

## Report

### Regional consultation meeting for the *Summit Nazionale delle Diapore*

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### **Introduction**

The *Summit Nazionale delle Diapore* wants to be an opportunity for the associations of migrants, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the International Cooperation, Embassies, and the Agency Italian for Development Cooperation, CNCS, local institutions (regions and municipalities) and the organizations of the civil society, to create a space and challenge the objectives and programs of cooperation with the migrants' countries of origin, start-up training and awareness raising activities on issues related to the complex relationship between Migration and Development. The establishment of cooperation and partnerships for the achievement of sustainable development goals through the enhancement of the participation of the diasporas aims to help create continuous relationship among the diaspora associations with Italian development cooperation agencies in the exchange of information, collective reflection and programming of actions for a more sustainable development cooperation.

Despite the heavy rain and string winds that passed by Rome yesterday, I did not regret that I attended and accompanied Charito 'Chato' Basa at the consultation meeting with different representatives of diaspora associations in Rome and other cities. Chato and I were soaking when we arrived; but the warmth of the discussions and exchanges of opinions from the beginning till the end dries us all up.

A mixed and lively and at times polemic participation of over 40 migrants representing associations from different countries of origin based in Rome and other cities of Italy was present. It consisted of the first and second generation, who raised their voices, concerns and recommendations on the issues of Migration and Development related to the Law 125 approved by the Italian government on 11 August 2014. Art. 2.6 of the law states that:  
*"La politica di cooperazione italiana, promuovendo lo sviluppo locale, anche attraverso il ruolo delle comunita' di immigrati e le loro relazioni con i Paesi di origine, contribuisce a politiche migratorie condivise con i Paesi partner, ispirate alla tutela dei diritti umani ed al rispetto delle norme europee e internazionali; and Art. 26. d) le organizzazioni e le associazioni delle comunita' di immigrati che mantengano con le comunita' dei Paesi di origine rapporti di cooperazione e sostegno allo sviluppo o che collaborino con soggetti provvisti dei requisiti di cui al presente articolo e attivi nei Paesi coinvolti;....."*

Discussions and workshops that followed introductions and presentations by the

Summit organizers and experts from the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs focused on —

- a) what is diaspora cooperation: participation and implementation, what are the characteristics of calls for proposals;
- b) how to enhance the skills of migrants and the new generations, in what types of projects they could participate; and what are the good practices;
- c) the creation of a diaspora forum and how to involve second generations;
- d) access to cooperation and partnerships: from eligibility criteria to how to improve collaboration with NGOs, institutions and individuals.

Charito Basa, who as was given 2 minutes — but spoke for 7 minutes (!) introduced the FWC and its activities: basically from a support organization to Filipinas in distress, to research and publications, capacity building, and financial literacy, and gender and development.

She expressed a significant concern: that despite the high interest and successful implementation of the projects—FWC feared that the continuity is very slow because agencies that supported the projects have different priorities now. She observed that this is a common practice of funding agencies.

However, she also underlined that 2 of FWC's mostly needed actions are still ongoing, thanks to the support of the Philippine government thru the Embassy and Overseas Workers Welfare Administration in Rome, i.e., : Financial Literacy and Gender & Development (gender awareness and introduction to violence against women).

I took notes as we joined Working Group C - to contribute in gathering inputs to the question of *competencies*, and what would organizations like to pursue as *priorities, if given the chance to access to financial support through partnership with other organizations and NGOs*. FWC expressed the interest to:

- 1) To continue of conduct activities within the community at on a more frequent basis that could reach out to other farther cities in Italy where there are Filipino organizations;
- 2) To share the knowledge and learning, to help translate and adapt, and train other migrant community associations for them to conduct the same activities, particularly on the issue of financial literacy.

Chato also reminded group participants that in all other proposals, the gender dimension of migration must be considered at all levels, in all discourses when speaking about migration and development—considering that almost half of the global migrant population is women.

Reports of different groups were presented at the plenary. Full reports will be available soon.

### *My personal reflections from my new understandings*

I listened and reflected on the different issues faced by migrant associations in Italy and their lack of access to support from the Italian government, despite the huge contributions that the migrant workers give to the host country. It was sad to hear, most especially the struggles of African migrants—who for as long as I can remember, they have suffered poverty and famine, exploitation, and discrimination because of the color of their skin; and that in their poverty-stricken and war-torn countries, people flee as we all see in the news. In our

after-consultation Messenger conversation, Chato explained to me that majority countries of Africa have and has been subject of destruction thru exploitation of their resources and people from the era of colonization by the rich Northern countries.

I am very amazed that when the migrant refugees come to Italy, most of their rights are not respected. Many of them are left out on their own. I see that everyday when I go out to work. Refugees sleeping in train stations scattered in piazzas. I have questions:

Do you see them?

Do you feel their pains and struggles?

What if you were in that situation? What would you do?

We, Filipinos in Italy live a less difficult situation; but that doesn't stop us from being concerned on the migration issues at a wider scope. The world keeps on changing, and every individual, whether one likes it or not—will also change. As Chato and I see it, the forces of capitalism have been winning. The migrants are loosing, if we deeply analyze it (social cost of migration, financial issues, and many other consequences that we are all aware of). There are efforts, but so few and with short-term impacts.

I fervently hope that within FWC, we are all open to learn more; and that sacrifices are not only for ourselves and our families, or even our own community. We ARE PART OF A GLOBAL COMMUNITY, and as such we are all called upon to contribute to make CHANGES, small or big.

I thank FWC for giving me the chance to learn more of the situation of others.

