

Support for Filipino Migrants in Canada and Japan: A Comparative Analysis

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Today, 8.6 million Filipinos are recorded as working or residing outside of the Philippines that means 10% of total population is in other countries. Roughly 4.1 million are permanent migrants, and 3.8 million are temporary and another 0.66 million are irregulars (Cai). They are recorded to live in 214 countries. Canada and Japan are two of the destinations for Filipino immigrants. Canada has half a million people of Filipino ancestry and it received more than 40,000 new permanent residents from the Philippines in 2014. Ninety percent of these OFWs (Overseas Filipino Workers) in Canada are women. Japan also has a big number of Filipinos; for example, in 2014, 217,585 Filipino residents were recorded. This number is also increasing slightly, up 4% compared to the previous year.

While Canada and Japan try to support Filipino migrants,

some differences are seen in the government programs, education and community organizations. In this thesis, the differences are analyzed by comparing the programs of support in the two countries. As a result, it will reveal that Canada seems more effective to offer working programs and has had more success than Japan. On the other hand, Japan concentrates more on education while a similar approach to support is seen in community organizations in both Canada and Japan.

Immigration is a form of movement of non-native people into a country in order to settle there. Immigration has recently been rising all around the world - in 2013, 232 million people lived outside their country of origin (United Nations Population Fund). As a result, the world has been internationalizing more and more. Emigration from the Philippines is one of the biggest in the world. In fact, the immigration of women of the Filipino is more than men of that and workers from the Philippines who work abroad are called "overseas Filipinos workers". In 2014,

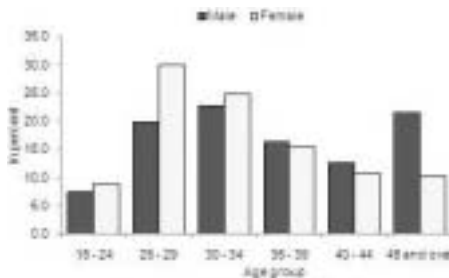


Figure 1 Percent Distribution of OFWs by Age Group and Sex: 2014
Source: Philippine Statistics Authority, 2014 Survey on Overseas Filipinos
Note: Reference period is six months prior to survey.

OFWs reached 2.3 million and there are slightly more female (50.5%) than male (49.5%) (Philippine Statistics Authority).

According to the Figure 1, emigrants between the age of 25-29 are the largest group (24.8%) followed by those 30-34 (23.7%). In fact, the number of OFWs has been increasing for the past four decades (Lozada). One of the main reasons is for employment. In the Philippines, people are longing to work abroad because of the low average salary and benefits, and the high unemployment rate (Natividad). In addition, labor export is a government policy so that the Philippines government encourages people to work overseas. If people emigrate officially, they can receive a number of subsidized benefits such as pre-migration training social and work condition abroad, life insurance and pension plans, medical insurance and tuition assistance for the migrant and his or her family, and eligibility for pre-departure and emergency loans (O'Neil). The reasons why the government supports immigration are for the Philippines' economy. Immigrants usually send some money, or remittances to their families in the Philippines. In 2014 from April to September, overseas remittances were estimated at about 173.2 billion pesos (Philippine Statistics Authority).

Sending Filipinos to Canada brings benefits to both two countries. When Filipinos work in Canada and help to fill important labor shortages, the Philippines can obtain 2 billion dollars in remittances from Canada every year (CIC NEWS). Half a million Filipinos in Canada are recorded all over Canada, especially in the Greater Toronto Area, and Vancouver also has a large num-

ber of Filipinos: 172,000 Filipinos in Toronto and 79,000 in Vancouver. These big areas provide many choices of employment. However, Filipino women tend to be employed in these fields: nursing and care-giving. As a matter of fact, 90% of those who work under the caregivers program are from the Philippines. Canada is offering not only working programs but also education support and community organization services. In British Columbia, the ministry of education has a policy that maintains the importance of multicultural education (BC Ministry of Education 15).

Japan also has considerable Filipino immigrants. They are usually called "newcomers" in Japan. Today Filipinos are the third largest group in Japan: it is 217,585 in 2014 (Ministry of Justice). While Japan also provides working programs to Filipinos, less people applied for it in 2014 compared to the first year in 2009. Although the program appears to be unsuccessful, education support and community services seem to be going well. Aichi is one of the prefectures that has many migrant children. Aichi prefecture has created a fund to help them, and schools in Aichi also make an effort to make them comfortable.

Education Support in Japan and Canada

Japanese policy focuses on language for Filipino young migrants, but in Canada, language education is not needed so much and Canada provides multicultural education. In Aichi, Japan, the prefecture of Aichi announced that it would reorganize "the

fund of Japanese learning support" in 2015 (Aichi prefecture government). The purpose of this fund is to support migrant children to promote their Japanese skills. This fund was started in July, 2008. Around 245 million yen has been allocated since then, which was donated from over 140 corporations and individuals. This is funding proposal.

- 1) Supporting foreign students
 - a. This fund will support Japanese language classes offered by NPOs, which are recognized by Aichi prefecture, and help a part of expenses to run the classes
 - b. If the students who attended classes of NPOs pass JLPT (Japanese Language Proficiency Test), the test fees will be refunded to the students.
- 2) Supporting international schools with foreign curriculums and students
 - a. This fund will cover a part of the expenses to hire a Japanese teacher
 - b. This fund will cover a part of purchase cost for Japanese textbooks
- 3) Others
 - a. This fund will be used for the publication of reports
 - b. This fund will be used for training a coordinator to run a program, a group of classes or curriculum

Figure 2 shows increases of funding for Japanese learning support year by year. Funding will keep increasing in the future as well. It means the more money collected, the more support will

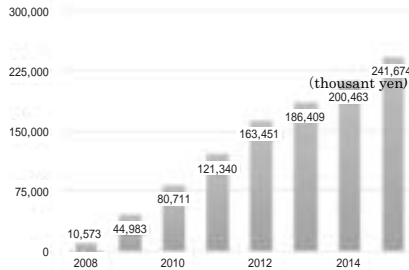


Figure 2 A Total Supporting Amount from the Fund
Source: Aichi Prefectural Government (2015)

be provided. The results of this fund are shown as 3 points. Firstly, the fund contributed to increase the number of Japanese language classes offered by NPOs. In 2007, which is before starting the fund, there were only 4 classes to learn Japanese in Aichi; however, in 2008, which is the first year of the fund, there were 25 classes, and last year in 2014, Aichi had 80 classes for Japanese learners. Secondly, the number of foreign children who study Japanese is increasing. Owing to the increased number of Japanese classes, children can get more opportunities to learn Japanese. Therefore, 1,177 children were confirmed as learners in 2014 although there were only 280 learners in 2008. Finally, the number of children with high Japanese skills has been increasing. The Japanese-Language Proficiency Test (JLPT) is one of the ways to measure the success of this fund. Comparing the scores for 2008 and for 2014, 60 children passed JLPT in 2014 while only 6 children passed in 2008. In addition, children who succeeded at a high level, N1 and N2, increased from 1 to 33. The Aichi Prefectural Government thinks supporting foreign chil-

dren for learning Japanese skills will create leaders in the area and bring a brighter and more energetic future.

Another thing is that schools try to help migrant children to develop their Japanese skills. In 2011, 200,696 foreign nationals were registered in Aichi prefecture. 26,636 of them were Filipinos. This number includes children. In fact, Aichi had the largest number of the foreign children, 10,375, in 2014 and 6,373 of them needed to be taught Japanese (Aichi Prefectural Government). According to a recent report in the Chunichi Newspaper, Iwata elementary school in Toyohashi City has a special teaching approach for the 62 Filipino students enrolled among a total of 768 students. This school prepares a special class for recently arrived students who need to learn Japanese. The class includes a Japanese teacher, Yoshihiro Matsunami, and a Filipino woman supporter, who teaches in Tagalog to the students who don't understand Japanese. Mr. Matsunami said that "she [the Filipina teacher] has the very important role in a communication between the students and me," (Chunichi Report). Moreover, in 2014, the Aichi Board of Education decided to assign more teachers for supporting foreign students and language tutors than in 2013.

In contrast, Canada does not focus on language acquisition for Filipino immigrants, who usually have good English skills. According to Statistics Canada, 99% of immigrants from the Philippines said they could carry on a conversation in one or both official languages (Statistics Canada). Therefore, a special language support does not have to be given for Filipinos in school or

the government. However, Canada is a multicultural country, so it is common that children from different cultural backgrounds are seen in schools. Thus, the government of British Columbia, for example, considers the importance of multiculturalism education:

In the broadest sense, we have long expected schools to serve as agencies for civic and democratic development and as places where our culture and values can be sustained and transmitted to the young. Today we turn to schools to help us enshrine language rights, to preserve diverse cultural heritages, to promote social equality and justice through recognition of individual differences. (A Legacy for Learners)

The provincial Department of Education set a standard education policy which provides British Columbia's school by addressing diversity. Instead of special support for Filipinos, schools treat every children as equal while respecting diversity.

Working Programs in Japan and Canada

Japan and Canada have working programs for migrants; however, Japan needs more improvements compared to Canada. In Japan, there is EPA (Economic Partnership Agreement) issued on 11th December, 2008 (JETRO). This agreement includes a chapter on the "Movement of Natural Persons," which means Japan can receive nurses and caregivers in the health-care sector from the Philippines. There are nursing courses and caregiver

courses. Candidates for the courses can work in Japan as trainees while studying for the national board exam. Under this program, the candidates can work for three years as nurse trainees and for four years as caregiver trainees. Moreover, when they pass the national board exam, they can get a special visa of four years, and it is possible to work in a hospital or nursing home as a nurse and care worker. In the nursing course, the requirement is having a nursing qualification from the Philippines and having worked for at least three years. For the care-giver course, university undergraduate degree plus caregiver certification or diploma of caregiver school are needed (Part 3 FTA/EPA and BIT). The candidates have to follow a process in order to get a degree. First, they must take a course of Japanese language for six months before coming to Japan. Then they have to take the course again for six months after arriving in Japan. Once they finish all courses, finally they can start their work training at hospital or care facility. Nurse trainees can take a national board exam a maximum at 3 times. If candidates pass the exam, they can continue to work as a nurse. On the other hand, if they cannot, they will go back to the Philippines. Caregiver trainees can take a national board exam only once. If they receive a good result, trainees can continue to work; however, if they fail, they have to return home.

As a matter of fact, it turned out that the result of the program seems unsuccessful. In the first year of this program, Japan received about 100 people as nurse trainees and 200 people as caregiver trainees but less than 50 people applied for the nurs-

ing course and less than 150 people applied for the caregiver course in 2014. It is actually decreasing and seems unpopular among Filipino immigrants. According to FMC, most of the migrants do not use this program. Many of them come to Japan and find a job through introductions from their friends. In addition, according to a report in Chunichi Newspaper, there are temporary employment agencies that offer bonuses to people introduce their friends. For Filipino immigrants, sponsorship is the most popular way to find a job, and the EPA program seems to be in the shadow of it. In fact, critics have argued that the wage is too low (Ishihara) or that six months is not enough for beginners to cover difficult Japanese medical words. Therefore, although there were 411 nurse trainees and 882 caregiver trainees from 2009 to 2015, only 5.6% (2 people) in a nurse course and 34.8% (31 people) in a caregiver course passed. One of the failed trainees said, "I had confidence about everyday language, and tried the national qualification three times but couldn't pass it. I would like some support for a re-trying" (NNA.ASIA). Moreover, some Filipino newcomers changed their minds and decided to go to Canada or the U.S. (Ide). From 2008 to 2013, 9% of those who passed the national qualification decided to give up working in Japan and went back to the Philippines (Yomiuri News). Although Japan tries to receive migrants in these ways, there is room for improvement.

Next, Canada also offers working programs which seem popular among Filipino immigrants. Nearly 90% of the caregiver program is occupied by Filipino woman. Caregiver programs in

Canada have three types: a Caring for children pathway, a Caring for people with high medical needs pathway and a Live-in caregiver program. As a matter of fact, the live-in caregiver programs are one of the oldest programs. This is a stream of the Temporary Foreign Worker Program, which expanded in October 2006 (Valiani). Under the program, workers can apply for permanent residency after working for 2 years.

In fact, there were problems before the revision of the programs. Some of the Filipino women who work under the program live away from their families and plan to bring their families when they get a permanent residency; however, many of them worry about the long period until being a permanent resident. Rhea Gaman, who has a mother working in Canada, said prolonged separation takes a toll on families. Her mother, who has a university degree in commerce, was a low-paid civil servant and took a caregiver job support her two children. "It was a bittersweet reunion when my younger brother and I arrived here in 2006," said Gamana, who was cared for by relatives in her mother's absence. "We wanted her to be there when we needed her. We wanted a mother-father figure that we didn't technically have" (Nicholas Keung). Thus, in 2014, the Live-in Caregiver Program (LCP) was revised so that the processing period to apply for a permanent residency takes within a half year while it took more than three years before the changes. Because of the long separation, some of the people gave up the program, but the new program will encourage people to apply for it. Another change is that workers do not have to live together with their

employers. In other words, workers can choose whether to live in the home or not. Before this, workers had to live in the employer's house. This style had many complaints such as that the workers were forced to have overwork and could not have private time (CIC News).

Canada offers nursing programs with good benefits and encourages migrants to be nurses. While the health care industry is filled with enough people in the Philippines, Canada is struggling with a nurse shortage and looking for nurses from other countries. Thus, the Quebec Skilled Worker immigration program (QSW) was revised in 2013 and it gives migrant nurses even more points than previous ones for their education and training. Moreover, the province of Quebec provides another attractive point about QSW. If migrants become a nurse under QSW, the average salary is between \$50,000 and \$60,000 a year. In addition to this, there are many opportunities to earn even higher salaries because of the nurse shortage throughout the province (CIC News).

In conclusion, Canada has changed its programs to be better. In an article posted on workpermit.com, it is reported that an immigration consulting company says, "They are welcoming persons from all countries and cultures, and not just for temporary work. Most of the program enhancements are targeted to encourage permanent residency and immigrants to become Canadian citizens." Thus, Canada is very positive to receive immigrants and has revised its working programs for them.

Community Organizations

Community organizations play an important role in migrants' lives, such as counseling and workshops. "There is not a big support from the Philippine government, so Filipino Migrant Center was established," says Virge Ishihara, who is the president of FMC (Filipino Migrant Center). Although FMC is based in Naka-ku, Nagoya, it helps wherever it is needed in Aichi prefecture. FMC has been fulfilling the responsibilities since it launched in 2002. Virge says FMC has three main programs: crisis intervention, education and community integration. Most of the Filipinos in Japan are female (75%). Some of them are suffering from many problems such as domestic violence, cultural problems and loneliness. FMC tries to counsel them and solve problems together. Thus, FMC holds a consultation for women at the office on every Friday. Virge says, "We defend them by knowing their basic rights." In addition, FMC tries to educate migrants who do not have any knowledge about living in Japan. While working in Japan, migrants have to deal with many things such as an insurance, taxes and visas. FMC holds workshops to give information and make them understand. Recently, FMC had a workshop about the new "My Number" system. It invited a specialist and held a lecture. Moreover, FMC held a forum about Japanese education in Toyohashi on 29th November, 2015. In addition to counselling, workshops and forums are helpful supporting to those who need help. Finally, FMC thinks about community integration. On 13th November, Japanese and

Filipinos were seen working together for a Christmas decoration in Ikeda Park in Naka-ku. FMC and the neighborhood association in Naka-ku called chonaikai often cooperate for events or cleaning of the park. Many migrants came to Japan for a job; however, the focus on work can make them lonely and feel isolated from Japan. Therefore, FMC makes an effort to share information with local people and help each other.

In Victoria, Canada, VFCA (the Victoria Filipino Canadian Association), a community organization, also supports migrants in similar ways to FMC. According to an interview with Annette Beech, a board member of VFCA, "We educate migrants with regards to their rights. We give them information and direct them to the right channel like asking advice to an immigration lawyer" (Beech Annete. Personal Interview, 13th November 2015). When Canada revises the programs, VFCA organizes an open forum to teach what migrants should do. Holding workshops and training seminars also encourages migrants to work in Canada. In terms of cultural ways, VFCA also tries to integrate immigrants to Canadian society. On Victoria Day, May 18th 2015, for example, there was a parade in downtown Victoria. While many local groups walked in the parade, VFCA was seen walking there and many Filipinos celebrated the day with Canadians. Both communities in Nagoya and Victoria are providing useful services which help their all things such as their work, lives and integration.

When comparing the Canadian and Japanese approaches to support for Filipino migrants in education, work programs and

community organizations, it is clear that Canada is more positive in promoting work programs. However, Japan has more educational support for Filipino children while the community organizations in two countries have similarities. Globalization in Japan is recently anticipated year by year; on the other hand, Canada is a multicultural country, so it has been receiving many people from all over the world and has more experience in this field. Therefore, Canada's approach could be useful as a model for Japan to encourage more immigrants.

Furthermore, both two countries gain benefits for their economies by receiving immigrants in order to meet their needs. In Canada, the percentage of dual-earner families is 69 % of couple families with children under 16 (Statistics Canada). These families need someone who takes care of their children. Thus, obtaining immigrants plays an important role in maintaining Canada's society as well as economy. Migrants are also important in Japan. This thesis actually shows that education and community support are helpful now in Japan, but working programs still need to improve. Taro Kono, one of Japan's most senior politicians, says "we probably need some kind of integrated policy in the future. That's what I call immigration policy or foreign workers policy - integrated, not just piece by piece." (Macfie). In fact, Japan started to open to migrants in the fields such as nursing and care-giving, but Kono thinks that it should be dealt with not partly but overall. In Japan, the aging society has been a serious problem so if more migrants join the workforce, it will contribute to the Japanese economy. Not only poli-

ticians but also we ourselves should think about the integration of immigrants to make our economy strong and create a better society for everyone.

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