

NGOs and Empowerment of Migrant Workers in Japan

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1. ASPBAE-MFA Research Project on Migrant Education Programs

This paper is the result of joint research on migrant education programs organized by two NGOs, the Asian and South Pacific Adult Education Bureau (ASPBAE, Mumbai, India) and the Migrant Forum in Asia (MFA, Quezon City, Philippines). This study aimed at clarifying the status quo of migrant education programs in Japan, Hong Kong, South Korea, the Philippines, Indonesia, and India. The authors participated in the project as members of the National Network in Solidarity with Migrant Workers (NNSMW).

The MFA and the Asian Migrant Center (AMC) have emphasized the idea of empowerment of migrant workers. ‘The Decade of Migrant Empowerment’ was the subject of the MFA-organized 6th Regional Conference on Migration held in Chiang Mai from March 28 to 30, 2000, in which attendees exchanged experiences of migrant empowerment. This paper is part of a tentative analysis of this Asian-wide project in collaboration with domestic and foreign NGOs. We are grateful to our partners and all the respondents who contributed to our research.

2. Migrant Workers and Their Families in Japan Since 1980

Before 1980, most foreign residents in Japan were Koreans and Chinese who had come to Japan before and during World War II throughout the period of Japanese imperial rule. Even during the period of high economic growth from 1950 to 1973, Japan’s labor shortage was filled with internal migrants from rural areas. That is why Japan was known as the only major industrialized country that, at least until 1980, had avoided depending on migrant workers. In this way, Japan had remained isolated from the wave of international migration.

Therefore, we will begin our chronological review in the 1980s. At the beginning of the decade, Filipina entertainers started to work in many snack houses and bars in various parts of Japan. This represented the first massive influx of migrant workers in postwar Japan, with the exception of those from South Korea.

The main characteristic of this period was the dominance of female “entertainers,” actually sex industry workers. They were the most likely of all migrant workers to have their basic human and labor rights violated.

The economic boom experienced by Japan during the period from 1986 to 1991 greatly increased total employment. As a result, a labor shortage developed in the second half of the 1980s, triggering a massive influx of undocumented migrant workers. In contrast to the first half of the decade, the majority of these were male workers from Asian countries, who found employment in

jobs that were shunned by the Japanese. The principal source countries for undocumented migrant workers were Korea, China, the Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia, Taiwan, Iran, Bangladesh, and Pakistan (see Table 2). Most of these laborers worked in small factories and in the construction industry, in what are called “3K” (or 3D, meaning dirty, dangerous and difficult) jobs. This raised debates over the “foreign labor problem” among the general public, referring to the debate on whether or not Japan should import migrant workers.

Another important trend during this period was the flourishing of migrant-concerned NGOs. Initially, they were largely church-based because migrant workers were in regular attendance there (mainly Filipinos). Organizing migrant workers through labor unions began in the 1990s, and these organizations have been supporting migrant workers ever since. It is not the workers themselves but various Japanese organizations that provide most of the support activities for migrants (Shipper, 2000). In Japan, the factors behind migrant empowerment are significantly influenced by the lack of strong migrant organizations.

Even though Japan suffers from a chronic labor shortage, it has consistently demanded the prohibition of unskilled foreign labor. But the 1990s began with the implementation of a revised immigration law, which created a long-term, unrestricted residency visa category exclusively for foreign descendants (second and third generation) of Japanese emigrants. Though quite a few Japanese Latin Americans (mostly Brazilians) had already entered Japan in the late 1980s, their numbers increased rapidly under the revised immigration law. Most of them found employment in the automobile and electronics industries, replacing internal migrants. In effect, they were the first foreign migrants allowed to work as unskilled labor.

On the other hand, the number of undocumented migrant workers also increased rapidly, peaking at 298,646 in 1993 (see Table 2). But the situation changed after the mid-1990s. The prolonged recession following the collapse of the economic bubble continues, and the overall unemployment rate is still rising. Though there are no official statistics on the unemployment of migrant workers, it is reported that their unemployment rate is much higher than for Japanese.

As a result, the number of undocumented migrant workers has decreased consistently, though gradually. Likewise, the number of Brazilians dropped in 1998 for the first time since the 1980s.

However, the recent decrease in the foreign population is seen as a temporary phenomenon, and it is clear that Japan will face a dire labor shortage in the near future. Influential politicians and the Ministry of Labor have begun to talk about importing labor. Even the Ministry of Justice, which traditionally has insisted on a more restrictive policy, recently published its Second Basic Plan for Immigration Control, in which it offers de facto acceptance of unskilled migrant workers.

Recent years have also been characterized by a growing diversity of migrant workers, and changing problems. Many migrant workers have grown attached to their living and working situations, and have begun to form long-term relationships, including marriages and raising children in Japan (Komai, 1995; Miyajima & Kajita, 1996). Hence, it is not just workers who are in need of empowerment. vulnerability into consideration, we can classify the following three categories as needing empowerment¹.

(1) Female migrants

Unlike most host countries, Japan has not imported female migrant workers as domestic

Table 1 Documented foreign population in Japan, 1980-1999

| Country | 1980 | 1981 | 1982 | 1983 | 1984 | 1985 | 1986 | 1987 | 1988 | 1989 |
|-------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Brazil | 1,492 | 1,652 | 1,643 | 1,796 | 1,986 | 2,135 | 1,955 | 2,250 | 4,159 | 14,528 |
| China | 52,896 | 55,616 | 59,122 | 63,164 | 69,608 | 84,397 | 74,924 | 95,477 | 129,269 | 137,499 |
| Korea | 664,536 | 667,325 | 669,854 | 674,581 | 680,706 | 677,959 | 683,313 | 673,787 | 677,140 | 681,838 |
| Peru | 348 | 376 | 399 | 432 | 466 | 553 | 480 | 615 | 864 | 4,121 |
| Philippines | 5,547 | 6,729 | 6,563 | 7,516 | 11,183 | 18,897 | 12,261 | 25,017 | 32,185 | 38,925 |
| Thai | 1,276 | 1,671 | 1,974 | 2,233 | 2,758 | 2,981 | 2,642 | 3,817 | 5,277 | 5,542 |
| Others | 56,815 | 59,577 | 62,892 | 67,407 | 75,124 | 63,690 | 91,662 | 83,062 | 92,111 | 102,002 |
| Total | 782,910 | 792,946 | 802,447 | 817,129 | 841,831 | 850,612 | 867,237 | 884,025 | 941,005 | 984,455 |

| Country | 1990 | 1991 | 1992 | 1993 | 1994 | 1995 | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 |
|-------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Brazil | 56,429 | 119,333 | 147,803 | 154,650 | 159,619 | 176,440 | 201,795 | 233,254 | 222,217 | 224,299 |
| China | 150,339 | 171,071 | 195,334 | 210,138 | 218,585 | 222,991 | 234,264 | 252,164 | 272,230 | 294,201 |
| Korea | 687,940 | 693,050 | 688,144 | 682,276 | 676,793 | 678,816 | 657,159 | 645,373 | 638,828 | 636,548 |
| Peru | 10,279 | 26,281 | 31,051 | 33,169 | 35,382 | 36,269 | 37,099 | 40,394 | 41,317 | 42,773 |
| Philippines | 49,092 | 61,837 | 62,218 | 73,057 | 85,968 | 74,298 | 84,509 | 93,265 | 105,308 | 115,685 |
| Thai | 6,724 | 8,912 | 10,460 | 11,765 | 13,008 | 16,035 | 18,187 | 20,669 | 23,562 | 25,253 |
| Others | 114,514 | 138,407 | 146,634 | 155,693 | 164,656 | 157,522 | 182,123 | 197,588 | 208,654 | 217,354 |
| Total | 1,075,317 | 1,218,891 | 1,281,644 | 1,320,748 | 1,354,011 | 1,362,371 | 1,415,136 | 1,482,707 | 1,512,116 | 1,556,113 |

Source: Annual Report of Statistics on Legal Migrants, Ministry of Justice.

Table 2 The number of undocumented foreigners in Japan

| | | 90.7 | 91.5 | 91.11 | 92.5 | 92.11 | 93.5 | 93.11 | 94.5 | 94.11 | 95.5 |
|--------------|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Koreans | Total | 13,876 | 25,848 | 30,976 | 35,687 | 37,491 | 39,455 | 41,024 | 43,369 | 44,916 | 47,544 |
| | Male | 8,793 | 17,977 | 20,469 | 22,312 | 21,406 | 20,998 | 20,324 | 20,801 | 20,501 | 21,662 |
| | Female | 5,083 | 7,871 | 10,507 | 13,375 | 16,085 | 18,457 | 20,700 | 22,558 | 24,415 | 25,882 |
| Filipinos | Total | 23,805 | 27,228 | 29,620 | 31,974 | 34,296 | 35,392 | 36,089 | 37,544 | 38,325 | 39,763 |
| | Male | 10,761 | 12,905 | 13,850 | 14,935 | 15,778 | 15,861 | 15,795 | 15,933 | 15,997 | 16,056 |
| | Female | 13,044 | 14,323 | 15,770 | 17,039 | 18,518 | 19,531 | 20,294 | 21,611 | 22,328 | 23,707 |
| Chinese | Total | 10,039 | 17,535 | 21,649 | 25,737 | 29,091 | 33,312 | 36,297 | 39,738 | 39,552 | 39,511 |
| | Male | 7,655 | 13,836 | 16,624 | 19,266 | 21,198 | 23,630 | 25,375 | 27,152 | 26,598 | 26,013 |
| | Female | 2,384 | 3,699 | 5,025 | 6,471 | 7,893 | 9,682 | 10,922 | 12,586 | 12,954 | 13,498 |
| Thais | Total | 11,523 | 19,093 | 32,751 | 44,354 | 53,219 | 55,383 | 53,845 | 49,992 | 46,964 | 44,794 |
| | Male | 4,062 | 6,767 | 13,780 | 20,022 | 24,463 | 25,624 | 24,759 | 22,611 | 21,059 | 19,866 |
| | Female | 7,461 | 12,326 | 18,971 | 24,322 | 28,756 | 29,759 | 29,086 | 27,381 | 25,905 | 24,928 |
| Peruvians | Total | 242 | 487 | 1,017 | 2,783 | 6,241 | 9,038 | 11,659 | 12,918 | 14,312 | 15,301 |
| | Male | 172 | 339 | 646 | 1,903 | 4,441 | 6,469 | 8,182 | 8,869 | 9,474 | 10,066 |
| | Female | 70 | 148 | 371 | 879 | 1,800 | 2,569 | 3,477 | 4,049 | 4,838 | 5,235 |
| Malaysians | Total | 7,550 | 14,413 | 25,379 | 38,529 | 34,529 | 30,840 | 25,653 | 20,313 | 17,240 | 14,511 |
| | Male | 5,023 | 10,099 | 18,466 | 27,832 | 24,150 | 21,250 | 17,222 | 13,266 | 10,975 | 8,942 |
| | Female | 2,527 | 4,314 | 6,913 | 10,697 | 10,379 | 9,590 | 8,431 | 7,047 | 6,265 | 5,569 |
| Taiwanese | Total | 4,775 | 5,241 | 5,897 | 6,729 | 7,283 | 7,457 | 7,677 | 7,871 | 7,906 | 7,974 |
| | Male | 2,080 | 2,356 | 2,790 | 3,427 | 3,757 | 3,867 | 3,976 | 4,032 | 4,017 | 3,987 |
| | Female | 2,695 | 2,885 | 3,107 | 3,302 | 3,526 | 3,590 | 3,701 | 3,839 | 3,889 | 3,987 |
| Iranians | Total | 764 | 10,915 | 21,719 | 40,001 | 32,994 | 28,437 | 23,867 | 20,757 | 18,009 | 16,252 |
| | Male | 645 | 10,578 | 21,114 | 38,898 | 32,086 | 27,630 | 23,176 | 20,151 | 17,469 | 15,762 |
| | Female | 119 | 337 | 605 | 1,103 | 908 | 807 | 691 | 606 | 540 | 490 |
| Burmese | Total | 1,234 | 2,061 | 3,425 | 4,704 | 5,425 | 6,019 | 6,341 | 6,391 | 6,335 | 6,189 |
| | Male | 1,041 | 1,676 | 2,712 | 3,661 | 4,149 | 4,511 | 4,686 | 4,664 | 4,590 | 4,442 |
| | Female | 193 | 385 | 713 | 1,043 | 1,276 | 1,508 | 1,655 | 1,727 | 1,745 | 1,747 |
| Bangladeshis | Total | 7,195 | 7,498 | 7,807 | 8,103 | 8,161 | 8,069 | 7,931 | 7,565 | 7,295 | 7,084 |
| | Male | 7,130 | 7,429 | 7,725 | 8,003 | 8,047 | 7,940 | 7,787 | 7,411 | 7,129 | 6,910 |
| | Female | 65 | 69 | 82 | 100 | 114 | 129 | 144 | 154 | 166 | 174 |
| Pakistanis | Total | 7,989 | 7,864 | 7,923 | 8,001 | 8,056 | 7,733 | 7,414 | 6,921 | 6,517 | 6,100 |
| | Male | 7,867 | 7,731 | 7,786 | 7,862 | 7,896 | 7,562 | 7,238 | 6,735 | 6,325 | 5,915 |
| | Female | 122 | 133 | 137 | 139 | 160 | 171 | 176 | 186 | 192 | 185 |
| Indonesians | Total | 315 | 582 | 1,192 | 1,955 | 2,675 | 2,969 | 3,144 | 3,198 | 3,189 | 3,205 |
| | Male | 191 | 416 | 949 | 1,629 | 2,171 | 2,366 | 2,471 | 2,485 | 2,441 | 2,448 |
| | Female | 124 | 166 | 243 | 326 | 504 | 603 | 673 | 713 | 748 | 757 |
| Others | Total | 17,190 | 21,063 | 27,044 | 30,335 | 33,330 | 34,542 | 35,810 | 37,223 | 37,532 | 38,476 |
| | Male | 11,431 | 14,409 | 18,789 | 21,245 | 23,517 | 24,406 | 25,155 | 25,950 | 25,941 | 26,463 |
| | Female | 5,759 | 6,654 | 8,255 | 9,090 | 9,813 | 10,136 | 10,655 | 11,273 | 11,591 | 12,013 |
| Total | Total | 106,497 | 159,828 | 216,399 | 278,892 | 292,791 | 298,646 | 296,751 | 293,800 | 288,092 | 286,704 |
| | Male | 66,851 | 106,518 | 145,700 | 190,996 | 193,059 | 192,114 | 186,146 | 180,060 | 172,516 | 168,532 |
| | Female | 39,646 | 53,310 | 70,699 | 87,896 | 99,732 | 106,532 | 110,605 | 113,740 | 115,576 | 118,172 |

Table 2 The number of undocumented foreigners in Japan (continued)

| | | 95.11 | 96.5 | 97.1 | 97.7 | 98.1 | 98.7 | 99.1 | 99.7 | 2000.1 | 2001.1 |
|--------------|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Koreans | Total | 49,530 | 51,580 | 52,387 | 52,854 | 52,123 | 59,160 | 62,577 | 63,848 | 60,693 | 56,023 |
| | Male | 21,995 | 22,549 | 21,669 | 21,479 | 20,792 | 23,839 | 24,434 | 24,463 | 23,150 | 21,356 |
| | Female | 27,535 | 29,031 | 30,718 | 31,375 | 31,331 | 35,321 | 38,143 | 39,385 | 37,543 | 34,667 |
| Filipinos | Total | 41,122 | 41,997 | 42,547 | 42,627 | 42,608 | 41,646 | 40,420 | 39,235 | 36,379 | 31,666 |
| | Male | 16,086 | 16,081 | 15,818 | 15,586 | 15,489 | 15,162 | 14,722 | 14,120 | 13,235 | 11,593 |
| | Female | 25,036 | 25,916 | 26,729 | 27,041 | 27,119 | 26,484 | 25,698 | 25,115 | 23,144 | 20,073 |
| Chinese | Total | 38,464 | 39,140 | 38,296 | 38,957 | 37,590 | 35,558 | 34,800 | 36,077 | 32,896 | 30,975 |
| | Male | 24,983 | 24,789 | 23,762 | 23,729 | 22,778 | 21,494 | 20,748 | 21,124 | 19,361 | 18,182 |
| | Female | 13,481 | 14,351 | 14,534 | 15,228 | 14,812 | 14,064 | 14,052 | 14,953 | 13,535 | 12,793 |
| Thais | Total | 43,014 | 41,280 | 39,513 | 38,191 | 37,046 | 35,138 | 30,065 | 26,546 | 23,503 | 19,500 |
| | Male | 18,844 | 17,811 | 16,839 | 16,053 | 15,542 | 14,885 | 13,552 | 12,174 | 11,082 | 9,281 |
| | Female | 24,170 | 23,469 | 22,674 | 22,138 | 21,504 | 20,253 | 16,513 | 14,372 | 12,421 | 10,219 |
| Peruvians | Total | 14,693 | 13,836 | 12,942 | 12,073 | 11,606 | 11,052 | 10,320 | 10,263 | 9,158 | 8,502 |
| | Male | 9,592 | 9,067 | 8,513 | 7,978 | 7,721 | 7,368 | 6,885 | 6,796 | 6,132 | 5,723 |
| | Female | 5,101 | 4,769 | 4,429 | 4,095 | 3,885 | 3,684 | 3,435 | 3,467 | 3,026 | 2,779 |
| Malaysians | Total | 13,460 | 11,525 | 10,390 | 10,296 | 10,141 | 10,143 | 9,989 | 9,763 | 9,701 | 9,651 |
| | Male | 8,119 | 6,537 | 5,589 | 5,518 | 5,340 | 5,332 | 5,195 | 5,004 | 4,984 | 4,954 |
| | Female | 5,341 | 4,988 | 4,801 | 4,778 | 4,801 | 4,811 | 4,794 | 4,759 | 4,717 | 4,697 |
| Taiwanese | Total | 8,210 | 8,502 | 9,409 | 9,403 | 9,430 | 9,364 | 9,437 | 9,429 | 9,243 | 8,849 |
| | Male | 4,055 | 4,128 | 4,328 | 4,333 | 4,346 | 4,338 | 4,394 | 4,381 | 4,330 | 4,227 |
| | Female | 4,155 | 4,374 | 5,081 | 5,070 | 5,084 | 5,026 | 5,043 | 5,048 | 49,134 | 4,622 |
| Iranians | Total | 14,638 | 13,241 | 11,303 | 10,153 | 9,186 | 8,121 | 7,304 | 6,524 | 5,824 | 4,335 |
| | Male | 14,209 | 12,853 | 10,964 | 9,828 | 8,883 | 7,825 | 7,024 | 6,251 | 5,569 | 4,158 |
| | Female | 429 | 388 | 339 | 325 | 303 | 296 | 280 | 273 | 255 | 177 |
| Burmese | Total | 6,022 | 5,885 | 5,900 | 5,957 | 5,829 | 5,650 | 5,487 | 5,304 | 4,986 | 4,473 |
| | Male | 4,309 | 4,188 | 4,188 | 4,236 | 4,133 | 3,990 | 3,870 | 3,755 | 3,528 | 3,190 |
| | Female | 1,713 | 1,697 | 1,712 | 1,721 | 1,696 | 1,660 | 1,617 | 1,549 | 1,458 | 1,283 |
| Bangladeshis | Total | 6,836 | 6,500 | 6,197 | 5,864 | 5,581 | 5,278 | 4,936 | 4,625 | 4,263 | n.a. |
| | Male | 6,642 | 6,278 | 5,951 | 5,620 | 5,326 | 5,016 | 4,685 | 4,371 | 4,020 | n.a. |
| | Female | 194 | 222 | 246 | 244 | 255 | 262 | 251 | 254 | 243 | n.a. |
| Pakistanis | Total | 5,865 | 5,478 | 5,157 | 4,766 | 4,688 | 4,490 | 4,307 | 3,931 | 3,414 | n.a. |
| | Male | 5,689 | 5,294 | 4,968 | 4,589 | 4,505 | 4,336 | 4,156 | 3,786 | 3,274 | n.a. |
| | Female | 176 | 184 | 189 | 177 | 183 | 154 | 151 | 145 | 140 | n.a. |
| Indonesians | Total | 3,261 | 3,481 | 3,758 | 3,970 | 4,692 | 4,953 | 4,930 | 4,906 | 4,947 | 5,315 |
| | Male | 2,456 | 2,608 | 2,808 | 2,962 | 3,523 | 3,739 | 3,692 | 3,621 | 3,627 | 3,876 |
| | Female | 805 | 873 | 950 | 1,008 | 1,169 | 1,214 | 1,238 | 1,285 | 1,320 | 1,439 |
| Others | Total | 39,629 | 42,055 | 45,187 | 46,046 | 46,290 | 45,988 | 46,476 | 47,970 | 46,690 | 52,832 |
| | Male | 27,175 | 28,653 | 30,542 | 31,144 | 31,450 | 31,534 | 31,868 | 32,705 | 31,790 | 37,285 |
| | Female | 12,454 | 13,402 | 14,645 | 14,902 | 14,840 | 14,454 | 14,608 | 15,265 | 14,900 | 15,547 |
| Total | Total | 284,744 | 284,500 | 282,986 | 281,157 | 276,810 | 276,541 | 271,048 | 268,421 | 251,697 | 232,121 |
| | Male | 164,154 | 160,836 | 155,939 | 153,055 | 149,828 | 148,858 | 145,225 | 142,551 | 134,082 | 123,825 |
| | Female | 120,590 | 123,664 | 127,047 | 128,102 | 126,982 | 127,683 | 125,823 | 125,870 | 117,615 | 108,296 |

Source: Ministry of Justice

workers, nurses, and caregivers. Instead, “entertainers” has been the sole category functioning as de facto working visa. The highly biased gender composition of migrant workers in Japan originates in this selective importation of female workers. At present, female migrants can be classified into three categories: entertainers, spouses of Japanese men, and Japanese Latin Americans.

The first female migrant workers in Japan were Filipina entertainers, who arrived in the early 1980s. At the end of the 1980s, Thai women began to be trafficked by illegal brokers, who put them to work in snack bars as sex workers (Caouette & Saito, 1999). Today, agencies are seeking recruitment from even more diverse sources of origin, such as Korea, Taiwan, Russia, Romania, and so on.

However, as more and more female migrant workers have married Japanese men, the problems facing them have changed. They are now housewives as well as migrant workers. For example, until the 1990s, most of the interventions done by NGOs running shelters were for sex workers (mostly Thais and Filipinas), whereas the majority of migrant women now in shelters use them to escape from domestic violence.

(2) Undocumented male migrants

Many undocumented male migrant workers, especially those from South Asia (including Iran), have now lived in Japan for almost a decade. The number of undocumented workers has consistently decreased since May 1993, especially for Iranians, whose numbers dropped from 40,001 in May 1992 to 5,824 in January 2000 (see Table 2). But during their stays in Japan, some learned the ropes, married Japanese women, or launched small businesses.

On the one hand, many are still engaged in 3-D jobs and are paid less than Japanese workers. But on the other hand, the differentiation among undocumented workers is intensifying: many South Asians (Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, and Iranians) have learned the Japanese language, enabling them to obtain more stable work in small factories, whereas Southeast Asians (Thais and Filipinos) who do not speak Japanese are engaged in dangerous and unstable work, such as construction work and jobs at industrial waste disposal sites (Komai, 2000).

(3) Japanese Latin Americans

Japanese Latin Americans constitute the largest segment of migrant workers in Japan, with a population of nearly 300,000. As mentioned above, Japanese Latin Americans enjoy privileged visa status with no restrictions on employment. Nevertheless, their status in the labor market is highly unstable because they are not employed by manufacturers, but rather by contractors who aim to save labor costs. Therefore, they are often dismissed without proper compensation.

Another problem encountering Japanese Latin Americans is that they tend to be family migrants, and face more multi-faceted challenges than single migrant workers. They have to raise children, care for elderly parents, and decide whether or not they should continue to stay in Japan.

3. Analytical Backgrounds

International migration is founded on social organizational infrastructures. Wage difference does not generate massive migration flows unless sending and receiving countries are connected by social networks. This is a well-known fact, but scholars failed to conceptualize this aspect.

Nonetheless, the salience of chain migration and transnational migrant networks has prompted an upsurge of scholarly interest in the migration systems approach (Boyd, 1989; Douglas & Faces, 1992). Migration systems are defined as meso-level institutional arrangements that facilitate migration and determine the direction and volume of migration flows.

Three aspects of the migration systems approach are of interest to us. First, migration systems serve as social infrastructures that sustain a continuous and massive flow of migration (Koido, 1997). Though most migration processes are initiated by the labor shortages in receiving countries or bilateral agreements on contract labor, migration continues independently of external factors once migration systems have developed (Massey, 1990).

Second, migration systems bring more or less transplanted social relations that foster daughter communities in receiving countries (Massey et al., 1987). New arrivals find jobs and housing and learn the ropes at the destination through interactions in daughter communities. That is, continuous social relations are preserved even after immigration.

Third, these transnational communities reduce the costs and risks associated with international migration, providing necessary resources and knowledge for living and working at destinations (Grack & Face, 1992; Massey et al., 1987). As a result, migration opportunities expand to include the whole community, in contrast to the first stage of migration in which migrants tend to come from a particular class, age, or gender.

However, since the migration systems approach owes much to American experiences, some modifications are required before applying it to Asian cases. The American prototype of migration systems takes it for granted “people from the same communities are enmeshed in a web of reciprocal obligations upon which new migrants draw to enter and find work in the receiving society” (Massey et al., 1987, p. 5). Whereas in Japan, ‘commercialized’ migration systems have been more salient in facilitating the influx of migrant labor. Rather than family and personal networks, legal and illegal recruitment agencies have determined destinations, occupations, and housing².

These same agents determine the places of work. They provide jobs and housings for migrant workers in accordance with requests from employers, which impedes the development of ethnic communities³. On the whole, the social relations of migrants to Japan have to be reconstructed there because of a lack of daughter communities that could guarantee continuous relations between the cultures of origin and destination. Consequently, reciprocal relations between migrants and an organizational basis for empowerment are less likely to develop.

One of the salient features of migrant workers in Japan, as Shipper (2000) points out, is that migrant-concerned NGOs are more widely recognized than migrant community organizations. In Western Europe and North America, it is principally the migrant communities that provide information, services, and assistance for new arrivals. These contrasting results arise from the difference of migration systems as well as the relatively small size of the migrant population in Japan—which are also why the role of migrant-concerned NGOs is more important in Japan (and other Asian countries). Because ethnic communities are relatively underdeveloped, NGOs’ potential for migrant empowerment is more significant in Japan.

Nevertheless, we should not overlook the fact that migrant workers have been incrementally constructing their own communities. Though geographically scattered, community institutions that

serve as focal points for migrants have been established, their numbers are on the rise, and their functions have been expanded. For example, though the population of Muslim overstayers has been continuously decreasing, a dozen Mosques were constructed based on their donations. As well, there are approximately a hundred *halal* food shops that serve religiously permitted foods to Muslim migrants (Higuchi & Tan'no, 2000). They function as centers for Muslim communities.

Later we will see that an important problem for migrant-concerned NGOs in Japan is that they are not well integrated with migrant communities. Though many Pakistanis and Bangladeshis participate in the activities of migrant-concerned NGOs, these organizations are not familiar with how migrant communities are developed. This has led to the 'reactive' nature of NGO activities, since migrant communities and NGOs are usually separated and migrants do not stay in contact with NGOs until they encounter serious problems they cannot solve on their own.

4. Data and Method

The principal source of data for this study comes from two kinds of mutually related research. A series of studies was conducted from February to July 2000.

(a) At the beginning of March, we compiled a list of migrant from the database of NNSMW and sent a total of 210 questionnaires to migrant-concerned NGOs. Twenty-seven letters were not delivered because the recipient had moved. In all, 67 (36.6%) were returned. Among those who returned questionnaires, ten organizations were excluded from our analysis because they did not provide the services we expected. As a result, we use the data from 57 NGOs in chapter 5.

(b) A multiple case study method was used to evaluate existing programs and to identify facilitating and impeding factors for empowerment. We also conducted 24 intensive interviews with 13 NGOs for detailed analysis. The sample consisted of a reputational sample of migrant-concerned NGOs engaged in empowerment practice. After discussion among the members of NNSMW, the research team selected samples for the pilot study. They were selected to cover all four categories classified above. Each organization was then contacted, told about the study, and asked if it was engaged in empowerment practice.

Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with staffs and through participatory observation. Each interview lasted from 1 to 6 hours and focused on: (a) what kind of education programs they provided, (b) how they evaluated the results, and (c) what they considered impediments for empowerment of migrant workers. The interview data are used in chapter 6.

5. Mapping the Activities of Migrant-Concerned NGOs

5.1. Migrant-concerned NGOs in Japan

Migrant-concerned NGOs are classified into the following three categories: (a) labor union, (b) church-based organization, or (c) civic and professional organization (including human rights, anti-discrimination, and women's organizations, and lawyers and medical personnel). The organizational basis of the 57 groups and the year of establishment are shown in Tables 3 and 4. First let us describe the characteristics and organizational basis of each category.

Table 3 Categorization of Migrant-Concerned NGOs

| Category | Number (%) |
|------------------------|------------|
| Christian organization | 19 (33.3) |
| Labor union | 9 (15.8) |
| Civic organization | 29 (50.9) |
| Total | 57 (100.0) |

Table 4 Year of Establishment

| Year of establishment | Number (%) |
|-----------------------|------------|
| -1985 | 15 (26.3) |
| 1986-90 | 18 (31.6) |
| 1991-95 | 20 (35.1) |
| 1996- | 4 (7.0) |
| Total | 57 (100.0) |

(1) Church-based organizations

The Catholic Church is one of the most important migrant support organizations in Japan. The Committee on International Cooperation in the Bishop's Conference is responsible for the pastoral care of migrants. In addition, several dioceses have solidarity centers for migrants. The Catholic Church has been relatively willing to host migrants for three important reasons:

First, the Catholic Church has been formally seeking solidarity with migrant workers worldwide since the Pope declared solidarity with migrants. In addition, when Filipina entertainers began to enter Japan in the first half of the 1980s, the Bishop's Conference in the Philippines requested that its Japanese counterpart provide pastoral care for them. Priests, nuns, and lay missionaries have also been invited to Japan from migrants' countries of origin (e.g., the Philippines, Brazil) since the 1980s.

Second, these movements from 'above' aside, many Catholic churches met with migrants at the local level. Compared with the Catholic population of approximately 400,000 in Japan, the number of Catholic migrant workers—at about 300,000—is far from negligible. In this respect, the impact of migrant influx has been felt far more by the Catholic Church than by society in general. As a result, many churches began to offer masses in foreign languages: more than 150 churches serve masses in English or Tagalog.

Third, Christian organizations have been actively engaged in social activities, for both Catholics and Protestants. It is in a sense natural to support migrants based on Christian universalism that espouses social justice.

Meanwhile, commitments to migrant issues by Protestant churches are not as well organized. Most activities begin spontaneously when migrants get together in their churches or neighborhoods. English worship services are being offered, though the number is much less than that offered by the Catholic Church. Among the Protestant denominations, noteworthy are the activities of the Episcopal Church of Japan. In addition to English services and counseling, the Episcopal Church of Japan invited Filipino missionaries to establish an organization to support Filipino migrants. The problem of Protestant churches is that efforts at the local level tend to be isolated and separate, since they lack formal organization.

(2) Labor unions

In Japan, labor unions are divided into enterprise unions and community workers unions (Shipper, 2000). Enterprise unions are organized in large firms and have led the labor movement in postwar Japan. What is important here is that temporary employees, part-time workers, and small-firm workers have been excluded from enterprise unions. Community workers unions arose in the absence of labor unions in the secondary sector.

Migrant workers are mostly incorporated into the secondary market; hence they have participated in community workers unions. But not all of them have been unionized. We have first to distinguish among three segments of migrant workers: (a) Japanese Latin American workers are employed in relatively large companies as temporary employees. Their salaries are relatively higher than undocumented workers; (b) undocumented male workers usually work in small firms and construction sites with no trade unions; and (c) most female workers are employed in the “sex industry” as “entertainers” who are not protected by the Japanese Labor Law.⁴

Among these three categories, undocumented male workers are the most likely to join community workers unions. The relationship between labor market and labor union membership is summarized in the table below.

Table 5 Labor Market and Unionization in Japan

| Type of labor market | Sub-category | Unions involved |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Primary sector | Japanese regular employees | Enterprise union |
| Secondary sector | Japanese Latin Americans | Community workers union |
| | Undocumented (male) workers | |
| | Female workers | None |

These unions assemble unorganized workers from various firms and industries characterized by bad working conditions or rights violations. However, in general, the actions of community workers unions are usually “reactive,” whereas enterprise unions are engaged in “proactive” functions. That is, the former does not usually begin collective bargaining until the rights of a member have been violated. Migrant workers usually do not join unions until they encounter a labor dispute. This is quite different from the latter, which takes the obedience of a labor agreement for granted and instead focuses on wage claims. These differences hinder cooperation between enterprise unions and community workers unions because they do not share the common goals of negotiating with employers and weakening the potential for labor movements.

(3) Civic and professional organizations

Most civic organizations initiated migrant-concerned actions when migrant problems became visible in their communities. Therefore, counseling or emergency aid is at the core of their activities. The roots of the activities implemented by civic organizations go back to the rescue of migrant women who had been victims of trafficking and forced prostitution. With the increasing number of male migrant workers in the late 1980s, the main issues turned to labor disputes and medical care. Especially grave was the problem of exclusion from medical services, that is, hospitals often refused treatment for migrant workers who lacked medical insurance. Human rights organizations have been active in urging administrative bodies to assure emergency medical services will be

provided to all migrant workers.

In 1990s, the activities of civic organizations expanded with the diversification of migrant workers' problems. Most notably, marriage (or family) and child education have grown in importance. The late 1990s also saw the rise of the networking of migrant-concerned NGOs into regional and national networks. Networking created a division of labor between NGOs and enabled them to negotiate with authorities. Division of labor also enabled effective lobbying by facilitating specialization.

Legal assistance often has been crucial for migrant workers, since many of their problems arise from discriminative legislation. Concerned lawyers forming into groups was the first step, since most lawyers were not familiar with the problems of undocumented migrants. Medical doctors also began supporting their activities. They provided medical examinations and consultation in association with civic organizations and established a private insurance referred to as MF-MASH for migrant workers excluded from public health insurance.

5.2. Services provided for migrants

Migrant-concerned NGOs offer several services (see Table 6). The majority of organizations provide counseling. Next comes seminars and Japanese language teaching. Though there are many migrant children in Japan, few NGOs provide mother tongue teaching. This because many Japanese can teach the Japanese language but cannot teach foreign languages. This also reflects the limits of Japanese-led support activities. It should also be noted that most Japanese NGOs are not familiar with the idea of teaching the mother tongue.

Cultural activities are held in one-third of NGOs, which helps migrants to feel comfortable in familiar circumstances. They are also seen as a means to recovering self-esteem and dignity: the Japanese tend to undervalue migrant's own cultures. Additionally, an obscure purpose behind cultural activities is to raise the awareness of the Japanese audiences.

Many organizations have tried to organize migrants, though few have succeeded. Similarly, though many NGOs have issued newsletters in foreign languages, few can afford to continue publishing on a regular basis.

Table 6 Kinds of NGO Activities

| Activity | Number (of 57 groups) |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Counseling | 45 (78.9%) |
| Seminar | 28 (49.1%) |
| Japanese language teaching | 25 (43.9%) |
| Cultural activities | 19 (33.3%) |
| Organizing self-help groups | 18 (31.6%) |
| Newsletter in foreign language | 16 (28.1%) |
| Unionizing | 14 (24.6%) |
| Shelter | 13 (22.8%) |
| Mother tongue teaching | 2 (3.5%) |
| Others | 28 (49.1%) |

Among these activities, the following are considered useful for migrant empowerment. Besides those programs looked at in detail, empowering activities focused on by NGOs include: Japanese

language teaching (7), counseling (6), legal assistance (3), unionizing (4), computer classes (2), visiting detention centers (1), and re-integration programs (1). The number in parenthesis signifies the number of those organizations that responded.

(1) Forum and seminar (3): An intercultural exchange group

We also asked which service could be provided for migrants to facilitate the empowerment process. Table 7 is a collection of suggestions from NGOs with regard to activities valuable to migrant empowerment. In terms of conditions of and impediments to empowerment, we received the following responses.

- (1) The problem of time: Two groups pointed out the difficulties encountered by those married to the Japanese. They cannot afford to participate in many activities. Some raise their children; others have to work together with their husbands for a living.
- (2) Co-ethnic leader: Two organizations suggested co-ethnic leaders and staffs are essential for empowerment. They can promote activities in collaboration with the Japanese. Ideally, it is not the Japanese that promote programs. They should support the programs of migrant workers themselves.
- (3) Stable life: One group pointed out that empowerment couldn't be expected until core members lived relatively decent, stable lives.
- (4) Empowerment through fundraising: Events for fundraising, such as bazaars and festivals, themselves lead to empowerment through the active participation and cooperation of members.

Table 7 Suggested Activities Valuable for Empowerment

| Kind of activity | Number suggested | Comments from NGOs |
|--|------------------|--|
| Japanese language teaching | 4 | Migrant workers are empowered through participating in a language class. They can find co-ethnic friends there and learn how to live in Japan as they become fluent in Japanese. |
| Self-help groups and co-ethnic associations | 4 | It is especially important to support groups that maintain solidarity through religious activities. |
| Leadership training | 2 | |
| Mother tongue teaching | 2 | Children of mixed marriages can be proud of both of parents' cultures and retain their self-esteem. |
| Cultural activity | 1 | Cultural activities can enhance self-esteem and provide opportunities to meet co-ethnics. |
| Special assistance | 1 | Legal, medical, and educational assistance. |
| Day-care center, baby-sitting | 1 | |
| Information on recycle shop | 1 | |
| Information | 1 | Most migrants are far from familiar with the welfare services available to them because of the language barrier. So, multilingual documents to access institutional resources should be distributed to every foreigner entering Japan. |
| Information center | 1 | Many migrants do not know how to cope in Japan. Civic information centers with full-time staffs should be launched as orientation centers to attend after entering Japan |
| Movement for political rights of migrant workers | 1 | |

- (5) Grassroots orientation: Two groups think programs that forget grassroots orientation tend to be unstable, or that it is essential for successful empowerment to include frequent contact with migrants themselves.

In this way, migrant-concerned NGOs have tried a variety of programs. They also have noticed impediments to empowerment. Therefore, the challenge for NGOs is to review past experiences so that effective methodology can be developed for the future. Therefore, we will examine more detailed and qualitative analyses of well-structured programs in the next section.

6. Comparative Case Studies and Evaluation

We have visited 13 organizations for case studies. To detect problems and lessons, education programs are comparatively described and analyzed. But before going into detail, let us look at the profiles of selected organizations (see Table 8).

6.1. Empowerment of Filipino women

(a) Description

SOL (the Solidarity Center for Migrants) was established by the Catholic Yokohama diocese in 1992. Soon after launching, the Philippine desk of SOL became well known for its unique programs. Especially noteworthy are: (1) women's program, (2) labor's programs, and (3) re-integration programs⁵.

The Philippine desk has been addressing the problems of female migrant workers such as intermarriage and trafficking since its establishment. Women's projects were formed to educate survivors of domestic violence; because solutions arrived at by the victims, prevention, and awareness raising are more effective than counseling individual problems. Another reason behind development of the program is that the mental support of victims requires a long-term commitment.

The primary stage of the program entailed organizing groups so that women with same problems could share their experiences. Differences of job status and relations with families hindered internal solidarity, even if participants were all survivors of domestic violence. Therefore, FWES (Filipino Women for Empowerment and Self-Reliance) was established to organize the wives of the Japanese who could barely afford to participate in terms of time and money. Economic empowerment was also emphasized to encourage members to become economically independent of their husbands or partners. Members started such small businesses as recycling, massage, acupuncture, and manicure. Although members themselves publicize these activities at their churches, these small businesses are not succeeding due to the lack of initial capital.

These programs generated a self-help group of domestic-violence survivors in 1997, which changed its name to KALAHASAN (Kababaihan sa Laban sa Kalahasan) in April 1999. KALAHASAN is composed of 10 members who are single mothers, single women living with partners, and divorced women. So far, members have engaged in sharing experiences and analyzing their problems at the shelters, at the offices of SOL, and at Catholic churches.

The common problem of FWES and KALAHASAN is that members do not have enough time to participate. Because overstaying women cannot find good jobs and have to work long hours in bad conditions, they cannot afford to set aside time to attend the groups. Keeping volunteer baby sitters

Table 8 Profiles of NGOs selected for case studies

| Name | Type | Year | Place | Full-time staffs | Part-time staffs | Active volunteers | Proportion of foreigners | Program |
|---|--------------|------|------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|--|
| SOL | Church-based | 1992 | Kawasaki | 5 | 7 | 30 | Middle | (a) Philippine desk Organizing, Re-integration Counseling, Leadership training (b) Latin America Desk Consciousness raising Self-help project Child education project Elderly care project Networking through internet |
| City Union | Labor Union | 1984 | Kawasaki | 4 | 2 | 0 | High | Unionizing |
| APFS | Civic | 1987 | Tokyo | 2 | 0 | 6 | High | Counseling, Leadership training |
| FWBZ | Labor Union | 1992 | Tokyo | 1 | 1 | 4 | Low | Counseling for labor disputes Study meeting |
| FLU | Labor Union | 1991 | Tokyo | 0 | 0 | 10 | Low | Counseling for labor disputes Unionization, seminars |
| HELP | Shelter | 1984 | Tokyo | | | | | Counseling/Psychotherapy |
| Kalabaw-no-Kai | Civic | 1987 | Yokohama | 1 | 0 | 20 | Middle | Self-help group Japanese language class Computer class |
| Hand in Hand Chiba | Civic | 1990 | Chiba | 0 | 0 | 21 | Low | Counseling |
| FICAP | Ethnic | 1997 | Nagoya | 0 | 0 | 10 | High | Counseling, Leadership training |
| ELCC | Church-based | 1998 | Nagoya | 3 | 0 | 7 | High | School education for undocumented children |
| CMIA | Civic | 1995 | Osaka | 4 | 10 | 15 | Low | Ethnic media support Free space for children of migrant workers |
| Kitakyushu Gaikokujin to Tomoni Ayumu Kai | Civic | 1993 | Kitakyushu | 0 | 0 | 0 | Low | Counseling, Self-help group, Unionizing |
| Saalaa | Church-based | 1992 | Yokohama | 3 | 2 | 20 | Low | Shelter, Counseling |

is also essential to promoting mothers' participation. That is, it is difficult to attend meetings regularly, especially for those most in need of participation.

Meanwhile, the FICAP (Filipina Circle for Advancement and Progress) is a grassroots organization rather than a migrant support NGO. Filipinas in Tokyo established FICAP in 1995, eventually opening branches nationwide. Though the first national meeting was held in 1997, only FICAP Aichi remains active.

Most members of FICAP Aichi are spouses of the Japanese. Though the number of registered member was 186 in 2000, only 6 to 10 are active. The gap between the number of active and inactive members illustrates the time management problem mentioned above. As with the Philippine desk, the biggest obstacle is to ensure a continuous commitment from participants.

Main activities are counseling, women's programs, participation in international events, and education programs. In terms of counseling, FICAP serves as an intermediary group that connects support groups with Filipino migrant workers: at the counseling, FICAP introduces proper organizations such as bar associations, shelters, and community workers unions. This sort of intermediary group is helpful because Filipinos are largely unwilling to visit Japanese support groups directly. Nevertheless, FICAP is aiming to become an 'authentic' self-help organization that can solve problems on their own rather than remaining a liaison group.

The women's program first promotes sharing experiences during counseling. FICAP also tried to establish a setting for open discussion in association with other branches. The second stage is orientation on specific issues. One of the themes of orientation was 'female migrants,' in which Filipinas consider the problems of migrant labor as their own issue.

In February 2000, FICAP and its partners established the FMU (Filipino Migrant Union) to deal with labor problema and to integrate local Filipino communities. FICAP is also a member of the municipality-sponsored Nagoya NGO Center, in which FICAP participates in cultural exchange programs and Tagalog classes, thereby developing networks with other NGOs and municipalities. The strength of the FICAP is its networking, which makes it a good place to launch ambitious programs.

The most remarkable result brought about by networking is the establishment of the ELCC (Ecumenical Learning Center for Children), which educates overstaying Filipino children. Because Aichi, Mie, and Gifu prefectural governments do not admit the enrollment of overstaying children, the education of such children had become a serious problem for FICAP. The president of FICAP appealed to NGOs and churches, which led to the establishment of ELCC in 1998. In 2000, 20 students learned there, supervised by 10 teachers. The Filipino curriculums are used and English and Tagalog are taught so that students can adapt themselves to Filipino schools after repatriation. The ELCC not only teaches unschooled children, but also raises the awareness of parents through parent-teacher associations and events. Activities of the ELCC are seen as empowering parents through child education.

(b) Evaluation and prospect

Both SOL and FICAP recognized the necessity of long-term education programs through the experience of counseling, which would be the starting point for migrant-concerned NGOs to begin programs for empowerment. SOL and FICAP also share a common organizing problem : members

have difficulty participating on a regular basis because most of them are married and are bringing up their children. Their experiences also give us two implications in terms of organizing migrant women in Japan.

First, as the emergence of women's programs of SOL suggests, differences in living conditions of Filipinas can inhibit organizing activities. Domestic violence, for example, is a delicate issue based on the relationship between partners, and thus, their problems tend to be personalized. In this situation, sharing national origin and gender is not sufficient to establish solidarity. In fact, a complicated power relationship has emerged between those who could solve domestic violence and those who could not⁶.

Second, support activities of FICAP are taking advantage of its grassroots orientation that aims at the self-help of Filipinas. The leaders of FICAP are migrant workers keeping relatively good relations with their husbands, which has a positive effect on supporting other Filipinas. Moreover, activities of FICAP depend heavily on its networking capacity. This intermediary role is important, because the distances separating migrant workers and support NGOs present a major problem.

However, the grassroots nature of FICAP sometimes limits its capacity for organizing, because it cannot afford to have an office and employ a full-time administrative staff. In this situation, the president tends to bear the weight of responsibility; hence, all the activities rely more on personal efforts than on organizational power. In fact, FICAP recognizes the necessity to improve the status quo toward an effective division of labor. Leadership training, fundraising, constructing decentralized structure, and opening a new office are measures designed to strengthen the internal structure. In this sense, SOL has the most desirable organizational infrastructure because co-ethnic staffs can devote themselves to training migrant leaders.

It should also be emphasized that empowerment and organizing are mutually facilitating in the following senses: (1) empowerment is accomplished by organizing, (2) organizing depends on the empowerment of members, and (3) members learn much through the process of organizing. Filipina leaders become empowered through constructing organizations. In fact, dissatisfaction with the cultural activities of Filipinas in Aichi prefecture led to the establishment of FICAP, which suggests core members were empowered to a considerable extent before launching. The endeavors to improve internal structures are also seen as a process of strengthening solidarity.

It is the presence of spouses of the Japanese that characterizes the Filipina population in Japan. Though they face some serious problems that often accompany intermarriage, such as domestic violence, their conditions are relatively stable compared with other migrant workers. They can assist with the empowerment of other Filipino migrant workers, which also empowers the wives of the Japanese. Potentially, Filipina wives can serve as the supportive and driving force to promote this 'dual' process of empowerment.

6.2. Are re-integration programs possible in Japan?

(a) Description

In Japan the necessity of re-integration programs has scarcely been recognized. Two reasons for this are apparent. First, the main focus of migrant-concerned NGOs in the late 1990s is highly biased toward the adaptation of migrant workers. This is partly because migrant workers themselves tend to have roots in Japan as their stays may become lengthier than anticipated.

Therefore, emphasis is placed on how to integrate them into Japanese society. Second, most NGOs are exhausted by solving urgent problems and thus cannot afford to think of re-integration, which demands more of a long-term perspective.

SOL is the sole group conducting a re-integration program in Japan. It started its program in 1996. More precisely, a pilot group for saving referred to as Kaisa was launched and included 13 members. Based on the experience of the pilot group, staffs began seminars and training programs for each community. At first, seminars were held twice a month in Yokohama. Now 13 groups are registered, of which 5 are actually active. At present, to maintain and develop programs of active groups is emphasized over increasing the number of groups. Therefore, SOL no longer conducts seminars on a regular basis.

The four-step seminar program includes the following modules: (1) introduction, (2) saving strategy, (3) investment, and (4) personal change.

Saving strategy: This entails two policies: (a) A certain amount of income should first be kept for saving, and (b) specific goals should be set to maintain motivation. For example, members are advised to make a concrete and detailed plan of their house if they intend to build one.

Investment: SOL also recommends diversified investment to avoid risk. If members plan to open a barbecue-chicken restaurant, it is better to expand the business into related areas, such as serving other cuisines or barbecue-sauce manufacturing.

Personal change: In addition to looking for economic opportunity, members should also pursue alternative life styles. For example, they should remain environmentally conscious, perhaps investing in organic farming instead of buying a passenger jeep (FX).

As mentioned earlier, 5 saving groups are active now. Their main characteristics are shown in Table 9. SOL serves as a facilitator to help groups make decisions on their own.

Group solidarity is the essential condition for introducing a re-integration program. Actually, groups are composed of people with diverse occupational status (except for Gabay ng Buhay, in which all of the members are wives of the Japanese). Thus, conflicts within the groups are the first hurdle that each group must overcome.

Let us introduce the case of Kilusanpang Kabuhayan (hereafter: KP)⁷. KP was launched in January 1998. It began with the coordinator and four friends composing a peer group affiliated with Yamato Catholic Church. When in 1998 they began to consider launching a business that would be helpful to others as well as profitable, the coordinator hit on the idea of a re-integration program of SOL. She had attended the seminar for re-integration twice and had occasionally assisted the staffs of SOL. The minimum amount of KP members' savings is 5,000 yen (about \$50), and the total amount of their savings has reached 450,000 pesos.

Among the seven members of KP, three (including the coordinator) have already returned to the Philippines. Following the advice of Unlad-Kabayan, a migrant-support group in the Philippines, KP planned to open a migrant bank and began a feasibility study in June 1999.

Table 9 Characteristics of Saving Groups

| Name | Members (total) | Members in the Philippines | Amount of saving (pesos) | Investment program | Note |
|-----------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| Kilusanpang Kabuhayan | 7 | 3 | 450,000 | Micro-finance business | Preparatory period (survey/research, scanning of the place and others) |
| Alitaptap | 21 | 10 | 2,500,000 | Acquire a preschool | Started partly by coordinator and some members; |
| Apple Tree | 7 | 2 | 90,000 | Poultry farming or organic farming | Will start within year 2000 |
| San Lorenzo | 5 | None | 500,000 | Catering (lunch-box) business | Study stage and probably would start June 2001 |
| Gabay ng Buhay | 5 | None | 200,000 | flower farm and flower shop | Planning stage/ Members are wives of Japanese |

(b) Evaluation and prospect

The practical and economic aims of re-integration programs is to get away from the ‘trap of migration.’ As migrants stay longer in Japan, their economic needs, especially for monthly consumption, increase exponentially. Even if they could save money to take back home, they are liable to return to Japan after the savings have been depleted. Therefore, migrants have to find an investment target to create a stable income source in the Philippines. This is the primary idea behind and ultimate goal of re-integration programs.

Re-integration programs facilitate not only economic empowerment, but also personal and community development. In April 2000, the “Assembly of Re-integration Members and Families of Migrants in the Philippines” was held in the Philippines, which gathered group members and their families living in the Philippines. The purpose of this assembly was to raise the consciousness of not only migrant workers but also their families and communities, and even potential migrants. Needless to say, the merit of re-integration programs is actually to raise migrant workers’ sense of responsibility to secure an economic and social life on his or her own. The pursuit of profit was underemphasized in favor of whether programs could lead to community development. On this account, the re-integration program recommends more community-based and sustainable investment projects.

It is difficult to evaluate the program, since it is still in the formative stage. But it is clear that re-integration and savings programs in Japan are a relatively hard process to settle. This is because, in general, it is difficult for migrant workers to save money constantly, because the cost of living in Japan is quite high. Additionally, migrants are likely to spend their money on comfort or luxury goods, as they grow familiar with their life styles in Japan. Thus, the priority of saving in their economic life might not be high. Or, saving is basically thought to be an individual concern.

Considering these factors, it is essential to establish the concept of group savings and re-integration more firmly. This means that migrants should first be educated about the concept of cooperatives and the alternative economic life. In theory, a collaboration among re-integration groups is the goal; e.g., Alitaptap can cater lunch box meals to the preschool of San Lorenzo. This would lead to a more stable operation of the re-integration process.

For successful re-integration, networking with sending countries is also important. SOL has already started networking with concerned organizations in the Philippines, such as Unlad-Kabayan, ECMI (Episcopal Commission on the Pastoral Care for Migrant and Itinerant People), BAPAKA (a stock-farming group), and TIPANANG Hardin (an organic farming group). Additionally, SOL is planning to employ a full-time local coordinator to make the program more effective.

6.3. Empowerment for long-term residence: Latin Americans

Though most Latin American migrants are enchanted by the myth of returning home, quite a few of them are likely to settle down in Japan. The Latin America Desk has five programs in progress: (1) awareness raising and unionization, (2) seminar for small business, (3) student program, (4) elderly program, and (5) networking through the Internet. It is impossible to evaluate these programs, because they are new. So in this section let us just introduce the purposes of each program.

- (1) This is actually awareness raising through unionization. When migrant workers come to the office looking for solutions to their problems, the staff recommend they become members of a labor union. After migrant workers join unions, they are expected to claim their labor rights and realize they have the right to do so. The principle aim here is that migrant workers are not regarded as clients, but as collaborators seeking solution together. SOL sets two concrete goals: (a) launching a their own associations in labor unions and (a) setting up a labor delegate in each factory. To recruit new members, SOL organizes meetings at events or festivals, such as Christmas.
- (2) Though this program is new, the goal is ambitious. To begin with, migrant workers are given know-how to do side jobs. Then they embark on the following: (a) workers' co-operatives that deliver Latin American goods and services in collaboration with Japanese consumers' cooperatives and (b) labor unions that supply the workforce for factories so that employees can obtain public insurance.
- (3) The aim of this program is to empower children of migrant workers so that they can find alternatives to unstable jobs in which their parents are engaged. But so far the focus is placed on establishing a meeting point where students can regularly come together.
- (4) As Japanese Latin Americans live in Japan longer than they had expected, many migrant families include elderly members over the age of 60. Because of poor housing conditions in Japan, elderly people tend to feel uncomfortable and alienated. The aim of this program is to establish a place in which they can feel at home.
- (5) The Internet program is carried out by Group Six in collaboration with the Latin America Desk. Group Six created a homepage in 1999. To expand the networks of migrant workers, a mailing list and a forum are also operating. The Group is composed of six Peruvians, in

association with the Action Catholic Organization.

6.4. The rise and fall of labor unionism

(a) Description

The difficulty of empowering migrant workers through unionization comes from the nature of the migrant-concerned labor movement. Migrant workers tend to join unions when they get into trouble, for example, industrial accidents, illegal dismissal, or non-payment of wages. They usually seek legal advice or help and leave unions once their disputes are resolved. Migrant workers in Japan join community workers unions not to strengthen worker solidarity and the labor movement, but because they need immediate assistance in resolving labor problems.

Under the above-mentioned conditions, the FWBZ (Foreign Workers Branch of Zentoitsu) and FLU (Foreigners' Labor Union) have been trying to organize undocumented migrant workers and solve their labor disputes. They have passed through similar experiences since they were established in the early nineties.

Though 1,759 migrant workers have become members of FWBZ, only 30 of them remain paid members. Most members stop paying when their problems are solved. In 1999, FWBZ received 156 members from Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, China, Sri Lanka, and 11 other countries. The main activities of FWBZ include giving counsel on Sunday and bargaining with firms. Because of the temporary nature of membership, no regular education program is provided for rank and file members. But about 15 workers gathered when the union held a study meeting for the revised immigration law in 1999.

On the other hand, migrant worker staffs regularly meet to study the Japanese Labor Law. There are three part-time staff members from Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Senegal who work as counselors at FWBZ.

The FLU has 750 members and roughly 100 members come to join annually, though the number is decreasing year by year. It is partly because undocumented migrant workers, after living in Japan for a decade or more, can resolve most of their problems by themselves. Since they don't join unions in search of better working conditions, they need not become members when they can manage themselves.

The number of migrant workers in community workers unions peaked during 1993-1994. After that period, their activities as well as their numbers have been stagnating. The reason is fourfold:

First, long-term economic recession led to declining bargaining power of migrant workers. At times of economic prosperity, Japanese firms tend to suffer a severe labor shortage, putting migrant workers were in a relatively advantageous position. However, after the collapse of the economic bubble, migrant workers turned out to be much more vulnerable in the labor market.

Second, it became difficult to organize migrant workers in workplaces. During the peak period, quite a few migrants worked in the same workplaces, making it easier to unionize. The workers could conduct mass bargaining with employers in case of labor disputes by themselves. At that time, Japanese staffs should have provided specialized training in Japanese Labor Law. However, because of the economic recession many migrant workers left their workplaces for their countries. That is why those who remain in the workplace often find themselves isolated and at a loss to assert their rights before employers.

Third, the composition of migrant workers has diversified as their stay in Japan has lengthened. At first, the category 'foreign workers' was sufficient to entail most migrant workers. This because of the once homogeneous nature of their makeup. But as their legal status and familial and marital conditions have grown complex, migrant workers no longer see themselves as an unitary entity, making it hard to be unionized.

Fourth, many migrant workers were forced to change their jobs due to long-term recession. They often moved to distant places in search of employment and in this way abandoned unions. The FWBZ and FLU both lost most core members, who who had returned to their countries or moved away.

(b) Evaluation and prospect

The above-mentioned problems aside, the Japanese staffs are not earnest invested in developing empowerment programs, because they often consider a precondition of effective empowerment to be stable settlement in any one place. In reality, most migrant workers have to move frequently in search of jobs. In addition, many migrant workers returned to their countries. Kanagawa City Union, for example, has many Korean members because Korean staffs are working there. Most Korean migrant workers go home within 3 to 5 years, quite different from Peruvians, as introduced in Section 6.3. As a result, Korean members leave the union before they get fully empowered.

Nevertheless, educating short-term members is not always fruitless. In the mid-1990s, repatriated Korean members launched Korea FWM. which aimed to share their experiences and to support migrant workers in Korea. Complying with the union staff's wishes to organize repatriated members, several members voluntarily planned FWM. This is noteworthy as a way of empowering short-term members in a transnational context. But given that their means of support are limited, they could not make monthly meetings and thus became inactive.

Yet, there are several signs of hope in terms of empowerment through unionization. First, three part-time staff members of FWBZ act as counselors, making the best use of their knowledge and experiences as migrant workers. Since they work in factories on weekdays, they cannot go to the office regularly. But they individually advise other migrant workers on weekdays. It is of great interest how they have become empowered and what kinds of difficulties they have overcome. Their experiences provide important insights helpful to promoting the empowerment of migrant workers in general.

Second, FWBZ opens the office for migrant workers on Sunday to be used as a quasi-public space, so that migrant workers can clue in on how to solve their problems through free discussion. It can be regarded as a first step toward empowerment. If combined with informational infrastructure (e.g., the Internet), it can nurture the public sphere of migrant workers.

Third, community workers unions are still trying to establish shop branches of Latin Americans, although it failed in the case of overstayers. In 1997, Brazilian members of FLU launched a branch in a factory in the Greater Tokyo area. Though 16 workers joined the branch at first, the number has decreased to 5 in 2000. As a matter of fact, only a tiny fraction of Brazilian workers there have become members, because most workers are afraid that joining a union leads to dismissal. Still, the shop branch enabled 'proactive' negotiation with the employers, obtaining for employees the rights of paid holiday and health insurance. In a company in Saitama prefecture, too, the FLU is

struggling to establish a shop branch for Brazilians hesitant to enter the union for fear of discharge. When the staffs went to broadcast from pamphlets, Brazilian workers threw eggs at them.

Fourth, an Iranian has become a full-time staff member of FLU. Full-time members have to coordinate a complex relationship with not only migrant members but also Japanese members and related organizations. They must remain in the job long enough to construct good relations with concerned workers and contacts. Additionally, most community workers unions cannot afford to pay salaries to satisfy migrant staffs. That is why labor unions seldom employ migrant workers as full-time staffs. However, as the case of Kanagawa City Union indicates, co-ethnic staffs can attract many migrant workers.

6.5. Success and failure in organizing South Asian undocumented workers

(a) Description

On September 2, 1999, 21 visa overstayers (16 Iranians, 3 Burmese, and 2 Bangladeshis) visited the Tokyo Immigration Bureau Office to apply for special permission for residence. This event surprised many Japanese people as well as migrant-concerned NGOs. It was the APFS (Asian People's Friendship Society) that promoted a series of movements requiring special permission for residence. In this section, we examine what is necessary for successful organizing, comparing two contrasting cases of APFS and Kalabaw-no-Kai. Though both groups suffer from same structural impediments, that is, long-term economic recession, APFS is still successfully organizing undocumented South Asians whereas Kalabaw-no-Kai quit its organizing project in January 2000⁸.

Kalabaw-no-Kai is one of the oldest and the most famous migrant-concerned NGOs in Japan. Since its establishment in 1987, Kalabaw-no-Kai had been known as a confrontational group committed to mass bargaining with authorities and enterprises. But in the mid-1990s, staffs began to build a more continuous relationship with migrant workers, because most migrant workers left Kalabaw-no-Kai after solving their labor disputes. Therefore, a Japanese language class was opened at the end of 1993.

Though the Japanese language class is still operating, Kalabaw-no-Kai quit maintaining its self-help groups. In 1996, some staff members and two Bangladeshi leaders began to organize a self-help group named Bangladesh Group. The Bangladeshi leaders were college graduates and aware of the importance of protecting their rights. Therefore, the decision to establish a group came easily. The 6 to 7 core members persuaded a few friends to join and gathered for preliminary functions. The opening ceremony was held in 1997, and about 30 members attended. Though the number increased, the manner of recruitment was somewhat coercive. Several leaders paternalistically dominated the group.

The main activities of the Bangladesh Group included: (1) sociability, (2) fund raising, (3) publishing a newsletter, and (4) rescuing compatriots.

(1) According to group leaders, Bangladeshis do not attend meetings that don't include entertainment such as parties. The leaders did not usually succeed in persuading Bangladeshi workers to join the Bangladesh Group without some form of enjoyable coercion. Therefore, sociability was crucial to attract new members.

(2) At first fund raising was considered important for dealing with accidents. Members had to pay 500 yen (approx. 5 dollars) per month. But in fact, most members did not pay the membership

fee. A Japanese staff member said this was because Bangladeshi workers in general are not familiar with insurance or diversification of risk, though they do know about helping each other. They asserted they could help each other in case of emergency without raising a fund. As a result, the fund raising activity was fruitless.

(3) The Bangladesh Group published a monthly Bengali newsletter for 6 months that was aimed at circulating useful information. However, the printing cost of 30,000 yen (approx. 300 dollars) per issue was too costly to continue publishing. Some members began to study how to create a newsletter by themselves. By the time they finished learning, though, the Bangladesh Group had been dissolved.

(4) A Bangladeshi worker was run over in Shizuoka and hospitalized. When he was discharged, the Bangladesh Group took him to Yokohama and cared for him. That was one of the most remarkable attainments of the Bangladesh Group.

(b) Evaluation and prospect

APFS and Kalabaw-no-Kai experienced a similar course of events between 1994 and 1995: (1) They widened the range of activities, which had been limited to Japanese class and counseling ; and (2) ad hoc projects and committees became predominant so as to enable flexibility.

Around 1992, APFS counseled an increasing number of legal and social problems that typically accompanied intermarriage. Therefore, in 1994, APFS founded a group called “Happy House,” organized by those who were married to the Japanese. The Happy House has been actively dealing with the problems of intermarriage. The success of Happy House illustrates that APFS could sensibly respond to the changing demand of migrants. Organizational flexibility of APFS also initiated the movement to apply for special permission for residence in 1999. At this time, too, the APFS quickly took action once it understood the growing needs of regularization.

The Bangladesh Group of Kalabaw-no-Kai was intended to construct a reciprocal relationship with members that stabilized their lives (and on a longer term) and enabled mutual assistance in cases of accident. In this sense, it was an ‘insurance group’ that lacked concrete objectives. But in the absence of concrete goals, the organizational basis of the Bangladesh Group was unstable.

In contrast, the APFS succeeded in strengthening internal solidarity by searching out a common goal, namely, the movement to apply for the special permission for residence. The APFS has consistently insisted on the regularization of undocumented workers since the beginning of the 1990s. At the beginning of 1999, judging from favorable opinions toward overstayers, Japanese staff members came to the conclusion that it was the time to increase action for the special permission. Japanese staff members proposed the idea to migrant members. Though it was a very risky movement, the number of participants increased rapidly.

6.6. Conditions for skill training

(a) Description

The increase of foreign residents in Japan has brought the establishment of various kinds of ethnic media. For instance, there are four weekly newspapers and one wire broadcasting for Brazilians. Nonetheless, migrant workers remain ill informed compared with natives. In 1995, many migrant workers were severely inconvenienced by the lack of information during the Hanshin

Earthquake.

The direct ancestor of the CMIA was launched immediately after the earthquake to provide crucial information for foreigners. It accepted telephone counseling and issued newsletters in 15 languages. Some volunteer staff members realized the necessity of local ethnic media through this experience.

That is why CMIA started an ethnic media support project. The purpose of this project was to educate migrants who wanted to establish ethnic media. Staff members realized it should not be the Japanese but the migrants themselves who would direct gathering, processing, and furnishing information. Therefore, the CMIA started a semester program for personal computer skill training in 1996. At first, 10 migrant workers met for class once a week. Four of the 10 finished the whole program, in which they learned how to edit simple newsletters.

However, issuing media was not so simple. Two impediments arose. First, migrant workers in general are too mobile to continue publishing in any one place. One participant started a new media while finishing the program. But he moved after he brought out the second issue. Likewise, most participants stopped attending after they had learned the basics of computers, which discouraged the volunteer staff members. Second, most participants only occasionally attended the class. Skill development could not be expected without regular attendance .

As a result, CMIA gave up the education program to establish ethnic media and changed the goals of the ethnic media support project. On the one hand, CMIA provided support to existing Spanish media. It is much easier to support existing media than to launch a new media. On the other hand, CMIA opened an Internet café to attract South Americans who were not familiar with computers. The aim here is to promote exchange between co-ethnics via e-mail. In Kansai region, Latin American migrants are by and large isolated, because there are relatively few Latin Americans there compared with Tokai region.

Kalabaw-no-Kai started teaching computer skills in 1998. Initially, a Bangladeshi member bought a personal computer and asked for technical advice from Japanese staff members. Regular (weekly) classes started to explore the potential demand in April 1999. Most participants are interested in communication through e-mail and the Internet.

A majority of participants are Bangladeshi and Pakistani overstayers. Approximately 40 migrant workers participated during the first year. Beginners are more likely to drop out. Four to five participants learned how to use and assemble desktop computers. Three Bangladeshis now instruct participants on computer use.

(b) Evaluation and prospect

There are two common aspects to effective education programs. First, practical programs such as Internet and computer classes can attract migrant workers. They can also promote the participation of those who are not in trouble, which may set in motion 'proactive' activities for empowerment. Bangladeshi core members in Kalabaw-no-Kai are especially keen to attend because they want to start a computer-related business after going back to Bangladesh. Though we cannot judge whether it is feasible or not, training computer skills may be a means of re-integration. Second, the Internet café and computer schools are thought to connect migrant workers with their friends and country of origin through information gathering and exchange. Especially for participants of the Internet café

who would otherwise be isolated, experiencing the Internet café can expand their life worlds.

The difference between CMIA and Kalabaw-no-Kai is the degree of commitment of migrant workers at the beginning of the programs. Latin American migrant workers were not members of CMIA until they participated in the program. The gap between demand and supply was at least partly created by the relative absence of initial contacts. In contrast, Bangladeshi members of Kalabaw-no-Kai were already committed to self-help groups before starting the computer school. This enabled a program that well reflects the demands of participants.

7. Discussion

7.1. Empowerment processes

Now we can consider what migrant empowerment is, based on the argument detailed above. Migrant workers have been deprived of their rights, exploited by employers, exposed to violence, denied self-esteem, and excluded from information. Migrant empowerment is a process to reverse these trends through education programs. In this sense, we can use Kukita's definition of empowerment as a social process to increase access to and to control resources (Kukita 1998). The process of empowerment can be divided into four stages⁹:

- (1) Getting access to resources: everyday knowledge to live in Japan, studying the Japanese language, learning about labor rights, etc. Counseling and Japanese classes belong to this stage. Positioning their activities in the process of migrant empowerment, migrant-concerned NGOs can set their goals beyond simply charity or emergency assistance.
- (2) Consciousness raising about structural problems: expanding social networks through group activities, participating in union meetings, etc. For example, Brazilian families who gathered at meetings of CMIA were empowered to face their difficulties after discussing what they experienced and how they had overcome their problems.
- (3) Participation in decision making: political socialization through organizing and collective action, taking part in activities aimed at articulated goals. Members of savings groups have nurtured internal solidarity through religious and social activities, which implies that mutual trust is essential for positive participation.
- (4) Influencing others: encouraging empowerment to those who suffer from the same subjective difficulties.

Regarding empowerment as a four-stage process enables migrant-concerned NGOs to develop their programs in stages. They can also position their activities appropriately in the context of the empowerment process.

7.2. Expanding the reach of programs

As we have discussed above, migrant-concerned NGOs tend to fail to get in touch with migrants' communities. Commercialized migration systems disturb the development of migrant communities, thereby restraining community empowerment among migrants themselves. Paradoxically, the powerlessness of migrant workers caused the flourishing of migrant-concerned NGOs in Japan. As a corollary, cooperation between NGOs and migrant communities can reverse the treadmill of

disempowerment erected by commercialized migration systems.

Nevertheless, it is difficult for NGOs to approach migrant communities without the inclusion of co-ethnic staffs and migrant leaders. Let us take the example of SOL, which reveals much about the task of approaching migrants. The Philippine desk of SOL has been working in collaboration with many Filipino communities around Kanagawa prefecture. To open up a wide range of participation, SOL takes the following steps:

- (1) Visiting scattered communities to search out potential leaders
- (2) Educating and training leaders
- (3) Meeting of core groups, bringing about internal solidarity
- (4) Introducing a new program to core groups of communities
- (5) Diffusing the program to other communities

When we think of an empowerment program, we should keep in mind two important points. First, not every migrant belongs to his or her own community. Second, migrants have their own individual experiences that require a wide array of programs to achieve empowerment. To simplify the argument we look at two categories of migrants: those with urgent problems and those without.

Migrants do not contact NGOs until they encounter troubles they cannot solve by themselves. But this actually constitutes the first stage of empowerment: Migrants must learn how to access necessary information. In most cases, however, the empowerment process ends at this stage, because migrants abandon NGOs after their immediate problems have been solved. How can NGOs cultivate continuous participation? Any answer to this must deal with two things:

First, sharing experiences instead of concentrating on personalized solutions is useful for accumulating a group potential for empowerment. This is especially important for isolated migrants who do not belong to any community. For instance, communication at Kanagawa City Union led to efforts to organize repatriated workers.

Second, migrant-concerned NGOs can approach migrant communities through those who contacted them originally for advice. Some participants in the programs of the Philippine desk of SOL first approached the office burdened by personal troubles.

Other migrants can afford to participate in education programs. As well, they are actually in need of education programs, since their livelihood remains vulnerable because of legislative, linguistic, and cultural difficulties. Therefore, empowered can help them avoid potential problems before they arise. In reality, migrants with no immediate problems usually do not get in touch with (FYI: the expressions are “get in touch with,” “get in contact with,” and “touch base with” (informal, bordering on slang) and all signify more or less the same thing) migrant-concerned NGOs.

In this case, attractive programs such as computer training or Japanese language classes provide occasions to begin the empowerment process. The FLU is now trying to establish a multilingual information system (especially for Iranians) that can offer a meeting place for migrants. It would serve as the ‘base’ for migrants to step up to the empowerment process. Besides computer training and Japanese language classes, other helpful programs that are attractive to migrants should be found.

8. Recommendation

8.1. Diagnosing the status quo

As discussed in chapter 5, some Japanese NGOs have begun migrant education programs. Even more impressive was that the majority of our respondents seemed somehow embarrassed by our questions. This is because most NGOs are not familiar with the idea of empowerment. For example, since 1999, an NGO in Fukuoka prefecture has been holding monthly meetings trying to launch a Peruvian union. Though hesitant members postponed the establishment of the NGO, they have become empowered to a considerable extent. However, this group was doubtful about the significance of the notion of empowerment.

Nevertheless, there exist quite a few NGOs that have actually started empowerment processes. Chapter 4 shows that about a half of the 57 NGOs are now at the first or the second stage of the empowerment process. But they are not conscious they are empowering migrants. In this sense, it is important for Japanese NGOs to be conscious of the fact that they are actually empowering migrants. This way of thinking avoids an assimilationist point of view and provides clues to the development of support group activities.

However, there still remain at least two problems for NGOs. First, their activities are more or less 'reactive.' With more than 10 years of experience, it is time to adopt more 'proactive' activities. Though so far the road seems long, proactivity can serve well as the goal for the coming years. Second, and closely related to the first point, migrant communities and migrant-concerned NGOs are relatively disconnected from one another. For example, Kalabaw-no-kai, which organized a Bangladesh group, was unaware of the existence of a mosque in the neighboring area. Additionally, when CMIA held multicultural child meetings planned by Japanese staff members, only a few children participated. On the other hand, when it held meetings for Brazilian children organized by a co-ethnic leader, the numbers in attendance have been steadily increasing. The relative success of the latter is due to cooperation between the Brazilian community and CMIA. These examples are suggestive to the future direction of migrant empowerment.

In principle, joint projects between migrants and NGOs are ideal for inducing the empowerment of migrants. In reality quite a few NGOs have tried and failed to gain the active participation of migrants. However, migrant-concerned NGOs will not be well known among migrants as long as NGOs do not recognize migrant communities. Therefore, it is necessary for NGOs to approach migrant communities in a positive and farsighted way.

8.2. Toward a 5-year plan for migrant empowerment

To conclude this article, we will list several points to be achieved in the next 5 years. First, it is essential for migrant-concerned NGOs to keep members participating on a regular basis before trying to launch education programs. Then they can begin programs that respond to the needs of migrants. Otherwise, the gap between demand and supply will doom NGO activities to failure before they have a chance to prove themselves. This is one of the most critical problems facing Japan. The case of CMIA tells us providing education programs for new faces is likely to fail. In contrast, Kalabaw-no-Kai succeeded its computer school served for members affiliated for several years. Such members opened their own homepages and collected information on their home countries using the Internet. These cases also suggest that selective incentives, such as using

Internet phone service, are sometimes necessary for continuous participation.

Second, education modules should be developed jointly. For example, simple texts used for short seminars during medical examinations can be effective for ad hoc participants. In a more general context, migrant workers move frequently in search of jobs. This suggests two directions for the development of education modules. First, though modest in goal, short-term programs will correspond better to temporary commitment. Second, common programs using the same education modules would allow inter-local cooperation to educate highly motivated migrants even after they have moved to other areas. So far, among between NGOs has largely been limited within specific localities. Group efforts beyond locality based on common education modules would enable temporary members to accumulate knowledge from remote locations.

Third, division of labor between reactive (e.g., emergency help) and proactive (e.g., re-integration) activities should intentionally be sought. Reactive activities, as efforts by migrant-concerned NGOs over the past 15 years have revealed, can provide an important safety net for migrants. Though safety nets can be crucial for migrants, they are not enough; is the time to implement proactive programs. Reactive and proactive activities can productively complement one another.

Fourth, one important problem facing Japanese NGOs is the distances separating NGOs and migrants. In reality, migrant communities and support groups are not yet well associated. NGO's services will vary widely, from providing emergency help to planning joint programs. At any rate, networking of scattered small migrant communities can heighten the effective implementation of education programs. Therefore, gathering information on migrant communities is vital to strengthening the relationship between the two.

Fifth, training co-ethnic leaders is crucially important. They can attract many more migrant workers than Japanese staffs, because of the fact that many Koreans join in Kanagawa City Union and most Filipinos first access FICAP in search of advice. In Japan, the importance of leadership training is not widely recognized. For example, the lack of appreciating the importance of helping potential leaders was well illustrated when CMIA refused assistance to a Brazilian student studying psychotherapy. Moreover, the experiences of migrant leaders can provide the most valuable foundation for promoting empowerment.

Appendix: 1st Diocesan Consultation on Filipino Migrants' Empowerment

Philippine Desk of Solidarity Center for Migrants

September 9-10 (Saturday-Sunday)

Theme: *"Pastoral Promotion of Migrants' Human Rights: A Review of Realities Towards Effective Strategies on Migrants' Empowerment in the next Millenium"*

Organizer: Philippine Desk of the Yokohama Diocese Solidarity Center for Migrants

Co-organizers: Diocesan Council on Justice and Peace/Diocesan Commission on International Cooperation

The consultation is seen primarily as a way for Filipino migrants and their advocates to review together and reflect on the realities of migrants in the diocese, and in Japan and to view responses to these realities for the past ten years. Participants can thereby be able to see the connections between concerns and issues confronting migrants in Asia and throughout the world. Eventually they will be able to formulate concrete, effective pastoral strategies which can further advance Filipino migrants' empowerment, which will hopefully contribute to the shaping of a new Japanese church and society, where migrants and Japanese can equally live together in justice and in security (SOL's VMO).

Why hold the consultation this year?

- This year 2000, is the Jubilee Year+ a time of rest, to sing and to celebrate. The specific reasons for the celebration among the Levites was to allow all people in the land to live in security; a time for freedom for slaves; rest for the land; restoration of property and cancellation of debts. The Jubilee Law speaks about justice to the land, human rights of poor people, slaves and those in debt. All of them should be freed and be given back their property. It is therefore necessary that we review our realities and bridge the gap of injustices experienced by migrants. We are called to truly unite ourselves in the justice spirit of the Jubilee celebration.
- We need to review the ten years since the AISA Yokohama (an Asia-Pacific conference which effected the church to respond systematically to the inhuman situation of migrants in Japan). This conference was instrumental in the creation of offices for outreach to migrants in various dioceses of the Catholic Church in Japan. We need to review how the Church has incarnated the mandate to proclaim the Good News and denounce the inhuman structures that oppress migrants and their families.
- For the past ten years, we have seen the Filipino population in Japan and in the Diocese of Yokohama grow steadily. However, this does not necessarily mean that their human condition has improved. We need to re-assess the situation in terms of protection and benefits for undocumented workers and trainees, in terms of better policies for wives and entertainers; and in terms of better treatment for children of undocumented migrants and of multi-cultural couples. We need to hear the voices of migrants from these sectors. Then having been energized by these voices, we will be able to plan for more effective strategies in building a new multi-cultural society.
- We need to review the violations to migrants as persons, particularly how the image of God in migrants and in the migrant community has been transgressed by dehumanizing policies and practices in both sending and receiving countries. We also need to recognize and affirm the contributions made by migrants to Japanese society and to their own country. We need to know how to use and maximize migrants potential and capabilities to attain a quality of life for all.
- We need to share from personal experiences what empowerment has been for migrants and their advocates. How have the initiatives of the NGOs and the church contribute to this empowerment? And how do we relate empowerment to our concept of human rights?
- This consultation could be an occasion to hear from migrants and learn of their experiences of racism, xenophobia and racial discrimination in preparation for the global conference on this matter which will be held in South Africa in the year 2001.
- With an updated understanding of the realities of migrants, hopefully we will be able to establish a clear set of priorities necessary for migrants empowerment for the next millenium. This will provide a fresh start for the migrants, the Church and NGOs to re-focus their programs to address the

most urgent tasks which will have been identified through the consultation.

Guidelines for the Consultation

1. Participation to the consultation will be open, although not limited,, to those who represent a Filipino group, association or community and to migrant advocates representing organizations related to the concerns of Filipino migrants in the Yokohama Diocese and if possible, in the other dioceses..
2. A representative of a Filipino group, association or community is requested to prepare a report covering the following points:
 - Their organization's vision, goals and activities
 - The composition of members: whether members are mostly composed of workers, women married to Japanese, mixed, etc., average age of members, average years of stay of members in Japan, etc.
 - Issues / concerns the group most worried about.
 - Share experiences of discrimination, xenophobia in the work place, neighborhood, public places or public agencies or offices.
 - Groups or individuals which the the group asks for support in times of problems and in meeting needs of the group.
 - Incidences where personal and group empowerment was/were achieved.
 - How the group considers their human rights while they are in Japan as migrants? Elaboration on this matter is requested..
 - Major concerns of the group in the following year or within 3 years.
3. Filipino migrants' advocates representing a church or any group or an NGO will be requested to prepare a report, covering the following points:
 - A short description of their organization
 - Migrant realities in Japan as perceived by the group
 - Group understanding of migrants' empowerment
 - Issues / concerns that the group is focussing on for the empowerment of Filipino migrants. For groups which have been advocating for ten or more years, please make a reflection on how the activities empowered migrants..
 - Major focus of the group for the next millenium.
4. Representatives from among the youth/children will be encouraged to share their life experiences as children of multi-cultural parents or children of both Filipino parents.
5. Representatives who can reflect the experiences of overstay Filipino couples with children and can give expression to their basic aspirations will be particularly sought out. Although there are migrants in this category, they have not visibly formed any particular community. We need to seek out representatives from each of the prefecture of the diocese.

¹ At first we planned to include children of migrant workers as the fourth category. But we could not collect enough data to analyze. Therefore we limit ourselves to mentioning the general conditions of migrant children. As migrant workers have roots in receiving countries, education of their children

becomes a serious problem. In fact, the number of students who are not fluent in Japanese has been increasing. In many cases children of migrant workers are burdened with a strange environment, language, and cultural barriers. The enrollment rate of Latin American and Indochinese for high school is far lower than that for Japanese.

Additionally, we have to consider the children of undocumented migrant workers who are not counted in official statistics. Whereas in Greater Tokyo, any children can enroll in public schools regardless of visa status, undocumented children may be excluded from public school education in other areas.

The number of students who need special program to learn Japanese

| | Elementary School | Junior High School | High School | Total |
|------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------|--------|
| 1991 | 3,978 | 1,485 | N.A. | 5,463 |
| 1993 | 7,569 | 2,881 | N.A. | 10,450 |
| 1995 | 8,192 | 3,350 | 264 | 11,806 |
| 1997 | 12,302 | 4,533 | 461 | 17,296 |

Source: Ministry of Education

² Recruiting agencies that often cause problems are major components of commercialized migration systems.

³ Of course the proportion of those who migrated using commercialized migration systems varies widely. In Japan, Thai women and Brazilians are among those most subjugated by commercialized migration systems.

⁴ Since entertainers are not formally seen as workers, the Labor Law does not cover them.

⁵ In terms of the leadership-training program by SOL, see also the Appendix.

⁶ Of course these two groups are not mutually confrontational. They cooperate during events.

⁷ The case of KP is based on an interview with the coordinator at Manila (June 30, 2000).

⁸ According to a volunteer staff member of Kalabaw-no-Kai, many members moved to peripheral areas in Japan looking for job opportunities or went home, giving up their lives in Japan. They claimed stable jobs were essential for organizing.

⁹ Though he distinguished five stages of the empowerment process, we have modified his original arguments.

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