

# ORIENTING LIVE-IN CAREGIVERS

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VOIES VERS LA  
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Promouvoir des communautés accueillantes au Canada

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## **Executive Summary**

Employing interviews with prospective, current, and former Live-In/Caregiver Program (L/CP) workers in the Philippines and Canada and participant observation of pre-departure orientation seminars (PDOS), we garnered information about the learning needs of these workers throughout their trajectory from temporary foreign worker to permanent resident and solicited recommendations about best practices for these programs. In this process, we uncovered tremendous gaps in the information that was supposed to be delivered in the mandatory PDOS programs and what was retained by all three sets of informants. Irregularities in the delivery of PDOS in terms of content and facilitation as well as the timing of mandatory PDOS contribute to these lacunae. In contrast, participants who enrolled in the voluntary Canada Orientation Abroad<sup>1</sup> (COA) program offered in the Philippines through the International Organization for Migration, were generally pleased with the information they received. Recently, however, the Government of Canada has decided that CP workers no longer qualify for this program.

Orientation is a process and the learning needs of migrants change with their trajectory from prospective migrant to temporary foreign worker to permanent resident and citizen. Moreover, as informants appear to be obtaining information about the L/CP often from relatives, both sending and receiving governments have an obligation to ensure that prospective, current, and former L/CP workers have access to accurate, clear, and up-to-date information.

## **Recommendations**

### **Government of the Philippines: PDOS (POEA and OWWA)**

1. As the Philippine government has already initiated post-arrival orientation seminars for its workers in different countries, these programs should be made available in Canada with input and assistance from the Canadian government.
2. Although the Philippine PDOS programs have also been regarded as one of the best-practices among labour-sending countries, we concur with other

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<sup>1</sup> The Government of Canada has recently (mid 2015) decided that CP workers no longer qualify for this program.

authors (c.f. Asis and Agunias 2012; Baggio 2008) that there is a need for re-assessment of the PDOS content and delivery format. Conducting a broader needs assessment similar to this pilot study is vital to ensuring that the needs of both OFWs and the Government of the Philippines are met.

3. In addition, greater attention must be given to the pedagogical skills of instructors, to ensuring their commitment to delivering the curriculum at hand, and to their on-going evaluation.
4. PDOS should not become a commercial forum for the sale of products and services whether proffered by a guest speaker or the PDOS trainer.
5. With regards to seminar content and delivery, participants recommended:
  - 5.1. The inclusion of former L/CP workers or other OFWs or expatriates as guest speakers to garner “first-hand” knowledge of Canada;
  - 5.2. More interactive workshops and time for discussion;
  - 5.3. Make on-line seminars available for those who cannot attend in person;
  - 5.4. POEA should offer a more Canada-focused orientation that includes information on applying for social insurance number, medical insurance, renewing contracts, the role of caregivers, changing employers, and making friends; and
  - 5.5. The messages conveyed in the sessions need to be standardized and inclusive of Philippine cultural, religious, and gendered diversity.
6. There is also a need to have more retrievable information on-line (i.e., website, Facebook page) where prospective and current L/CP workers can pose questions and seek clarification on issues post-PDOS.
7. Although the PDOS is offered in the regions, prospective caregivers must still travel to the capital region to take the stress management seminar. Participants suggest that this session be integrated into the PDOS so that it is available outside Manila.
8. Registration for PDOS should be made possible using SMS, e-mail, or another on-line format.
9. Re-consider when PDOS is offered to prospective OFWs. The current timing of just prior to departure may not be conducive to learning and absorption of information by OFWs as they are often more preoccupied with obtaining documents required for their job and with making last minute arrangements of their personal affairs.

### **Government of Canada (GOC)**

1. The GOC should collaborate with the Philippine government as indicated above to develop a series of orientation seminars across time and place as workers transition from early arrivals to community members.
2. The GOC should reinstate funding for the COA program for CP workers. While Program regulations have changed and it is no longer a fairly certain pathway to permanent residency status, some participants will be eligible for permanent resettlement. Moreover, the information shared in the COA is relevant for temporary foreign workers and gives prospective workers some of the important tools they will need to function in Canadian society.
3. It follows that funding should be made available to immigrant serving agencies and other support organizations who provide assistance to L/CP workers regardless of their status as temporary migrants.
4. The GOC through its network of immigrant-serving agencies should offer informational seminars for first-time employers, as is required in Singapore, to learn about their obligations under the CP and about the processes they will need to undertake on behalf of their employee (i.e., applying for social insurance number, provincial health insurance, etc.).

### **International Organization on Migration: COA**

1. While participants benefited from the interactions that can only occur when attending a seminar in person, hosting the COA only in Manila limits its availability particularly for those in rural and remote areas who may not be able to travel without considerable hardship to the Capital Region. To this end, an alternative on-line course could also be made available.
2. The IOM could create a Facebook page, perhaps open only to those who have registered for the COA, to provide updates on the CP, respond to questions, and address misinformation before it spreads.
3. Participants were greatly appreciative of the helpful handbook provided to them; however, concerns about luggage weight restrictions meant that more were leaving the binder behind. Providing the same information in a USB key and/or in a COA website would be a more suitable format.

### **Future Research**

1. Given the small sample size of this pilot project, more research is required to learn more about the impact of pre-departure orientation programs. Moreover, we need to conduct research that is inclusive of not only a larger sample size, but also introduce a comparative component to the investigation, particularly as fewer workers are entering Canada directly from the Philippines itself. Therefore, we need to compare the informational needs of CP workers who entered Canada from a third country (i.e., Hong Kong, Singapore, Saudi Arabia, etc.) without the benefit of PDOS or COA and those who came directly from the Philippines.
2. Social networks are important sources of information about Canada, the L/CP, and settling into the country (temporarily or permanently). Further research is needed on the role of social networks in social support as well as their influence on decision-making about working, living arrangements, and workers' future trajectories.
3. Given the proliferation of on-line resources and social media whose information may be helpful, misleading, or outdated, research is needed into these information flows and how they influence prospective, current, and former L/CP workers.

### **Conclusion**

In addition to more stringent oversight of PDOS administration to ensure that all modules are being delivered fully and appropriately using the prescribed methods, the Philippine government and receiving countries such as Canada need to collaborate on the development of an orientation program that would serve OFWs as they depart, settle, work, and live abroad. Providing just-in-time, or more accurately just-ahead-of-time, information will help ensure that knowledge is more readily retained. A series of seminars offered over at different points in the life trajectories of L/CP workers as they journey from the Philippines to Canada and from prospective workers to permanent residents, has the advantage of being both more responsive and more timely, as well as more flexible in providing up-to-date information as changes to policies and programs occur. Furthermore, multiple seminars taking place in Canada over time creates additional opportunities for social networking and for workers to avail themselves of social support as come together. Overall, the pre-departure

learning needs of workers require the collaboration and participation of different sectors and groups at the local, provincial, federal, and international jurisdictions in order to bring about policy changes that improve the experiences of migration, adaptation, and settlement of workers and families in Canadian society.

## 1.0 Introduction

Since 1992, over 52,000 women and men, well over 90% from the Philippines, have entered Canada under the auspices of the Live-In Caregiver Program<sup>2</sup> (LCP) (Kelly et al. 2011). Implemented that year to address a reputed crisis in child, elder and disabled care, the L/CP enables participants to apply for permanent residency status after completing 3,900 hours of full-time service (approximately two years) working for—and living with—their employers (Faraday 2012; Kelly et al. 2011). This unique hybrid program that enables temporary foreign workers to become permanent residents poses particular challenges for both pre-departure orientation programs and for immigrant-serving agencies that are not authorized to offer services to temporary foreign workers (although many do so regardless of the guidelines). In our previous SSHRC-funded research project, *Filipino Families in Transition: Filipino Families, Canadian Issues*, the vast majority of informants, former L/CP workers in Ottawa and Edmonton undergoing family reunification, were unaware of the existence of settlement services, community organizations or ethno-specific organizations that could have provided support for their families upon arrival (Spitzer and Torres 2012). Moreover, respondents in that project, and in previous studies (c.f. Spitzer 2009; Spitzer and Bitar 2002), claimed they learned little about their rights or the opportunities they might have in Canada while working under the L/CP.

### 1.1 Objectives and Methods

Focusing on the perceived needs of current and former L/CP workers, this pilot study addresses Pathway to Prosperity's new emerging theme of pre-arrival services from "the perspective of both individuals who are in the pre-arrival stage and, retrospectively, from those who are already permanent residents in Canada" (P2P RFP).

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<sup>2</sup> The L/CP is now known as the Caregiver Program (CP) after the requirement that workers reside with their employers (among other changes to the Program) was lifted in late 2014 after data collection for this project had begun. We employ the acronym L/CP to indicate that we gathered data while the Program was in transition.

Specifically, our objectives were to:

- (1) Examine the learning needs of prospective, current, and former live-in caregivers throughout their trajectory from temporary foreign worker to permanent resident *by hosting focus groups* (FGs) with prospective L/CP workers in the Philippines and with current and former L/CP workers in the Ottawa-Gatineau region. In these FGs, we sought to elicit information about: what they learned in their pre-departure orientation programs, what information might be useful to them at their current stage in their integration trajectory, and their preferences for program delivery including format, timing, and content;
- (2) Compare the content of the pre-departure orientation programs offered to L/CP workers in the Philippines with the perceived needs of prospective, current, and former live-in caregivers *by conducting a literature review pertaining to pre-departure programs for overseas Filipino workers, by observing pre-departure orientation sessions in the Philippines, and by using content analysis to examine visual and textual materials provided during those sessions.* Participant observation of these sessions and content analysis of the materials would be used enabled us to not only track the content and delivery mechanisms of pre-departure sessions, but also to consider the content provided in the context of what information respondents retained, lost, or misunderstood;
- (3) Offer preliminary recommendations for policy and pre-departure orientation program refinements *by soliciting recommendations for revisions from focus group participants and by analyzing the gaps between commonly perceived needs and delivered content of the pre-departure sessions through the comparison of course content in light of what respondents have found most useful at different stages of their migration process; and*
- (4) Use this pilot study to develop a larger proposal for funding that would incorporate more sites of investigation and a greater array of key informants.

## **1.2 Rationale**

Overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) including those destined to work in Canada under the L/CP are required to participate in a mandatory pre-departure orientation program in the Philippines; however, there has been little systematic

evaluation as to how this program meets the informational needs of L/CP workers as they move through departure and resettlement processes unique to Canada given the possibility that employment may lead to permanent immigration status.

Previous research, including projects led by Dr. Spitzer and coordinated by Dr. Torres while at the University of Ottawa in cooperation with community partners, one organization of which was represented by Ms. Aimee Beboso, revealed that current and former live-in caregivers lacked knowledge of issues such as the steps required to obtain accreditation of foreign credentials, eligibility and accessibility of training and retraining, procedures for and considerations of family reunification including savings, housing, schooling for the children, labour and human rights, and services available for and rights of live-in caregivers. Indeed, some research participants mentioned inaccurate information that workers received through friends, relatives or informal networks (Spitzer and Torres 2012). This echoes previous research that found newcomers who had relied on information from previously settled members of their cultural community often possessed out-dated information or misinformation compared to those who without a local support network were compelled to seek out informational support on their own (Neufeld et al. 2002). Resultantly, the dissemination of specific, accurate, and up-to-date information that is provided in an appropriate and timely fashion is critical to ensuring that individuals have the best opportunities to deal with the challenges of settlement, family reunification and integration.

Prior academic research on pre-departure orientation programs has focused on important issues such as governmentality and the discursive construct of the ideal immigrant that is embedded in course content (Rodriguez 2010; Rodriguez and Schwenken 2013). While these issues are of interest to us and represent another layer of analysis of these data, both in terms of course content and informant responses, that we hope to undertake in the future, we anchor this, our initial investigation in the realm of enhancing participatory program development, by inserting the recommendations of those targeted by these programs into their content and form. The funding from P2P provided a window

of opportunity to gain in-depth knowledge on an important avenue for facilitating Filipino migrant integration in Canada by drawing from the perspectives of both workers who are in the pre-arrival stage and, retrospectively, from former live-in caregivers who were successful in obtaining permanent residency in this country

## **2.0 A Brief Overview of Pre-Departure Orientations**

Presently, temporary foreign workers leaving the Philippines must participate in, at minimum, a six-hour pre-departure orientation session (PDOS) offered by one of the two administrative units under the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) that deal with out-migration: the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA), the organization that also oversees the administration of insurance and assistance to Filipino workers abroad as well as reintegration programmes for returnees; and the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) (Anchustgui 2010; OWWA 2012; Spitzer and Piper 2014).

### **2.1 Pre-Departure Programs**

Embedded in a sophisticated infrastructure that monitors skill demand, explores employment opportunities, and facilitates the out-migration of Filipino workers across the globe (Rodriguez 2010), the Philippines is one of the first countries to have developed its own pre-departure programs that other countries have sought to emulate (Watanabe 2014; c.f. Rodriguez and Schwenken 2013 re: India). For example, Indonesian migrant workers must participate in mandatory pre-departure preparation; however, Hugo (2009) found the quality of the programs uneven. In Sri Lanka, prospective overseas workers may tune into a weekly radio broadcast and/or avail themselves of community-based awareness campaigns that inform local residents about migration and migrant life. Foreign domestic workers are required to attend a 13-day orientation program, while trailing spouses and other family members are expected to partake in one full-day seminar (Watanabe 2014). Migrant workers from Bangladesh must attend a mandatory pre-departure session that covers country-specific information, migrant health, and migrant worker rights in a two-hour time period (Watanabe 2014).

## **2.2 PDOS and its Delivery**

All Filipino migrants over the age of 12 leaving the country to settle permanently or those working temporarily abroad are required to attend a *Pre-Departure Orientation Seminar* (PDOS) (CFO 2014). Country-specific departure programs are also available for OFWs migrating to Bahrain, Canada, (some targeted for those bound for British Columbia, Alberta, and Saskatchewan), Brunei, Denmark, Hong Kong, Italy, Kuwait, Norway, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Switzerland, Taiwan, and the UAE (OWWA 2014). PDOS covers topics such as standard contracts, airport departure and arrival procedures, overviews of destination regions, familial and emotional challenges common to OFWs and their family members, emergency contacts, and how to avail oneself of Filipino government programs while overseas (Watanabe 2014).

Individuals enroll in PDOS programs provided by different organizations depending on migration status, job category, and recruitment type. The Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO) offers a full-day seminar for immigrants, including family members reuniting with former L/CP workers in Canada that deals with issues of settlement such as obtaining a driver's license, applying for citizenship, and employment matters. OWWA organizes the programs for temporary overseas workers, including those under the auspices of the L/CP, who are migrating with the assistance of a recruitment agency (GOCC 2011). In addition to offering the PDOS themselves, OWWA accredits organizations such as recruitment agencies to provide forums for lesser-skilled workers whom they place abroad, industry associations who deploy technical and professional workers overseas, and some non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that offer courses for household service workers (Anchustegui 2010). The POEA provide seminars for government-placed and name-hired workers who are identified by their overseas employer; these workers may include nurses, engineers, and L/CP workers—the vast majority of them are now contracted directly by a Canadian employer rather than locating employment with the aid of a recruitment agency (Anchustegui 2010; Bonifacio 2008; Watanabe 2014). Moreover, the National Reintegration Centre for OFWs (NRCO) offers pre-departure orientation programs to departing workers and their

families that teach skills such as financial literacy and work to reinforce values of thriftiness, hard work and familialism (Spitzer and Piper 2014).

PDOS instructors are accredited by OWWA and are required to have some experience as an OFW, to possess some university education, and to have successfully completed the OWWA Trainers Training for PDOS Management course. However, other work and personal experience can be substituted for the first two requirements and PDOS service-providers need only retain one accredited instructor. Notably, recruitment and employment agency personnel are prohibited from becoming PDOS trainers (Anchustegui 2010).

### **2.3 L/CP Workers**

In addition to the required PDOS attendance (Bonifacio 2008; Guevarra 2006; Watanabe 2014), prospective L/CP workers are required to take a three-hour session on stress management. Furthermore, L/CP workers and others migrating as permanent residents may voluntarily take part in the full-day Canadian Orientation Abroad (COA) program, supported by Citizenship and Immigration Canada and offered by the International Organization for Migration in Manila. This full-day seminar provides information about Canadian society, the rights and obligations of temporary workers and immigrants, navigating Canadian labour and housing markets, education, and the challenges of adjusting to a new society (GOC 2011).

In Canada, L/CP workers, as temporary foreign workers, are technically ineligible to avail themselves of the services of immigrant-serving agencies who are funded to provide services such as language training and settlement counseling to permanent residents and refugees (Bonifacio 2008; Spitzer and Torres 2008). That said, most agencies will still continue to offer assistance and develop programs where needs arise, yet L/CP workers, particularly those in smaller centres and rural areas, may not be aware of service providers in their region nor have the resources required to access them (Bonifacio 2008; Spitzer 2009). The support offered migrant caregivers by the Philippine government in Canada is primarily centred around the issuance of passports or other bureaucratic requirements pertaining to Filipino citizenship (Bonifacio 2008).

## **3.0 Description of the Study**

### **3.1 Methodology**

This project is informed by critical and feminist turns in community-based research that support political-economic and gendered perspectives and an action orientation that further influences our methodological approaches (Carlson, Engebretson, and Chamberlain 2006; Reinharz 1992; Ristock and Pennell 1996). The import of this issue emerged from respondents in previous research and was reinforced by community partners involved in those studies. Subsequently, community partners in Ottawa-Gatineau and Manila continued to be engaged in all aspects of the research process, provided great assistance in the recruitment of participants, and will be involved in on-going research dissemination.

### **3.2 Methods**

Research questions drive researchers' choice of methods. In this short-term exploratory pilot study, qualitative methods (interviews, focus groups, participant observation) were selected as being most helpful to enable us to gain a greater comprehension of and appreciation for the complexity of the focal problematic (Hesse-Biber 2007).

#### **3.2.1 Interviews and Focus Groups**

Informants were to be given a choice of participating in either an individual interview or focus group discussion. Focus group discussions can be useful in obtaining a great deal of key information quickly, most notably by allowing the community in question to identify priorities as well as the parameters of an issue and the language that is used to describe it (Leavy 2007). While the synergy of the group discussion can produce fertile results, group dynamics become particularly relevant as some speakers may dominate and/or silence others. Practically speaking, it is sometimes difficult to schedule a time and place for multiple participants to come together. Individual interviews allow for a longer exposition from the informant and more probing from the interviewer. In both cases, the researcher is tasked with close listening, open questioning and clarity seeking (Hesse-Biber 2007).

Interviews took place in a quiet place where the informant felt comfortable. To enhance their comfort, they were invited to speak in Tagalog, English, Taglish, or

any other Pilipino language that she or he might have in common with the interviewer. All of the interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim after obtaining consent from the informant. Interviewers translated the transcripts into English if necessary.

### **3.2.2 Participant Observation**

With explicit permission from the relevant authorities, all pre-departure training observations were accomplished in the Philippine capital, Manila, in late 2014. This activity gave the research team an opportunity to review the content of orientation sessions, and to corroborate key informants' evaluations of the quality, content, and delivery of pre-departure programs. MCS observed the pre-departure orientation training for migrant workers bound for Canada facilitated by OWWA. DLS attended the COA and observed the stress management seminar. Researchers took extensive notes during these sessions, attending to the content and format of the workshop delivery, the nature of the discussion, if any, and the interaction of the participants with each other, with the facilitator, and with the built-environment.

### **3.2.3 Literature Review and Content Analysis**

The literature review focused on English language materials published within the past ten years that focused on, but were not geographically limited to, pre-departure programs for temporary foreign workers in the Philippines and Canada. RWE employed database search engines including SCOPUS, ProQuest, and Google Scholar, and examined websites from organizations including Metropolis, the International Organization on Migration, the International Labour Organization, the Scalabrini Migration Center, and the governments of Canada and the Philippines for appropriate literature. Reference lists from suitable articles, theses, and reports also led to further discoveries.

We had planned to undertake an analysis of PDOS materials including handouts and PowerPoint presentations to examine both the content and the discursive underpinnings of the messages provided to PDOS participants. Regrettably, there were no handouts offered by the OWWA/POEA PDOS we attended, and we were informed that we would not be allowed to make copies of visual materials for fear of being plagiarized by some other organization. While the COA provided us with a generous amount of material, including the handbook

and guide to Canada that each participant receives along with information about the genesis and roll out of the COA program in the Philippines, without the comparative information from OWWA/POEA, we were compelled to abandon this method.

### **3.2.4 Ethical Considerations**

Ethics approval for this project was obtained from the University of Ottawa. In accordance with our approved protocol, all informants were apprised of their rights and of our commitment to upholding their confidentiality and anonymity and all signed consent forms to acknowledge that they understood and agreed with the procedure. All team members signed oaths of confidentiality to affirm their understanding of and commitment to ethics protocols. These materials are stored in a locked cabinet in the Principal Investigator's office.

## **3.4 Sample**

### **3.4.1 Prospective L/CP Workers**

Three of the study's prospective caregiver informants were female and at time of interview, between the ages of 21 and 35; the sole male informant was 31 years old. Two of the participants were registered nurses, one was an English teacher, and one was an accountancy graduate. The geographical origins of the informants varied, although all of them were from the Luzon Island Group. Two of the respondents were from the Cordillera Autonomous Region, one was from the province of Pampanga, and the other from Metro Manila. All of the informants attended the mandatory Pre-Departure Orientation Seminar provided by OWWA/POEA. Three underwent the COA seminar facilitated by International Organization on Migration. None of the informants had previous experience working overseas. All were directly hired by their employers in Canada; two of the participants were going to be caring for family members such as grandparents or nieces and nephews.

### **3.4.2 Current L/CP Workers and Former L/CP Workers**

Of the 14 Filipino participants interviewed in Canada, seven were still working under the aegis of the L/CP; of the remaining seven former caregivers, five have obtained permanent residency (PR) status and two were awaiting their PR

approval and were residing in Canada with open work permits. The ages of the interviewees ranged from 24 to 55 years old; 13 participants were female and one was male. Participants came from different regions in the Philippines: nine came from Metro Manila and five from outside the Metro region. Working in Canada was for all participants their first experience labouring overseas. Furthermore, all informants were directly hired by their employers. The majority had relatives already residing in Canada when they arrived. Twelve out of the 14 participants joined the voluntary COA seminar.

### **3.5 Recruitment**

#### **3.5.1 Canada**

Recruitment started in October 2014 and ended in January 2015. The research assistant initially publicized the study through her personal contacts in the Filipino community in Ottawa and the recruitment of the participants snowballed from there. In addition, she disseminated recruitment flyers in public areas such as the mall, public transportation stations and churches, and placed posters in public libraries and Filipino grocery stores. Important contacts leading to potential participants were made through this recruitment method. Our community partner, the Philippine Migrants Society of Canada (PMSC), was also able to introduce participants to the study.

Challenges were faced in the recruitment process because of the specificity of the participants to be interviewed. Firstly, we needed to speak with live-in caregivers coming directly from the Philippines. Although a substantial number of caregivers were introduced to the research assistant, most were ineligible because they came to Canada via another country such as Hong Kong, Singapore, the Middle East, and Denmark. Secondly, the recruitment of current live-in caregivers was challenging because there was limited opportunity to interact with them. The only time the researcher was able to do so was during their days off. With that being said, arrangements with caregivers' employers also had to be made. Thirdly, the research assistant also noted hesitation from live-in caregivers in committing to be interviewed for the study. The initial plan was to conduct two separate focus group discussions for the current and former caregivers; however, this proved to be difficult because of the differences in the scheduling of the participants (irregular work hours or different days off) as well

as concerns about confidentiality and anonymity. As a result, individual interviews were conducted instead.

### **3.5.2 The Philippines**

The recruitment of participants from the Philippines took place from November 2014 to March 2015 and was conducted through flyer distribution, research orientation in PDOS sessions, and informant contacts (snowball sampling). Recruitment flyers, together with the project brief, were emailed to government offices, NGOs, recruitment agencies, and individuals working with migrant Filipino workers. The research assistant also handed out flyers in strategic areas (OWWA, POEA, and DOLE offices and inter-city transportation centres) in Manila and Baguio City where she is based. With the permission and facilitation of the Social Marketing Division of OWWA, the research assistant also provided an overview of the research in an effort to recruit participants in several PDOS for prospective L/CP workers.

Despite a concerted effort and this combination of techniques, the research team had difficulties recruiting participants. Prospective caregivers taking PDOS are individuals already in their last stage of the migration process. Hence, most of them are busy with the completion of documentary and travel requirements and/or are interested in maximizing their remaining time with their loved-ones. Likewise, while the main recruitment area was Metro Manila, most of the prospective migrant workers are from the provinces and only travel to the capital to attend PDOS. Resultantly, the RA commonly heard:

*Gusto ko sanang magpainterview kaya lang kailangan ko nang bumyahe paprobinsya. [translation: I would like to participate in the interview; unfortunately, I already need to travel back to my province].*

Potential informants were offered the option of participating in an interview via Skype; however, as Internet connection in rural areas is both scant and where existing, problematic, and some participants were uncomfortable with the format meant that none took us up on this alternative.

## 4.0 Findings: Caregivers

### 4.1 Summary Findings

We analyzed each transcript to:

- (i) Tease out what prominent lessons informants retained after attending pre-departure programs;
- (ii) Solicit their reflections on the process of registration and their access to the session;
- (iii) Record their comments about what topics they would have wanted to have covered by the orientation session;
- (iv) Ascertain their recommendations for the content, organization, and delivery of the pre-departure programs; and
- (v) Understand where participants obtained additional information about the L/CP and the settlement and integration process in Canada.

To this end, we have summarized these findings in a series of tables to allow us to both quantify and visualize the qualitative results. The responses of former LCP workers ( $N=7$ ) are represented in dark blue, current LCP workers in rust ( $N=7$ ) and prospective workers who undertook pre-departure programs in the Philippines but have not yet migrated to Canada are represented in a lighter blue ( $N=4$ ). Importantly, a smaller number of respondents attended the voluntary COA program.

Please note that these reflect what the informants took away with them from these sessions and *not* what materials the facilitators of these sessions necessarily delivered. Moreover, we spoke with participants who had been enrolled in these sessions over a range of time periods; some had attended sessions within days or even hours of being interviewed while others had taken them over five years prior. A discussion of how each group — prospective, current, and former — of caregivers reflected on the programs follows.

#### 4.1.1 Table 1: PDOS/Stress Module Content Recalled

TOPIC/ SAMPLE & COLOUR CODING	FORMER L/CP = 7							CURRENT L/CP = 7							PROSPECTIVE L/CP = 4			
Airport Procedures																		
Canadian Lifestyle																		
Homesickness, Mental Health																		
Rights of OFWs																		
Weather, Seasons																		
Potential Family Break-Up																		
Tax deductions, EI in Canada																		
Relationship with employer																		
Encountering cultural diversity																		
Changing Employers																		
L/CP Regulations																		
Re-Train for Credentials																		
How to Send Remittances																		

Forty-two percent of former, 86% of current, and 75% of prospective L/CP workers cited airport procedures as the topic they most recalled from PDOS. In addition, 42% of former, 14% of current, and 50% of future workers remembered hearing about Canadian lifestyles. Forty-two percent of former L/CP workers, 28.5% of current workers, and none of the prospective workers recalled learning about the rights of OFWs. Over twenty-eight percent of former workers and 14% of current ones remembered learning about Canada's weather and seasons. While none of the former workers recalled talking about potential family break-up, 14% of current and 25% of prospective workers mentioned these topics. Tax deductions and employment insurances benefits, and employer-employee relations were topics recalled by 28.5% of former caregivers; an equivalent percentage of current L/CP workers mentioned learning about cultural diversity in Canada. One current and one future L/CP worker said they learned about being able to change employers. Fourteen percent of previous L/CP workers recalled learning about L/CP regulations and another 14% noted that the need to re-train in order to obtain credentials in Canada was discussed. One prospective worker recalled learning about how to send remittances.

#### 4.1.2 Table 2: PDOS Materials and Seminar Organization Recalled

TOPIC/ SAMPLE & COLOUR CODING	FORMER L/CP = 7					CURRENT L/CP = 7					PROSPECTIVE L/CP = 4			
No Handouts														
No Time for Discussion, Q&A														
"Know Your Rights" Booklet														
Time for Discussion, Q&A														
Good Handouts														
Joke Book														

Nearly 45% of respondents —26.5% of former, 43% of current and 75% of prospective workers— do not recall receiving handouts. Forty-five percent of former, 14% of current, and 25% of prospective L/CP workers said there was no time for discussion while 14% of former and current workers and 25% of future ones indicated they were able to ask questions in the seminar. Three of the seven (43%) of former L/CP workers received a booklet outlining their rights as workers; an equivalent percentage of current caregivers claimed they received good handouts and one former worker mentioned receiving a book of jokes to help with stress management.

#### 4.1.3 Table 3: Accessing and Organization of PDOS Recalled

TOPIC/ SAMPLE & COLOUR CODING	FORMER L/CP = 7						CURRENT L/CP = 7					PROSPECTIVE L/CP = 4		
Paid for PDOS														
Far to Travel														
No Cost for PDOS														
Full Day Session														
Half Day Session														
Two hours or less														

Almost 29% of former and 71.5% of current L/CP workers said they paid to attend their orientation sessions. Interestingly, 14% of former, 29% of current, and 50% of future caregivers recalled that there was no enrolment fee for PDOS. Over 28% of former and 71.5% of current L/CP workers felt that they had too far to travel to attend PDOS programs. Forty-three percent of former, 14% of current and 25% of prospective workers recalled participating in a full day session; 14% of former and current L/CP workers said their sessions were half-day, and one current L/CP worker (14%) and one (20%) prospective worker said their PDOS session lasted for two hours or less.

**4.1.4 Table 4: Suggestions for PDOS Regarding Delivery**

TOPIC/ SAMPLE & COLOUR CODING	FORMER L/CP = 7							CURRENT L/CP = 7							PROSPECTIVE L/CP = 4			
Country Specific Groups																		
Facilitator Experienced in Canada																		
Internet-based Delivery																		
Include former OFW/DH																		
Better Room (AC/Sound/Seats)																		
Register On-Line																		
Not Mandatory for former OFWs																		
Offer in Each Region																		
Use Small Group Discussion																		
Video/Webinar/YouTube																		

Eighty-six percent of current and 75% of future L/CP workers recommended that orientation sessions be country-specific while 71.5% of former, 28% of current, and 25% of prospective caregivers suggested that the facilitator should have had some experience working in Canada. Over 70% of former and 75% of current L/CP workers advised that PDOS be made available via the Internet while 43% of current L/CP workers and 25% of prospective ones thought it would be beneficial to include a former OFW as speaker or facilitator. Three out of four recent PDOS attendees awaiting departure for Canada were dissatisfied with the room where the session was held while one of seven (14%) of current L/CP workers made a similar complaint. One person from each sample category wanted to be able to register for PDOS on-line and a similar proportion advocated that former OFWs should not be expected to re-enroll in PDOS each time they travel overseas for work. In addition, 28% of current and 25% of future L/CP workers suggested that PDOS be made available in regions across the Philippines. Fifty percent of prospective workers recommended including some small group discussion in the session and one former L/CP worker thought that PDOS should be made available through different formats including webinars, YouTube.

4.1.5 Table 5: Suggestions for PDOS Regarding Content and Format

TOPIC/ SAMPLE & COLOUR CODING	FORMER L/CP = 7	CURRENT L/CP = 7	PROSP. L/CP = 4
More Discussion, Q&A			
More/Better Hand-outs			
Life After L/CP			
How to Establish Community			
Health Insurance in Canada			
Canadian Rules and Regulations			
Help Participants Network			
Contact Info for Help in Canada			
Test to Ensure Info. Grasped			
Coping with Homesickness			
Worker's Rights			
Budgeting, Financial issues			
Immigration Procedures			
Preparation for Weather			
Check Paperwork			
More Info on L/CP			
Better Visuals			
Role of Nannies/Child Discipline			
More Hands-on Materials			
Learning Objectives			
Include Videos, You Tube Clips			

Over 28% of former and 57% of current L/CP workers recommended that more time be set aside for discussion and question and answer periods. Fourteen percent of former and 57% of current caregivers remarked that PDOS should provide both more plentiful and more substantive handouts. Two former L/CP workers (28.5%) suggested that PDOS should incorporate topics such as how to establish community and provide more information about health insurance in Canada. Reponses offered by one (14%) of the former caregivers and by one of the four future L/CP workers are identified in Table 4.1.5 above.

#### 4.1.6 Table 6: COA Content Recalled

TOPIC/ SAMPLE & COLOUR CODING	FORMER L/CP = 5 <sup>[3]</sup>	CURRENT L/CP = 7	PROSPECTIVE L/CP = 3
Preparation for Weather			
Family Reunification/PR Status			
Geography of Canada			
Canadian Lifestyle and Society			
Networking at Session			
Budgeting, Remittances, Salaries			
Changing Employers			
Support Services in Canada			
Transportation incl. airport			
Worker's Rights			
Health Insurance in Canada			
Dealing with Culture Shock			
Education, Re-Credentialing			
Taxes, Economizing			
Currency			
L/CP Regulations			

The content area most frequently recalled by respondents who enrolled in the COA program was preparing for winter, which was mentioned by 80% of former, 57% of current, and 67% of prospective L/CP workers. Obtaining PR status and family reunification was the second most commonly remembered subject with 100% of former and 43% of current caregivers citing this topic. Sixty percent of former, 43% of current, and 33% of prospective workers recalled learning about the geography of Canada. Sixty percent of former, 28.5% of current, and 33% of future caregivers remember learning about Canadian lifestyles and society. Eighty percent of former and 14% of current L/CP workers noted the opportunities they had to network with others at their COA session. Eighty percent of former and 33% of prospective workers recalled learning about budgeting, remittances, and salaries. Over 57% of current workers and 33% of future ones recalled their right to change employers. Forty percent of former, 14% of current, and 66% of future workers learned about support services in Canada while 40%, 14%, and 33% of past, present, and future L/CP workers learned about transportation and 40% of former

<sup>3</sup> Indicates number who attended the COA

and 28% of current workers discussed workers' rights. Further, 28% of current and 33% of future caregivers heard about health insurance. Forty percent of former workers recalled learning about culture shock; one former and one future worker recollects discussing education and the need to re-credential in one's field; and one current and one prospective worker noted they had discussed taxes and the need to economize. Lastly, one former worker remembered learning about Canadian currency and one current worker learned more about L/CP regulations.

#### 4.1.7 Table 7: COA Materials and Organization Recalled

TOPIC/ SAMPLE & COLOUR CODING	FORMER L/CP = 5					CURRENT L/CP = 7					PROSPECTIVE L/CP = 3		
Free food, Good Ambiance													
Handbook													
Brought Handbook to Canada													
Discussion/Q&A Welcomed													
Feedback Form													

Overwhelmingly, 100% of former and current and 67% of future workers positively reminisced about the ambiance set by the IOM in their organization of the COA in Manila. A similar percentage recall the handbook provided, which 100% of former and 28% of current L/CP workers brought to Canada. Twenty percent of former and 71% of current workers were enthused about the time they had for discussion and asking questions. Sixty percent of former and 14% of current workers remember receiving an evaluation form.

#### 4.1.8 Table 8: Suggestions for COA Regarding Content and Format

TOPIC/ SAMPLE & COLOUR CODING	FORMER L/CP = 5				CURRENT L/CP = 7				PROSPECTIVE L/CP = 3				
Host w. PDOS/Other Regions													
Webinar/On-Line Seminar													
More Advertising													
Use Digital Files/On-Line/USB													
More Info on Canada													
Could be Two-Day Seminar													
More Time for Discussion													
On-Going Training in Canada													
Update Video from 1994													

One former L/CP worker (20%) and 43% of current ones suggested that the COA should be hosted alongside PDOS in regions outside of Metro Manila. In addition, 43% of current workers recommended making it available as a webinar or another on-line seminar. Two-thirds of prospective workers felt that the IOM should advertise it more. Fourteen percent of respondents currently employed under the L/CP made the following propositions: (1) provide a USB key or access to an on-line website for information in lieu of the handbook; (2) offer more information on Canada; (3) increase the seminar to two days; (4) allow more time for discussion; and (5) deliver on-going training after arrival in Canada. Finally, one future L/CP worker recommended updating the current video used in the COA that dates to 1994.

**4.1.8 Table 8: Source of Information Regarding L/CP and Settlement**

TOPIC/ SAMPLE & COLOUR CODING	FORMER L/CP = 7					CURRENT L/CP = 7					PROSPECTIVE L/CP =4			
Relatives in Canada														
Canadian Govt. Websites														
Friends														
L/CP Facebook Forums														
Internet														
Employer														
Confusing Info from Family, PDOS														
NGO														

Relatives in Canada are major sources of information according to 86% of former, 71.5% of current, and 75% of future L/CP workers. Eighty-six percent of former, 100% of current, and 25% of prospective workers sought information from Government of Canada websites while 43% of former, 28% of current, and 50% of future caregivers learned about Canada and the L/CP from friends. Fifty-percent of prospective workers as well as 14% each of former and current ones joined L/CP Facebook forums to obtain information and 43% of former and 14% of current workers sought out material from other Internet sources. Similar percentages turned to their employers for this information. Two former workers (43%) received contradictory information from various sources and 14% of former and current caregivers turned to NGOs for this material.

#### 4.1.9 Table 9: Suggestions Regarding Source of Information About L/CP and Settlement

TOPIC/ SAMPLE & COLOUR CODING	FORMER L/CP = 7							CURRENT L/CP = 7							PROSPECTIVE L/CP =4			
Govt. Agents Answer Q's re: Files	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Get Support from NGOs	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Info on Job Placement Centres	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

Only a few respondents offered suggestions with regards to where best to obtain information about the L/CP and resettlement in Canada. Twenty-eight percent of former L/CP workers wanted government agents to be able to respond to questions regarding their files. Fourteen percent of former and current caregivers felt that NGOs were the most important purveyors of accurate information and one former worker (14%) noted that information should be made available about and through job placement centres.

## 4.2 Prospective Caregivers

Informants understood that attending the OWWA/POEA PDOS is mandatory not only for (live-in) caregivers bound for Canada, but for all Filipino migrant workers whether it is their first time to be employed overseas or not. Furthermore, they grasped that attendance at both PDOS and stress management are parts of the Department of Labor and Employment's requirements for migrant workers and that participation in the COA was optional.

The pre-departure orientation is very useful, especially for me, whose first time to travel . . . and I do not have any idea to what, where am I going. I do not know what I am going to do . . . It's good because our orientation they told us about that . . . and then . . . oh! At least you have the idea now, you have that initiative . . . it's like very useful because then you have an idea what you are going to do during that days . . . when you are about to travel.

- Leah, prospective L/CP worker

Their expectations of pre-departure orientation seminars (see Tables 4.1.8 and 4.1.9) varied and was influenced by respondents' previous knowledge of program content and by their deployment of other migration information sources, which for most was comprised of members of their kin networks who already resided in Canada. The respondents also shared that they have been utilizing social networking sites, e-forums, books, and online sources for information they deemed relevant for their transition to being migrant workers. Some of the informants shared that since they had read from online sources the topics covered by the OWWA/POEA PDOS, they had limited expectations from the training. Nevertheless, they hoped the OWWA/POEA PDOS would extensively discuss airport and immigration document requirements and procedures, the L/CP program, arrival in Canada and meeting one's employer, and how to prepare for the winter. Those who attended the stress management seminar hoped they would learn more about appropriate stress management responses, real life situations and how to cope with them, and be provided with information about and contact numbers for support organizations in Canada. Lan, however, had this to add:

In CPDEP [stress management module], they defined stress in the Filipino language; they defined how we can deal with stress, and it was translated in Filipino, from English to Filipino, so it is easier for us to comprehend. But of

course, one loophole maybe is you are leaving the country, they should be preparing you more on how to speak in the foreign language better. However, for me, it doesn't matter what language they presented the slide. It still is, some line we can take from them when we leave the country. I think one of the most important things that made me participate well was the trainer. The trainer was very knowledgeable about what she was saying; she speaks intelligently. If you listen to her, you can say that she knows what she is doing and she can get your attention easy. It's really, um, innate with the person. I have been to several trainings and seminars; no matter how good the material is, it really depends on the facilitator on how you can make your participants engage in the session, so probably she was successful in that matter.

The three informants who attended the COA revealed that they did not have specific learning objectives for the session; however, because they were informed through social networks and on-line forums that the COA session would be informative and worthwhile, they had high hopes for the orientation program. The informant who had yet to attend the session shared the expectation of learning from the COA more about Canada's laws and policies on migrant workers, and the scope and limits of a migrant visa.

Considering their current trajectory as L/CP workers and as first time émigrés, airport tips were identified by the informants as the most useful information learned from the pre-departure orientations. Stress management was likewise noted as valuable in their transition to being away from their native land. Abby noted that:

About the PDOS regarding the LCP, I think they need to give more information about the job, the routine, and tips on how to deal with the employer. Also, how to, in case they are not treated well by the employer, they need to give specific details on how they will change their employer like write to their employer a month before. They need to look for new employer. Stuff like that. I think they need to process another contract. Those are the things they need. If the employer-employee relationship doesn't work well, they need to give specific details . . . What are the processes? What do you do? Where do you go? Yes . . . the processes, the culture, the weather, and most importantly, I think the PDOS needs to mention things about getting your, this thing they called SIN [social insurance number] in Canada and your health cards. And in Canada . . . they use credit card usually. So Filipinos need to know that you need to apply for credit card or debit card. We also need to know how to manage these things about these credit cards. Because other Filipinos think that these credit cards will just pull you down like when you have a credit card and use it you are just giving our money to the bank, you know. But then for Filipinos who want to stay there in Canada longer, I think that credit cards are used by banks

for mortgages so when you want to get a house or when you want to get a card, I think they look at your credit line. So that is something that Filipinos need to know about.

One informant also stressed that although the perception of working overseas being more economically beneficial than staying in the country is common to migrant workers, the financial management, remittance calculation, and savings projection exercise at the COA allowed the informant to be more realistic about the financial viability of working overseas. Accordingly, “you will realize that you just don’t send back home, you also need to save and allot some for yourself.”

The respondents noted the importance of understanding their employment contract and their rights, including the ability to change employers in Canada. However, two of the informants who attended both the Philippine and Canada-sponsored orientation seminars remained confused about the general provisions of the L/CP contract, as the PDOS and COA appeared to provide contradictory information, particularly with regards to workers’ ability to change employers.

Examining learning points vis-à-vis informants’ expectations and perceived information needs, there is consensus among the respondents that the orientation programs did not extensively cover the full range of knowledge that they felt they required to be successful OFWs. As earlier mentioned, one opined that information about the legal and regulatory frameworks on migrant workers is essential, but these were not discussed in the PDOS; the same observation was noted in the COA. Others stressed that orientation seminars did not provide essential information related to permanent residency status and health care insurance cards.

In addition, individual respondents were anxious about: residing with an employer, which could mean unlimited, unpaid overtime; coping with employers who might have mental health issues such as PTSD; dealing with flight connections, lay-overs, and terminal and baggage transfers; applying for their SIN; deciding whether to reside with their employer; handling the process of changing residences; and managing the consequences of a delayed release of their POEA exit clearance.

Although the three pre-departure seminars attended by the informants had open forums for raising concerns and asking queries, the informants did not avail themselves of these opportunities. Their reticence was linked to delayed start times and transportation issues that deterred them from prolonging the session as they were anxious to depart from the venue as quickly as possible due to long travel times back home. Furthermore, some expressed a lack of confidence in the ability of the facilitator to respond accurately and some confessed to a generalized disinterest in program content areas. Moreover, *Lan* suggested that the facilitator could have taken a more direct role in promoting discussion:

The facilitators should have asked specific questions to assess participants' learning; instead of asking "Do you have any questions?" It would be more productive to ask: "Are you ready to leave? What again are the things you must prepare before departure?"

Prospective L/CP workers discussed their various challenges to attending PDOS sessions in Metro Manila. For some, transportation to and from the capital was problematic, time-consuming, and costly. The registration was for some quite frustrating and information about the sessions was not always accurate. As Deidre who took a bus to and from Baguio (five to six hours one way at a cost of 300 Pesos) said:

Actually, what happened to me was I took the PDOS on Tuesday, and then I took the CPDEP [stress management] on Wednesday. We were not informed that we can (sic) take both sessions in the same day. Of course, to us it was additional hassle; I needed to travel again for a half a day session, and it was just stress management. They could have just combine the two or make me take them both in the same day.

### 4.3 Current and Former Caregivers

Former caregivers do not generally remember the details of the PDOS seminar especially if they have been in Canada for more than two years. Most of them recollect that they were introduced to the airport policies and recall having a thirty-minute overview of Canada, focusing primarily on the weather and Canadian society. Information on rights and the locations of the Philippine Embassy in Canada were also provided. Handouts were provided irregularly; however, even those who did receive handouts do not remember the contents.

Current caregivers have better recall regarding the contents of the PDOS having taken it less than two years ago. The most recent caregiver informant arrived two months before the interview. Current caregivers remembered the PDOS lasting from two hours to the whole day. Participants noted that attendees of the PDOS had different occupations in the host country, were bound for different countries, and included between 30 to 100 attendees. Participants indicated that they learned about the mandatory PDOS through different sources such as the POEA, the CIC website, and the acceptance letter to the L/CP from the Canadian Embassy. They took the PDOS in various cities such as Manila, Baguio and Cebu. Participants had to register physically in the POEA/OWWA offices. Schedules were typically provided a week or two after registering.

The stress management seminar is mandatory for household service workers, domestic helpers, and live-in caregivers and its participants are bound for different countries. Moreover, as this program is conducted only in Manila, caregivers from the provinces had to go to the capital city in order to attend the workshop.

Informants found it difficult to differentiate the lessons provided by the PDOS and the stress management program because of overlapping information. Participants noted that general discussions on what they will be experiencing abroad were provided. Speakers talked about culture shock, dealing with homesickness and depression, as well as possible realities such as family problems. Stress-management was also discussed in the mandatory pre-departure orientation seminars. In these sessions, benefits of being a registered OFW; moreover, plans such as PAG-IBI and Phil-Health were also discussed. In addition, attendees were also informed of the airport policies and procedures such as tax exemption, luggage allowance, and airport terminals. Participants remember the 30-minute briefing on Canada including its seasons, winter clothing and culture. Brief information on Canada's LCP and immigration laws were also being provided. Some recalled learning about their rights in Canada, such as intolerance of abuse, and contact numbers and locations in case of emergencies were provided. Handouts were provided to participants but irregularly and inconsistently. One received a piece of paper of contact information in Canada, while another received a guide on airplane policies. We

observed that content delivery and format depended on the facilitators' personality, values, and even personal agendas.

Participants generally had to travel far to attend the PDOS and stress management programs. Even participants who lived within Metro Manila travel at least two to four hours to arrive at the seminar location, while those who lived farther had to fly and rent a hotel room or stay with their relatives in Manila. Ria—a current L/CP worker—stayed in Manila for a week, and spent between 15,000 and 20,000 pesos to attend to these processes. She shared her experience:

For the PDOS . . . that's the challenge because once you arrive in the office, they are going to give you a priority number, which is two weeks after *pa!* . . . and also because they only cater 30-40 persons, if I can remember it right. So that's a big challenge for us who is far from Manila. . . [I'm from] Iligan City, in Mindanao, which is by boat, almost three days or by plane is an hour or two.

Participants have noted the numerous times they have to go the offices to register and submit documents in order to attend the mandatory seminar. Rebekah's account resonates with that of other informants.

I also did everything in the POEA . . . it's near Quiapo right? . . . but before you can have it forwarded, you need the papers in a thick pile. For example, you signed it, you gave the labor there. . . and then you submitted it there, they will not forward it right away. They will collect the papers first, so your paper is submitted there. They say it will take five days to one week, but when you go there, it is still not there. No, it's because when it is signed so infrequently. For example, it will be processed from Monday to Friday. If you process on Monday, they will tell you to have a leeway of one week. Because in that one-week they will collect the papers before they have it forwarded. So when your hand gets tired, it will be pending again. If the person signing it gets tired, you [sic] need a time-out first . . . when you there, they will tell you step by step in the POEA. For example, the first step is to forward you application, and then they will tell you to do the PDOS . . . to have your picture taken . . . to eat first because it's break time . . . It is annoying right? Then CLOSED. It's already 12:00. Then they will tell you to get the labor first, but for this labor, you need to wait for it in another office . . . then you back again. Bring it to Window 8; after Window 8; bring it to Window 5. What is it really? You really have to go through a lot before you can get to the top. That's not the top! . . . And then you have to go through the window, window, window . . . depending on [what you need] how many windows! And they will tell you the same time, again and again. It will make you crazy if you are not persevering. Makes you crazy!

Participants who attended the COA remembered that the orientation was given in one afternoon to a full day and that it was Canada-specific. While most live-in

caregivers took the seminar with fellow live-in caregivers bound for Canada, one remembered taking it with those leaving through the family-class stream. They noted that there were around 30 to 35 participants in the seminar. All attendees knew about the free seminar through a flyer attached to the visa upon approval for the L/CP.

Lessons taken from the COA were more specific as to what was remembered during the PDOS. Selina, a former live-in caregiver, remarked:

They helped me a lot, because here [in Canada], it's so funny. They told me never to ask for: "How old are you? What is your weight? What is your height? Are you Black? Are you White?" Never ask that kind of questions. Because back home some of us, well not all of us, some of us, like, "Hey, you're bigger than before! Oh, you gained weight!" But here it's not like that... you have to respect like everyone here. Don't be racist. Yeah. ... So I applied that, it helped me a lot.

In the seminar, participants also remembered details such as minimum wages and cost of living in Canada and learned about budgeting their money. Important topics such as changing employers, the scope of their work, provincial and territorial labour standards and taxes were also discussed. The COA also provided information on applying for the SIN and OHIP, and how the bus system works. In addition, participants learned about the specific provinces they will be living in during the L/CP. Notably, seminars were interactive and provided the prospective caregivers with the opportunity to become acquainted by being grouped into provinces to which they would be going. Some live-in caregivers started their Canadian networking through the COA. Furthermore, they learned more details about the possibility of applying for permanent residency status upon completion of the L/CP. Questions relating to the migration of their families were also addressed in the seminar. While the COA appeared to provide more detail about life in Canada and the L/CP and its aftermath, there was some overlap of topics discussed at the OWWA/POEA PDOS such as the climate and culture of Canada, as well as the airport policies and procedures, the rights of live-in caregivers, and what to do in case of abuse.

The COA is only provided in Manila, which was a deterrent for one participant who remarked that even though she knew about the usefulness of the COA, she

could not justify the additional travel expenses to attend a non-mandatory seminar. Those who opted to participate found the registration to the COA much more effective than the PDOS as all they needed to do was to send an SMS or an email to be registered for the COA. Participants also noted receiving snacks and beverages, and lunch during the seminar, which they greatly appreciated. Handouts on abuse, FAQs, and a booklet containing detailed information on Canada were also provided during the seminar. Overall, those who attended the COA preferred the organization of this orientation to the PDOS.

Reflecting on the information that might have been useful for them at their current stage in their integration trajectory, current L/CP workers mentioned they would have liked more knowledge about adjusting to Canada's climate, people, and culture, how to cope with homesickness and maintaining contact with family in the Philippines, and locating friends and support networks in Canada. In addition, they said they would have liked to learn more about applying for their SIN, health insurance, filing tax returns, shopping tips, adjusting to (or potentially, leaving) their employers, volunteering, and educational opportunities.

Informants who had completed the L/CP wished they had received more information about how to apply for permanent residency, and the process of reuniting with family members and helping them integrate into Canadian society with information regarding securing housing, schooling, and child-tax benefits, etc. They were also concerned about the financial barriers they faced with regards to (re)credentialing for the Canadian labour market and the transition to better and more remunerative work.

In addition to the orientation programs, informants described obtaining information from the Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) website as well as from family and friends to help them in their early transition to the L/CP and life in Canada. Some mentioned that information they received from informal networks, sometimes passed on from 'generations' of caregivers, was outdated, therefore, they often turned to the CIC website or hot-line when they were in doubt. This resonates with the literature that has documented that Filipino caregivers in Canada tend to rely on informal networks including family

members, friends, and recruitment agencies to learn about how to proceed along their paths to integration and citizenship or during times of distress (Bonifacio 2008; Spitzer and Torres 2012), and that some of this informally gathered information may be inaccurate (Neufeld et al, 2002; Spitzer and Torres 2012).

## 5.0 Findings: Pre-Departure Orientation Programs

### 5.1 POEA: Participant Observation

The observation of PDOS for Canada-bound workers happened over two sessions. The first covered the following modules: migration realities; health and safety; Hello Canada: society, culture; and understanding contract details. For the second observation, the research assistant joined the whole day training and re-observed the facilitation of the first four modules as well as the delivery of the lectures on financial literacy, OWWA programs and services for migrant workers, and airport tips. Importantly, these sessions hosted all types of workers destined for Canada, not just those migrating under the auspices of the L/CP.

The PDOS for Canada-bound workers is scheduled Monday to Thursday of every week depending on registration or training demand. Classes are usually composed of 15-25 participants from all over the Philippines who are agency-hired. The program is delivered in a fully air-conditioned and well-equipped training facility at the OWWA Building in Buendia. The room has a good working projector, sound system, and sound proofing system. Thus, despite the simultaneous conduct of PDOS for Middle East in the adjacent room, the room remained conducive to the participants' learning. The room can host as many as 150 participants. Relating the number of training participants to the facility, one of the facilitators shared that:

We used to facilitate PDOS for more than a hundred Canada-bound workers per day. The continuing restriction on migrant workers has reduced our workers' opportunity for employment, so now we have only about two sessions per week and with very few students.

Each module is allotted 30 to 45 minutes, with open forums in-between. Facilitators include OWWA personnel, private individuals, and institutional

volunteers. This mix, coupled with the facilitator's personal values and agenda has an impact on the content and quality of the pre-departure program.

Orientation program participants were left to just watch the PowerPoint presentation of two modules. Prior to lunch break, one of the facilitators informed the class that the volunteer representative of a recruitment agency has notified her of possible absence. The facilitator stated that if the volunteer were unable to appear, she would act in her place. After lunch, the same facilitator returned and delivered the first module. After this, she asked the class to stay and wait for the volunteer facilitator. The participants were left to watch another PowerPoint presentation to kill time. After running the slides multiple times and taking videos of the presentation, the participants were left with nothing else to do but to share with each other some stories and to take 'selfies.' Neither the volunteer nor the substitute facilitator arrived. More than an hour of waiting passed and the participants were growing anxious of the time, especially because some had provincial bus trips to catch and one had to be at the airport at 4 PM for his flight back home. When the substitute facilitator returned, she asked the group if they had finished watching the PowerPoint presentations, confirmed that the volunteer teacher could not attend then added that she had to visit the sea-food market to purchase goods for her birthday celebration the next day. The group answered that they have watched the presentations and expressed the wish to proceed to the next module and finish on time for their trip home. With only 30 minutes prior to the set program closure, the facilitator proceeded to deliver the last module. However, with the participants' continuous demand for on-time dismissal, the facilitator had to end the session without finishing her slides.

### 5.1.1 POEA: Observer Reflections

All facilitators exhibited a good grasp of their assigned modules. They were able to contextualize their inputs from their actual experiences as former migrant workers or their observations as personnel specializing in migrant affairs. However, a common observation among the lectures was the poor time management and the influence of the facilitator's personal values on content. Excluding the two lectures where participants were left to view the slides, only the sections on migration realities were completely delivered without time

extension. Across the other modules, only about half of the prepared slides were delivered as a majority of the facilitator's presentation focused on catechism. In the module on health and safety for instance, the facilitator spent 75% of the lecture discussing health and happiness as functions of maintaining religious conscience. Encouraging participants to remain religious once in Canada, one of the facilitators likewise remarked that migration is not a phenomenon but the Divine's plan for the Philippines' economic development; therefore, the speaker noted, migrant workers serve as God's instruments.

The promotion and maintenance of gender stereotypes were likewise emphasized. In one of the modules, participants were reminded of the importance of Filipino women's "pagiging mahinhin" [demure and lady-like] and Filipino men's "pagiging masikap" [hard-working] as distinct assets of the country's migrant workers. These gender-based characteristics, the facilitator stressed, are to be maintained if migrant workers are to reflect Philippine pride in their destination countries. The facilitator also warned the female participants to be conscious of their choice of clothing "if they do not want to put themselves into trouble."

In addition, in the financial management lecture for instance, the facilitator attempted to spark interest in investment schemes, including the multi-level marketing program in which she was engaged. The facilitator shared not only her experience of the efficacy of the company's products, but also the travel, leisure, and financial gains she has reaped from being among the company's top performing members. The facilitator, however, also repetitively stated that she was only sharing an option and that financial management would depend on the migrant workers' choice of investment. Finally, our observations affirmed that no handouts were provided to participants.

## **5.2 Stress Management: Participant Observation**

The Stress Management module was offered at the POEA's Blas Ople Building in the Capital Region. The workshop began more than two hours late because the session taking place in the seminar room did not end on time. During these hours, participants waited on benches outside the office, while the observer

(DLS) received a complete briefing with the facilitator on its content during a two-hour discussion with the workshop leader.<sup>4</sup> The workshop itself was held in a room which, though it had a high ceiling, was rather hot and stuffy. Importantly, the observation took place whilst new seminar rooms were under construction, thus this was a transient difficulty albeit one that was experienced by a number of our informants.

The facilitator discussed the concept of stress and homesickness, frequently referring to Christianity as the palliative in dealing with these issues. Participants were encouraged to remember to serve their employers like Jesus serves the people and when frustrated to take deep breaths, go to a quiet place, and pray. They were told to “remember that God would never take you somewhere where He cannot protect you” and to avoid becoming covetous of others’ lifestyles, or possessions, as “envy is the root of evil” and it is what leads to crime. Just prior to the break, an insurance representative gave a brief pitch and disseminated information about the health plan on offer.

### **5.2.1 Stress Management: Observer Reflections**

The observation of this session was influenced by the investigator’s inability to participate in the entire workshop due to an injury and thus she was unable to see how the second half of the program was rolled out. Notably, the facilitator did not actively engage participants in the first hour observed. The long delay in the start-time may have influenced the ability of the facilitator to encourage or even allow interaction. The late start was apparently not an infrequent phenomenon; however, the paucity of alternative meeting space due to construction may have exacerbated the problem. As noted, participants entering the room were already frustrated, many having hurried through lunch due to a late finish of their earlier PDOS session to return to a set of hard benches for several hours waiting for the seminar room to be cleared. Participants frequently checked their watches and whispered concerns about securing transportation back to their homes given the considerable delay in the start-time. As many informants noted, they traveled a considerable distance—some waking up as

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<sup>4</sup> Due to an injury sustained the same day for which she needed to seek treatment, DLS only remained for the first hour of the orientation session.

early as 3:30 AM to take an early bus to Manila to be at the POEA office at 8:00 AM. The session that was to run between 2 PM and 4 PM was now going to end at approximately 6:30 PM; conceivably, for some, this would become a 24-hour marathon.

The room itself was not conducive to learning as the seating had no writing space and, as a number of informants opined in the interviews, the temperature of the room was uncomfortable. The instructor relied heavily on Christian thought and prayer, which could make minority religious individuals uncomfortable. Importantly, the instructor emphasized individual coping strategies, encouraging participants to accept their circumstances and concentrate on their end-goals, to the virtual exclusion of supportive interventions, such as reaching out to both informal networks of family and friends, and formal support systems such as legal redress and non-governmental organizations.

### **5.3 COA: Participant Observation**

The COA is hosted by the International Organization on Migration whose offices are located in a Makati office tower, close to public transportation. The seminar is conducted in a window-less, yet colourful, classroom adorned with pictures of Canada and informational posters about its Provinces and Territories. Participants sit in moveable chairs with armrest writing tablets. The chairs allow for flexibility of seating arrangements that were made use of during the full-day session as attendees were at times invited to work together in small groups. The instructor stood at the front of the room and had access to a lectern. A longer table at the back of the room was available for refreshments. Two refreshment breaks (mid-morning and mid-afternoon) and luncheon were provided free of charge to participants.

The facilitator set the tone of the orientation session that commenced with introductions after which participants were invited to gather into small groups based on their provincial destination in Canada, to exchange contact information, which initiated the support network they would require in Canada. An atmosphere of engagement and excitement prevailed, as participants were repeatedly encouraged to ask questions either in the seminar, after the session, or

even pose them to the instructor via email. In addition to discussing airport procedures, providing an overview of Canadian geography, and describing the L/CP and recent Program changes, the facilitator also highlighted the diversity of religious beliefs (or lack thereof), how to queue for washrooms in Canada (which differs substantially from the Philippines) and how to dress for the weather (including where to shop for such items). Importantly, the instructor gave participants a ‘reality check’ with regards to their wages, its purchasing power in Canada, and how much they need to save to apply for Permanent Residency status for themselves and their families. She recommended that their wages should be set aside for their own needs and for the future settlement needs of their family members when they come to Canada and that their partners should handle expenses in the Philippines. Furthermore, she encouraged them to have a serious talk with their families about why they cannot send remittances while working under the L/CP if they want to immigrate to Canada. At the conclusion, participants received a certificate of attendance and a Canadian flag pin. In addition, they received a highly detailed information kit that included the names and contact numbers of immigrant-serving agencies and L/CP worker advocacy groups in each province.

### **5.3.1 COA: Observer Reflections**

The COA was led by a skilled facilitator and well organized from the registration process through to the distribution of certificates at its conclusion. The room was comfortable and conducive to the workshop format and proceedings started and ended on time. Overall, the participants were greatly enthused about the amount of knowledge they gained, the approachability of the instructor, and the opportunity they had to network with others in the room. Attendees were very pleased with the good quality refreshments and lunch service, which our study informants mentioned as well.

The facilitator brought to light many issues that might not have occurred to these prospective migrants, such as the preponderance of agnostics and atheists (not to mention those who identify with a religion, but are non-practicing) in the country, the more informal manner of addressing each other, and perhaps most importantly, the relative purchasing power of the Canadian dollar as compared to the Philippine peso. As she indicated, what seems like a huge salary when

converted to pesos is low in light of the Canadian dollar and the cost of living, and must be regarded in those terms if they want to assist their families in migration. Much of the instructor's comments about Canada and Canadian society were highly insightful; however, some information was out-of-date. For instance, she made a comment about Canada not having been engaged in a war for many decades, when we have been engaged in Afghanistan and other conflicts in recent years. Moreover, the comment that Canada is a country of immigrants, while true in demographic terms, fails to recognize the presence and persistence of indigenous peoples that may be an important factor for all newcomers—and more long-term settlers—alike to acknowledge. As a postscript, we should note that as of mid-2015 the Government of Canada has decided to no longer support the provision of the COA program to prospective CP participants as changes to the Program dramatically reduce the potential number of CP workers who will qualify for PR status; resultantly, they have been classified as temporary workers (as opposed to temporary workers who were engaged in a transition to immigrant status) and are thus ineligible to receive orientation and integration services.

## 6.0 Discussion

### 6.1 PDOS Content

PDOS curriculum is designed to provide attendees with information on topics such as: the challenges and process of migration; airport procedures; some country specific information; financial literacy; working abroad; and health and safety issues (Anchustegui 2010). Specifically, the seminar is meant to include discussions on the features of standard employment contracts (GOC 2011), and information on what to do in case of contract violations, as well as a discussion on OFWs rights and responsibilities (Asis and Agunias 2012). In addition, participants are provided with more information about the Philippine's Social Security System, its national health program (PhilHealth), and the benefits of being an OWWA member as well as various credit and social programs offered by OWWA (GOC 2011). The module on financial literacy demonstrates how to manage earnings, and how to remit overseas earnings to their families through

official institutions emphasizing the financial security remittances can provide OFWs and their families (Asis and Agunias 2012; Gueverra 2006).

Importantly, these topics are meant to be delivered as part of the standardized PDOS curriculum; however, it appears that even recent PDOS attendees have only vague recollections of some and not all of these topics being covered. The timing of PDOS delivery, within two weeks of departure, may hinder the ability of future migrant workers to concentrate and fully grasp materials presented when they are preoccupied with many other matters.

Moreover, it is unclear how much of the content is being delivered or delivered appropriately to attendees. Anchustegui's (2010) evaluation of OWWA-accredited PDOS offered through agency, industry, and NGO partners revealed that only 4% of facilitators followed the standardized curriculum and recommended teaching methods. Anchustegui goes on to state that the "disparity between implementation as prescribed by OWWA and the actual execution of the PDOS by OWWA-Accredited PDOS providers" . . . is potentially "the culprit behind OFWs ignorance of the rules and regulations in the host country and of his rights and responsibilities as a migrant worker" (2010: 6). The inclusion of guest speakers, often representatives of insurance, investment, or financial institutions, reduces the time available for the delivery of the core PDOS curriculum (Anchustegui 2010; Watanabe 2014). These interventions, along with facilitators who may try to unduly influence participants in terms of investment schemes, contributes to concerns that PDOS has become unduly commercialized (Anchustegui 2010). Furthermore, while spiritual beliefs can provide meaning and serve as a source of social support, facilitators who forewent standardized curriculum to offer Christian messages not only excluded non-Christians, they failed to offer information about the rights of OFWs to absent themselves from abusive situations, the sources of support they could receive from governmental and non-governmental agencies if facing challenges, or even the ways to connect with local community to help them contend with loneliness and homesickness.

Overall, we learned that participants wanted accurate and concrete information that (for prospective L/CP workers in particular) addresses their fears, as all participants were first time OFWs. They were also in need of clarity about the

pre-departure and arrival processes, including the documents that were necessary for each stage of their trajectory. Moreover, they wanted to hear from former or current OFWs about their experiences. Unsurprisingly, the module on airport procedures was the information most often retained.

## 6.2 Lessons Learned: Delivery

The standardized PDOS curriculum for new hires was designed to be delivered in a period of six hours. Of the 11 informants who responded to the question, five said they attended a one day seminar, two indicated that it was a half-day, and two claimed their PDOS lasted less than two hours. The disparities may be in part due to recollection, where they took the program, and if they included the stress management seminar in their calculations. That said, Anchustegui (2010) also found dramatic variation in PDOS duration from two hours to three days.

PDOS facilitators are supposed to deploy multiple methods (lecture, PowerPoint, film/video, and discussion) in their delivery of the program. From what our informants told us, what we observed, and what Anchustegui (2010) also found, compliance with this directive appears to be weak. Informants frequently wanted more discussion and more time to ask questions, particularly with someone who had experience working or living in Canada.

Participants were open to using internet-based delivery mechanisms for orientation sessions; however, they strongly preferred in-person interactions. That said, they would have liked the option to pose questions on-line or via e-mail after the session. In addition, informants wanted to ensure that their time as well as their needs (i.e., food, water), were respected. As the Canada-bound workers are generally well educated, they possessed more sophisticated expectations from facilitators and were critical of those who they felt did not engage with their participants.

The array of procedures that prospective OFWs must undergo, the certificates they must acquire, and the differentiation of those workers into multiple categories, can be confusing and have consequences for the preparation of future OFWs. The relegation of prospective L/CP workers to either POEA or OWWA to receive PDOS training has meant that workers who are migrating under the

auspices of an agency receive more Canada-specific information from OWWA while name hired workers, who represent the vast majority of current and future L/CP workers, participate in POEA PDOS programs that include workers destined to a host of countries. Finally, while various governmental jurisdictions handle the PDOS program and related OFW and OFW family programs, the OFWs with whom we spoke did not differentiate amongst government departments that for them only represented the Government of the Philippines. Some of the government officials with whom we interacted appeared surprised that OFWs were not more aware of the mandate of their respective organizations. Moreover, the domains of their organizational entities deterred government officials from taking ownership of problems that cross jurisdictional boundaries.

### **6.3 Recommendations**

We offer the following recommendations in the hopes of spurring both discussion and action to improve both the value and quality of pre-departure orientation programs and to ease the transition, settlement, and potential integration experiences of future, current, and former L/CP workers.

#### **6.2.1 General**

Orientation is a process and the learning needs of migrants change with their trajectory from prospective migrant to temporary foreign worker to permanent resident and citizen. We urge governmental and non-governmental partners to collaborate in designing and rolling out a series of “just-in-time” programs—in different formats (in-person, self-directed on-line learning, webinars, etc., depending on local context)—to aid workers, their families, and their employers as the migration trajectory unfolds. Moreover, as informants appear to be obtaining information about the L/CP often from relatives, both sending and receiving governments have an obligation to ensure that prospective, current, and former L/CP workers have access to accurate, clear, and up-to-date information.

#### **6.2.2 Government of the Philippines: PDOS (POEA and OWWA)**

- As the Philippine government has already initiated post-arrival orientation seminars for its workers in different countries, these programs should be made available in Canada with input and assistance from the Canadian government.

- Although the Philippine PDOS programs have been regarded as one of the best-practices among labour-sending countries, we concur with other authors (c.f. Asis and Agunias 2012; Baggio 2008) that there is a need for re-assessment of the PDOS content and delivery format. Conducting a broader needs assessment similar to this pilot study is vital to ensuring that the needs of both OFWs and the Government of the Philippines are met.
- In addition, greater attention must be given to the pedagogical skills of instructors, to ensuring their commitment to delivering the curriculum at hand, and to their on-going evaluation.
- PDOS should not become a commercial forum for the sale of products and services whether proffered by a guest speaker or the PDOS trainer.
- With regards to seminar content and delivery, participants recommended:
  - The inclusion of former L/CP workers or other OFWs or expatriates as guest speakers to garner “first-hand” knowledge of Canada;
  - More interactive workshops and time for discussion;
  - Make on-line seminars available for those who cannot attend in person;
  - POEA should offer a more Canada-focused orientation that includes information on applying for social insurance numbers, medical insurance, renewing contracts, the role of caregivers, changing employers, and making friends; and
  - The messages conveyed in the sessions need to be standardized and inclusive of Philippine cultural, religious, and gendered diversity.
- There is also a need to have more retrievable information on-line (i.e., website, Facebook page) where prospective and current L/CP workers can pose questions and seek clarification on issues post-PDOS.
- Although the PDOS is offered in the regions, prospective caregivers must still travel to the capital region to take the stress management seminar. Participants suggest that this session be integrated into the PDOS so that it is available outside Manila.

- Registration for PDOS should be made possible using SMS, e-mail, or another on-line format.
- Re-consider when PDOS is offered to prospective OFWs. The current timing of just prior to departure may not be conducive to learning and absorption of information by OFWs as they are often more preoccupied with obtaining documents required for their job and with making last minute arrangements of their personal affairs.

#### **6.2.3 International Organization on Migration: COA**

- While participants benefited from the interactions that can only occur when attending a seminar in person, hosting the COA only in Manila limits its availability particularly for those in rural and remote areas who may not be able to travel without considerable hardship to the Capital Region. To this end, an alternative on-line course could also be made available.
- The IOM could create a Facebook page, perhaps open only to those who have registered for the COA, to provide updates on the CP, respond to questions, and address misinformation before it spreads.
- Participants were greatly appreciative of the helpful handbook provided to them; however, concerns about luggage weight restrictions meant that more were leaving the binder behind. Providing the same information in a USB key and/or on a COA website would be a more suitable format.

#### **6.2.4 Government of Canada (GOC)**

- The GOC should reinstate funding for the COA program for CP workers. While Program regulations have changed and it is no longer a fairly certain pathway to permanent residency status, some participants will be eligible for permanent resettlement. Moreover, the information shared in the COA is relevant for temporary foreign workers and gives prospective workers some of the important tools they will need to function in Canadian society.
- It follows that funding should be made available to immigrant serving agencies and other support organizations who provide assistance to L/CP workers regardless of their status as temporary migrants.
- The GOC should collaborate with the Philippine government as indicated in 6.2.2.

- The GOC through its network of immigrant-serving agencies should offer informational seminars for first-time employers, as is required in Singapore, to learn about their obligations under the CP and about the processes they will need to undertake on behalf of their employee (i.e., applying for social insurance number, provincial health insurance, etc.).

### **6.3 Future Research**

- Given the small sample size of this pilot project, more research is required to learn more about the impact of pre-departure orientation programs. Moreover, we need to conduct research that is inclusive of not only a larger sample size, but also introduce a comparative component to the investigation, particularly as fewer workers are entering Canada directly from the Philippines itself. Therefore, we need to compare the informational needs of CP workers who entered Canada from a third country (i.e., Hong Kong, Singapore, Saudi Arabia, etc.) without the benefit of PDOS or COA with those who came directly from the Philippines.
- Social networks are important sources of information about Canada, the L/CP, and settling into the country (temporarily or permanently). Further research is needed on the role of social networks in social support as well as their influence on decision-making about working, living arrangements, and workers' future trajectories.
- Given the proliferation of on-line resources and social media whose information may be helpful, misleading, or outdated, research is needed into these information flows and how they influence prospective, current, and former L/CP workers.

## **7.0 Conclusion**

Employing interviews with prospective, current, and former L/CP workers in the Philippines and Canada and using participant observation of pre-departure orientation programs, we garnered information about the learning needs of L/CP workers throughout their trajectory from temporary foreign worker to permanent resident and solicited recommendations about best practices for pre-departure programs. In this process, we uncovered tremendous gaps between

the information that was supposed to be delivered in the mandatory PDOS programs and what was retained by all three sets of informants. Irregularities in the delivery of PDOS in terms of content and facilitation as well as the timing of mandatory PDOS contribute to these lacunae. In contrast, former COA participants found the seminar extremely helpful although some would have liked to have it delivered in other regions of the country. This suggestion seems, at present, moot for L/CP workers as the Government of Canada has decided that they no longer qualify to benefit from the program.

In addition to more stringent oversight of PDOS administration to ensure that all modules are being delivered fully and appropriately using the prescribed methods, the Philippine government and receiving countries such as Canada need to collaborate on the development of an orientation program that would serve OFWs as they depart, settle, work, and live abroad. Providing just-in-time, or more accurately just-ahead-of-time, information will help ensure that knowledge is more readily retained. A series of seminars offered over at different points in the life trajectories of L/CP workers as they journey from the Philippines to Canada and from prospective workers to permanent residents, has the advantage of being both more responsive and more timely, as well as more flexible in providing up-to-date information as changes to policies and programs occur. Furthermore, multiple seminars taking place in Canada over time creates additional opportunities for social networking and for workers to avail themselves of social support as come together. Overall, the pre-departure learning needs of workers require the collaboration and participation of different sectors and groups at the local, provincial, federal, and international jurisdictions in order to bring about policy changes that improve the experiences of migration, adaptation, and settlement of workers and families in Canadian society.

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