

# Realizing the Development Potential of Filipino Diaspora Philanthropy

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*Financial, material, and other contributions and donations of overseas Filipinos are largely sent to their communities of origin in the Philippines. Such philanthropy of the Filipino diaspora remains predominantly characterized by charitable giving focused on providing immediate assistance to those most in need in the Philippines. There are, however, emerging practices of strategic philanthropy of overseas Filipinos. The Asia Pacific Philanthropy Consortium (2007) defines strategic philanthropy by diaspora populations as “investments that fund longer term and sustainable solutions and social change in home countries, as opposed to charitable giving that addresses immediate needs, and beyond remittance transfers that fulfil familial obligations”. The study cited several examples of Filipino diaspora organizations — in partnership with NGOs, foundations, and/or local and national government agencies — engaged in strategic philanthropic investment aimed at sustainable development and social change. The cases of Ayala Foundation-United States of America, Answer for the Cry of the Poor/Gawad Kalinga and their partner overseas Filipino organizations and individuals were discussed and analyzed as exemplary efforts of strategic diaspora giving/philanthropy. The paper also cited the challenges that must be addressed and put forward recommendations for Filipino diaspora philanthropy to achieve significant scale and scope, and create meaningful impact on Philippine development.*

Interest in the relationship between overseas Filipino migration and national development has been growing steadily for many years. Academic institutions, government agencies, and non-government organizations seek to understand the complex connections between the movement of people and the development of their home countries. Most of these efforts focus on the impact of remittances on migrants’ countries and communities of origin. The largest

share of remittances is sent home to support families and relatives, and this is where research has focused on. However, there are unaccounted portions of remittance transfers that are intended for “public good”. These monies are often referred to as “diaspora philanthropy”, a phenomenon that has only recently begun to receive closer attention.

Opiniano (2002, as cited in Association of Foundations, 2005) defines diaspora philanthropy as the “process in which migrants or immigrants abroad, in forging and sustaining their relations with their origin societies, allocate a certain portion of their remittances to fund development projects in the country of origin” (p. 5). Johnson and Sedaca (2004, as cited in Silva, 2006) comment that although their reasons for going abroad vary, most overseas migrants maintain affinity with and keen interest in matters related to their countries of origin. Further, they say: “When this interest becomes engagement, whether collective or individual, émigré and diaspora communities can use their financial, time, and intellectual resources to help reduce poverty, contribute to the expansion of the private sector, and enhance global competitiveness of their countries of origin” (p. 6).

The optimism of Opiniano, Johnson, and Sedaca in the development potential of diaspora philanthropy is shared by a number of scholars. Yet, whether the current practices of diaspora philanthropy have actually contributed to the development of home communities remains an open question. Filipinos direct an important portion of overseas remittances to help those beyond their immediate families. However, it remains uncertain whether these migrant acts and contributions have developed into a more substantive engagement contributing to social change and development. It is to this discussion—migrants’ current and future role in effecting social change in the Philippines—that this paper seeks to contribute.

The research for this paper involved the conduct of key informant interviews among migrant leaders, personnel of government agencies, and non-government organizations involved in the fields of migration, philanthropy, and

development. It also surveyed overseas Filipino organizations and their current practices in diaspora giving. Moreover, it pinpointed best practices in strategic diaspora philanthropy and made case studies of the best among them, some of which are presented in this paper.

This paper briefly characterizes the current practices of Filipino diaspora philanthropy and cite reasons why there is no widespread engagement in strategic giving; highlights some best practices in strategic diaspora philanthropy; identifies the challenges; and offers recommendations to realize the development potential of Filipino diaspora philanthropy.

### **Characterizing Current Practices of Diaspora Philanthropy**

Filipino diaspora philanthropy remains predominantly characterized by traditional charitable giving, focused on providing immediate assistance and relief to those most in need. There has been no significant, widespread shift to a more strategic approach to giving that would focus on underlying issues, sustainable solutions, and social change. Silva (2006, p. 42), in a study of Filipino hometown associations in Canada, comments:

*Because of the irregular nature of the collective remittance flow to the Philippines, the development impact is not as great.... While development projects undertaken are typically tangible in nature, they are not targeted towards a specific objective within a community. Projects end up as small contributions to an array of different problems which do not entirely provide holistic impact on development.*

The Asia Pacific Philanthropy Consortium (APPC) defines strategic philanthropy by diaspora populations as “investments that fund longer term and sustainable solutions and social change in home countries, as opposed to charitable giving that addresses immediate needs, and beyond remittance transfers that fulfill familial obligations” (APPC, 2007). Ayala (2006) emphasizes that the term “strategic” is not meant to denigrate what is often called “charity,” because

such donations are just as important, especially to people who are in need of immediate assistance, but suggests that philanthropy must also attempt to address the underlying issues creating the need for charity.

Strategic philanthropy to the Philippines appears to be limited in large part by a donor's desire for swift and tangible results, and the lack of access to partners in the Philippines who are committed to sustainable development approaches and outcomes. It is observed that Filipino migrants want to see that their contributions are used for the intended purpose and want to be able to distinguish concrete outcomes. "Consequently", according to Silva (2006, p. 37), "projects geared towards economic development are quite rare since results relating to this type of programming are often difficult to measure and observe by migrants themselves."

Strategic giving is further limited by the lack of information on potential partners and development initiatives readily available to donors. For the most part, the migrant population is unaware of the myriad of worthy development initiatives, programs and projects in the Philippines. Few donors have links or partnerships beyond those with their own village. Tessie Alarcon, president of Feed the Hungry (FtH), a foundation based in the United States, said in an interview on October 20, 2007: "We would like to fund more sustainable projects such as livelihood projects and microfinance projects, but our problem is the lack of partners who will monitor these projects and ensure their sustainability."

Discussions with NGO leaders point out the following obstacles to more widespread engagement:

- Most NGOs are familiar with and focused on traditional funding agencies and have not yet recognized the Filipino diaspora as a source of funding; and
- Most NGOs do not have the social capital, skills, and resources required (e.g., mounting fund raising campaigns in diaspora communities) to mobilize donations from overseas Filipinos.

## **Emerging Practices in Strategic Philanthropy**

Although the lion's share of overseas contributions is directed to traditional charitable endeavors and local communities, there are several examples of diaspora organizations -- in partnership with NGOs, foundations, and/or local and national government agencies -- engaged in strategic philanthropic investments aimed at sustainable development and social change. It would be presumptuous -- or premature at best -- to suggest an "emerging trend" of strategic diaspora giving. But, cautious optimism for the future of diaspora giving may be appropriate.

Notably, the Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO), an agency under the Office of the President of the Philippines is actively encouraging more strategic and sustained giving from donors. In 2006, the CFO shifted its focus to fewer, more sustainable projects. Regina Angela Galias, former project director of *Lingkod sa Kapwa Pilipino* (LINKAPIL), has said: "In 2006, we campaigned to our donors not only to provide relief to those affected by typhoons and other disasters but to provide funds for rehabilitation of their means of livelihood" (M.R.A. Galias, personal communication, August 17, 2007). This policy shift was responsible for the significant increase in donations going to livelihood projects. In 2006, \$3.6 million of the \$4 million generated went to livelihood programs (CFO, 2007).

Several smaller-scale initiatives further illustrate the emergence of strategic philanthropic practices among diaspora communities and their local partners:

- The NGO *Atikha* engages the Filipino diaspora in social enterprise projects. Its *Save a Tree of Life* campaign mobilized diaspora donations to start up a community-based business enterprise, Coco Natur. The campaign was undertaken in partnership with the Overseas Filipinos Worldwide-Mutual Benefit Corporation (OFW-MBC), an organization

of professionals based in San Francisco, California and Seven Lakes International, a federation of overseas Filipino hometown organizations with members from San Pablo City, Laguna. The initial \$17,500 investment from the diaspora has leveraged an additional US\$95,000 from the Philippine Department of Trade and Industry and individual donors. Coco Natur has developed into a fair trade social enterprise of coconut farmers and overseas Filipinos, transforming coconut farmers into producers, instead of just being suppliers of coconuts (Atikha, 2006).

- *Romblon Discussion List - Culture Livelihood Educational Assistance for Romblon (RDL-CLEAR)* is a virtual hometown association of former and current residents of Romblon, with about 70% of its members residing outside of the Philippines. RDL-CLEAR organizes and engages the dispersed hometown population through the internet and occasional *sanrokan* conferences in Romblon, which bring together local government officials, the academe, and NGOs to discuss and propose interventions to key problems facing the province. One of the key priorities recently identified was the preservation of coral reefs in the town of Calatrava in Tablas Island, Romblon which were being destroyed by rampant dynamite fishing. With a donation of \$2,900 from the diaspora community, RDL-CLEAR coordinated the participation of the local government, academe and the fishermen in protecting the coral reefs. While the investment was modest, it increased the municipality's 2005 coastal management budget of \$4,800 by 60% (Powers, 2006). The area has now been declared a fish sanctuary, a growing variety of fish are seen on the coral reef, and fishing in the area has become more abundant (N. Fajutagana, personal communication, October 5, 2007).
- The *Damayang Pilipino sa Nederland (DAMAYAN)*, an organization which aids Filipinos in the Netherlands and in the Philippines, and the Association of Bansaleòos Worldwide (ABW), a virtual hometown association of former Bansalan residents, launched a joint fundraising

drive among Filipinos in the Netherlands to promote both micro-enterprise and literacy in Mindanao. DAMAYAN and ABW provide mothers with start-up capital so that they can set up small micro-enterprises, increase their household income and eventually send their children to school. The two organizations were able to raise a total of \$5,265 from the Netherlands-based diaspora. This initial contribution leveraged several other contributions for the program from the Wild Geese Foundation in the Netherlands, local government and provincial government of Misamis Oriental (L. Rispens-Noel, personal communication, September 15, 2007).

Two additional organizations provide further examples of strategic philanthropy. The Ayala Foundation-United States of America's (AFUSA) support of the Gearing up Internet Literacy and Access for Students (GILAS) Project and the Answer for the Cry of the Poor (ANCOP) and Gawad Kalinga (GK) partnership are considered exemplary because (1) the supported programs represent strategic interventions to problems of national scope and concern; (2) the resource mobilization campaigns for the projects are able to integrate national needs with donors' preference for hometown or local giving; and 3) the organizations have successfully used diaspora funds to leverage additional contributions from local governments and private corporations, allowing projects of a far greater scope and scale.

*Ayala Foundation USA (AFUSA): mobilizing philanthropy for a 21<sup>st</sup> century education*

AFUSA was established in 2000 to broaden the U.S. donor base for social development programs in the Philippines. In its initial years of operation, AFUSA was fairly "donor driven," with most contributions directed towards the preferences of individual donors. In a departure from this pattern, in 2005, AFUSA began campaigning among the diaspora for support of a specific program of national importance, the GILAS (Gearing up Internet Literacy and Access for Students) initiative.

The GILAS project was initiated by a consortium of corporations, government agencies, public schools, NGOs, and overseas Filipinos to address the acute scarcity of technology resources in public high schools in the Philippines. The program aims to put computer laboratories with internet access in all 5,789 public high schools by 2010 (Garchitorena, 2007).

AFUSA actively promoted GILAS through presentations and networks throughout the United States. Volunteer groups composed of about 100 Filipino-Americans in ten states raised funds for the program through events such as golf tournaments, benefit dinners, marathon runs, grant proposals, and book sales. Individuals requested that their friends donate to GILAS in lieu of personal gifts. Others requested that their companies, such as Citigroup and Microsoft, match individual contributions to the GILAS project (C. Cruza, personal communication, January 21, 2008).

Filipino-American companies also helped AFUSA raise funds. Seafood City, a Filipino-American-owned supermarket chain, assisted through donation boxes and co-branding of their "Pamana" brand products. The amount raised was matched by Seafood City management, resulting in contributions of over \$37,000 in two years.

AFUSA's success in mobilizing resources for GILAS "is based on its capacity to respond to the priorities and aspirations of the Filipino donor" (Garchitorena, 2007, p. 18). The campaign was able to convince donors of the critical need to equip Filipino students throughout the country with computer and literacy skills. The donors were also given a free hand to support and become involved with a particular school in their hometown. Through the new computers, they could communicate with their beneficiaries and could even opt to be online mentors to teachers and students in the Philippines.

The GILAS consortium has also used the diaspora contributions to leverage government funds, convincing officials to match funds raised from the private sector and overseas Filipinos. According to Mario Derequito, Executive



Director of Ayala Foundation (personal communication, January 21, 2008) the total amount generated for the GILAS project from January 2005 to December 2007 was \$3.75 million, which benefited 1,670 public high schools and approximately 800,000 underprivileged youths in the Philippines. Of the \$3.75 million, Chiara Cruza, Senior Development Officer of Ayala Foundation (personal communication, January 21, 2008) said that AFUSA raised \$564,187, or about 15% of the total, directly from Filipino-Americans.

AFUSA's GILAS campaign is an impressive example of mobilizing diaspora philanthropy for a remarkably strategic initiative. Introducing computer technology to individual schools enhances students' learning and increases their opportunities for better paying employment.

*ANCOP and Gawad Kalinga (GK): Addressing poverty and transforming communities*

Johnson (2001, p. 4) defines global social investing as "the strategic and systematic investment of private philanthropic resources to address complex, inter-connected manifestations of chronic underdevelopment". An example of social investing within the context of the Filipino diaspora is ANCOP's mobilization of resources for GK, an ambitious project designed as an integrated, sustainable, and holistic program to alleviate poverty in the Philippines and transform communities of the poor and homeless. The GK 777 program aims to build 700,000 homes in 7,000 communities in seven years.

ANCOP was established by the Couples for Christ, a faith-based organization in the Philippines, to generate awareness and mobilize resources for the GK initiative. ANCOP USA was established as a 501(c) (3) organization in 2003 and the organization has established additional bases in Australia, Canada, and other countries.

According to Eleonor Chichioco (personal communication, December 7, 2007) Program Director of ANCOP USA, ANCOP has developed a variety of

different ways in which donors can support the GK initiative. A donor can support a house for \$1,500 or a village for \$59,000 (aside from house construction includes funds for day care, health services and other projects). Small donors pool their donations to collectively sponsor a house or village, which can be named after the donors. Donors can also choose the location of the house or village they wish to support. In addition, ANCOP raises funds through special events such as concerts, marathons, and benefit dinners.

From 2003-2007, Chichioco reported that ANCOP USA raised approximately \$12.45 million to build over 300 GK villages. Rhona Cuaresma, Coordinator of ANCOP Australia, reported raising \$1.583 million, which established 23 villages. Manette Acero, Coordinator for Finance of ANCOP Canada, stated that they raised around \$2.5 million and established 82 GK villages (personal communication, December 7, 2007). From just these three countries, ANCOP has been able to generate \$16.53 million and establish about 405 villages since they were established in 2003. According to Myra Ortega, ANCOP's Officer-in-Charge of Coordinating International Affairs, ANCOP has chapters in about 28 countries, but 95% of donations comes from the US, Canada, and Australia (personal communication, January 23, 2008).

ANCOP also encourages non-monetary support from its donors. Volunteers and partners are asked to assist directly in the construction and activity of GK villages (E. Chichioco, personal communication, December 7, 2007).

As of June 2007, GK had built and transformed more than 1,200 communities in the Philippines and provided homes and economic opportunities to approximately 26,299 families (R. Cuaresma, personal communication, December 7, 2007). About 35% of these GK communities were established with donations from the Filipino diaspora.

Several factors have likely contributed to ANCOP's success in raising money. The GK builds on the donors' charitable impulse to provide assistance to the poor and homeless. Couples for Christ has a solid overseas membership

which both contributes directly and serves as volunteers. As a Christian group, it has also been able to attract donations readily from other Christian groups. And GK's early, tangible community-based accomplishments raised confidence among donors.

### **Diaspora Members as Agents of Social Development and Change?**

The foregoing examples of strategic philanthropy illustrate the growing role of the Filipino diaspora as change agents in communities in the Philippines. Many in the Filipino diaspora have accumulated relatively substantial financial and social capital; have gained expertise in specialized fields such as finance, business, health care, development and the environment; and have been exposed to new philanthropic practices. They are poised to play an important role in the development of their communities of origin.

Overseas Filipinos have not only mobilized resources for development; they have also, at times, leveraged additional aid from development agencies and corporations in their host countries. For instance, Tessie and Pabito Alarcon, together with other Filipino-Americans in Washington, D.C., raised \$1.57 million for various Feed the Hungry projects in depressed communities. About 30% of the funds they raised annually come from corporations and organizations such as World Bank, Microsoft and CISCO (T. Alarcon, personal communication, October 20, 2007).

Overseas Filipinos can be catalysts for change by making full use of their acquired knowledge and skills for the benefit of their communities of origin. Innovative ideas, new technologies, international networks, and new markets are all critical resources that the Filipino diaspora bring to these communities. Micro-enterprises in rural areas are able to develop innovative products, improve product packaging, and become linked to the global market through the ideas and networks of the Filipino diaspora. Leila Rispens Noel, who is based in the Netherlands, helped to establish the virtual organization of Bansalan residents, and mobilized her townmates abroad and the local government to support

sustainable development projects. The organization is now promoting the products of community-based enterprises in Bansalan globally, through the internet.

Diaspora communities also have the potential to contribute to their home communities in less direct ways. They can influence local politics, encourage transparency and accountability in government and community organizations, and even promote local activism. The RDL-CLEAR experience shows how virtual hometown associations (HTAs) are able to influence policy makers and local government executives in crafting policies and programs that are responsive to the needs of the community. RDL-CLEAR is now engaged, together with other organizations in Romblon, in stopping mining operations in one of the province's islands.

Another important role of the Filipino diaspora in effecting change in communities is through investments in enterprises, at times seeking a combination of financial and social return on their investments. Nestor Duldulao and Art Claveria, entrepreneurs based in San Francisco, mobilized Filipino diaspora donations in Northern California to develop community-based coconut enterprises in Laguna. The intention is to provide jobs for coconut farmers and their families. Others are investing in credit cooperatives and microfinance organizations to provide much needed capital for micro-enterprises in the rural areas.

These experiences remain few. But, optimistically, the number of overseas Filipinos actively engaged in strategic giving will continue to expand. One critical ingredient for growth will be the development of an enabling environment to encourage and facilitate such giving. This challenge is examined in the succeeding section.

### **Issues and Challenges**

Strategic deployment of Filipino diaspora philanthropy remains limited in scope and scale. Although — as this paper illustrates — there are several exemplary efforts, they remain few and far between. Much must be done — by

the government, NGOs, and the business sector — to create an enabling environment for a widespread and consistent interest in strategic giving. In addition, the following issues and challenges need to be addressed to generate a significant shift from charitable giving to strategic giving by overseas Filipinos:

#### *Broadening the Donor Base*

The diaspora donor base for strategic giving remains relatively small. Efforts have not reached a significant number of overseas Filipino organizations. Facilitators and nonprofits have not engaged a substantial number of overseas Filipinos to give back to the Philippines. Furthermore, knowledge and skills transfer from the Filipino diaspora remains scarce and limited.

The challenge is to engage a broader section of the Filipino diaspora — especially second generation Filipinos, those who are not associated with groups, and those involved in traditional charitable giving — to contribute to strategic causes in the Philippines. This challenge calls for creative forms of reaching out to Filipinos overseas, e.g., making full use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) and informing them of the needs of the communities and the development initiatives in the Philippines. This challenge entails finding “...means and ways that will make it easier to give, offer sufficient choice and options to diaspora donors, and make it possible to track the impact of what was given” (Najam, 2007, p. 146).

#### *Building Partnerships*

The Association of Foundations (2005) has stressed that because overseas Filipinos are “absentee investors/donors/entrepreneurs,” they are in need of reliable partners that will help them identify development projects, viable investments, and businesses opportunities in the country. Since migrants are not by nature development oriented (Orozco, 2003), the challenge is to find development partners in the Philippines who will assist them in project identification, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.

Another challenge is to build partnerships among the various stakeholders — including overseas Filipinos, NGOs, government, business — and merge their initiatives towards strategic giving. This challenge will require new forms of cooperation, collaboration, and mechanisms through which to pool efforts and resources.

#### *Accommodating Donor Preference*

Powers (2006, p. 54) views the philanthropy of overseas Filipinos with its hometown bias as a “highly inequitable funding mechanism for development (that may) overlook the areas most in need of assistance.” Yet, the Filipino diaspora should not be expected to take the place of government and development agencies in ensuring equitable development. At best, it should augment government and development agencies’ efforts towards ‘equitable’ development.

The challenge is to craft “equitable” development programs and projects that accommodate the Filipino donors’ hometown bias and preferences. In addition, this means encouraging hometown beneficiaries like churches and local governments to develop projects that strategically address the problems in their communities that their townmates abroad can support.

#### *Pooling and Leveraging of Diaspora Funds*

There is a need to both pool and leverage diaspora philanthropy in order to attain scale and have a significant impact on the lives of people in hometown communities. Vasconcelos (2007) points out that if migrant remittances and, we might add, diaspora donations are not leveraged, economic activities and employment opportunities in these communities will remain low.

The challenge is how to pool the resources of the Filipino diaspora and leverage them with development agencies, foundations and the Philippine government. It entails convincing overseas Filipinos, who are more comfortable with handling their donations themselves, to give to a pooled fund. It also requires efforts to help

development agencies and government units recognize the importance of complementing diaspora philanthropy for social and economic development.

### **Recommendations**

Diaspora philanthropy should be linked to a comprehensive strategy of harnessing diaspora resources to sustainable development. For diaspora philanthropy to achieve significant scale and scope, and create meaningful impact on development, the following key recommendations are proposed:

#### *Create a GO-NGO working group on migration and development*

There should be a coordinating body composed of government and NGO representatives -- a "GO-NGO" partnership -- that crafts strategic programs and projects and coordinates initiatives of the various stakeholders on migration and development, both in the Philippines and abroad. Representatives from the Department of Foreign Affairs, Department of Labor and Employment, Commission on Filipinos Overseas and the Department of Trade and Industry should participate in this working group. NGO representatives may come from alliances of NGOs involved in migration and development, such as the Philippine Consortium on Migration and Development, Association of Foundations, League of Corporate Foundations, International Network of Alternative Financial Institutions and the Philippine Social Enterprise Network.

This working group could facilitate coordination and complementation of initiatives to avoid competition and duplication. It could also promote the development of strategic projects, such as GK and GILAS that could be implemented in various towns and provinces.

#### *Build networks of overseas Filipino organizations and NGOs*

Considering that overseas Filipino organizations are relatively small and informal, and usually give small contributions, building networks of overseas

Filipino organizations is key to the pooling of diaspora efforts and donations. These networks could spearhead advocacy of strategic philanthropy and reach out to the broadest section of overseas Filipinos. They could use Filipino channel television to reach out to overseas Filipinos. They could help devise mechanisms for pooling diaspora contributions. Since the organizations lack resources for organizing and capacity building, facilitators like AFUSA and CFO could initiate networking among the various organizations. They could also equip the leaders with skills in organizing and fundraising.

At the same time, networks of NGOs in the Philippines advocating for strategic philanthropy should be forged. These networks, such as the Philippine Consortium on Migration and Development, should reach out to overseas Filipinos, NGOs, government organizations and the business sector; advocate for the leveraging of diaspora philanthropy from the national and local government units and development agencies; and assist in crafting development programs that could be funded through diaspora philanthropy. They should link NGOs in key communities with high concentrations of overseas Filipino families with hometown associations in different countries. These networks should also help identify development-oriented local governments and executives, and assist in identifying social enterprises that could be scaled up and replicated in various provinces.

*Establish community foundations and develop community-based ICT materials*

Community foundations that recognize the hometown preference of overseas Filipinos should be established. A community foundation (CF) is a private, non-profit organization which mobilizes local resources for grant giving in a defined geographic area. A CF aims to improve the quality of life in a particular community by addressing its diverse and changing needs in a participative manner — building community spirit and strengthening community leadership as local citizens come together to solve problems and create a common vision for the future (AF, 2004, p. 6).



There is a dearth of information on the important role of community foundations and the mechanisms of setting them up in the Philippines. The Association of Foundations could spearhead the advocacy of and help set up community foundations in areas with high concentrations of overseas Filipinos.

Community foundations could work to become the recipients or intermediaries for hometown associations (HTAs) giving. They could leverage these donations with the local government and other sectors of the community. They could also assist HTAs in selecting strategic projects and ensuring equitable distribution of resources in a given community.

The setting up of a community foundation should be complemented with the development of communication materials and mechanisms that can reach the families of overseas Filipinos and other members of the community. Hometown websites, local radio stations, and cable televisions hooked to the internet will help update the HTAs on community issues and initiatives.

*Conduct research and develop data bases of stakeholders*

There is a need for empirical studies on Filipino diaspora philanthropy, and the migration and development nexus, so that strategies can be put in place to mobilize diaspora resources towards sustainable development. Projects funded by the Filipino diaspora should be evaluated to gain insights on strategic philanthropy practices and their impact on the communities. Results of such evaluation should be disseminated to the various stakeholders. In addition, databases of various stakeholders in the Philippines and abroad should be developed as mechanisms to link overseas Filipinos with partners in the Philippines.

Overseas Filipinos can contribute substantially to change and development in their communities of origin. With their monetary resources, knowledge and skills, they are, without a doubt, an important development resource. But the development potential of diaspora philanthropy can only be

realized if government and development organizations step forward with the commitment and resources to create an environment conducive to strategic giving, investment and development.

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#### **Endnote**

\* This article includes the introduction and a shortened version of a section of the paper entitled *Diaspora giving: An agent of change in Asia Pacific communities? (Philippines)*. This was written by the authors in 2008 as commissioned by the Asia Pacific Philanthropy Consortium.