

## COMPLETION REPORT

### Cooperatives in Japan and in the Philippines: Basis for a Model for the Promotion of OFW Welfare through Cooperativism

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This research paper explored how the welfare of OFWs can be promoted through cooperatives. It aimed to answer the research problem, “How can OFW welfare be promoted through cooperatives?”

Mixed-methods was employed in gathering data for this research, which included focus group discussions, interviews, document analyses and site visits. It examined the aspects of migrant work and worker cooperatives: (a) welfare programs for OFWs; (b) Overseas Filipino Work in Japan; and (3) the best practices in Worker Cooperatives in Japan and the Philippines. Lessons learned from these practices was used as basis for designing a model of OFW Cooperatives that can promote workers welfare.

The study found that both Workers Cooperatives, JWCU (Japan) and Asiapro (Philippines) satisfy the five Best Operative Practices, they effectively achieve capacity building, manpower placement and business partnership.

Since workers’ welfare is the goal of OFW Workers Cooperative, its role, which is limited to providing advisory, facilitation, consulting and guidance services cannot be neglected. This will reduce corrupt practices and will ensure that the hard-earned OFW money go to their intended use.

#### *Advisory for capacity building, manpower placement and business partners*

In OFW Workers Cooperative, Advisory for **capacity building** is necessary and can be achieved when there is continuous education for OFWs that can provide them advisory, facilitation, consulting and guidance services for training in (a) language and culture; (b) work ethics and processes; (c) the laws that govern migrant work; (d) financial management; (e) skills upgrade; and (f) human relationships and family responsibility. Parallel to this is the development of competencies and skills of their Family Left Behind to prepare them for their target occupation. This can be done in partnership with private and government agencies after assessment of their competencies and skills.

Advisory for **Manpower placement** can be effectively done when the applicant is assisted in choosing the licensed recruitment agency that can provide (a) the proper assessment of personal attributes, competencies and skills; (b) preparation of legal documents; and (c) contract assessment to ensure that employment salary, benefits, scope of work, accommodations, rights and benefits are appropriately specified. Because the OFW Workers Cooperative is competent to connect with different offices that will ensure compliance to overseas requirements, it can provide advisory, facilitation, consulting and guidance services in (a) the selection of recruitment agency with foreign employers that have the capacity to pay salary and award the benefits throughout the employment period (affirmed by the local and foreign recruitment Agencies); (b) establishing the integrity and employers' commitment to OFW welfare (affirmed by recruitment agencies, host-country-based Filipino Association or the Philippine Overseas Labor Office (POLO)); and (c) getting the commitment of both employer / employee to abide by the laws, regulations and scope of work stipulated in the contract.

Return and reintegration is also part of advisory for manpower placement. Here, the OFW Workers Cooperative can provide advisory, facilitation, consulting and guidance services on matters pertaining to exit documents, take-home cash and goods, and community scanning for employment / livelihood. Guidance can be provided for family conditioning and reunification, rest and recreation, socialization. The Workers Cooperative's partnership with public and private agencies and institutions is essential to this task.

Because OFW Workers Cooperative is committed to promote participation of its members in any business that can provide them income, Advisory for **Business partnership** can be pursued. The aspects covered under the business partnership are remittances and payments, savings, investments. Data on community absorptive capacity, labor supply and demand, business capitalization and sustainability, and areas of community participation towards development should be made available through the OFW Workers Cooperative.

As the case may be, Pre-deployment (recruitment, documents, contract, government requirements, foreign employer, departure, deployment) and Stability and participation in community development (business, employment, income, sustainability, contribution to community development, nation building) cannot be addressed through the OFW Cooperative whose major role is to provide advisory, facilitation, consulting and guidance services.

The Model for Promoting OFW Welfare through Workers Cooperative (Ramirez, 2017) how OFW welfare can be attained through Workers Cooperative. Overseas Filipino work follows a trajectory composed of different phases: pre-deployment; employment; pre-return; return; reintegration; and stability and participation in community development. Workers Cooperative, for its part, follows best operative practices. If Advisory for capacity building, manpower placement and business partnership are applied to both overseas Filipino work and Workers Cooperative, there are services that can be offered at each phase of migrant work to ensure OFW welfare.

The OFW Workers Cooperative Model (Ramirez, 2017) is therefore recommended to guide the promotion of OFW welfare in the different stages of migrant work.

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

**To be confirmed but no funds**

International Symposium on Social Sciences and Management, Osaka, Japan February 6-8, 2018

“Cooperative Best Practices in Japan and the Philippines: Basis for Overseas Filipino Workers’ welfare through Workers Cooperative”

Presenter: Veronica Esposo Ramirez, Ph.D

The paper can also be presented in the Philippines in 2018 when a Cooperative conference is organized by the Cooperative Development Authority. The date and venue to be confirmed.

It can also be presented at a Roundtable discussion or forum on Overseas Filipino Work. The date, organizer and venue still to be determined.

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

The paper will be published in a form of Monograph to be distributed to:

JWCU, Japan

Akira Kurimoto, Director of Consumer Cooperative Institute of Japan

Cooperative Development Authority, Philippines

Department of Labor and Employment, Philippines

Overseas Workers Welfare Administration, Philippines

National Reintegration Center for Filipinos Overseas, Philippines

Members of Coop Works Workers Cooperative

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

N/A