylan Switzerland

**Saturday, 27 October**

**7.30 - 8.30 BREAKFAST**

**9.00 - 9.15 Opening of the day:** Marylou Hardillo Werning, member Interim Committee  
**Opening remarks** – Her Excellency Delia Domingo, Philippine Ambassador to Germany (*invited*)

**9.15 – 9.30 15 years of Babaylan, an Overview**

- Adora Fischer and Malu Padilla, members Babaylan Interim Committee

**9.30 – 10.15 Panel presentations**

**Gender and Development issues of Philippine Migration in Europe**

- Sally Rousset, member of Babaylan France, works with “Développement et Civilisations Lebret-Irled” in Paris.:

**Migration as a strategy for development - Trends and Perspectives**

- Bernice Campos Roldan, advocacy officer Unlad-Kabayan, Philippines

**Migration and Development – looking at it from the African women's Perspective**

- Zeedah Meierhofer-Mangeli, Founding chairperson, Black Women's Resource Center, Zurich, former Director, Akina Mama wa Africa (*invited*),

**10.15 – 10.30 Open Forum – Q & A**

**10.30 -10.45 BREAK**

**10.45 – 12.30 Discussion Groups on the morning topics** (break out groups)

**12.30 – 13.30 LUNCH**

**13.45 – 15.30 Parallel Workshops**

- Remittances as instrument for development – *Bernice Campos Roldan*  
*Objective: To exchange info on the possibilities of using remittances as instrument for investments on developments projects.*
- Gender and Literature in Cultural Context – *Adora Fischer*  
*Objective: To sensitize participants to gender stereotyping in Philippine Folktales. To find out how Philippine Folktales represent gender and sexuality. To find out who or what defines gender in Philippine Folktales.*
- Developing a Filipina Migrant Agenda in Europe – Our issues and concerns  
- *Malu Padilla and Lina Gschwend*  
*Objective: To define issues and concerns of women migrants and come up with recommendations for action.*
- Campaign of the Domestic Workers in Europe – Updates and Plans  
- *Fe Jusay*, Commission for Filipino Migrant Workers (CFMW)  
*Objective: To share updates on the status of the campaign and come up with recommendations for cooperative action..*
- How do you do that? Putting up a migrant women's savings and credit cooperative – the Diwata experience  
- *Debbie Carlos Valencia*, Diwata, Greece  
*Objective: To encourage women to put up initiatives by sharing good practices.*

**15.30 – 15.45 BREAK**

**15.45 – 16:15 Workshop Reports**

**16.30 – 19.30 Babaylan Congress (guests are welcome as observers)**

- Report/Update Interim Committee, Adora Fischer
- Finance Report, Tess de Man-Selibio, interim treasurer
- Country Reports
- Babaylan organizational matters (i.e. amendment proposals to the Constitution)
- Election of Babaylan ExeCom

**19.45 – 20.45 Dinner**

**21.00 – 23.00 Cultural Night, Tombola**

**Sunday, 28 October**

**7.30 - 8.30 BREAKFAST**

**9:00 – 11:00 Plenary session** c/o Babaylan ExeCom

- Presentation and adoption of the Conference resolutions, recommendations and the two-year thrust of Babaylan
- Other organisational matters and acknowledgements

**11.00 – 12.00 Closing Ceremonies**

**12.00 – 13.00 LUNCH**