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RECOMMENDATIONS
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Some 30 media practitioners, policymakers, NGO officials and academics from six ASEAN countries participated in the Regional Consultation on Media & Labor Migration held on August 21-23, 2000 in Manila, Philippines. The Consultation looked at the state of labor migration in the region, the extent of media coverage of migration issues and the role the media can play to raise public awareness and understanding of labor migration issues. Countries represented included Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, the Philippines and Vietnam. The Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) assisted AMIC as its co-partner in organizing the event. The Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung funded the project.

Acknowledging the critical importance of media in creating public awareness, public interest and public participation in labor migration issues in both countries of origin and destination, and the need for collaboration among media, NGOs, academia and the private sector in information dissemination and educational activities on labor migration;

Realizing that there are various difficulties faced by relevant entities in dealing with media, among them, illiteracy and the lack of media accessibility in rural areas where many migrants come from, high costs to publish in the newspapers or air on broadcast, profit motives of media companies that limit opportunities for educational programs, lack of NGO resources to woo the media in providing more coverage of migration problems, media regulations and control in some countries, and the lack of media programs in the language of migrant workers;

the participants discussed and generated a list of recommendations as follows:

I. HOW CAN MEDIA PLAY A MORE PRO-ACTIVE ROLE IN ADDRESSING LABOR MIGRATION ISSUES IN THE REGION?

1. Go back to the basics by preparing and equipping themselves with the relevant background knowledge on labor migration issues on a multi-sectoral level. This involves, among others, training reporters to report effectively on migration.

2. Include in their media coverages, in particular investigative reports, information on the background and dynamics of the migration process, and critical analysis of policy changes. It should also report on dangerous and problematic situations like migrants’ vulnerability to HIV and dangerous drugs.

3. Move away from a negative and sensational way of reporting. They should present migration issues realistically rather than sensationaly to avoid stigmatization and distortion of perceptions of social realities. They must report accurately and consistently.

4. Devote more space and airtime to migration issues on a regular basis, providing migrant workers mechanisms to send their feedback.

5. Enlist the support of the regional networks of government broadcast stations and private companies in disseminating information on migration.

6. Present labor migration issues in an entertaining way to capture audience’s interest. This could be done, for instance, by dramatizing labor issues through soap operas and enlisting entertainers to discuss migration during talk shows.
7. Initiate the *formation* of networks to connect producers, editors and journalists from Asian countries to be able to exchange and disseminate information across borders and produce meaningful reports on regional and even global situations on labor migration.

8. Harness the use of the Internet in disseminating information on migration concerns.

9. Assist NGOs in packaging migration issues for information and educational campaigns as well as for advocacy purposes.

II. HOW CAN THE GOVERNMENT, NGOS, ACADEMIE AND PRIVATE SECTOR ASSIST MEDIA PROMOTE BETTER AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING OF LABOR MIGRATION ISSUES IN THE REGION?

a. Government

1. Work with media in spreading relevant information on migration to the grassroots level. This involves a more pro-active and consultative approach towards media in generating better understanding of migration issues.

2. Provide media with relevant documents and data on migration laws and overseas employment, programs and services provided by governments of the origin and destination countries, statistics on migration, appropriately desegregated by gender. Governments can prepare and distribute to media short videos featuring laws, rights, culture and conditions in the countries of destination.

3. Provide better access to accurate and timely information on migration concerns.

4. Design mechanisms for faster responses to media queries on migration issues.

5. Implement greater transparency and less red tape.

b. NGOs

1. Cooperate with media in highlighting problematic aspects of the migration process, including illegal recruitment, irregular migration and trafficking.

2. Provide media relevant and timely information on the cultural, grassroots and gender perspectives of labor migration.

3. Build ties and contacts with journalists and producers to improve chances of getting migration issues aired and published.

4. Initiate training programs on how NGOs can effectively deal with media. This includes, among others, learning how to present and package migration issues to ensure publication and airing of their stories.

5. Be more accessible to media as credible sources.

6. Encourage current affairs departments of broadcast companies to feature migration issues in their programs.

7. Make media aware that they can be the voice of the voiceless.
c. Academe

1. Be accessible to media and share with journalists the results of researches and findings on migration issues and related studies.
2. Be a source of unbiased analysis of migration issues.

d. Private Sector (businesses who employ migrant workers)

1. Be more accessible to media.
2. Provide relevant information to journalists.
3. Participate in seminars and discussion groups.

e. Trade Unions

1. Provide media with relevant information of workers' rights and workers' groups.
2. Seek media assistance in addressing *grievances/concerns* of migrant workers.

f. International Organizations

2. Sponsor more training sessions for journalists to assist them get a good handle of migration issues.