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Philippines Overseas Worker Program: An Economic Blessing or Curse?
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Abstract

Philippines Overseas Worker Program: An Economic Blessing or Curse? As part of a long-standing government-sponsored program, millions of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW) send billions of dollars a year in remittances back to their home country, accounting for 10% of gross domestic product. This paper argues that by normalizing export labor, the country has become dependent on OFW income at the expense of sustainable development achieved through reduction of income disparity and mobilization of the workforce toward domestic production. It takes a balanced look at the appeal of the overseas work program set against the social costs imposed on workers and their households and varied misalignments toward domestic development. Using research gathered from economic texts and migration experts, it reveals the underlying structural problems with labor exportation, concluding with a discussion of the economic rise of South Korea juxtaposed to the Philippines' relative stagnation.

INTRODUCTION

Each year, nearly two million Filipino nationals depart for distant lands to toil under extended work contracts orchestrated or regulated by their government in search of a better future for themselves and their posterity. From domestic workers to nurses, construction workers to seafarers, male and female Filipino nationals are distributed across the globe and dutifully send some of their income back to their homeland (see Figure 1). As part of this deliberate government economic strategy, the Philippines officially reported 1,832,668 overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) across 192 countries for 2014.¹ Other sources report upwards of 5.3 million temporary and unauthorized migrants, which when added to those who have permanently settled, account for over 10 million Filipinos living overseas or roughly 10% of the population.² OFWs send \$31 billion a year in remittances back to their families, accounting for 10% of gross domestic product.³

Systematically deploying a large percentage of a nation's workforce on an indefinite basis cannot be a formula for economic prosperity. Despite the ostensible benefits of labor export and its increasing permanence in Filipino culture, there are misunderstood and hidden sides to the underlying economics. By normalizing export labor, the country has become dependent on OFW income at the expense of sustainable development which could be achieved through reduction of income disparity and mobilization of the workforce toward domestic production. Despite the economic appeal, the overseas worker program is harmful over the long term due to attendant social costs and disincentives toward domestic investment.

This paper begins with a discussion of state-normalized labor exportation in the Philippines including the historical context it grew from. It takes a balanced look at the

appeal of the overseas work program as a development strategy, including the economic stimulus it provides to the government and the sustenance it offers families of workers in the form of remittance income. It then examines the varied misalignments toward domestic development and the principal social costs imposed on workers and their households. Using research gathered from economic texts and migration experts, it reveals underlying structural problems with labor export, concluding with a discussion of the economic rise of South Korea juxtaposed with the Philippines' relative stagnation.

STATE-NORMALIZED LABOR EXPORTATION

Migration is long-intertwined in the Philippines' social conscience and OFWs are a major element in the Philippines' culture and economy. Growing from roots in the American colonial era, labor export evolved from a temporary solution to the country's fiscal woes into a lasting economic lifeline, with a large government bureaucracy orchestrating the recruitment and distribution of workers toward global demand. As the Philippine state normalized the outplacement of its workforce and as the number of citizens traveling abroad for employment climbed, remittance income took on more permanence as a formal development strategy.

Filipino worker migration can be traced back to the early twentieth century when the booming agriculture industry in the western United States and Hawaii created demand for cheap imported labor. The Philippines was an American possession as a concession of the Spanish-American War so as U.S. colonials, Filipinos could enter the country unencumbered by lengthy immigration processes.⁴ Entry restrictions tightened with the passage of the 1934 Tydings-McDuffie Act which led to eventual independence, but work abroad relationships continued under the U.S. Exchange Visitor Program and agreements which allowed Filipinos

to serve in the American military.⁵ The Philippine state took a more pronounced role in labor export arrangements in the 1970s following President Ferdinand Marcos' declaration of martial law, which he justified as necessary to instill economic discipline. Marcos subscribed to neoliberal, export-oriented industrialization supported by the West, using the Filipino citizen as the principal export. Employment opportunity would, in theory, act as a relief valve for social unrest and remittances from overseas workers would help rescue the economy by servicing the growing national debt.⁶ In 1974 Marcos formalized the labor export program by Presidential Decree (P.D. 442), at which point the Philippine state started taking on ownership of training and recruitment programs to streamline worker flows to match demand overseas. Three government agencies, later consolidated into the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration, (PEOA) were created to administer and promote the labor export program. To mitigate capacity shortcomings, the government extended its reach through a growing field of private agencies for overseas worker recruitment and placement.⁷ P.D. 442 was an inflection point transitioning worker outflows from a U.S.-centric arrangement to a global orientation. The construction boom coincident to the 1973 oil crisis eventually led to Middle East countries eclipsing the United States as destinations of opportunity.⁸

Although labor brokerage was conceived as a temporary economic and social relief measure, the central role of the state in outmigration of Filipino workers was normalized by successive presidents following Marcos' ouster.⁹ Today the POEA and a network of other government agencies perform market research to determine demand, train and certify prospective workers, and efficiently process requisite documentation to enable their accession into the host countries' labor force. The Philippine state formalized labor

migration through bilateral relationships with host countries and maintains an extensive network of labor attachés in host countries to extend the reach of the marketing program and perform collection as a form of immigration intelligence.¹⁰ The global enterprise of Filipino labor has become a source of pride for Philippines heads of state as expressed in a boast by President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo in 2003: “Not only am I the head of state responsible for a nation of 80 million people. I’m also the CEO of a global Philippine enterprise of 8 million Filipinos who live and work abroad and generate billions of dollars a year in revenue for our country.”¹¹ In short, historical precedent, global labor demand and the lure of upward mobility for Filipino nationals have accrued to make the overseas work program increasingly permanent and vital to the economy.

APPEAL OF OVERSEAS WORK PROGRAM

Defenders of the government’s overseas work program assert that the Philippines could not do without the money inflows from its exported labor force. This argument is compelling given that the government and families of temporary workers have become increasingly dependent on OFW remittances (see Figure 2). Among countries with temporary workers abroad, the Philippines trails only India and China on money sent home by its citizens, accounting for in excess of \$30 billion and approximately 30% of exports.¹² Owing to remittances, cash reserves are healthy and the country has experienced surplus conditions over successive years, allowing it to service its debt and manage a persistent trade deficit.¹³ The government views remittances as a necessary stimulus for economic growth and development. Through remittance income, families inject money into the economic system for living and sustenance needs including housing, utilities, transportation, communication, health care, and education.¹⁴

Proponents assert that the benefits from citizens working outside the country do not end with households appropriating remittance income toward basic sustainment needs. In theory, experiences and training accrued in the host countries, combined with the modern conveniences they have grown accustomed to should generate the political will to apply pressure on municipal governments toward community investment. Failing that, OFWs are empowered to self-finance projects to improve the standard of living in their native backyard. Accordingly, an expatriate should be able to return to the Philippines with substantial savings which could be applied to community modernization or entrepreneurial pursuits.¹⁵ For example, in the town of Mabini 80 miles south of Manila, overseas workers helped finance schools, a community center, and infrastructure improvement projects that were historically funded by local government.¹⁶

Aside from the economic incentives, the Philippine state's out-migration policies may function as a social stabilizing mechanism to absorb political discontent. Conditions of unemployment and underemployment contain the seeds of veritable political crises and income distribution tensions. As working class individuals struggle to keep pace with the rising cost of living, they may be apt to join anti-government movements and are subject to influence by extremist organizations.¹⁷ By providing conduits for its citizens to find work abroad and subsequently propping up the economy with their remittances, the Philippines manages the potential for serious social upheaval.

Finally, there is the appeal of working abroad to Filipinos themselves. Despite a culture known for its family-orientation, that millions of people break the bonds of loved ones to seek extended employment overseas speaks to both the lure and normalcy of the program. Mellisa Catarata, a 44-year old nurse and former OFW now living permanently in

the United States, said she chose to leave a government hospital job to emigrate to Singapore as a way to earn more and provide a better life for her family. Although she plans to eventually retire in the Philippines, she saw overseas work as a lucrative “stepping stone” to a more promising future.¹⁸ To many Filipinos like Catarata, working outside the country is a pathway to improve their livelihood and that of their families while simultaneously fueling dreams of self-transformation and discovery.¹⁹ Sustained in part by a steady supply of workers pursuing a fabled pilgrimage that has been passed down through verbal narrative across generations, the labor export program has generated significant institutional inertia due to its positive influence on macroeconomic metrics. While pro-labor export arguments survive cursory inspection, a more scrupulous look uncovers serious misalignment toward domestic development and exposes harmful social ills which cascade through the socio-economic system.

COSTS OF DOING (THE LABOR EXPORT) BUSINESS

A scrupulous examination of the overseas work program exposes significant counterweights to its broad economic appeal including the opportunity cost of displaced human capital and social dislocations on Filipino families. With supply mechanisms oriented toward external requirements, the country is deprived of valuable human capital through the loss of quality professionals or would-be entrepreneurs in segments of the labor market which could be valuable domestically. Additionally, institutionalized migration imposes meaningful social costs on workers and their families. Protracted separations levy psychological burdens from loneliness and depression while negatively impacting responsibilities such as child rearing at home. Finally, workers are subject to damage to their

their emotional health and physical well-being from abuse and exploitation in the host countries.

Loss of Intellectual Capital

Many of the workers lured overseas by higher relative salaries and the promise of a better future for their families are among the nation's best qualified and educated.²⁰ In 1980, half of the OFW population had been college-educated as compared to one-eighth of the workforce at large. Many of these citizens opted for permanent residency in the higher-paying host countries, contributing to a shrinking middle class. In the 1990s, the number of citizens from professional fields leaving the islands eclipsed those entering the domestic workforce.²¹ This brain drain is particularly acute in the scientific and technical vocations which lose tens of thousands of health care workers, engineers, information technology experts, chemists and other highly skilled professionals each year to labor-importing countries.²²

Market pressures have created supply/demand mismatches and led to skewed education system outcomes, particularly in science and technology. These imbalances have manifested themselves in unhealthy competition over skilled workers between Filipino government agencies and external recruiters. As the PEOA effectively recruits, markets and outpaces workers, its counterparts in organizations such as the Mines and Geosciences Bureau and the Philippine Council for Agriculture, and Natural Resources Research and Development struggle to retain staff. Valued for their English fluency, Filipino scientists are also regularly plucked away by the United Nations, World Bank and U.S. Agency for International Development.²³ These imbalances are also manifest in university admissions for science and technology degrees. Consistent with external demands, most of the 150,000

university science major and trade school graduates are heavily weighted toward medicine and nursing, with less than 2,000 gaining credentials in basic sciences. Per capita, the Philippines lags behind its Asian neighbors in scientific research and development, resulting in depressed scientific output. Tellingly, the Philippines trails its Association of Southeast Asian Nations counterparts in patent applications and approvals.²⁴

Aside from indications of de-skilling in industry indexes and surveys, perhaps the most insidious consequence is wasted potential in the domestic sector. The case of health care workers, including doctors, nurses and elderly care providers, highlights this problem. Aided by the government's explicit export policy, the Philippines is a leading supplier for nurses, which historically comprise one of the highest percentages of exported labor with over 250,000 people working abroad. Deficits in nurses across the world, combined with poor domestic wages, have catalyzed nurse outmigration, while depriving the Philippines of important nursing care to support the health care needs of its population. For instance, with care for the elderly emerging as a lucrative market for aspiring OFWs, the training apparatus is directed toward preparing health care professionals for the aging populations they will tend to in the host countries versus orienting on local public health concerns. Domestic salaries cannot compete with compensation opportunities abroad. In the United States for example, the average nurse can expect to take home approximately \$3,500 per month versus \$200 per month in the Philippines, a dramatic difference even after accounting for variance in cost of living. Overseas demand has prompted a proliferation of nursing schools and moved some doctors to reinvent themselves as nurses to improve their chances of outplacement.²⁵

Doctors transitioning into nursing exacerbates a persistent challenge for the Philippine state to care for the needs of its citizens. The 130,000 doctors who are certified by

the Philippine Medical Association fall woefully short of the one million recommended by the World Health Organization and 50,000 of them are working outside the country.

Domestic nurse shortages and doctor-to-nurse transitions combine to stress the health care system and have led to the closure of several hospitals.²⁶ While this health care example may represent a temporal challenge, the central point is that system imbalances created by external demand pressures result in lost potential toward domestic needs. This opportunity cost combines with fractures in family solidarity to impose meaningful debits on the socio-economic balance sheet.

Family Separation and Other Anxieties

Critics of the Philippines' labor export program also bemoan its attendant social and family destabilization. As Filipino workers depart for far reaches of the globe, their loved ones, children in particular, are dispossessed of meaningful guidance and emotional support while the workers themselves are susceptible to loneliness and depression. One in four children have a parent working overseas according to one UNICEF study. Research indicates separated children, those with a mother overseas in particular, underperform their peers in school. In a case of bitter inequity, female domestic workers may be nurturing children in host families while their own children are raised by surrogates at home.²⁷

Regardless of gender, spouses of overseas workers must redefine their roles in the household to balance child rearing with providing for the family. A cascading effect is their withdrawal from the domestic labor market and consequent dependence on remittance income.

Advances in social networking which allow routine contact with family members do little to ameliorate fractured family disposition.²⁸ Mellisa Catarata illuminates: "You miss your

family. No one takes care of you when you're sick. No one is there to help you when you have a problem."²⁹ As the old adage goes, virtual presence is actual absence.

Abuse and Exploitation

Abuse of OFWs has been a persistent menace, particularly among lower skilled occupations like domestic worker. According to an International Labour Organization report, workers have reported an array of human rights violations and other indignities including verbal or physical abuse, non-payment of wages, long working hours, food deprivation and denial of access to public services.³⁰ A particular distressing case is that of migrant workers, especially women, being lured into the sex trade or becoming victims of human trafficking. Studies have documented Filipinas working overseas augmenting their income with prostitution in their off time. Others are deliberately marketed and trained by the government labor export apparatus into vulnerable, gender-type occupations such as domestic worker and entertainer.³¹ Undocumented workers are particularly vulnerable to exploitation and are routinely forced into the sex industry abroad.³² Reports of sexual assault, enslavement, and murder of lower wage workers by their employers are not uncommon.³³ In a highly publicized case, 22-year-old Maricris Sioson who had been working in Japan as an entertainer, returned to the Philippines deceased with the explanation that she had died in a hospital of hepatitis. An independent investigation uncovered that she had in fact died of traumatic head injuries and suffered unthinkable abuse to her sexual organs.³⁴

These glaring offsets to the benefits of labor exportation due to loss of human capital, social costs on workers and their families, and cases of abuse and exploitation are exceedingly difficult to quantify, in part because of the complexity of calculating alternative

outcomes and because many of the emotional costs are borne in the psyche. However, the attendant costs are real, and when combined with misalignment toward domestic development prerogatives, form a powerful counterargument against the inertia of the government's out-migration strategies.

DISINCENTIVES TO DOMESTIC INVESTMENT

The Philippines overseas work program is trapped in an orbit valuing short-term outcomes over long-term development. This is attributable to a stubborn tendency in economic policy to favor the immediate impacts or influence on a special group to the neglect of long-term consequences on the broader impacted population.³⁵ That the labor export program was necessary in the first place signals underlying structural problems in the economic system and government policies. With its increasing permanence, core problems of income disparity and persistent poverty go unaddressed as land-owning elites are insulated by the political system.³⁶ Additionally, instead of remittance income being aligned to long-term investment projects, it has often fueled a consumption culture among communities connected to OFWs. Finally, by overemphasis on employment measures, the Philippines fails to achieve the full production potential of its workforce and misses opportunities to develop organic industries which could generate sustainable development.

Protecting the Elites?

Economic dividends from the overseas worker program have done little to assuage wealth inequities between the haves and have-nots. As income from OFWs has increased, poverty levels have remained stubbornly high (see Figure 3). In general, high income inequality in a country increases the probability of the government being penetrated by the wealthy elite where they are likely to enjoy healthy returns in policy-making.³⁷ This plays

out in the Philippines where elites with significant land holdings also hold prestigious postings in government and are direct beneficiaries of OFW economic policies.³⁸ Since the colonial era, the Philippines has been controlled by a small number of land-owning elite families, with wealth structured around family conglomerates.³⁹ Although OFWs have a political presence in the homeland, their commitment to apply pressure on elected officials for economic change is diluted by the tyranny of distance when overseas. For instance, there are nagging difficulties for OFWs to vote. Voting in an election requires the citizen to travel to a Philippine consulate, and if they have residency in the host country, to attest by affidavit that they intend to return to the homeland within three years.⁴⁰ In short, elites are insulated by OFW policies which favor the status quo, are difficult for OFWs to impact, and which have not budged income disparity.

Investment versus Materialism

Beneficiaries of OFW remittances can certainly apply the proceeds to basic sustenance, but the fungible character of money allows it to find its way into materialistic pursuits. The wishful thinking of OFWs returning with nest eggs and alacrity to invest in their local communities has not come to fruition. The previous investment example from the town of Mabini notwithstanding, remittance income has rarely gone to entrepreneurial ventures or capital construction projects. Disposable investment income from workers who remain overseas for indefinite periods of time tends to become immobilized in real estate investments or luxury items which do not serve small businesses through circulation.⁴¹ Even in Mabini, homes and vehicles purchased with overseas income sit unoccupied for years, while their owners pay down the debt used to finance them.⁴² OFWs have been lucrative targets for affluent real estate developers plying residential and retail properties. It is not

uncommon for nearly entire suburban gated communities to have residents who are in some way connected to an overseas worker.⁴³ Meanwhile, surplus populations of tenant farmers, marginalized indigenous peoples and others who are desperately poor are on the outside looking in to these gated neighborhoods. In short, remittance income has not been leveraged into domestic entrepreneurial endeavors which could achieve breadth and depth by reproduction in the economic system.

Employment versus Production

In national economics, a primary objective should be to maximize production, with employment as a means to that end. It is not possible to achieve full production without full employment, but the inverse is not true, i.e., a nation can have full employment without full production.⁴⁴ This is a salient point which is obscured by overemphasis on metrics of unemployment. While labor export creates employment opportunities, it does little to remedy income disparities or mobilize the broader workforce for important domestic production imperatives. Since the majority of OFWs come from non-poor families, remittance income may actually be worsening distribution of wealth problems.⁴⁵ By narrow focus on employment without inclusion of the poor population, labor becomes less efficient at the expense of production.⁴⁶ This is the peril of the overseas worker program: commoditizing export labor to boost employment dis-incentivizes production which could be generated at home from the use of valuable human capital.

Review of fundamental economic principles reveals latent fallacies inherent to the government's labor export program. While the landed elites profit from real-estate and retail markets aimed toward OFWs, they also remain insulated by the political system which is difficult for expatriates to penetrate. Healthy macroeconomic metrics including GDP and

employment obscure persistent income disparity and high poverty levels. As the following South Korea case demonstrates, solving these root causes while making deliberate investment in industry provides a pathway to continued prosperity.

CHASING THE TIGER: WHAT THE PHILIPPINES CAN LEARN FROM SOUTH KOREA

The Philippines would be wise to consider the case of South Korea. Following World War II at the time of their independence, South Korea and the Philippines were both on relatively shaky footing: similarly poor and bearing high levels of inequality in income and wealth, with the Philippines enjoying slightly higher income per capita and significantly higher education levels. Divergent outcomes in land reform between the two countries set the stage for drastically different economic conditions over the long run. Whereas South Korea rolled out ambitious land reforms which faded out the landed elite and made way for egalitarian society, Philippines' reforms failed to unseat the land-owning class who became fixtures in the political process.⁴⁷

In addition to land reforms, the economic boom in South Korea was engineered by the government's deliberate investments toward industrialization which were oriented toward export-led economic growth. In the 1980s, national policies helped nascent industries with subsidies, loans, and grants while also instilling discipline by forcing them to export. Natural pressures of the exportation process forced industry to make behavioral adjustments in order to produce competitive products for the global marketplace. Economic successes accumulated and replicated in secondary markets as backward and forward linkages were created across economic sectors to support the growing businesses and create sustainable

economic growth. To illustrate, opening of the automobile industry created backward linkages for suppliers of component materials and parts (e.g., tires).⁴⁸

Reeling from indebtedness and external structural adjustments, the Philippines was unable to invest in the industrialization which helped South Korea prosper. Lacking policy changes to achieve structural modifications and requisite seed money to generate viable development, the country was left with the labor export program to help bail out the economy. While effective as a stopgap measure, economic stimulus from the overseas work program is unlikely to create long-term, sustainable growth since it cannot create the robust, mutual supporting linkages in secondary domestic markets.⁴⁹

CONCLUSION

The Philippine government's organized labor export program evolved from a temporary measure to absorb unemployment and stimulate the economy into a permanent development strategy. The appeal of the program derives from its positive impact on the national coffers through remittance income and the promise of a better future for the laborers through higher relative compensation. This appeal is set against attendant social costs imposed on workers and their households and varied misalignments toward sustained domestic development. Healthy macroeconomic measures obscure persistent income inequality and poverty while dis-incentivizing structural changes needed to produce viable industries which would support sustainable development. As the case of South Korea demonstrates, unless the Philippines addresses distribution of wealth and generates globally-competitive industrialization while phasing out export labor, domestic development will likely be elusive.

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- ²⁵ *Ibid*, 391-392.
- ²⁶ *Ibid*, 392.
- ²⁷ *Ibid*, 399-400.
- ²⁸ *Ibid*, 399.
- ²⁹ Catarata.

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- ³⁰ Nicole Sayres, *An Analysis of the Situation of Filipino Domestic Workers*, (International Labour Organization, 2007), 24.
- ³¹ Rodriguez, 93
- ³² Boquet, 400.
- ³³ Ibid, 402.
- ³⁴ Rodriguez, 98.
- ³⁵ Henry Hazlitt, *Economics in One Lesson*, (San Francisco: Laissez Faire Books, 1979), 3.
- ³⁶ Robyn Magalit Rodriguez, interview by Jason Glynn, (October 16, 2017).
- ³⁷ Jong-sung You, "Corruption and Inequality in Asia," in *Routledge Handbook of Corruption in Asia*, edited by Ting Gong and Ian Scott, (New York: Routledge, 2017), 102.
- ³⁸ Arnisson Andre Ortega, *Neoliberalizing Spaces in the Phillipines: Suburbanization, Transnational Migration, and Dispossession*, (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2016), 54.
- ³⁹ Suzy K. Lee, interview by Jason Glynn, (October 25, 2017).
- ⁴⁰ White III, 87, 168.
- ⁴¹ Ibid, 86-87.
- ⁴² Onishi.
- ⁴³ Arnisson Andre Ortega, *Neoliberalizing Spaces in the Phillipines: Suburbanization, Transnational Migration, and Dispossession*, (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2016), 178.
- ⁴⁴ Hazlitt, 56.
- ⁴⁵ Virginia Miralao, "Globalization, Democracy, and Development: Some Asian Patterns and the Philippines' Experience," in *Globalization and the Washington Consensus*, 147-160 (Buenos Aires: CLASCO, 2008), 159.
- ⁴⁶ Hazlitt, 57.
- ⁴⁷ You, 107-108.
- ⁴⁸ Suzy K. Lee, interview by Jason Glynn, *Doctoral Dissertation Research: State Capacity and Labor Migration* (October 25, 2017). Lee's dissertation was unpublished at the time of this writing, but this paragraph summarizes our conversation regarding her research.
- ⁴⁹ Ibid.

TABLE 1 - Number of Workers with Contracts Processed by Type		
TYPE	2013	2014
Total	2,241,854	2,391,152
Land-based Workers	1,773,939	1,873,180
New Hires	562,635	639,679
Rehires	1,211,304	1,233,501
Sea-based Workers	467,915	517,972

TABLE 2 - Number of Deployed Overseas Filipino Workers by Type		
TYPE	2013	2014
Total	1,836,345	1,832,668
Land-based Workers	1,469,179	1,430,842
New Hires	464,888	487,176
Rehires	1,004,291	943,666
Sea-based Workers	367,166	401,826

TABLE 3 - Number of Deployed Land-based Overseas Filipino Workers by Top Ten Destinations, New Hires and Rehires		
DESTINATION	2013	2014
All Destinations	1,469,179	1,430,842
Saudi Arabia	382,553	402,837
United Arab Emirates	261,119	246,231
Singapore	173,666	140,205
Qatar	94,195	114,511
Hong Kong	130,686	105,737
Kuwait	67,856	70,098
Taiwan	41,145	58,681
Malaysia	34,088	31,451
Bahrain	20,546	18,958
Canada	18,120	18,107

TABLE 4 - Number of Deployed Land-based Overseas Filipino Workers by Top Ten Destinations, New Hires		
DESTINATION	2013	2014
All Destinations	464,888	487,176
1 Saudi Arabia	166,744	193,457
United Arab Emirates	81,926	56,589
3 Taiwan	29,174	48,922
4 Kuwait	34,211	36,731
5 Qatar	28,453	26,831
6 Hong Kong	22,477	22,226
7 Singapore	16,787	14,885
8 Malaysia	14,094	14,840
9 Japan	6,307	8,973
10 Bahrain	9,275	8,641

TABLE 5- Number of Deployed Land-based Overseas Filipino Workers by Top Destinations, Rehires		
DESTINATION	2013	2014
All Destinations	1,004,291	943,666
1 Saudi Arabia	215,809	209,380
2 United Arab Emirates	179,193	189,642
3 Singapore	156,879	125,320
4 Qatar	65,742	87,680
5 Hong Kong	108,209	83,511
6 Kuwait	33,645	33,367
7 Malaysia	19,994	16,611
8 Italy	19,314	14,727
9 Canada	13,061	11,690
10 Bahrain	11,271	10,317

Figure 1: OFW Statistics

Source: Data from *Annual Report 2014*, Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (Mandaluyong City: Department of Labor and Employment), 24, accessed October 26, 2017, <http://www.poea.gov.ph/annualreports/annualreports.html>.

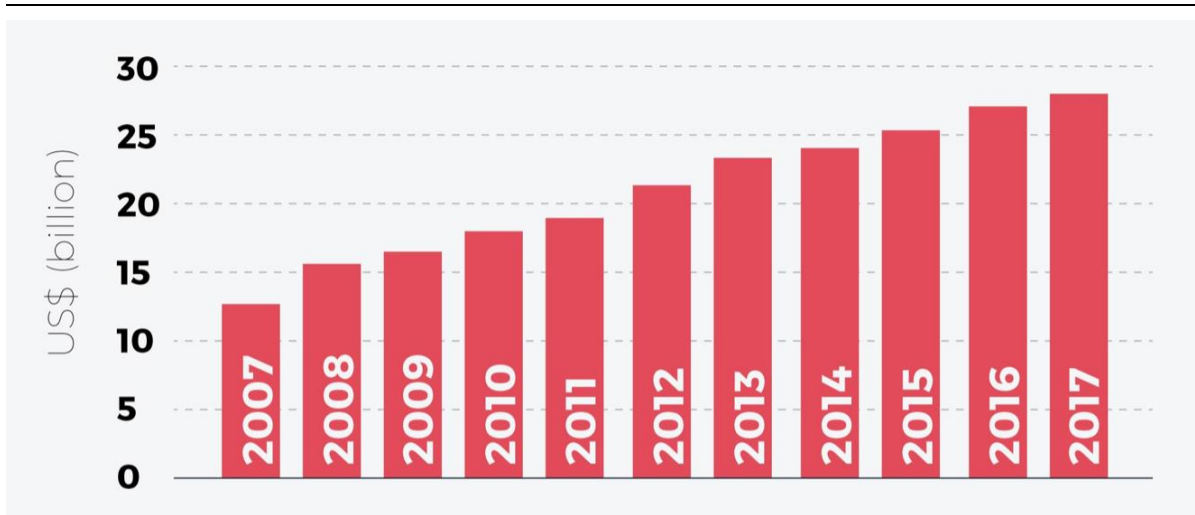


Figure 2: OFW Remittance Income

Source: Cash Remittance Volumes for Overseas Filipino Workers, The ASEAN Post, February 20, 2018, accessed May 4, 2018, <https://theaseanpost.com/article/overseas-remittances-remain-crucial-philippine-economy-0>.

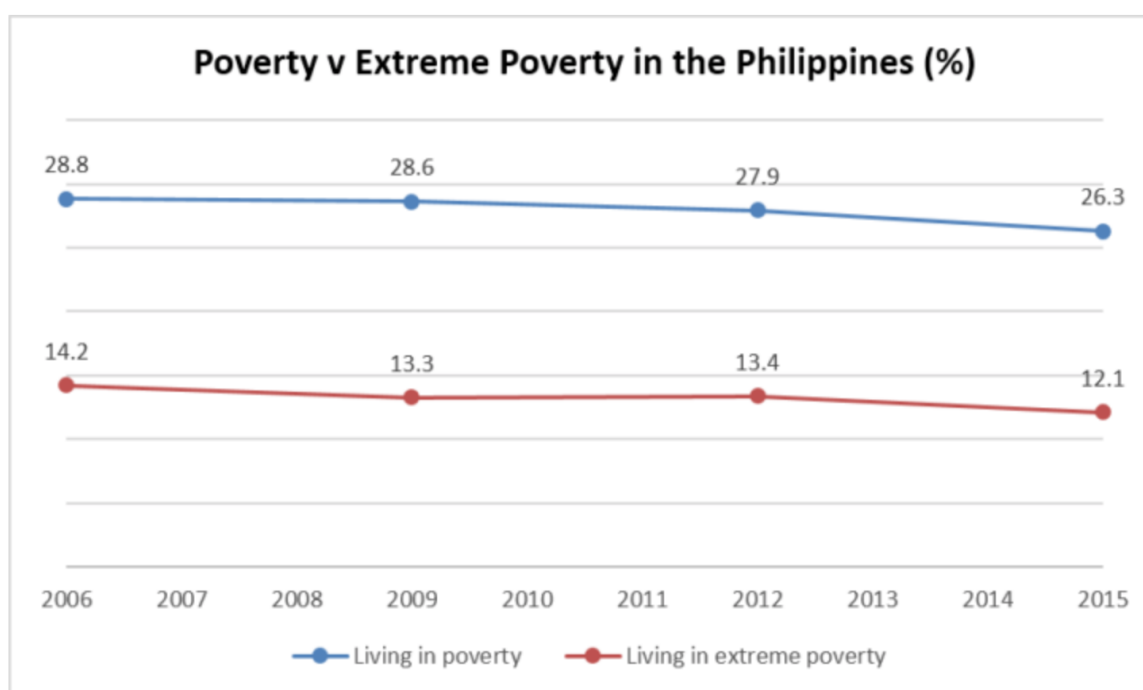


Figure 3: Poverty in the Philippines

Source: ASEAN Today, March 27, 2017, accessed May 4, 2018, <http://www.aseantoday.com/2017/03/education-inequality-poverty-a-paradox-in-the-philippines/>