

Profile of Japanese Filipino Children (JFC) in Metro Manila

This paper highlights the findings of a study aimed in coming up with a profile of JFC in Metro Manila, Philippines. In this study, the JFC are children borne out of the union of a Japanese father (JF) and a Filipina mother, except for one who had a Japanese mother.

Data gathering consist of: a survey of 100 JFC mothers from different cities in Metro Manila; three focus group discussions (FGDs) among 22 JFC participants and three JFC in-depth interviews; and, six family case studies.

The survey records a total of 135 JFC, 52% of whom are females and 42% are females with ages ranging from 1-27 years, average is 12. Mothers account that of the JFC are Filipino citizens, 1/3 have dual citizenship, while 11% are Japanese citizens. Only 17% are born in Japan, the rest in the Philippines.

FGD participants and interviewees are composed of 7 males and 15 females with ages ranging from 10-32 years, median is 10-19 years old. A total of 8 females and 3 males, are noted in the cases. Their ages range from 8 to 19 years old, four of whom are of pre-teen age.

Most of the JFC are in school, majority in the elementary and high school levels. Those who are out of school are primarily high school graduates and college undergraduates with four college graduates, some of whom are working to contribute to the family income. The JFC aspire to finish college, get a degree, and find a good job. Majority wants to be professionals and a few plan to engage in business. Majority of the JFC want to go to Japan to meet or reunite with their JF. They long for support, love, and communication from their JF. Some want to work and live in Japan, a few wanting their mothers to enjoy the same privilege. Majority aspires for legal recognition, Japanese citizenship, and hope to enjoy the same privileges accorded to their Japanese counterparts. All of them want to get out of their poverty situation.

Financial difficulties especially in educational and survival needs; absence of JF's support; securing required documents in obtaining legal recognition and Japanese citizenship; discrimination due to father's absence; people's mistaken notion of JFC's good life for having a JF; and, the mothers' own difficulty for lack of support, are among JFC problems mentioned.

Majority of the mothers met the JF while working as entertainers in Japan. The survey reveals that JFC parents stayed together for an average of 4 years, with only 40% ending in legal marriage. Presently, only 17% of Japanese fathers (JF's) continue to communicate and provide support. Among other reasons, the JFs stopped communicating for unknown causes; due to conflict/misunderstanding; and, the presence of another woman or the JF's wife. The trend goes for the FGDs and the case studies of abandoned children.

Respondents cope through the help of their maternal family, relatives, friends, and helping organizations, beefed up by their faith in God. They admit to having received assistance, both sought and voluntary, from various entities that include government organizations. However, locating the JF and legal assistance are provided mainly by NGOs. Some enjoy scholarships from private donors and NGOs.

Although their appeals for help are mostly directed to the JF and their paternal family, they also look to the Japanese and Philippine governments, NGOs, and respective family/relatives/community, as sources of support. In all cases, the JFC believed that they are the primary agents of their own success through hard work and sacrifice. Mothers, themselves, expressed that they have to do their best in order to send their children to school and provide them a good future.

Based on the suggestions and recommendations of respondents themselves and the assessment of the current status of the JFC, the following are recommended:

- Bilateral agreements between the Japanese and Philippine governments to ensure the promotion of the JFC's rights and privileges as citizens of both countries to include, among others: legal recognition and citizenship of the JFC; ensuring support of the Japanese Father for their Japanese Filipino Children's growth and development until their age of majority; protection from discrimination of the JFC and JFC mothers, and other support programs like free Japanese language training.

- Urgent concrete steps by the Japanese government to locate the Japanese Fathers, engender their ample support for their JFC, and more rational documentation procedures for the JFC's legal recognition and citizenship privileges as possible Japanese citizens;
- Establishment of a comprehensive program, both Japan-based and Philippine-based, for livelihood, educational, spiritual and psychosocial development of the JFC and JFC mothers, including training programs on livelihood and skills development, as well as, a psychosocial program to arrest the possible effects of abandonment to both the JFC and their mothers;
- Information dissemination on helping organizations, both government and non-government organization, that promote the rights and privileges of the JFC;
- Sustained support and assistance among existing organizations and support groups in the promotion and pursuit of the rights and privileges of the JFC and JFC mother;
- Advocacy on the promotion of rights and privileges of the JFC by mothers themselves, the JFC and support groups;

Community education towards non-discrimination of Japanese-Filipino children and their mothers; and,

- Education and awareness program for Japanese Fathers on their paternal responsibilities and obligations and the consequent effects of abandonment upon their JFC, JFC mothers and families.

-
- Notes: 1. The study was undertaken with two co-researchers, namely: Ms. Josefina M. Rolle and Prof. Yolanda G. Ealdama. Both are also from the College of Social Work and Community Development, University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines. Hired interviewers assisted in data gathering.
2. Special acknowledgements are due to the respondents and participants of the study. All FGD participants and 77% of survey respondents are Maligaya House clients, a Philippine-based Japanese NGO providing legal, scholarship and educational assistance to JFC and their mothers. Seven percent of survey respondents are clients of BATIS Center for Women, a Philippine-based NGO providing assistance to distressed Filipina overseas workers. Both NGOs are in research, publication, networking and advocacy work in the promotion of the rights of their respective clientele.

Publication of the Results of Research Project:

Verbal Presentation (Date, Venue, Name of Conference, Title of Presentation, Presenter, etc.)

Date is to be arranged, Dissemination Forum, Research and Extension for Development Office (REDO), College of Social Work and Community Development, University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines, **Profile of Japanese Filipino Children in Metro Manila.**

Thesis (Name of Journal and its Date, Title and Author of Thesis, etc.)

Philippine Journal of Social Development, (for next publication, 2010), **Profile of Japanese Filipino Children (JFC) in Metro Manila**, College of Social Work and Community Development, University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City (with co-researchers: Ms. Josefina M. Rolle and Prof. Yolanda G. Ealdama)

Book (Publisher and Date of the Book, Title and Author of the Book, etc.)