



2011



Master Thesis

RESKILLING the
SKILLS of the
SKILLED?

A report analyzing the pre-departure and Hong-Kong based reintegration training programs and their effects on the lives of Filipino Domestic Workers in Hong Kong

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Universiteit Utrecht

In collaboration with: Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants



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A report analyzing the pre-departure and Hong-Kong based reintegration training programs and their effects on the lives of Filipino Domestic Workers in Hong Kong

Cover photo by Renske van Milink:
Filipino Domestic Workers gathering on a Sunday at Central
Hong Kong, China.

August 2011

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ABSTRACT

In this globalizing and gradually more competitive world even the lowest skilled jobs in the employment market increasingly require workers to (re)skill themselves and obtain training certificates. This is true for the (highly) educated Filipino women that aspire to migrate to Hong Kong as domestic workers and are obliged to take a household training sponsored by the Philippine government before their departure. Once in Hong Kong they have the choice to again take skill trainings but this time to prepare them for their migration back to their home country. The main goal of this paper is to compare the two types of training programs and to determine the impact they have on the lives of the Filipino Domestic Workers. This paper will first argue that the two training programs are fundamentally different in all aspects ranging from their goal to their usefulness. It will then demonstrate that even though this migration ‘deskills’ the women, the Hong Kong-based training programs can help mitigate the effects of this by offering them new employment opportunities as entrepreneurs. Conversely, the pre-departure household trainings can have adverse (long-term) effects on the future of the FDWs. Finally, recommendations will be given on how to improve the two training programs and make the migration of these women more edifying.

Key Words: training program, Filipino Domestic Workers, deskilling, reskilling, Philippine government, TESDA household training, FWRC, Bayanihan, Hong Kong

PREFACE

This study about skills development from female Filipino domestic workers was conducted and written by Renske van Milink, a student from the University of Utrecht in close collaboration with the Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants over a period of almost four months: from February to May 2011 in Hong Kong, China. Hong Kong was chosen as a destination for a research/internship since it is an interesting location for research about Migration due to the fact that it is a famous destination for many migrants with different ethnic and professional backgrounds. There were also personal reasons for this choice: the author's profound interest in Asia and the topic of Skilled Migration.

This paper is meant to provide concrete data, gather new information and hopefully benefit the Filipino migrant community in general, and the migrant organizations in specific since it can be relevant for their different campaigns and advocacy programs. It is also a component of the International Development Studies Master of Sciences (MSc) degree of University Utrecht and is largely based on an internship report that was handed in to the Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants at the beginning of June.

This document was made possible with the support of different (government and migrant) organizations working for and with immigrants among which: the Consulate of the Philippines, Mission for Migrants, FMW, Comadrona, United Filipinos in Hong Kong, the FWRC and the Bayahani Center and several others.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to begin by thanking my parents. They were, first and foremost, the impetus behind this project. They have always inspired me and given me unconditional support. Their understanding of the world, their faith in humanity, their interest in other cultures and of course their international background, experiences and lifestyle have been an immense source of knowledge and inspiration. I have not only greatly learned from the places I have seen and the people I have met during my life with them but I have also matured a lot as a student and as an individual. The international lifestyle I inherited from my parents and then decided to pursue makes me feel like I am part of the 200 million global migrants that have left their countries of origin and started a new life- sometimes several times over- until finally managing to feel at home almost anywhere in the world.

I want to thank Professor Maggi Leung for her critical vision and support, but especially for her patience. She showed great interest in this project and often challenged me to raise my expectations of myself. The valuable advices and feedback she provided really helped this project realize its potential. I admire her pertinent professionalism and I am grateful that we had this opportunity to work together.

I owe a lot of gratitude to my host organization The Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants (APMM) that gave me the opportunity to carry out this research. It is a small organization but the impact they have regionally, locally and on people's lives through their various activities is beyond measure. It is difficult to express my gratitude to Rey Asis in words. He is an exceptional committed altruistic activist with a clear vision of the current state of affairs and problems in the world who somehow always manages to work with a positive attitude. Also Ramon Bultron was a great inspiration to me. His hours spent travelling showed me that when one has goals in mind one should never stop at borders or at other boundaries- one should always dream and reach further. The rest of the team was also extremely supportive and the whole experience would not have been the same without them. Indeed, I am very grateful to have met, interacted and worked side by side with Aaron Ceradoy, Dolores Balladares-Pelaez, Eman Villanueva, Janet Carnay, Jun Tellez, Joselito Natividad, Lola Chih-Hsien Huang, Norman Uy Carnay, Vicky Casia Cabantac and Pastor Joram Calimutan. They are all unique and inspiring individuals.

I also very much appreciate the efforts of Cynthia Tellez, Marilou Aguila, Rowena dela Cruz and Maza in particular for their interest in the project and their help with the collection of data. Of course I also want to acknowledge the staff of the Consulate of the Philippines in Hong Kong for their collaboration.

I want to deeply thank the Filipino community and in particular all the Filipinas who I encountered. Rumor has it that the Filipinos are the most happy and gullible people. I have little doubt that this is not just a rumor. Countless times I have been amused by and laughed with them. Thank you for your support. *Salamat* my friends!

Finally, I want thank my sisters and my friends 'back home' - you know who you are- for their support and encouragement. They stood by my side when times were rough and there seemed no end in sight. They constantly stayed in touch with me during my time in Hong Kong, they scolded me when I procrastinated, praised me when I completed anything having to do with this project and celebrated with me anything worth celebrating. They truly made studying at University Utrecht and my time in Hong Kong an "unforgettable lifetime experience".

Renske van Milink

August 2011

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	2
PREFACE.....	3
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	4
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	5
LIST OF FIGURES.....	8
LIST OF TABLES.....	8
LIST OF PICTURES.....	8
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	9
1. INTRODUCTION.....	10
1.1. Research Objective.....	13
1.2. Relevance of the Research.....	14
1.3. Framework of the Thesis.....	15
1.3.1. Regional Framework	15
1.3.2. Host Organization.....	17
1.3.3. The Research Process	17
1.4. Structure of the Thesis.....	18
2. LITERATURE REVIEW.....	19
2.1. The Migration-Development nexus.....	19
2.2. The Asian Migration.....	22
2.3. Domestic Workers in Hong Kong.....	23
2.4. Filipino Domestic Workers.....	26
2.5. Discussion.....	28
2.6 Conceptual Model.....	30
3. METHODOLOGY.....	33
3.1. Data Collection.....	33
3.1.1. The Survey.....	33
3.1.2. The Focus Groups.....	36
3.1.3. The Interviews.....	37
3.1.4. Participatory Observation.....	37
3.2. Limitations of the Research.....	37
4. WHERE ‘IT’ ALL STARTS.....	40

5. THE PRE-DEPARTURE TRAINING PROGRAM.....	46
5.1. Goal.....	46
5.2. Content of the programs.....	47
5.3. Length.....	48
5.4. Cost.....	49
5.5. Location.....	50
5.6. Training Camp.....	52
5.7. Abuse and Exploitation.....	54
6. EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PRE-DEPARTURE TRAININGS.....	56
7. THE HONG KONG BASED REINTEGRATION SKILL TRAINING PROGRAMS.....	60
7.1. Goal.....	60
7.2. Government sponsored training centers in Hong Kong.....	61
7.2.1. FWRC.....	62
7.2.2. Bayanihan Training Center.....	64
8. EFFECTIVENESS OF THE REINTEGRATION SKILL TRAINING PROGRAMS.....	67
9. RESKILLING THE SKILLED?	69
9.1. MIGRATION: PERMANENTLY DE-SKILLING THE FILIPINAS?.....	69
9.2. TRAINING PROGRAMS: DE-SKILLING OR RE-SKILLING?.....	72
10. RECOMMENDATIONS.....	75
11. CONCLUDING REMARKS.....	79
12. WORK CITED.....	82
13. GLOSSARY.....	89
ANNEXES.....	90
1: The survey questionnaire.....	90
2: Province of Origin of the Survey Participants.....	93
3: Information from survey questionnaire concerning the FDWs’ work conditions.....	94

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: The Conceptual Model.....	32
Figure 2: The education level of the participants.....	41
Figure 3: Type of work performed by Filipinas before Migration.....	42
Figure 4: Opinions about the length of the pre-departure household trainings.....	48
Figure 5: Location of the pre-departure training program.....	51
Figure 6: Training Camp conditions.....	53
Figure 7: Illustration of the illegal unpaid work performed during training, and the location of this work according to those who answered ‘Yes’ to the question.....	54
Figure 8: Views on the pre-departure trainings before and after migration.....	58
Figure 9: Plans of FDWs about their stay in Hong Kong.....	70

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Migration Status of Asian countries.....	11
Table 2: Population trends of foreign domestic workers in Hong Kong.....	25
Table 3: What a FDW is expected to do according to TESDA.....	47
Table 4: Amount paid for the training.....	49
Table 5: Overall rating/opinion of the pre-departure trainings.....	57
Table 6: Rating of equipment: old or new?.....	58
Table 7: Equipment: broken or damaged?.....	58
Table 8: Vocational skill trainings offered by the government to FDW.....	61
Table 9: Definitions Skilling, re-skilling, de-skilling.....	72

LIST OF PICTURES

Picture 1: Collection of common scenes of Filipino migrant workers in Central on a Sunday.....	16
Picture 2: Example of a group of respondents answering the survey questionnaire in Chater Garden.....	35
Picture 3: Example of a focus group discussion in a café in ‘Central’.....	36
Picture 4: A total of 13 OFWs taking a baking training at FWRC in a small classroom.....	63
Picture 5: Two OFWs taking a Hair Culture training course, supervised by their teacher, at Bayanihan.....	65
Picture 6: A busy computer training course at Bayanihan Training Center.....	65
Picture 7: Example of a demonstration of FDWs in Central.....	67
Picture 8: Another (silent) protest of FDWs in Central.....	67

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

APMM= Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants
DOLE= Department of Labor and Employment
FDH= Foreign Domestic Helper
FDW= Female Domestic Worker
FGD= Focus Group Discussion
FWRC= Filipino Workers Resource Center
HK= Hong Kong
ILO= International Labor Organization
OWWA= Overseas Workers Welfare Administration
OFW= Overseas Filipino worker
PHP= Philippine Pesos
POEA= Philippine Overseas Employment Agency
POLO= Philippine Overseas Labor Office
MFMW= Mission for Migrant Workers
NGO= Non-Governmental Organization
TESDA= Technical Education and Skills Development Authority
UNIFIL = United Filipinos in Hong Kong

1. INTRODUCTION

*“You will see that at the end of my life I will say that I was never the engineer I wanted to be [...]I became a trained maid in Hong Kong and I will probably have my own small business when I go back home...”-
Maricel, Age 30, Focus group 7/5/11*

This thesis is presented for the Master International Development Studies at the University of Utrecht and contains research questions, a discussion of the literature relevant to the project, a methodology section, the limitations to the project, the analysis of the gathered information and finally conclusions and recommendations for the future. The thesis is the result of an investigation about the two types of trainings given by the Philippine government to domestic workers during their circular migration to Hong Kong. In theory, training in general and skills development in particular “play a vital role in individual, organizational and overall national economic growth” (Javied 2009:1). Education and training are considered to be “indispensable instruments for improving “labor mobility, adaptability and productivity” (Cailods 1994). Whether in practice this is always the case is doubtful. The effectiveness of trainings is directly linked with the needs of the participants, the quality of the programs and the opportunities they offer.

With approximately 7.5 million Filipinos – 8 per cent of the country’s population – living abroad, the Philippine economy has become heavily dependent on labor migration. Every year thousands of medium to highly educated women leave the Philippines to work as domestic workers somewhere else. Many do decide to return after many years but during this whole migration back and forth they will have lost, gained and switched skills that they have obtained either through their education or through skill training programs catered by the government at different stages of their migration.

The Asian continent is home to almost 60 percent of the current world population hence it is perhaps not surprising that it attracts numerous discussions of global migration. Even though international migration is certainly not a new phenomenon in Asia, “in recent years it has acquired an unprecedented scale, diversity and significance”(Hugo 2005:1). Indeed, in this last decade has there has not only been an increase in the number of individuals moving between nations in Asia, but has also the types of mobility have become more complex and the movement is less selective. There are different reasons that explain this fact: an increase in education, proliferation of international media, better transportation mediums and the internationalization of business and labor markets etc. However, according to Hugo, two elements have been especially influential: first the propagation of social networks since “most Asian international migrants move to a place where they have social capital in the form of relatives or friends already living there. These networks not only encourage and facilitate mobility but also assist the migrant in adjusting to the situation in the destination” (Hugo 2005:3). Second, the entire migration industry (consisting of immigration officials, migration agents,

recruiters, travel providers etc.) that is crucial in the migration system has expanded and facilitated migration flows. This is an interesting remark that will return at different moments in this research.

Noteworthy is the fact that the international migrations occurring in Asian countries nowadays involve mainly non-permanent labor movements, in particular in the service sector. It is especially women who have become more significant in these migration flows with many moving into **domestic service**¹. Indeed, over the years many researchers have been studying the so called “feminization” of migration.

Today the most important migrant sending countries in Asia are Bangladesh, China, Indonesia, Nepal, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Vietnam while the most important labor receiving countries are countries such as Japan, the Republic of Korea, Singapore and Hong Kong (see Table 1). Certainly, Hong Kong was and is a major receiving country for migrant workers, particularly women from Southeast Asia who work as **foreign domestic helpers** (FDHs) or domestic workers (DWs). The proportion of Hong Kong households employing FDWs has more than tripled from 3.6% in 1987 to 10% in 2000² (Hong Kong Census & Statistics Department 2001 as cited by Chan 2005:511). In March 2001, there were around 230 thousand FDWs in Hong Kong and nearly 70% of them were from the Philippines (Director of Immigration 2001 as cited by Chan 2005:510). More recently however the Filipinos have seen their dominance reduced by the growing number of Indonesian domestic workers.

Table 1. Migration Status of Asian countries

1.	Labour sending - <i>Bangladesh, China, Indonesia, Nepal, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Vietnam</i>
2.	Labour sending and receiving - <i>India, Malaysia, Pakistan, Thailand</i>
3.	Labour receiving - <i>Middle East, Brunet Darussalam, Taiwan (China), Japan, Republic of Korea, Hong Kong SAR, Singapore</i>

Source: Wickramasekara 2000

The migration flows of domestic workers (between the Asian countries in the table above) have existed for several decades yet it is only after the years 2000 that several attempts have been made by the *sending* countries to supposedly “upgrade or professionalize domestic work” (Asis 2006:3) and “ensure competent workers abroad” (Ochi 2005:4). One of the most common methods to do this is through the implementation of **‘pre-departure’ training programs** which intend to prepare and inform migrants about the country they are going to but also to allow them to acquire the necessary skills for their future job abroad.

¹ Words in the color red can be found in the glossary

² Households employing FDWs are predominantly small nuclear families with above average incomes. In 2000, 32% of all households with a monthly income of over HKD 50,000 (around USD 6,410) employ at least one FDW (Hong Kong Census & Statistics Department 2001 as cited by Chan 2005:511).

It was in 2004 that the Indonesian government started offering mandatory pre-departure training programs for all women wanting to find domestic work abroad. The law 39/2004 under the headline “*Concerning the Placement and Protection of Indonesian Overseas Workers*” is the main piece of legislation governing recruitment, placement, and protection of migrant workers and made the training programs for its domestic worker a requirement for migration. During the these mandatory trainings (often given in training camps) the women are given health tips, an overview of their rights, seminars for awareness raising about different issues, language courses and other skills courses, such as cleaning, cooking and taking care of children and elderly (for more information see IOM Report 2010).

It is possible to say that the Filipino government copied the initiative of the Indonesian government because it also announced at the end of 2006 that it would make the so called pre-departure “household trainings” mandatory. Even though the option of undergoing household training already existed for decades, they officially became compulsory for all aspiring domestic migrants 5th of February 2007 (cf. POEA Website 2007). Today, as stated in the POEA guidelines (POEA Website March 2007), all Filipino workers are obliged by law to obtain a training certificate before they migrate (unless they already worked as a domestic helper before 2007).

At the same time, sending countries have also inverted numerous efforts and a lot of money in the implementation of ‘**on site**’ or ‘**reintegration**’ **training programs** in the countries where their migrants are working. Indeed, in the case of the Filipino government, different training programs have been set up in the receiving countries (such as Hong Kong) for the female domestic workers to attend usually during their day-off. For the sake of clarity and simplicity these will, from now onwards, be referred to as ‘Hong Kong Based’ (skill/**vocational**) training³. As will later be explained, these range from computer training to cooking classes and are meant to encourage women to become entrepreneurs (i.e. start their own business) once they go back to the Philippines- something that usually happens after around a decade of work abroad and has been regarded as highly desirable by the Filipino government.

This document will describe, evaluate and compare the two training programs mentioned above that are offered to the female domestic workers (FDWs) that migrate from the Philippines to Hong Kong (and back). It will also discuss their usefulness and determine the effects of the two training

³ A deliberate choice was made to name these training programs ‘Hong Kong-based’ trainings. The expression “reintegration training program” to qualify these skill trainings given to OFWs before going back home was considered and would have been more appropriate, yet it may cause confusion with what the Philippine government calls “reintegration seminars”. These 1-day seminars (in the form of public presentations and talks) are completely different: they are given for free by the government to the returning FDWs and are sometimes referred to as ‘training seminars’ yet they do not deal with skills or trainings for that matter. “Post-departure trainings” would have been misleading since these the training programs in question have little to do with the departure from the Philippines; they are intended to give FDWs new employment opportunities back home. Hong Kong-based (skill or vocational) training was therefore regarded as the best term for these trainings.

programs on the lives of the FDWs. Doing this is important since it will give a better overview of the entire migration process of Filipinas to Hong Kong (and back). It will also allow for a finer understanding of: what these women experience before and after the migration, what the involvement of the government in this migration is (and what benefits it receives from it), and finally what the consequences of the migration on the professional and personal lives of the migrating women are (particularly in terms of their skill development and changes of skills). Ultimately it will hopefully also reveal if and how migration is a vector of (self-) development for these women in this specific type of migration.

The main research question of this thesis can be formulated as follows:

How do the pre-departure and Hong Kong-based training programs implemented by the Philippine government differ, and what is their impact on the lives of the Filipino Female Domestic Workers that migrate to Hong Kong?

The research question will be answered with the help of the following sub-questions:

1. *What are the goals of the government pre-departure and Hong Kong-based training programs offered to Filipino Domestic Workers?*
2. *What are the training conditions of the two training programs?*
3. *To what extent are the two trainings necessary and useful for the Filipino Female Domestic Workers?*
4. *What are the long-term consequences of this migration on the skill development of the FDWs and how do the training programs (by either 'reskilling' or 'deskilling' them) change the lives of these women?*

The main question and research questions will be explained further in chapter 2, section 2.6.

1.1. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Every training program offers different (job) opportunities and different explanations exist for why an individual or a group undergo trainings in the first place. They can range from the mere interest in the subjects/skills to the obligation of doing a training for a certain company. Of course, the effectiveness and impact of trainings also depend on a variety of factors ranging from the quality of the material that is being used during the classes to the teaching skills of the trainers and the coherent content of the program. In order to gain insight in the differences between the pre-departure and Hong Kong-based training programs implemented by the Philippine government and their impact on the lives of the Filipino Female Domestic Workers, the following three research objectives have been made:

- The first objective is to thoroughly describe and analyze two types of training programs that are currently being offered to the Filipino Migrant workers. It is important to look at both trainings separately and to analyze the conditions, benefits and possible disadvantages/

challenges of these training programs since they can have a strong impact on the lives of the women, on both a short and a long term. In short, the objective was: clarifying why and how the women are being trained.

- Second, the intention is to compare the two training programs in order to see which one is most useful to the FDWs and why. The pre-departure training program (which is mandatory) and the “Hong Kong-based” training programs (which are optional) are fundamentally different- as will be shown later on- especially in terms of the skills they seek to develop and teach. Yet, they do not both necessarily reflect the needs of the women. The objective then was to find out what skills (i.e. which trainings) the women actually (could) need for, during and after their migration to Hong Kong.
- Finally, providing recommendations to improve the trainings and maximize their impact on those who are intended to benefit from it. By doing this, this paper hopes to increase awareness of the important issues and challenges of the training programs. Throughout this thesis different problems and areas of improvement will be presented and hopefully by doing this, actions will be taken in the future (by for instance migrant organizations or NGOs) to request or demand better training programs and conditions.

1.2. RELEVANCE OF THE RESEARCH

This work intends to be both academically and socially relevant.

As mentioned in the previous section one of the goals of this paper is to raise awareness, question the need of the two training programs and diffuse the opinion of the FDW about them. More precisely, this research hopes to be socially relevant on two different scales. First, on a small scale, for the Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants whose five-fold strategies are:

- 1. Advocacy and Campaigns for the defense and protection of migrant workers' rights;*
- 2. Migrant Organizing and Linkaging to strengthen the solidarity movement of migrants;*
- 3. Women's program to orient and organize women migrants;*
- 4. Mission and Network building for the enhancement of migrant workers upliftment and well-being;*
- 5. Education and Research for advocacy, information sharing/networking and resource development (APMM Website 2006)*

It is towards this last strategy that this research is aimed at and finds itself to be most useful. Obtaining updated information and statistics about domestic workers is essential to be able to properly help them and engage in campaigns defending them. As the last strategy explains: all research carried out should serve as the basis of any efforts done in the name of migrants such as advocacy and resource development.

Similarly, but then on a larger scale, this research very much intends to offer a concrete data about the circumstances in which domestic workers have migrated and have trained, which can serve the

other migrant organizations and the migrant community in general. Different organizations have shown interest in this project since only by propagating the reality of the migrants and communicating their difficulties and problems that further action can be taken.

This research of course also intends to be academically relevant since this is a topic that has not been researched in depth as of today. Indeed, limited information can be found on the pre-departure training programs and virtually no studies exist that closely look at the Hong-Kong based reintegration skill trainings. Further information about the academic relevance of this research can be found in the literature review and discussion sections.

1.3. FRAMEWORK OF THE RESEARCH

1.3.1. Regional Framework

This research takes place in Hong Kong which is today one of the richest cities in Asia and a center of world trade. “It is an international hub, whose social and cultural landscape is heterogeneous, hybrid, and transnational” (Constable 1999:203). Included in Hong Kong’s population of over 7 million inhabitants there are important ethnic minorities that have progressively settled down during the last four decades.

As previously mentioned, Hong Kong was and still is one of the most popular destinations for foreign domestic workers, also called ‘foreign domestic helpers’ or ‘housemaids’ who are employed by Hongkongers (typically families) for an initial period of two years. The latest census and immigration records reveal that domestic workers account for almost two-thirds of the city’s 370,000 non-Chinese population (Census and Statistics Department 2006). Statistics also show that they make up approximately 3% of the population of Hong Kong and an overwhelming majority of them are women (City University of Hong Kong 2011).

Hong Kong often seems to be run by Filipinos: they not only serve many households but also can be seen in many restaurants and hotels. Especially on Sundays it is striking to see how many Filipino FDWs occupy public spaces such as parks and squares. In particular outside the MTR Central Station (i.e. the main subway station) thousands of Filipinas, who have the day off, gather in order to meet with other helpers, to share food and drinks or simply to spend the afternoon together. There are also often public meetings arranged and other activities such as (music, dance, fashion) shows, protests and ceremonies. On Sundays Central could be nicknamed ‘Filipino town’ and even though the experience is enjoyed and probably beneficial for many Filipinas, the local government and Chinese population have a different and more critical opinion regarding it. During a brief interview with a Chinese guard who was in charge of safeguarding a luxurious shop and was preventing the Filipinas from leaning against the window glasses the following was said: “every Sunday Filipino women are everywhere around here...it is a problem you know”.

Perhaps the most powerful image during a walk around Central on a Sunday is the contrasting sight of the modest Filipino women with limited access to commodities (“working as slaves”⁴) and the imposing luxurious capitalistic landscape marked with gigantic stores such as Prada, Gucci, Dolce and Gabanna among others. Indeed, on a normal Sunday images such as these are fairly common:

Picture 1: Collection of common scenes of Filipino migrant workers in Central on a Sunday, typically gathering/socializing in front of luxurious shops (Cartier, Armani, Prada and Chopard). (Source: pictures taken by author).



According to the domestic helpers themselves “Hong Kong is a beautiful place [with] different nationalities[...] We see lots of beautiful and fantastic work of expert hands here that tend to conquer our minds and our hearts. Sometimes because of this, we develop the desire of not leaving...” (Precy Cayog 1996:22 as cited by Constable 1999:212). Hong Kong is often regarded as a second home by Filipino Migrants and over the years many women find it hard to leave Hong Kong since they have made friends and have integrated into the migrant community that has supported them throughout their stay.

⁴ “We are workers, not slaves” is one of the main messages of Filipinas and other migrants during protests organized by migrant organizations.

1.3.2. Host Organization

The study is conducted with the support and close collaboration of the Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants (APMM), a regional NGO whose mission is “to support the migrants’ movement through advocacy, organizing, and building linkages for the advancement of migrants’ rights” (APMM Website 2006). The organization was initially called Asia Pacific Mission for Migrant Filipinos which was established in 1984 but it acquired its current name in March 2002. APMM functions on the basis of donations from churches and groups (at the local but also the regional and international level), migrant communities, service institutions and concerned individuals.

The APMM staff and their collaborators were of course an important source of information but they also work with different migrant organizations which made it easier to get in touch with domestic workers. Through these different organizations they were then asked to participate in the survey questionnaire or in the focus group discussions. The APMM team also contributed to this research by giving criticism on the research process and giving tips on how to change the research design and on the methodological aspects for the intended type of research.

1.3.3. The Research Process

The fieldwork for this research was carried out between February and May of 2011 in Hong Kong, China. To start, a situational analysis was made of Hong Kong to gain insight into the characteristics of the main migration flows affecting it. Also, basic information and statistics were gathered about the Filipino Domestic Workers before, during and after their migration to Hong Kong. At the same time government institutions, training centers and different migrant organizations were consulted and contacted. They were informed about the research that is taking place and were asked for their cooperation/collaboration.

After this, a pilot study was organized for the purpose of composing a good survey. Questions were asked to and advices were taken from those migrant women who participated in this pilot study. The final version of survey was then distributed to the population of interest: those FDWs who have done the TESDA household training program after 2007. This survey was intended to be a tool for gathering information and opinions specifically on the pre-departure training programs.

Once the target of a 100 was reached, focus group discussions were organized in order to gather information about the non-mandatory Hong Kong-based training programs⁵. These FGDs effectively gathered in-depth information about this topic on which very little research can be found. They also were also an occasion to discuss the findings from the survey questionnaire and to clear several doubts and questions that came along during the research.

⁵ The choice of having a survey questionnaire and focus group discussions for the collection of data on the pre-departure and Hong-Hong based training programs respectively will be explained later on (see Page 32-35).

Finally, semi-structured interviews were organized at different moments with key figures and experts. Ideally all the relevant government officials from the Consulate of the Philippines in Hong Kong should have been interviewed; in reality the government's bureaucracy and busy schedule made it difficult to schedule and organize interviews with all experts. Nevertheless two government officials were interviewed and frequently consulted.

At the end of May 2011 a preliminary internship report was handed to the Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants containing the most important results of the research. Afterwards, another version was handed in and signed by the host organization in question. The final internship report was used as the basis of this thesis whose final version was presented in Utrecht in August 2011.

1.4. *STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS*

The thesis consists of eleven chapters. After this introductory chapter 1 the key concepts and theories are discussed in chapter 2, which provides the theoretical basis for this research. An overview of the literature about the migration-development nexus, the Asian migration, the information about domestic workers in Hong Kong and the studies about Filipino Domestic Workers will be given followed by a discussion linking the sub-questions of the research to the reviewed literature. The chapter concludes with explaining the conceptual of this research and the main arguments behind it. In chapter 3 there will be more clarity on the methodology of the research, the different research methods that were used to gain sufficient information and to collect the needed empirical data to answer the formulated research questions. Chapter 4 will uncover the beginning of the migration process and explain why the women migrate (and have to take the pre-departure training program in the first place). Chapter 5 and 6 will describe, analyze and critically look at these pre-departure household trainings. Chapter 7 and 8 will do the same for the Hong-Kong based vocational skill trainings. In chapter 9 will look first look at the long-term effects of the Filipino migration to Hong Kong and then look at how the training programs affect the skill development of the women. Chapter 10 will recap the most important recommendations to improve the training programs. Finally, the conclusion in chapter 11 will answer the main question of this research project.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter will give an overview of the past and current literature that can be found and is related to the topic of this research. First section 2.1 will examine the big and controversial migration-development nexus and explain its relevance to the topic of this paper; second, section 2.2 will give an overview of the written literature on the migration within the Asian continent which is generally of a very specific type. Section 2.3. will look at the information that is available on Domestic Workers in Hong Kong. Finally, section 2.4 will give an overview of the data can be found on the Filipino domestic workers and will partially discuss the recently implemented government training programs. Later on a discussion will follow that links the literature review to this thesis. The last section of this chapter will present the conceptual model containing the main arguments of the thesis.

2.1. THE MIGRATION-DEVELOPMENT NEXUS

Researchers across disciplines have been interested in defining, determining and studying the relationship between migration and development. In both academic and public discourses these two terms were not explicitly linked to each other until the 1960s. From this period onwards three trends or “phases” in migration policy and literature can be identified according to Faist (2009:41-43). The general trend is that policy makers and analysts have initially looked at remittances and return migration as a way of transferring resources across borders, while nowadays there is more and more discussion around the terms ‘network society’, ‘world society’ or ‘globalization’ covering a period of ever increasing circulation. Even more recently, there have been debates on the view of migration as a vector of self-development for migrants hence directly (and indirectly) benefiting them.

For a long time geographers in particular have been occupied with addressing the spatialities of migrants at a variety of scales. Nowadays however the topic of migration seems to be of growing interest not only among scholars but more generally among politicians and international organizations (Faist 2009:38; Delgado Wise and Covarrubias 2009). Migration has always mattered but today it matters more than ever before due to its growing scale and its widening global reach⁶. Indeed, there is little disagreement among scholars that with globalization the world has become smaller and more interconnected (Giddens 1990, Waters 1995) and that there is an increase of flows (Castells 1996 and 2000). Together with capital, financial, cultural, ideological flows among others, there has also been an increase in human flows. In general, there seems to be a consent among scholars and researchers that the traditional causes of migration have been accentuated by new factors directly related to globalization, such as the “revolution of the modes of transport, the growth of transnational communities or the evolution of information technology” (Chetail 2008:183; see also

⁶ If an international migrant is defined as a person who stays outside his usual country of residence for at least one year, it is possible to say that the total international migrants has more than doubled in just 25 years to approximately 200 million migrants worldwide (Koser 2009:148). Hence roughly 1 in every 35 people in the world today is an international migrant.

UNHCR 1995). Some scholars have argued that globalization has fostered migration movements creating strong “push” and “pull” factors. According to Ignacio and Mejia for instance the lack of opportunities for full employment and decent work in many developing countries has pushed millions of individuals to cross borders in hope for a better living. At the same time, other countries (mainly located in the North) experience shortages of workers in various sectors of their economies creating a demand for labor from abroad (2008:6).

As briefly mentioned before, based on Faist’s work three phases can be identified regarding the migration-development nexus since the 1960s. A small summary of the three phases will be now be presented after which a discussion will follow.

In short, the first phase is what Faist called “Migration and Development-Remittances and Return” in which public policy focused on the ‘labor gaps’ in the First World and ‘development’ in the Third World. Around the 1960s the thought was that development was supposed to result from financial remittances, return migration, and the subsequent transfer of human capital (Kindleberger 1967). In line with the principles of modernization it was believed that the emigration of surplus labor from underdeveloped areas leads to a new equilibrium between capital and labor (see Lewis 1954). If labor goes to the developed countries, labor scarcities in the South should then create an inflow of capital and, ultimately, economic development in the South (see for instance Hamilton and Whaley 1984).

The second phase, between the 1970s and the 1980s, is the “Underdevelopment and Migration-Poverty and Brain Drain” in which the concept of ‘development’ was more or less replaced by ‘dependency’ as a “structural condition of the periphery dominated by a center, and ‘underdevelopment’ was seen as its inevitable result” (Faist 2009:41). The *dependencia* movement is widely regarded as a criticism to the modernization theory, also on the topic of migration theory since the dependency scholars did not see migration causing development but advocated that there was a causal link from underdevelopment to migration (see Portes and Walton 1981). Also, rather than focusing on financial remittances, the main focus was brain drain. According to Faist “[i]n a dependency perspective, underdevelopment led to the loss of highly skilled workers, who migrated from the periphery to the centers in the dependent world and, above all, into industrialized countries. This outmigration, in turn, was thought to contribute to even more underdevelopment and increased migration” (2009:42).

Phase three, “Migration and Co-development-the Celebration of Circulation” started in the 1990s and is considered to still exist nowadays. Co-development connotes a reversal of the nexus and implies a more optimistic view, similar to the one reigning in the 1960s. In this line of thought, international migration is supposed to stimulate development in the South, this time not only via economic remittances and human capital, but also via knowledge flows more generally and social remittances (Maimbo and Ratha 2005). In other words, “[Migration] is no longer simply seen as a failure of development but increasingly as an integral part of the whole process of development with a potentially important role to play in the alleviation of poverty”(Chetail 2008:199). This means, concretely that Migration is no longer seen as a problem, but as a tool for development.

Arguably, besides these three stages analyzed by Faist a fourth stage, in which there is a special focus on migration and self-development, can be identified. In terms of time this stage can approximately be located on a parallel with the last stage. Perhaps this “Migration and Self-development” stage can be placed within the ‘co-development’ phase since this term often makes reference to the idea of self-development (in other words, development but then for migrants themselves). According to Delgado Wise and Covarrubias, the view that migration can be seen as a way of ‘co-developing’ (based on migrants’ potential development contributions to their home countries with the support of the developed nations) has influenced the policies of some countries, namely countries in the EU but it is also a fact that many of these policies have a direct (positive) impact on the lives (and personal development) of migrants themselves. Indeed as these two scholars explain co-development seeks to:

“(1) promote productive activities through remittances; (2) *educate migrants* and encourage their return to their places of origin; (3) *involve migrants in cooperation projects*; (4) *educate and guide potential emigrants in places of origin*; (5) promote the creation of bridges between communities of origin in the South and those who have emigrated to the North; (6) foster interaction between national governments, local civic and business organizations, universities, educational and cultural centers, and migrants; and (7) *improve the living and working conditions of migrants*” (2009:91, emphasis added).

From this citation it seems that the idea of co-development can imply a win-win-win situation for not only the developed country, the developing country but also the migrants themselves. By for instance involving migrants in cooperation projects and educating them, migrants can acquire new knowledge and new skills and thus engage in a self-development process.

This is an interesting observation since this means that individuals that have migrated are able to now only (economically) support their families that they leave behind, but are also able to ‘help themselves’ in the sense that migration, can develop their abilities and skills that they can potentially use in their country of origin and or their own benefit in general. Generally it is considered that self-development is particularly important for women since they are most affected by poverty. Migration offers women the hope of escaping poverty and greater access to opportunities than in their often more patriarchal communities of origin (see Maseno and Kilonzo 2011:45).

Even though it is possible to go further into the available literature that analyzes the relation between migration and self-development, the most important point is that even though a lot of literature exists on the topic there are few studies analyzing concrete/specific migrations occurring in today’s world and studying their impact on the (self)development of migrants. For instance there is no study as of yet that addresses the question of whether the migration of Filipino Household Helpers to countries like Hong Kong is a source of self-development for migrants. Dozens of studies emphasize the importance of remittances for the development of the Philippines, often underlining the fact that “The Philippines is one of the only five countries worldwide that receive more than 10 billion dollars

in remittances annually” (Burgess and Haksar 2005; FRB bank study by Carroll 2008:1, Adriano 2009), yet there has much less been a focus on the migrants themselves. Can the Filipinas self-develop while working as full-time domestic workers abroad? Do the Filipinas that migrate to Hong Kong acquire skills at all? If yes, to what extent are these skills beneficial for them (i.e. to what extent do they allow the women to self-develop/grow)? Are the skills that migrants acquire through their migration as useful for them in the receiving countries as in the sending countries? Are the skills they acquire a short term or a long term solution for a better life? This research will attempt to give an answer to some of these general questions through a study of the specific, but significant, migration of FDWs to Hong Kong.

2.2. THE ASIAN MIGRATION

“Asia is one of the world’s greatest suppliers of female international migrants who become domestic workers, not only elsewhere in other Asian countries but other regions especially the Middle East and Europe” (Hugo 2005:18).

As briefly mentioned before, one particularly visible and important global trend in migration is that women’s representation among migrants has increased rapidly, starting in the 1960s and accelerating in the 1990s. In 2005, almost half the world’s economic migrants in 2005 were women (Koser 2009:149; Kunz 2008:1395). Different explanations exist that explain the proportional increase of women migrants. One explanation is that the global demand for foreign labor, especially in more developed countries, is becoming more and more gender-selective. In other words “more jobs are available in the fields typically staffed by women- services, health care, and entertainment”(see Kunz 2009:149). Contributing an insightful theoretical framework on the position of women in the global economy, Sassen (1984, 1988) establishes that globalization not only demands the low-wage labor of Third World women in export processing zones of developing countries but also in secondary tiers of manufacturing and service sectors in advanced, capitalist countries. Another explanation, specifically applicable to the context of Asia is that there has been increase in migration of women for domestic work (also referred to as “maid trade”); in organized migration for marriage (in which women are sometimes called “mail-order brides”); and in the trafficking of women, above all into the sex industry (*idem.*). Certainly, nowadays many Asian nations with a surplus of labor are a major global source of contract migrant workers who secure jobs in another country for a limited period, usually around two years.

Another interesting observation is that while women have traditionally migrated to join their partners, an increasing proportion migrates today independently (Koser 2009:149; Wickramasekara 2000). In fact, they are often primary breadwinners for families that they leave behind even though they often have a low-wage job such as domestic work. Hong Kong (China) and Singapore represent the most important destinations of domestic workers in Asia. A sizeable number migrate to the

Middle East, especially Saudi Arabia and Kuwait as well. Entertainers also represent an important group of women migrants, mostly going to Japan. These migrants come mostly from the Philippines and from Indonesia. In other countries like Bangladesh cultural factors have led to women not being permitted to be recruited as labor migrants.

It is thus important to keep in mind that Asian countries vary in the extent to which women are represented in labor migration (Hugo 2005:18). However, as mentioned in the next section, in almost all cases women migrants are one of the most vulnerable groups in all countries (Wickramasekara 2000:16).

Furthermore, a clear distinction needs to be made between skilled and unskilled/low-skilled migration of women. These two types of motilities are different not only with respect to the characteristics of the migrants, but also in terms of the circumstances, destination, nature and experience of the migration (Hugo 2005:17). There is some overlap however in the cases in which some (moderately) high-skilled migrants accept an unskilled occupation in order to migrate and earn money. As will be elaborated later on, there are indeed thousands of Indonesian and Filipino women who have a tertiary level education but become domestic workers overseas, in cities such as Hong Kong and become international labor migrants (see also Battistella 1995).

Again, an extensive review of the feminization of migration in Asia can be made but will be avoided since it is only one of the many topics in which this study can be placed. What should be stressed here is that there are once again there some loopholes in the existing research about migrant women in Asia. Indeed, it seems to be that despite the increasing interest in migrant women, there is still research lacking in many domains (Hugo 2005:1). In particular there is not a very large interest in the lives of the migrants once they have returned home (after a cyclical migration). In the case of Filipino domestic workers that work in Hong Kong and go back to the Philippines after a number of years there are only a couple of studies that evaluate the (lack of) efforts of the government to welcome their women home (Parreñas 2001, Yang 2004, Ochi 2005). But what awaits the Filipinas that have been away for a long time? Will they remain in the Philippines or go back?

There also seems to be very little research has been conducted on the gender dimension of remittances (Kunz 2008:1396). According to Kunz the development potential of remittances can be increased by looking at remittances from a gender perspective. This research will not particularly deal with remittances but will solely deal with women. Even though there are also many male domestic workers (mainly working as drivers etc.) they fall outside the scope of this paper. It intends to uphold a gender dimension.

2.3. DOMESTIC WORKERS IN HONG KONG

There have been numerous researches studying foreign domestic workers (FDWs) and their impact of on the Hong Kong society. It is considered that the intensity of the phenomenon of domestic workers in Hong Kong is relatively new (see Chan 2005:512 for an explanation). According to

Hakim (2000) the need for paid domestic workers generally depends on factors such as demand for female labor, female educational attainment and changes in social norms regarding gender roles. However, while some early modernization theories have predicted that society's demand for paid domestic workers will decrease with modernization (Coser 1973), others argue that it is a society's level of income inequality rather than level of modernization that determines the size of its paid domestic work force (Milkman, Reese, & Roth 1998). Chan's research (2005) analyzed the impact of foreign domestic workers on parental roles and family dynamics of Hong Kong's and found that the increase in married women's labor force participation in Hong Kong has led to a greater demand for childcare, which has been filled by FDWs. Similarly, also other scholars have argued that the growing number of FDWs and the rise in women's educational attainment have played an important role in enabling more married women in Hong Kong to enter paid work (see Suen 1994).

Most of the FDWs in Hong Kong are "young women, 16-34 years old, among whom a large percentage are married, with children and relatives for dependents" (Women's International Network News 1992). They usually live in their employer's residence and are involved in the five broadly defined categories of 'domestic duties': household chores, cooking, baby-sitting, child-minding and looking after aged persons in the household (Hong Kong Immigration Department October 2010). In reality most FDWs are responsible for multiple tasks, and over 80% of households employing these workers consist of either elderly people aged over 65 or children under 12, 10% of which consist of both (Hong Kong Census & Statistics Department, 1987, 1991, 1996, 2001 as cited by Chan 2005).

The education level of the women arriving to Hong Kong has also often been measured and analyzed (see for instance Ignacio and Mejia 2008:19). The general trend is that Indonesian domestic helpers are young (in their 20s), are not highly educated and are uninformed about their legal rights (Adelman 2004). Filipinos on the other hand are usually older, have a higher education level (many are college graduates) but "were unable to find work at home in the fields for which they were trained" (Chang and Ling: 2009:38). They are generally also well informed of their rights and speak good English. Remarkably, many Chinese employers seem to now be favoring Indonesian workers who speak Cantonese since are more "docile" and "more willing to work without the statutory weekly 24-hour rest day" (Ignacio and Mejia 2008:19).

The proportion of Hong Kong households employing FDWs has more than tripled from 3.6% in 1987 to 10% in 2000⁷ (Hong Kong Census & Statistics Department 2001 as cited by Chan 2005:). FDWs were first brought to Hong Kong by expatriates who moved from nearby Southeast Asian countries during the early 1980s. Entrepreneurs rapidly identified a market niche and started importing FDWs into Hong Kong systematically. In March 2001, there were around 230 thousand FDWs in Hong Kong, of whom nearly 70% were from the Philippines, followed by those from Indonesia and Thailand (Director of Immigration 2001 as cited by Chan 2005). Historically, Filipinos

⁷ Households employing FDWs are predominantly small nuclear families with above average incomes. In 2000, 32% of all households with a monthly income of over HKD50,000 (around USD 6,410) employ at least one FDW (Hong Kong Census & Statistics Department 2001).

have been the largest group of foreign domestic helpers in Hong Kong however since the Asian financial crisis of the late 1990s they have seen their dominance reduced by the growing number of Indonesian domestic workers (see table 2). According to Ignacio and Mejia “[t]his recent turn in FDH trends reflects both a growing preference for Indonesian maids and the creation of stiff competition within Hong Kong’s domestic helper market”(2008:11).

Table 2: Population trends of foreign domestic workers in Hong Kong

Year	The Philippines	Indonesia	Thailand	Others	Total
2002	148,400	78,100	6,700	3,900	237,100
2003	126,600	81,000	5,500	3,800	216,900
2004	119,700	90,000	4,900	3,800	218,400
2005	118,000	96,900	4,500	3,800	223,200
2006	120,800	104,100	4,300	3,600	232,800
2007	123,500	114,400	4,100	3,500	245,500

Source: taken from Ignacio and Mejia 2008

Even though Hong Kong is often regarded as being a place where decent work is found, a place where enough money can be earned and a place where riches generally accumulate. FDWs often see as the opposite of the Philippines, which is one of the poorest countries in Asia. Nevertheless, Hong Kong’s image as a land of opportunity has been challenged by the numerous accounts that have put a spotlight on the great difficulties and human suffering of countless migrants. Indeed, the difficult situations faced by domestic workers are well known and there are many studies written on how to address these different problems (see for instance Wickramasekara, 1995; Gulati 1993). Since these women are restricted to their employers private homes they often work long hours for low pay and are quite often subject to abuse and exploitation. Chang and Ling (2009:39) and Heyzer (1989:1116) claim that “authorities in both Singapore and Hong Kong restrict Filipinas from changing employers, type of employment and even having the right to terminate their jobs for two years”. On top of this, “confiscation of passports is a common practice. Sexual harassment is a common complaint by domestic workers. They enjoy hardly any protection and the national laws invariably favour employers”. These abuses are common even in Singapore and Hong Kong which are generally considered having better labor administration systems (Asian Migrant Centre 1999 as cited by Wickramasekara 2005:18).

Still, despite the presence of these problems it is generally considered that compared to other receiving countries of FDWs, Hong Kong’s policy regarding these workers is rather comprehensive and benevolent (see for instance Cheng 1996; Chin 1998). Women who go to Hong Kong to work as maids are entitled to a minimum wage which on the 25th of August of 2010 was \$3,580 per month

(Hong Kong Immigration Department Website 2010) and these women are protected under the Employment Ordinance and the Standard Contract for the Employment of a Foreign Domestic Helper. Even then, foreign domestic helpers and their supporters (including NGOs, activists and employers) often stage protests about what they view as discriminatory treatment by the Hong Kong government. The most important protests that take place in Central indeed concern discrimination, the restrictively low minimum wage, and the two-week stay limit at the end of their employment contracts.

Even though the information that can be found on Filipino Household Workers in Hong Kong is highly important there are some issues that have received more attention from scholars than others. While the migration procedures and requirements to migrate to Hong Kong have often been analyzed and subject of criticisms (cf. ILO study by N.J. Sayres) there very few academics have been interested in studying the opportunities that Hong Kong offers, particularly in terms of educating or training the women. Similarly, the working conditions have been the subject of numerous studies yet there are virtually no studies analyzing the conditions of the trainings that are offered to FDWs both before their departure to Hong Kong and in Hong Kong.

Also, the different abuses endured by Filipinas during their stay in Hong Kong have been frequently reported. However, the abuses that they face outside of Hong Kong, or right before their arrival, have been much less researched. Indeed, what is the situation in the case of the mandatory household training? The reason why it is important to look at potential abuses during these trainings is because the women are often placed in collective temporary housing, far away from their family, which means that they are in a particularly position (as mentioned above).

2.4. *FILIPINO DOMESTIC HELPERS*

Filipino (Foreign) Domestic Workers (or Helpers) are almost unquestionably the most researched domestic workers in Asia, probably due to the significant numbers of migrating workers (there is however probably also a practical explanation to this: nearly all Filipinos are proficient in English which makes it easy to research them; perhaps not coincidentally Indonesian workers are much less researched and Thais even less so). Regardless of this fact, Filipino Domestic workers are one type of low-wage service workers who have successfully met the rising demand for cheap labor in the global cities of Asia and Europe and, to a lesser extent, the United States (Parreñas 2000:563). It is estimated that migrant Filipina women are employed as domestic workers in more than 130 countries (Tyner 1999). According to a study written by Sayres from the ILO “For Filipino domestic helpers, the benefits of overseas employment include higher salaries than those in the Philippines, enhanced social status as an OFW, and, in particular for female OFWs, a greater degree of independence” (page 9).

While in current literature some scholars chose to focus on the impact of the migration on the women’s families back in the Philippines (see for instance Parreñas 2001) and on the international

division of reproductive labor (Parreñas 2000) other scholars have decided to focus more on the changes of the Filipino migration. According to Rosca for instance about three decades ago they worked as “medical workers, secretaries, clerks, and teachers [but] then eventually as domestic help and sex workers” (1995:526) and while they mostly used to migrate to the Middle East especially at the end of the 1980s, the movement shifted to East Asia and among others to Hong Kong (Heyzer 1989:1116).

An important fact is that the Philippines is increasingly dependent on remittances. Indeed, remittances reached 9% of the gross national product and occupy 20% of the total export in the Philippines (Albada 2004). Due to this dependency it is probably not surprising that the government of the Philippines increasingly started promoting migration. Indeed President Corazon Aquino- during her period in office from 1986 to 1992- promoted overseas workers as part of a national development strategy and several times referred to these female domestic workers as the “modern-day heroes” of the nation. Later on President Fidel Ramos also referred to Filipina migrant workers as “a vital export commodity (for) the Philippines’ own economic strategy” (Rosca 1995:524). According to Parreñas (2001) representing the women in this fashion would facilitate the nation-building project of the Philippines to enter the global market economy as an export-oriented economy. To be sure, promoting such a positive image of migrant workers as ‘heroes’ does promote the process of emigration but is also a rather provoking thing to say since many migrant women have asked themselves “why are we called 'heroes' when we are slaves in other countries?” (Plandano 1995: 60 as quoted by Parreñas 2001).

Partially due to the fact that Domestic Workers have become vital to the Philippine’s economy, the government has made several attempts to protect overseas contract workers by supervising their placement through official contracts with receiving states (in Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and the Americas). This is also manifested in the creation of several government institutions such as the OWWA (which is in charge of providing different types of services to migrants in their country of destination such as free legal assistance and counseling, help with repatriation, insurance coverage and has loan programs for housing and small business enterprises- Stasiulis and Bakan 1997). Nevertheless, according to Perrenas (2001) “its lack of power to override the laws and jurisdiction of receiving nations mars the assistance that OWWA can offer. The labor conditions established by POEA, such as salary rates and days off, similarly lose bearing with the loss of jurisdiction upon migration”. Later on in this paper there will be a discussion on how these organizations play a role in the training of these women.

Another more recent way in which the Philippine government has attempted to give assistance to female domestic workers is through different training programs. Just like in several other countries, in the Philippines women who want to work abroad need to register with (private) recruiting agencies that offer training programs to these women are affiliated with/certified by the government. These pre-training programs are mandatory since 2007 (in the sense that aspiring domestic workers are not allowed to migrate without them). The other type of training that is sponsored by the government are

the (optional) Hong-Kong based training given at the Bayanihan and the FWRC. More information about these two training programs will be given later on. What is important to remember is that these two types of training are relatively new and that very little information can be found about them. In particular the government-sponsored training programs in Hong Kong have virtually not been researched. It is therefore on this topic that this research hopes to be most academically relevant, useful and perhaps even revolutionary. Training programs can have extremely positive effects not only for those who take them but also for those surrounding them and for the society in general. The question however is: are the two training programs supported by the government actually useful, and if yes to what extent? For whom are they most profitable: for the government or for the women themselves? What options do the Filipinas have once they go back to the Philippines with (and without) the trainings? Will they go back to do doing low-skilled work or can they go back and start using the skills they acquired through their education? What are the effects do the training programs on their professional career? How can the training programs be improved? This paper will hopefully be first to give a tentative answer to these and other questions.

2.5. DISCUSSION

The previous paragraphs of this chapter provided important insights into the exiting literature that surrounds this research. A deliberate choice was made to cover literature from a large global scale to a very specific ‘Filipinas migrating to Hong Kong’ scale in order to show how this research is related to- and fits into- a variety of topics. Here will be stated how the literature is applicable to the central question and the sub-questions.

The central question is: *How do the pre-departure and Hong Kong-based training programs implemented by the Philippine government differ, and what is their impact on the lives of the Filipino Female Domestic Workers that have migrated to Hong Kong?*

From the introduction and the discussed relevant literature it appears that female migration, and more specifically the migration of the Filipino female Domestic Workers to Hong Kong (but also other places) has been increasing over the decades and with it the number of women who have undergone training programs offered by the government of the Philippines has steadily raised. While the living and work situations of FDWs have been subjects of interest for several scholars, there is again very little information about the different trainings implemented by sending countries and about whether (and how) they actually benefit the women. Filipino domestic workers are particularly interesting to research because they (still) represent the most important group of Female Domestic Workers in Hong Kong- even though the Indonesians are becoming more and more numerous. Also the skill training programs were only recently implemented on a large scale to Filipinas migrating abroad: 2007 was the year in which the pre-departure trainings became mandatory and approximately around the same time the Hong Kong vocational skill trainings received increasing attention from Filipino

decision makers. An impact assessment thus seems indispensable in a time where education and training are highly valued and determine the future of many workers and professionals.

The sub-questions of the research are:

1. *What are the goals of the government pre-departure and Hong Kong-based training programs offered to Filipino Domestic workers?*
2. *What are the training conditions of the two training programs?*
3. *To what extent are the two trainings necessary and useful for the Filipino Female Domestic Workers?*
4. *What are the long-term consequences of this migration on the skill development of the FDWs and how do the training programs (by either 'reskilling' or 'deskilling' them) change the lives of these women?*

The first question concerns the motivations of the Philippine government behind the implementation of the training programs. Even though some information (from official sources such as websites) can be found on this topic, it is important to go deeper in order to have a proper understanding of the targets that have been set for the trainings. This will later serve to determine to what extent the goals have been reached and facilitate the analysis of the impact of the training programs. Different interviews with both experts and beneficiaries of the programs will show that there are clearly different ideas on what the goals of the training are- and should be.

The answers to question 2 regarding the conditions of the training programs give a general overview of the circumstances under which the Filipinas receive the training. Even though many aspects can be considered, the main focus will be on the length, cost, content, materials and facilities.

Questions 1 and 2 will add information to the migration-development nexus (section 2.1) and to the situation of FDWs in Hong Kong (section 2.4).

When answering question 3 one has to consider of course the opinions of those who have undergone the programs but also the opinions of experts (such as directors of the training centers and heads of migrant organizations who have been familiar with the migration of Filipinas to Hong Kong since years or even decades). Obtaining first hand information is a key for a good evaluation of the training programs. This question will give crucial information about the *actual* usefulness of the training programs, meaning that a contrast will be made between the official stated goals and impact they have according to the women who take them. This question will mainly add literature to section 2.4 since it will show how effective the FDWs that migrate to Hong Kong benefit from the help given to them by the government.

Finally question 4 will show the impact of the training programs on the skill development of FDW. The trainings are intended to teach, 'professionalize' and facilitate the shift of skills that is necessary for their future vocation. However, besides the potential short term usefulness/impact of the training programs, they can have an important role in shaping their future professional career. In other words,

even if a certain training program is necessary and useful on a short term, it does not mean that it is useful on a medium to long term, especially if the women migrate (back) to a country where the new skills they acquired are not requested/useful. Training programs can thus have adverse effect (and leave the women ‘worse off’ on the long term); this is particularly true when the new skills they acquire are on a lower scale than those they already possessed. It is extremely interesting to see what doors the training programs open but also what doors are closed (or more difficult to keep open) once the training programs have been taken and a new career path begins. This question will thus add literature to section 2.1 about migration as self-development but can also sparkle some debates concerning the impact of the feminization of migration on the content of the two training programs (that are clearly directed towards a female audience).

2.6. CONCEPTUAL MODEL

As it is possible to see from Figure 1 and as was already explained this study will look at the migration of medium to highly skilled women from the Philippines to Hong Kong and back and particularly at the training programs they are being offered.

In the search for an answer to the central question and the sub-questions a conceptual model has been drafted. The main question is: ***How do the pre-departure and Hong Kong-based training programs implemented by the Philippine government differ, and what is their impact on the lives of the Filipino Female Domestic Workers that have migrated to Hong Kong?***

In order to adequately answer the question it is necessary to first understand *why* the training programs are taken and why they were implemented in the first place. As Figure 1 shows, it starts with a group of young (medium and highly) educated women who find themselves unemployed (or unemployed) shortly after graduating, a situation that triggers a desire to migrate.

The training programs are situated in between the two countries since they are and can be considered as ‘in-between’ steps that prepare the migrants for their arrival in either of the two countries in question. As should be obvious, the two training programs that are central to this study are the Pre-departure training and the Hong-Kong based training.

In order to know how these two training programs implemented by the Philippine government differ from one another various aspects will be considered. The most important ones are: the goals, the skills they develop, the cost, the length and the training conditions. The main differences are listed next to the training programs. As can be observed the two training programs seem to be fundamentally different in all of their aspects yet further information is needed and will be given in the following chapters.

In order to discover what the (long-term) impacts of the two training programs are, it is important to look at the outcomes of the trainings, especially on how they affect the skills of the women since this will be crucial in determining their (professional) future. The colored arrows show the ‘de-skilling’ and ‘re-skilling’ processes that take place (for a definition of these terms see page 71 or the Glossary). As will be argued later on, the pre-departure training definitively contributes to a ‘de-skilling’ of the FDWs to a very low-skilled job. Once in Hong Kong (and engaged in domestic work) the FDWs have two options: to take or not to take the Hong Kong based training programs. If they do, then this training can contribute to a re-skilling of women: their skills are being upgraded so that they can be self-employed. Should they however chose not to take the program then they are likely to find themselves trapped in a ‘de-skilling’ situation since the skills (and knowledge) they acquired during their tertiary education will have been outdated and uncompetitive by the time they return to their home country. It is important to know that this migration generally takes between 5 and 15 years meaning that finding medium to high skilled work will be even harder than before their migration since they have to compete with recently graduated skilled students.

The general idea is the odds of FDWs of returning to a situation of **unemployment** (and thus to perhaps migrate back to Hong Kong and restart the cycle) is smaller when they have taken a Hong-Kong based training since they can (or, to say the least they have the option to) become entrepreneurs and be self-employed.

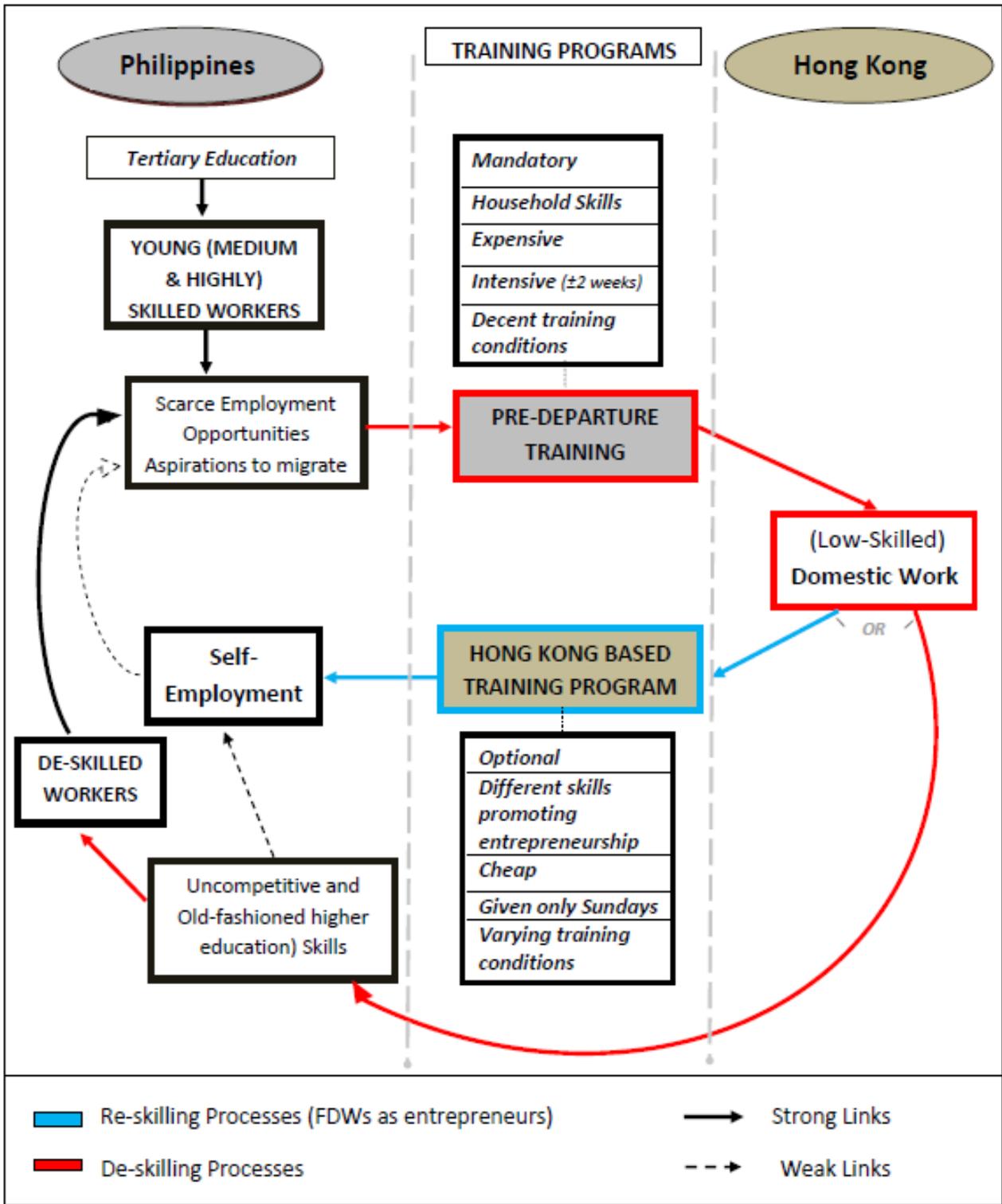


Figure 1. The Conceptual model

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. DATA COLLECTION

For this study diverse research methods were used in order to collect sufficient information and the necessary empirical data to give an answer to the research question presented in Chapter 1. The various research methods that were used will be explained here below.

3.1.1. The survey

A. Pilot Study

Since this is a new topic of research and previous similar surveys cannot be found, a draft survey questionnaire was composed and distributed to 8 individuals. They were initially asked to answer the questions after which they shared their opinion about them and a discussion followed about modifying them, changing the answers or adding questions. Also, the preliminary questionnaire was discussed with the APMM staff and with Maggi Leung, Professor at Utrecht University. With their help, the survey went from 21 to 38 questions.

B. The Survey questionnaire

After the pilot study, the final survey questionnaire was printed, distributed and used for this research with the intention to obtain information specifically about the pre-departure training programs (see Attachment I). Parts of it are based on a questionnaire made by Ignacio and Mejia (2008). The questionnaire attempted to obtain information about 5 different topics:

1. Basic background information of the participants (Section A of the questionnaire) mainly in order to be able to describe the sample and their education/work background before their Migration.
2. Whether the participant has undergone a government training program and the basic details of this program in the case of a positive answer (Section B).
3. The participant's view/opinion on the training program itself (Section C) in order to evaluate the value and effectiveness of these training programs in the eyes of the FDWs.
4. The participant's view/opinion on the training camp conditions (if applicable) and information about any problems/abuses (Section D)
5. Information about the current work conditions (Section E). To have a clearer picture of the situation and their future prospects in terms of leaving/staying in Hong Kong.

C. The Sample

For this study it would perhaps have been ideal to gather 10 percent or more of the total number of Filipino domestic workers as respondents to the survey (according to some quantitative statisticians). However, this was unfeasible in terms of the time and the budget available for this project.

Additionally, obtaining information from 10% is in a sense unrealistic because this would mean collecting surveys from around 14 000 women. Instead a much more realistic target for the survey questionnaire was set: a 100 surveys from women who have undergone a pre-departure training program after mid-2007.

In total 166 questionnaires were filled out from which 112 met the criteria above (i.e. experienced a pre-departure training after 2007). The random sample that was conducted inevitably gathered the data of women that participated in a training program before 2007, which already existed even though they were not mandatory. The participants were instructed to fill out the entire questionnaire only if they have done such a program and were told to only fill in the Section A (Basic Information) and E (information about current work) if they did not meet the criteria of the 2007 benchmark⁸. The 53 cases that did not meet the criteria were excluded from the study and only used for extra information about the working conditions of the FDWs in Hong Kong.

D. Sampling Method

It is important to point out that since most of the FDW's are not provided with regular days off. When they do have them, they use them to take care of their personal business. This means that answering a survey questionnaire for which they need to make displacements would be an extra burden for them. This research attempted to be as participant-friendly as possible and attempted to make sure that all participants had the time and the willingness to fill in the questionnaire. Three different ways of finding participants for the survey questionnaires were used:

1. Random Sampling through a walk around Central. On Sundays, around exit F of the Central MTR station (the most common destination for Filipino Domestic Workers on this day) a walk was made starting next to the Chater Garden (walking the road up towards Chater House) and random small groups of women were selected⁹. As any worthy researcher would do, I introduced myself and an explanation of the questionnaire and the project was given to them. Many of the women who were approached were surprised and even intimidated by this encounter (i.e. they avoided any eye contact with me, the researcher). The first time this walk was performed many declined to participate. From every 50 people (all in small groups) on average only about 7 agreed to respond. Initially attempts were made to reduce the intimidation I caused- probably due to the different ethnic background and the fact that I presented myself as a researcher wanting some of their free time- and to improve the response rate by trying to talk less fast, by casually conversing with them before, by sitting down with

⁸ The data of those who did fill in the questions concerning the training programs but did not meet the 2007 criteria was not used in this study.

⁹ Note: those groups of women who were either eating, playing or praying were not considered since asking them to participate would disturb their activities and would most likely have resulted in a negative answer. Once again, the researcher intended the questionnaire to disturb the FDWs as less as possible.

them on the floor etc¹⁰. Nevertheless this had little effect and many FDWs were still very reluctant to participate. On top of this, out of the 50 questionnaires that were collected during this first walk, only 11 met the criteria of having undergone a training program after 2007. At this rate the collecting of data was going to take too much time. Instead two other ways of collecting the data were also used;

Picture2: Example of a group of respondents answering the survey questionnaire in Chater Garden (picture taken by author 20/02/11)



2. Snowball effect. Many Migrant organizations were contacted, approached and were asked to contribute to the project by locating FDWs that have recently arrived to Hong Kong and have thus done the mandatory government pre-departure training program (after 2007). 70 questionnaires were filled using this method of data collection. And, finally;
3. Another Random Sample was conducted this time by leaving a stack of questionnaires at the Mission for Migrants (one of the largest migrant organizations). FDWs who arrived at the office (Located at St. John's Cathedral in Central) were asked to fill in this questionnaire if they wanted while they were waiting for their meeting with one of the Mission's personnel. Also some women who called the organization were asked to answer the questionnaires via telephone and the answers were written down by the staff. Around 40 questionnaires were filled-in this way.

The diversity in the sampling methods for the survey questionnaires was not only necessary (because limiting the sampling to only one method would have taken too much time) but also useful since it

¹⁰ Also incentives (chocolate candies) were used. Wrong? According to some researchers: yes. Nevertheless the incentives worked a little in the sense that unintentionally Filipino chocolate candies were bought and this made many women laugh and released some of the tension. Whether it actually increased the response rate is uncertain.

probably makes the data more representative (due to the presence of a random sample which covers 51 out of the 112 questionnaires). Only using a snowball sampling would have been the easier option yet was turned down for this same reason.

3.1.2. The Focus Groups

Focus group discussions were used to gather information specifically about the Filipino government training programs that take place here in Hong Kong. The reason why focus group discussions were preferred over survey questionnaires was because the percentage of women having participated in a training program here in Hong Kong is very small. Indeed, the recent implementation of these programs and the fact that they are not mandatory makes it very difficult to find FDWs that have taken these trainings by for instance conducting a random sample. Instead, a snow ball effect was used once again involving different migrant organizations to contact these women. In addition to this, group discussions were preferred since they allow for more accurate and in depth information on topics which have not properly been researched yet. The discussions took place in different cafés in Central since they provided a comfortable environment away from the noise and beverages could be offered to the women (see picture 3).

In total 4 focus group discussions (each with 5 FDWs) were carried out. Each focus group discussion lasted 1 hour and 15 minutes and even though several questions were asked, the women actively raised other issues and debated among each other about what was being said.

Picture 3: Example of a focus group discussion in a café in ‘Central’

(picture taken by author, 17/04/11)



3.1.3. The Interviews

Several interviews were conducted with different experts on the topic of the training programs and the conditions of the migration of the Filipino household helpers to Hong Kong and back. The interviews generally lasted around an hour and covered both training programs including the views and opinions on them.

The following individuals were interviewed:

- Leonida Romulo, Labor Attaché from the Consulate of the Philippines
- Necy Cataran, Welfare Officer from the Consulate of the Philippines
- Tess Ibañez Ubamos from the Bayanihan training Center
- Marilou U. Salero from the FWRC (Filipino Workers Resource Center)
- Tess Aquino from the Mission for Migrants
- Dolores Balladares-Pelaez from the United Filipinos in Hong Kong
- Irene Coles Pejil from the Komadrona migrant organization
- Chloe Belle, head of Las Filipinas Hong Kong- provider of independent training programs

3.1.4. Participatory observation

Finally, this research uses participatory observation as a source of data collection. Towards the end of the internship, mostly on Sundays, several two-hour visits were made to the two government-sponsored training centers: the Bayanihan and the FWRC. During the visit to the Bayanihan training center I observed but also modestly participated in the cooking training, the hairdressing training and the computer training. I saw and took pictures of the material, the diplomas and the infrastructure in which these training programs take place.

Some questions were asked not only to the trainers but also to the students while they were carrying out the training. The responses were interesting even though they mostly confirmed the points that the participants in the focus group discussion had already made.

3.2. LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

Some of the empirical challenges faced whilst conducting the research are in part inherent to most research in general. Acquiring knowledge about the situation through interviews- and also through survey questionnaires- has been the basis of most conclusions yet there is always uncertainty about the truthfulness of the answers provided by the participants/interviewees, questions about the representativeness of the sample chosen and doubts about the general angle of the research, which is determined by the questions that were chosen.

During the interviews and focus group discussions efforts were made to quantify the responses as much as possible, but motivations and aspirations of people are (as is often the case in social science research) difficult to express in numbers. However they do not necessarily need to be since for the purpose of drawing a (general) picture of the training programs there was a larger focus on the quality, rather than quantity of answers.

It was unfortunately not possible to get more information directly from the Consulate of the Philippines because interviews were difficult to obtain and one important interview with Labor Attaché Romulo Salud was cancelled and never rescheduled despite the numerous emails requesting this.

Contrarily to what was initially planned, it was not possible to obtain a large random sample because the response rate was very low and it would have taken too much time. A large random sample would have assured the representativeness of the sample, making the findings applicable to the rest of the Filipino female workers in Hong Kong. Instead, just under 50% of the collected questionnaires were randomly distributed. This means that the sample is not guaranteed to be representative of the population but at least to a rather decent extent the findings can be generalized.

The sample was initially intended to represent most of- if not all- the provinces of the Philippines. This was however not feasible for two reasons: first, there are 81 provinces in the Philippines and from the 112 respondents only 70 disclosed their province of origin. Hence, even in theory it would have been impossible to cover all provinces; second, when the snow-ball effect was used it was observed that many of the migrant groups and organizations were in fact organized by province. There is thus a risk that the results are not representative of all women of all provinces. In practice many provinces are probably not represented in the sample and certain provinces might be over-represented. For more details see page 49-50.

It was difficult to make sure the respondents actually answered all of the questions of the survey. This is because the participants were promised anonymity and the groups were instructed to pile up the filled-in questionnaires once they were done answering all questions. It was thus impossible to determine who had left some of the questions unanswered and ask them to complete them. In retrospect it would have been better to make sure that all surveys were properly answered, or that some sort of assistance was available in case the questions were not well understood, before they were handed back to the researcher, since occasionally some important answers were missing or lacked detail. In particular the age and the province of origin were not often provided (probably out of precaution to be traced).

Finally, it is important to point out some of the possible biases that might exist in this research. The staff from the Consulate seemed to be rather reluctant towards the project and its intentions. As typically all government officials do, the staff was careful with the information they disclosed during the interviews about the training programs and the employment opportunities in the Philippines.

Most of the answers to the questions ended in positive notes and might be biased- in particular because the organization APMM was rightfully mentioned as the collaborator of this project in the beginning of the interview which might have sparked additional reluctance since this organization has at different moments protested against the actions of this Consulate.

4. WHERE 'IT' ALL STARTS...

“There is no place for educated women in the Philippines and even if there is it is still better to migrate to Hong Kong or elsewhere...” (Tess Aquino, Interview 07/03/2011). Remarkably, almost every single person who was interviewed stressed the importance of unemployment (but also **underemployment**) in this debate and all other debates concerning Filipino Domestic Workers, many of them emphasizing it is the root cause of the migration and its many problems. In other words, unemployment is “where it all starts” (Dolores Balladares-Pelaez, Interview 12/May/2011). Knowing this, it would be unwise to engage in discussions about skill trainings without at least partially covering the context in which they were given, implemented and designed. Therefore this section will start from the beginning by describing the national context, studying the professional and educational backgrounds of these Filipino women and presenting the main reasons why they ‘chose’ to leave their families and work abroad for several years.

Two different sources of information seem to confirm the initial statements of this section:

A. Data survey questionnaire:

Part A of the survey questionnaire was meant to gather the basic educational and professional backgrounds of the women. This allows for a better understanding of the pre-migration situation of the women. Based on the answers the following results were drawn:

- Education Level

Constable many years ago made the observation that “Filipina domestic workers do not come from the poorest or least educated sector of the Philippine population. The vast majority have attained more than a high school education, and some belong to middle-class families” (1999). What Constable is stating here is still very much the case nowadays: the majority of women that participated both in the survey and in the focus group discussions had at least a college degree.

As the bar chart below (figure 2) clearly shows, around 63% of the participants is a College Graduate (which is similar to the 62% that Sayres found in the study of the ILO found) and around 5% has a Post-Graduate diploma. The categories “High School Graduate” and “Some College” both represent less than 20% of the sample. Only 1 case did not answer this question.

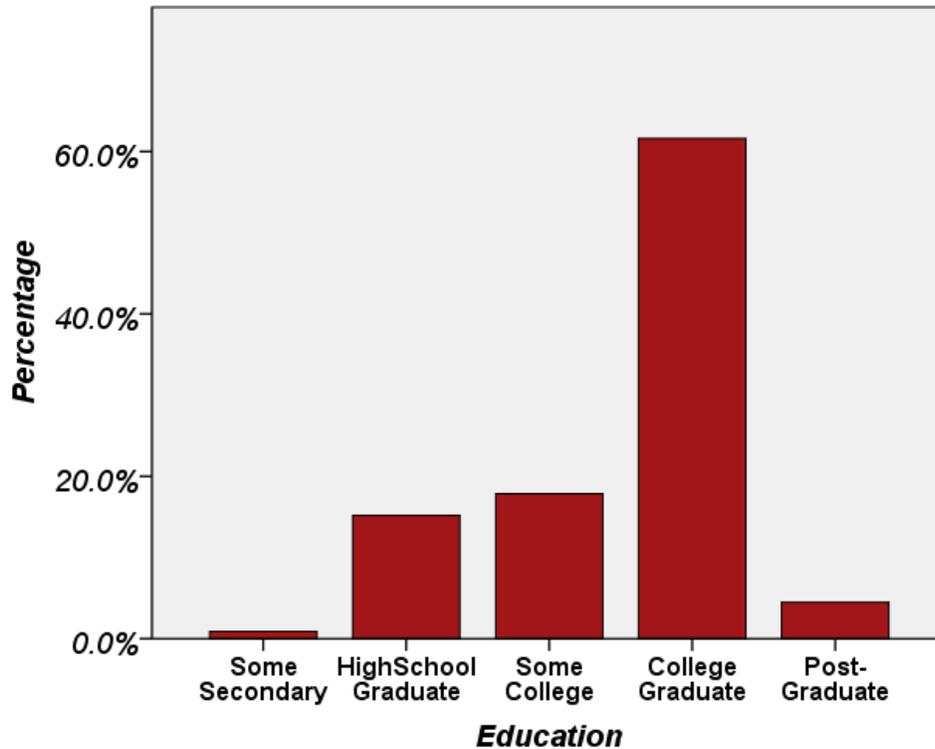


Figure 2: The education level of the participants

During the focus group discussions the question of the education level among FDWs was also tackled and out of the 20 women who participated in the focus group discussions, 2 had begun but not finished college, 14 had obtained a college diploma and 4 had a post/graduate diploma. When asked what the general situation was, the women confirmed that the large majority of the Filipino Migrants that arrive in Hong Kong have at least a college degree. The following question then naturally followed “why migrate to Hong Kong as a domestic worker if you have a valid college graduate diploma?”. To this question they unanimously answered that there are few unemployment opportunities for women in the Philippines, that if there are they are mostly low-skilled jobs with a low payment, and that in this case it is more profitable to migrate to Hong Kong and do a similar (or the same) job but then for a much higher salary. This problem is what the following section will discuss.

- Employment Status

The survey questionnaire showed that an almost equal percentage of women were employed full-time (47%) and unemployed (43%). Only around 10% of the women had a part time job. The high unemployment rate among these women is thus extremely high. Nevertheless, even more noteworthy is the low quality of the work of the women that were unemployed: among those who reported having a full-time or part-time job before their arrival in Hong Kong, 33% claimed they worked as Sales Persons (cashiers, sales helpers...), 16% had found Domestic Work, 14% had a job in a Factory, 12% did simple Office work (receptionist, secretary...) and less than 10% reported

having had a skilled job that matched or validated their diploma (manager, computer programmer, team coordinator at an IT company...).

In figure 3, the categories “nurses” and “teachers” were taken separately from “skilled jobs” (senior managers, engineers..) for two reasons: first, they regarded as medium-skilled jobs in the Philippines due to the high surplus of nurses and teachers to the point that the jobs have a low value. Indeed, in the Philippines, Teacher Education is the second most popular college program. Every school year, more than 400,000 college hopefuls aspire to become teachers (Ramota 2005). Second, because it was expected and observed that these two categories would be over-represented.

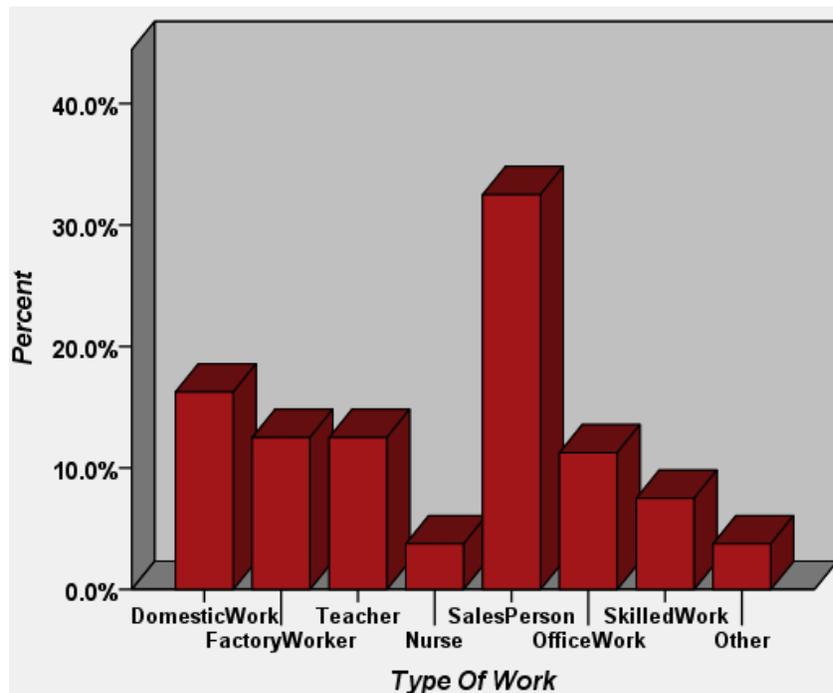


Figure 3: Type of work performed by Filipinas before Migration

Interestingly, the general picture of the employment situation among Filipino FDWs seems to have changed little over the years. Indeed Heyzer and Wee in 1994 wrote that “In Hong Kong, although some respondents were employed as domestic helpers, prior to deployment, many had worked in clerical, teaching, or nursing professions”. These four categories are indeed still very prominent nowadays even though the category ‘sales person’ seems to be the most dominating one of all.

B. Current available data and statistics:

Available statistics also seem to confirm that the Filipino women who end up migrating to Hong Kong and to other places have a rather high education level and that both unemployment and

underemployment are major incentives for women to migrate abroad to find a job that at least pays better. The rather high education level of the female Filipino migrants has often been observed and documented. Indeed, as Machado (2003) rightfully points out: “[a]lthough domestic workers generally have low education levels, some domestic workers who have migrated to other countries from countries such as the Philippines or from Eastern Europe often have medium or even high levels of education”. Also, a study performed by the Mission for Migrants in 2007 confirms- just like Heyzer and Wee did in 1994- that the Filipino domestic workers based Hong Kong have greatly invested their education and that “An astonishing 73% of domestic workers have a college education or higher” (MFMW Report 2007). Many were trained as nurses, teachers, engineers and accountants.

Nevertheless, regardless of their numerous material and immaterial investments in their education, many Filipinos often do not see the fruit of it since they often have difficulties finding a job in their own country. Indeed, “the Philippines [still] has one of the highest unemployment level in Southeast Asia” (Filipino Global Community 2009) even though the unemployment rate has decreased over the last decade, from 10.20% in 2003 to 7.50% in 2010 (Index Mundi 2011).

Unemployment is particularly high for the youth. Indeed, both Montalvo and the Website of Trade Union Congress of the Philippines point out that almost half of all unemployed workers in the Philippines belong to the 15-25 years bracket. A study by the ILO study 2009 goes as far as saying that the youth comprises nearly two-thirds of the total unemployed. In real terms, the number of young unemployed went from 1.28 million in 1988 (and almost doubled) to 2.4 million in 2006. Interestingly young workers who are college graduates have the highest unemployment rate (over 26 percent) and general skepticism among young workers over finding a job is significant: 44 percent (Montalvo 2004).

Returning to the findings of the survey questionnaire, the findings showed that most of the migrants were rather young. From the 112 women, 100 disclosed their age (the rest did not do so because they probably did not see the question or wanted to remain as anonymous as possible), the age varies between 24 and 47 years old, the median is 30 and the mean is 31.5 years approximately. This is rather similar to the study conducted in 2004 by the ILO which situated the age of the Filipino Domestic Worker between 25 and 34, the average being around 33 years old.

Unemployment is indeed also very high for women according to current information and statistics. Indeed, “The problem [of unemployment] is particularly important for women, which is important [to note] since they have a higher educational level than men” (Montalvo 2004). In many cases the jobs that the women find are low-skilled and underpaid. Indeed, as a study by the ILO confirms: even though “more women are working than ever before, [...] they are also more likely than men to get low-productivity, low-paid and vulnerable jobs” (Pinoy Press 2008). This means that underemployment is also an important problem in the Philippines. Statistically this is true for 19.6% (thus 1/5th) of the population according to the Filipino National Statistical Board (2011). In the case young men, there are often jobs in agricultural sector where they typically find work

according to the crop seasons. Young women who find jobs are mostly in services, “particularly in sales and basic occupations, many of which are in the informal sector and which include the street hawkers, peddlers, as well as the small service providers such as beauticians, laundrywomen and domestic helpers” (ILO Study by Canlas and Pardalis 2009). These jobs are at the bottom of the employment ladder, especially in terms of remuneration, but also in terms of access to legal protection and social security.

A rational decision would then be to attempt to find a job elsewhere, where they can at least get a better pay. Ramota (2009) correctly tells the story: “The worsening employment scenario, stagnant salary and other economic woes” are pushing Filipinos to leave their countries and find opportunities far away. This is thus why they migrate to Hong Kong. As one woman in a focus group discussion confirmed: “I was young and I was a qualified teacher and for almost two years I tried to find a good job. I worked some time as a sales lady, later I found a part-time job as a pre-school teacher but I also had to take care of my family. The salary just wasn’t enough. Here in Hong Kong it is three times higher” (Anonymous, FGD held 17/04/11).

The sections A and B above are intended to show to things: first that many women in the Philippines are generally well-educated and second that unemployment (and underemployment!) in the Philippines is very high (this can be proven with this study and past studies/data).

Being aware of the unemployment (and underemployment) situation in the Philippines is essential since it relates directly to the cause of the migration of these women and thus also explains *why* they undergo the mandatory household pre-departure trainings in the first place. This last point in turn is important since it raises questions about whether there is a loss of human capital caused by migration and whether the efforts and investments in the education of these women are completely wasted. The answers to these questions will be given later on.

Now that it has been explained why these Filipino women migrate to Hong Kong (and in what context they take the trainings) it is time to focus on the training programs.

To start, the following explanation is appropriate: as Helen Ochi (2005) explicates, it is the Philippine Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) that assume overall responsibilities related to labor administration. Under DOLE, there are other agencies such as the POEA (Philippine Overseas Employment Agency whose goal is to protect migrants, and whose guidelines written at the end of 2006 made the pre-departure training programs mandatory for the following year), the OWWA (Overseas Workers Welfare Administration, which takes care of different reintegration programs) and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) whose goal is to provide various skill training courses (in particular pre-departure ones).

For the sake of having a chronological and clear explanation, first an analysis will be given of the pre-departure training program: the one all women have to undergo before migrating abroad to work as a domestic helper or maid. The analysis will include an overview of the (official and unofficial) goals of this training, a closer look at the cost and the length for the training followed by an

examination of the training camps, the quality of the programs, the use of skills, the materials, and the cases of abuse/ exploitation. Later, on page 59, a similar analysis of the Hong Kong-based training programs will be given. It is particularly interesting to study this since a limited amount of academic research is currently available on this topic. Needless to say, by doing this comparisons will be drawn and recommendations can presented about how they can be more effective for those who are intended to benefit from them.

5. THE PRE-DEPARTURE TRAINING PROGRAM

A rather general idea of the context in which women from the Philippines migrate to Hong Kong has been presented in the previous section. Now some more time will be spend on describing the (training) circumstances in which the women usually find themselves before actually setting foot on *the land of more, or better, opportunities*: Hong Kong.

Briefly put, after having ‘made’ the decision to Migrate to Hong Kong, Filipino women need to find a recruitment agency that are willing to take them and lead them through the entire process of migration. Alternatively the women can arrange a direct hire. In both cases, a lot of money and effort is invested in obtaining health tests and certificates and in assembling all the required documents such as employment certificates, personal records, diplomas, identification cards, school transcript of records, passports, training certificates and security clearances. During the focus group discussions it was concluded that a single one-way migration to Hong Kong can cost around 120 000 to 140 000 pesos (around 2800 to 3500 dollars). Once the administrative work has been completed a new phase of training begins. As has been stated several times already, these training programs existed and were optional for the migrants before 2007. After this, a government-certified training program became mandatory for all migrants wanting to get a job abroad as a domestic worker. Without it they are not allowed to leave.

5.1. GOAL

The pre-departure training program is given and certified by the government agency TESDA (The Technical Education and Skills Development Authority) whose vision is to be “the leading partner in the development of the Filipino workforce with world-class competence and positive work values” (TESDA Website 2011) and whose mission is to provide “direction, policies, programs and standards towards quality technical education and skill development” (*idem*). Not surprisingly, one of its main goals is to “train people” and to engage in the “competency assessment and certification of workers”.

It is important to remember that these training programs are mandatory: indeed the POEA states that in order to upgrade “the capabilities of the worker, *all applicants for domestic helper shall undergo skills assessment* by the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority. TESDA-certified workers will be issued Certificate of Competency. Domestic helpers with years of experience as household workers abroad can directly go through TESDA skills assessment system” (POEA August 2007, emphasis added).

In terms of the certificate, the training centers approved by the government require the FDWs to pay them a certification fee of 100Php (Philippine dollars). This certificate, according to them proves that they are a “competent household service worker” (Necy Cataran, Interview 17/03/11) and is given to

the POEA in conjunction with the work contract so that the Overseas Employment Certificate (OEC) can be processed and only then the FDWs are allowed to migrate¹¹.

5.2. **CONTENT OF THE PROGRAMS: which skills?**

The official content of the pre-departure training programs is listed on the TESDA website (see table 3). These are rather generally stated and in practice many training agencies include many more competencies. The participants of the survey questionnaire were asked to specify the content of the programs (question 7) on the basis of a series of options taken from existing information about the training programs, previous surveys and the pilot study. While virtually all women who obtained the TESDA certificate indicated having learned how to use the washing machine, use the ironing machine, use the vacuum cleaner and learned the basics of household cleaning, 98 % were instructed on how to deal with employers in different case scenarios, only 75 percent affirmed having learned the essentials of baby care/sitting, 63% how to take care of the elderly/sick people, and only roughly 39% affirmed having received Chinese language, cooking and history during the training. This is a mistake according to Tess Aquino (head of the Mission for Migrants) who stressed that “one of the most interesting things about these trainings is that it exposes women to Chinese culture, even though this is unfortunately not always done and in any case not done enough” (Interview 07/03/11) Further comments about the content of the pre-departure training programs will be given later on.

Table 3: What a FDW is expected to do according to TESDA

<p>BASIC COMPETENCIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in workplace communication Work in team environment Practice career professionalism Practice occupational health and safety procedures <p>COMMON COMPETENCIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain an effective relationship with clients/customers Manage own performance <p>CORE COMPETENCIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clean living room, dining room, bedrooms, toilet, kitchen Wash and iron clothes, linen and fabric Provide food and beverage/services

Source: TESDA (Procedures and Guidelines in Applying for HSW) 2011 Website

The reason why competencies differ between migrants is of course due to the fact that the training institutions are all private corporations which have to abide to the requirements given by the government (and are regularly inspected by it) but have their own policies, programs and ways of functioning and teaching.

¹¹ Indeed 99% of the participants indicated having a training certificate from the government. The 1% that did not can only be explained in terms of ignoring or lack of knowledge concerning the origin of the certificate.

5.3. LENGTH

The government of the Philippines has not regulated a standard length to the pre/departure training programs, hence some programs only last a couple of days whereas some of them take weeks depending on the policies of the training center in question. A frequency distribution analysis showed that while some indicated having received the training in one day (2% of the respondents), others spent 1.5 months in training (3%). Most participants (51%) however indicated that they spent 2 weeks in training, 12% one week, 15% three weeks and 15% one month. The average length of the training was just above 2 weeks.

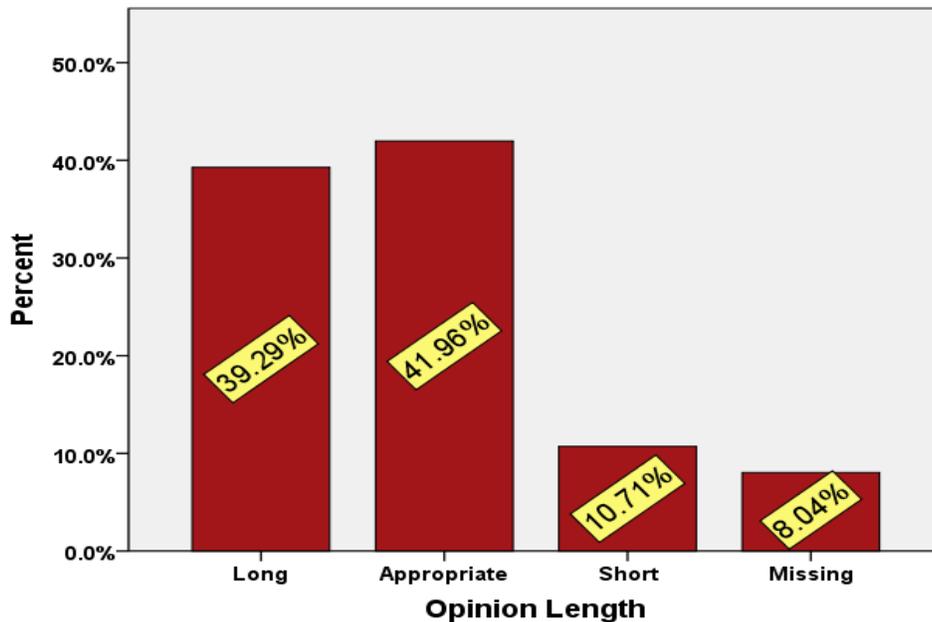


Figure 4: Opinions about the length of the pre-departure household trainings

Interestingly, the length of the training program is already an issue on which there is little agreement. While 40 percent of the women who answered the question thought the program was too long, 42% percent thought it was appropriate and 11% thought it was too short (see Figure 4).

According to the discussions during the focus groups, there are two different opinions about the length of the training programs because there are two different ideas about what their goal is and should be. On the one hand, there are those migrants who think the training program is too long because in their eyes it is merely a place where they have to learn how to do things they can already do- and have done on a regular or daily basis-. As one participant explained: “I studied engineering

[...] During the training I had to learn how to cook and clean for a couple of weeks, something that as a women I had to do my entire life. The program was a waste of time [...] Maybe shorter programs is better” (Rafaela, FGD 10/04/11).

On the other hand, there are those who argue that the training program is too short, and should thus be extended because it does not enable them to learn the essentials of what they will need once they are alone and abroad. Admittedly these women are also right since important skills like speaking the Chinese Language (Cantonese) and lessons about the Chinese tradition/custom are often not provided (enough) in the training. These issues will be covered later on in chapter 6 that discusses the quality of these government pre-departure trainings.

5.4. COST: who pays, who benefits?

In terms of the costs of the program, the outcomes were also very different. Even though a very large percentage of respondents did not disclose the amount they paid (21%), the lowest recorded amount paid for the program was 1000 pesos, the highest 20 000 pesos. The differences can of course partly be explained in terms of the length of the programs but also in terms of the deals that the aspiring migrants have with their recruitment agency. Some agencies sponsor the future FDW or pay a large amount of the fee for them (to be able to take the training), meaning that the women will later (with for instance their salary) have to pay them back.

The average price of the training was 7730, the median 8000. Around 47% indicated having invested between 6 000 and 10 000 pesos in the training (see table 4). The results can be summarized as follows:

Payment Training (pesos)	Percentage
1000-5000	20%
6000-10 000	47%
11 000- 15 000	7.2%
16 000- 20 000	3.6%
Missing	21%

Table 4: Amount paid for the training

Perhaps not surprisingly, there are many criticisms around the fees of the trainings. Among those who answered the question, only 2% of the participants in the survey questionnaire thought the training was cheap, 22% thought the price was okay and 76% thought it was expensive.

In economics, a cost-benefit analysis is often made to analyze the cost effectiveness of different alternatives in order to see whether the benefits outweigh the costs. In this case a cost-benefit analysis would be most useful if the training programs were optional. Even though this is not the

case, it is still interesting to have an idea of whether the costs- either material, immaterial (time, efforts)- outweigh the benefit. This question was asked to several FDWs during FGDs and these are some of their answers:

- *“The training was somewhat worth the costs. I learnt some new things about Hong Kong but I do think that the government benefits more from the programs than us”*
- *“If it the training was not required, I would probably not do it. It is the private institutions, and also the government, that benefit from us taking the training: the trainings are expensive you know, and thousands of women take them....”*
- *“The training is expensive. I had to leave my family to go to Manila...I don’t think I learned much and I do not think it is worth the money and the efforts. Maybe if they were shorter, cheaper, better we would benefit more. In the current state of affairs however, no, we do not want them ”* (Focus Group Discussion, 21/03/11).

The opinions of Filipinas that were approached about this topic were again divided even though they did frequently link the costs of the training they had to bare to the (financial) benefits that the government (and the private sector) receives from them. The issue of who benefits more from these programs will be elaborated upon later on, in any case it should be clear that the FDWs are not the only stakeholders in these trainings- For now, some of the other ‘costs’ of the trainings will be discussed. One issue that for instance provokes even more reactions (than the high training costs) is the corruption of the trainers and training directors that sometimes occurs. Manipulation of the fee structure is for instance a common complaint. More information about this can be found in section 5.7.

5.5. **LOCATION**

“Location, location, location?”- (Commonly used expression)

It is interesting to observe the displacements women have to make before they migrate to Hong Kong to be able to attend the household training. During the FGDs, a common complaint was that the training centers were usually located far away from their home towns and mostly located around Metro Manila Province. This of course is an extra burden/cost for women who already do not have the *option* of taking the training or not.

Data from the survey questionnaire showed that many Filipino domestic helpers came from the Mountain province (9 in total), Pangasinan province (11), Isabela (7), Kalinga (5), and metro Manila Province (even though this was less than 12%). Unfortunately among the 112 respondents only 70 disclosed their province of origin (probably out of precaution since many questions were rather sensitive and women often asked to remain anonymous/ unidentifiable).

As previously mentioned there are chances that many provinces are not represented in the sample and certain provinces are over-represented (see ANNEX 2). Part of the reason why this is the case is

probably because when the 70 questionnaires were distributed to migrant organizations that in general have members from the same province.

When it comes to the locations of the trainings however the distribution is completely different. Only 7.5% of the women reported having followed the household pre-departure program in their province of origin (i.e. where they were based). On the other hand, almost 70% of the women took the training in Metro Manila Province. Only 6% took the training in a place other than Metro Manila or their own province (see graph below). There thus seems to be massive migration towards the capital city for the purpose of the training (see Figure 5).

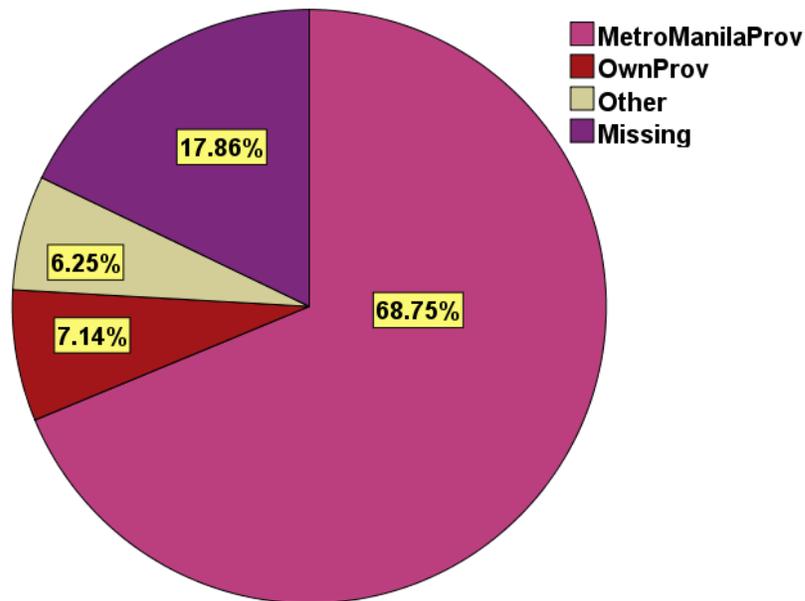


Figure 5: Location of the pre-departure training program

According to the interviewed government officials there have been efforts to decentralize the labor migrant placement services: “Some reforms did include a decentralization programme but it is yet to be fully implemented” (Necy Cataran, 17/03/11). This is evident from the number of recruitment agencies who reside in Metro Manila Province and its vicinity.

It is understandable that concentrating pre-departure activities in the Metro Manila Province is practical and efficient for recruitment agencies as the operational costs of housing prospective labor migrants in one place is lower than having multiple training centers in several different region. Nevertheless this is highly inconvenient for the women who have to leave their families behind for several days or weeks. Indeed, 51% of the survey respondents stated being married and out of a 111 participants that responded to the question 56% declared having children to take care of. Among those, 40% had one child, 30% had two children, 16% had three children and the rest had between 4 and 6 children. In addition, again, “when women are forced to go to Manila they face additional costs” (Balladares-Pelaez 12/05/11).

Finally, having to make displacements to other provinces for the training is also inconvenient because it implies that women have to find a place to stay. Sometimes they manage to arrange something with their friends or family, however often taking the training means staying in training camps.

5.6. TRAINING CAMP:

While training camps are much more common for Indonesian domestic workers, during their training, many Filipino labor migrants are also placed in temporary housing while they take the training. In total, 60% of the women of the sample indicated staying at in a house or big building provided by the training center or recruitment agency while they were being trained.

Contrarily to what was initially thought, and contrarily to the information that can be found on Indonesian training camps, the living standards in the training camps (in terms of food, cleanness and facilities such as toilets and showers) was rather decent. The living conditions at these training camps can be summarized as follows (see figure 6).

It is possible to see that most women being trained thought the camp was well maintained: 22% thought the camp was *very clean* and 44% thought it was *clean*. Only 1% thought the camp was dirty.

Similarly, 45% of the respondents rated the quality of the facilities as “good” and 18% answered it was “very good”. About 5% thought it was bad. However, when discussing these results during the focus groups it turned out that during the training some women did make use of broken down or very old facilities. There were complaints that some showers did not work and that the mattresses in the camps were very hard to sleep on since they were either too thin or too old and uncomfortable.

In the survey questionnaire most respondents claimed that the food was “good” (47%), 17% thought it was “very good” and 23% rated it “decent.” While not particularly reflected in this data however, many women during the focus group discussions complained about the small portions and the lack of variety of the food.

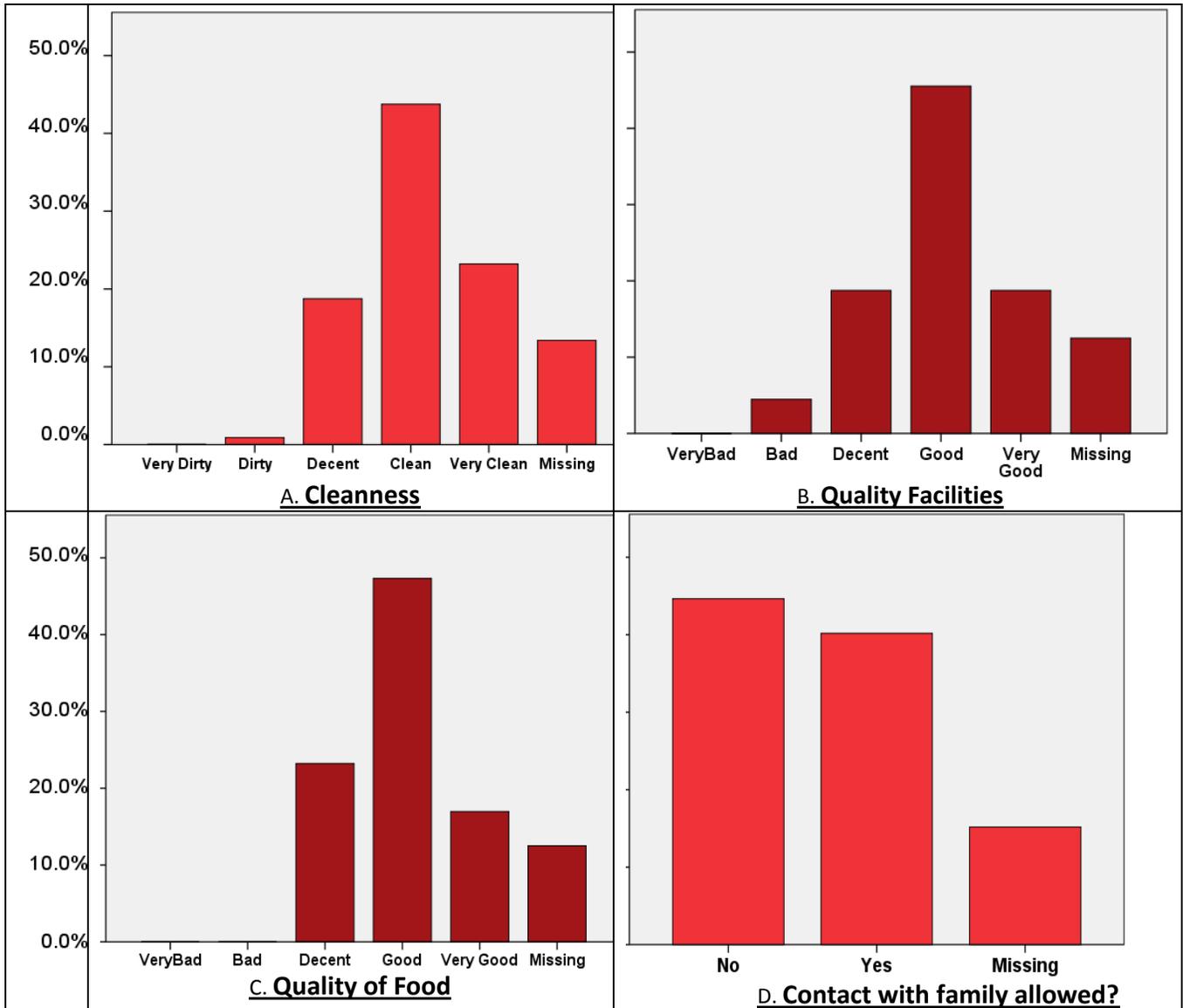


Figure 6: Training Camp conditions

On the downside, as shown in the graph D, these training camps are often closed to the public (including the FDWs’ family members). Around 44% of the respondents declared not being able to contact their family on a regular basis. Indeed, to the question “During the training, were you allowed to contact your friends and family (by phone, mail)?” the majority gave a negative answer. Even if the families of labor migrants are allowed to visit, the number of visits is limited, considering the distance to their home region and the costs associated with making such a journey. This is a problem for migrants that has several times been observed. A study by APMM for instance claims that “The agency claims that their purpose is to provide skills and language training however

these workers are treated like prisoners. They are not allowed to go out, denied access to their families and ordered to follow all of the agency staff instructions” (Triple Whammy 2009:12). This makes monitoring of the housing conditions of these institutions rather difficult.

5.7. ABUSE AND EXPLOITATION

In the Philippines, in general the training conditions for Filipino domestic helpers appear to be satisfactory, even though there are several cases of exploitation and some isolated cases of corruption and abuse.

In terms of exploitation, a common complaint is that during the training prospective FDWs “have to do illegal and unpaid work for either the recruitment agency or the directors of the training program in order to supposedly practice what they are learning” (Anonymous, Interview expert 07/04/11.)

Indeed, the survey questionnaire revealed that 43% of the women had to take part in some sort of unpaid work while they were being trained. Among these over half did not specify where this illegal free work was performed (probably out of precaution), but 19% declared having been placed in the agency owner’s house, 17% cleaned and cooked (etc.) for the agency’s office and around 9% did free domestic tasks in another house.

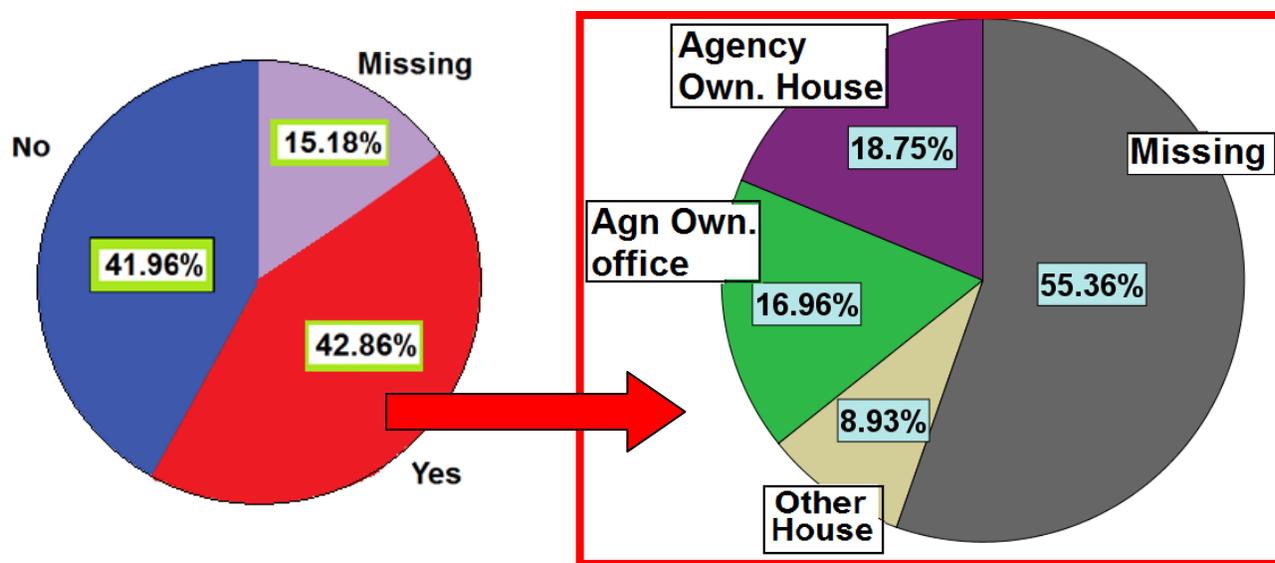


Figure 7: Illustration of the illegal unpaid work performed during training, and the location of this work according to those who answered ‘Yes’ to the question.

To question 28, expressly asking about cases of abuse and exploitation that were witnessed or experienced, 32 out of the 112 participants did not give an answer to the question (28%), 48%

answered “None” and 24% answered positively by ticking one of the given options or specifying another kind of abuse. The most common complaints were: verbal abuse (13 cases), corruption (12 cases) and emotional abuse (7 cases). The rarest cases were physical abuses (only 3 cases).

Admittedly, nowadays the situation has greatly improved compared to the times when the training programs were not mandatory and hence not (firmly) regulated by the government. Furthermore, recently the Philippines has created numerous laws and regulations that address the rights of domestic workers and the protection of Philippine citizens from all kinds of violations. According to Leonida Romulo (Interview 17/03/11) “the Philippine government has made a significant commitment to the protection of migrant workers throughout all stages of their migration. This means that we also regularly inspect the training center and punish those that commit violations”.

According to Dolores Balladares-Pelaez, board member of a migrant organization (United Filipinos in Hong Kong), “the problem [however] is that these programs are mandatory” and the fact that they are mandatory “leads to corruption” (interview:12/05/11). Indeed, just like on a country level the Philippines has recorded a high amount of corruption, it is also seems relatively to be present on the lower institutional and bureaucratic levels.

An interesting fact that was discussed during several interviews is that in 2008 President Aquino prosecuted Director General Augusto Syjuco of the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) for high amounts of corruption (for more information see Cabacungan, Ortiz and Sinay 2008). “If this is director of TESDA we are talking about, you can imagine that the problem also exists in the lower levels of it” (Anonymous, FGD 21/03/11).

Corruption is indeed one of the main complaints among FDWs and migrant organizations when it comes to the TESDA pre-departure training since “officers [are] connived with private agencies at the expense of prospective workers” (NOVA 2011). Also in the media there are occasionally accusations about suspicious payments and transactions inside this institution. This is partially why according to different interviewees the government should have more control over the costs of the training and of the migrants in general.

6. EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PRE-DEPARTURE TRAININGS: *how useful?*

It was already explained that according to the Philippine government the household pre-departure skill training were designed to “produce and indorse world class skills”, “to prepare them” and “to protect the welfare of the migrants” (Interview Leonida Romulo 17/03/11). The content and the training conditions have already been described. The question now is how useful these programs actually are. Part of the answer will be given in this chapter and the next chapter will address the long term impacts/usefulness of this training.

Questions 11 to 18 of the survey questionnaire were meant to capture the effectiveness of the training programs from the perspective of the FDWs themselves. The results can be summarized as follows:

- Question 11 asked the women to rate how frequently they used the skills they acquired during the training. Fortunately 55% of the women stated using the skills of the training program often, 33% sometimes and only 8% stated “no”. Thus the training generally covers the essentials of the tasks that they have to perform in Hong Kong. It is however important to precise that this does not necessarily give an indication of the usefulness of the programs; it merely indicates that they match the job descriptions. The important question however is: are these training programs *actually necessary*?

- Most women that answered question 12 declared that the skills they were thought during these programs are useful for them in both Hong Kong and the Philippines (59%), about 31% thought they are useful only in the context of their domestic work in Hong Kong and 11% were unsure. These results were discussed in the FGDs

- The opinions of the FDWs about these programs remain almost unchanged before and after their arrival in Hong Kong when they have already started their jobs (see figure 7). There is a small noticeable downward change in the categories “pointless” and “useful” meaning that the women have a lower esteem for their programs once they have actually arrived in Hong Kong and started working.

Perhaps most interestingly are the answers given to question 17 of the survey questionnaire which asked the participants to rate the overall quality of the training. The answers are displayed in the table below.

Even though around one fifth of the respondents did not give an answer to this question, there was surprisingly only one participant who stated the program was “very good” (see table 5). Ten cases (almost 9 percent) stated it was “very bad” and there seems to be a general consent that the quality/usefulness of the training programs seems to be lying in between mediocre and bad. Several interviews also dealt with the question of the usefulness of the TESDA pre-departure training programs and different points were stressed.

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Very Good	1	.9
	Good	8	7.1
	Mediocre	16	14.3
	Bad	57	50.9
	Very Bad	10	8.9
	Total	92	82.1
Missing		20	17.9
	Total	112	100.0

Table 5: Overall rating/opinion of the pre-departure trainings

According to Dolores Balladares-Pelaez, from the United Filipinos in Hong Kong there is no use in making these programs mandatory: “I see no reason to argue that making these programs mandatory is a good thing except that it maybe makes the women more competitive in the market and it is a good business for the government to earn more revenues” (interview: 12/05/11). In fact, several migrant groups like *Migrante* have been demanding the scrapping of this policy which they consider as just another government approach to “extort” money from overseas Filipino workers through the collection of training fees.

Balladares-Pelaez also claims that “anyways the training will not guarantee a job”.

Others however prefer to focus on particular aspects of the training that make them not as useful as they can/should be. Indeed, some argue that they could actually be rather instructive but that the content should be more adapted to the women’s needs. As Marilou Salero (interview: 09/04/11) explained: “the training often does not include Cantonese lessons etc...even if it did, here in Hong Kong they have these programs for free...so why pay for it back home?”. Other interviewees stressed that the materials which are used for the trainings do not serve their purpose. “The instruments are old-fashioned [and] they regularly do not work” says Tess Aquino from the Mission for Migrants (interview 07/03/11). This is an interesting observation and looking further into this will give a deeper insight on the issue of effectiveness.

From the survey questionnaire it was observed that 51% of the respondents that answered the question rated the equipment as old fashioned, 24% were unsure about how they would rate it and only 20% thought it was new. Similarly, 42% of the respondents affirmed that the equipment was damaged. As a FGD participant blatantly asked “how can the trainings be useful if the equipment we use, and learn how to use is either old or broken?”

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	New	20	17.9
	Old	51	45.5
	Not sure	24	21.4
	Total	95	84.8
Missing		17	15.2
Total		112	100.0

Table 6. Rating of equipment: old or new?

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	No	46	41.1
	Yes	42	37.5
	Total	88	78.6
Missing		24	21.4
Total		112	100.0

Table 7. Equipment: broken or damaged?

In conclusion to this section, it is possible to say that the short-term usefulness of the household pre-departure trainings (i.e. their usefulness for their next job) is often contested by both the migrants themselves and the migrant organizations that attempt to influence the decision making of the politicians. Again, while most of the skills that are being taught are in line with what is expected of them during their time in Hong Kong, the trainings often do not have good training materials and the content does not necessarily represent the FDWs' needs (since essential skills are not being taught, like learning the Cantonese language).

Filipino FDWs are relatively highly valued in Hong Kong due to their high education level and proficiency in English; however if a proper (i.e. in depth) education on Chinese Culture would be offered to them they would have a much higher comparative advantage to other groups of female migrant workers, especially for Chinese employers. Most importantly, the household skills that are being instructed and reinforced during the TESDA trainings (like cleaning, cooking, using the washing machine etc.) are usually skills that these women already possess (at least to a large extent) which is why they are often regarded as a waste of time. It is most certainly a combination of these issues/factors that makes many people wonder if these programs should be mandatory for *all* women, or if they have to exist at all.

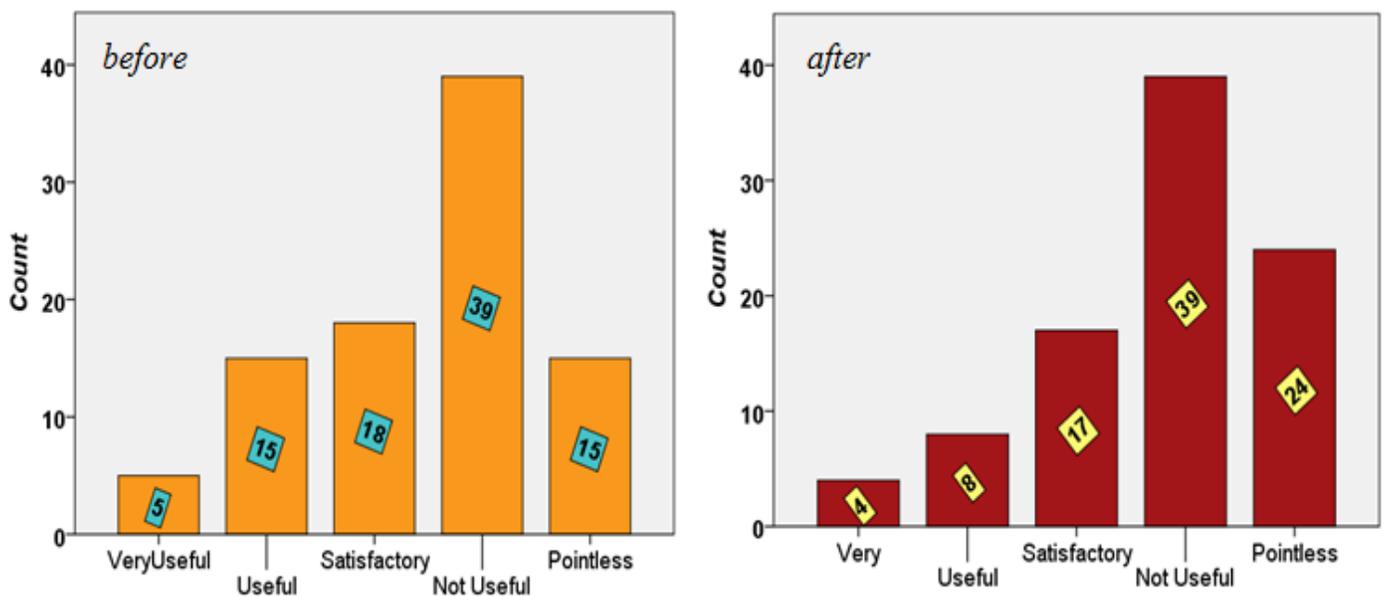


Figure 8: Views on the pre-departure trainings before and after migration

Assuming that the TESDA pre-departure household training programs have been sufficiently analyzed, it is time to move forward in time: to the moment the Filipino migrant workers have completed one or several contracts and are ready to go back home to the Philippines where they intend to settle down permanently or at least for several years. When returning after a decade or so, many know that the diplomas (and skills) they obtained in the past by means of their tertiary education will be (regarded as) outdated (see Chapter 9) At the same time, they will not be able to find (good) jobs as domestic workers in the Philippines even if they wanted to (because they have usually already been taken by women from lower-classes and with a lower educational background). They are however faced with the option of skilling themselves again (through trainings) while they are still in Hong Kong (*option* is here a key word).

7. THE HONG KONG BASED REINTEGRATION SKILL TRAINING PROGRAMS

Past studies have shown that women engaged in domestic work overseas face an important problem: they have to abandon their academic or professional career (or the hopes of obtaining one) in the Philippines when they decide to work overseas, which gives little opportunity for them to acquire new skills applicable after return (Parreñas 2001).

In Hong Kong different reintegration seminars are given to FDWs organized by religious institutions, private businesses and other agencies. These programs typically serve either to prepare the domestic workers for reintegration to the Philippines or to train the domestic helpers in new skills. As mentioned before the Government of the Philippines is also actively involved in helping these women to “reintegrate”. Interestingly, they have different ways of doing this: from giving counseling to organizing free seminars or to distributing leaflets that advertise loaning deals for those interested in starting up a business¹².

Another way in which the Philippine government attempts to help the women with and after their migration back to their home country is by offering them training (again), but this time a non-mandatory one of their choice. The reason why these programs can be called “reintegration” training programs is because the FDWs learn new skills that will help them to open a business, become entrepreneurs or be self-employed when they are back. More explanations will be given later on but basically these are trainings for hair-dressing, sewing, catering etc given on either Saturdays or Sundays. Yet it is mostly on Sundays that women attend these trainings “since this is the only day-off for many of them” (Irene Coles Pejil, Interview 24/04/11).

7.1. GOAL

Pilot skill trainings for a group of FDWs were launched in the late 1990s. The goal is to equip the trainees with new skills which would enable them to become entrepreneurs and improve prospects for alternative employment in the Philippines. In other words, they can acquire skills that will give them new vocational options which can help their reintegration into society.

From the Government’s point of view this is of course a strategic move to avoid increasing the unemployment rate with the return of thousands of FDW every year. The reality is, however that there is little chance that returning FDWs will be able to find a similar type of work (i.e. domestic work) in the Philippines because there is already a surplus of usually less-educated women in this

¹² Recently, on June 9th 2011, the OWWA announced that it will launch a 2 billion Philippine Pesos Filipino workers Reintegration Program in line with the President’s agenda of providing sustainable business to the returning OFWs and their families.

sector. Both the FGDs and Balladares-Pelaez from UNIFIL-HK confirmed this “when they are back they are usually not engaged in domestic work anymore” (Interview 12/05/11). On the other hand, chances of them getting a job that validates the diploma they obtained before their migration are also really slim since these are usually regarded as outdated- especially compared to the recently graduated youth which are also looking for employment (for more details see Chapter 9). In other words, once back from Hong Kong most Filipinas have to face once again the reality of unemployment or underemployment in the Philippines. A logical and viable solution to this problem is then to encourage these women be self-employed.

In addition to this, it is believed that another reason for giving these trainings to large groups of women is to “disperse the crowd in Central, where thousands of Filipinos assemble on Sundays...they are sometimes believed to be disruptive there” (Anonymous FGD, 08/05/11). This has also been stressed by Tess Aquino from MM and many other interviewees.

7.2. GOVERNMENT SPONSORED TRAINING CENTERS IN HONG KONG

The two training centers that will be analyzed here are those that are sponsored by the Philippine government in Hong Kong, namely the Bayanihan training center and the FWRC (Filipino Workers Resource Center).

According to the website of the consulate of the Philippines, these two centers offer the following trainings:

“Skills Training and Other Personal Development Programs

- Microsoft Computer Training
- Basic Cantonese Program
- Cooking, Baking, Meat Processing, Candle Making, Dressmaking, Beadscraft, Cold Porcelain, Cosmetology, Hair Culture, Ribbon Folding, Cake Decorating”

Table 8. Vocational skill trainings offered by the government to FDW

(Source: taken from POEA Website, March 2011, <http://www.philcongen-hk.com/labor/g11.htm>)

Keeping this table in mind, it is important to point out two things: first, not all the trainings given in these two training centers serve to “reintegrate” the FDWs. Indeed, some programs that are given because they are fun (i.e. dancing lessons), others because they are useful for the women during their time in Hong Kong (i.e. Cantonese lessons¹³) or simply they are useful at all times (i.e. Basic Computer lessons). This thesis will focus mostly on those skill training programs that actually can

¹³ During the focus group discussions it was argued that programs like these are very interesting but that Cantonese lessons should be given before they migrate to Hong Kong, not after.

have an effect on the employment situation of the FDWs in the future. In other words, only on the vocational skills/trainings (*vocational* here being a key word), which by definition give them new employment opportunities (these represent the majority of the trainings offered by the government in the two training centers).

Second, not all Hong Kong based trainings sponsored by the Philippine government will be discussed in this paper. There will only be a focus on the trainings offered by *the two centers* that the Philippine Government- via its consulate in Hong Kong- has been sponsoring and still sponsors nowadays. Some other trainings that occasionally are given or sponsored by the Philippine government usually are given in collaboration or in partnerships with NGOs or banks. These trainings come and go: they are usually given once or a couple of times over a limited period of time after which another type of training opportunity is offered. They are therefore difficult to research and will not be considered in this paper. Finally it is important to remember that the Philippine Overseas Labor Office (POLO) offers other types of (economic, social) seminars/trainings (for instance personal money management...). These will not be considered here since they do not directly provide the women with *skills* that offer *new employment opportunities*.

A brief description of the two centers will now be given followed by an evaluation of their effectiveness. By doing this parallels will be drawn with the pre-departure trainings.

7.2.1. FWRC Training Center

The FWRC is located in Cheung Sha Wan, Kowloon. It was through the efforts of the Consulate and the Philippine Overseas Labor Office (POLO) in Hong Kong that the host government allowed the setting up of a half-way house for distressed OFWs.

As mandated by RA 8042, FWRCs (there are many in Asia) are run by OWWA's onsite welfare officers where high concentrations of OFWs obtain services from the government. According to the website of the Philippine Overseas Labor Office (POLO) the Female Workers Resource Center provides "capability building activities to prepare OFWs for their eventual reintegration to their respective families and communities consisting of [...] entrepreneurial and skills training [...] and other personal development programs" (POEA Website March 2007). This was confirmed by Necy Cataran (Interview 17/03/11) who stated that "The FWRC serves as a meeting place for Filipino organizations [but also as] a training center for skills development, especially in preparation for reintegration".

It is remarkable however that very few OFWs go to the FWRC. Indeed, as Marilou Salero head of the center, explained "the FWRC attracts between 130 to 200 women every year. We advertise ourselves via radio and newspapers and this is rather useful even though many Filipinas still prefer to gather in Central or elsewhere" (Salero, interview 09/04/11).

Observational visits to the FWRC were made and notes and pictures the workshops that were being given at that moment, such as the cooking training, the hairdressing training and the computer training. Questions were asked and discussions with the trainers and the students took place. The following conclusions were drawn:

- Cost and content of the training programs:

First it is important to point out that these programs are- or more precisely are promoted as being- free of cost. Indeed, like Leonida Salud (interview 17/03/11) explained “these training programs are free for all OWWA members”. In reality however the focus group discussions stressed that these programs were not completely free: they cost between 50 and 150 Hong Kong dollars. This sum of money is however negligible compared to the fees of the trainings at the Bayanihan (around 650) and especially compared to the pre-departure household trainings. It must not be forgotten however that travelling to the FWRC is a burden and is an extra cost that needs to be taken into account.



Picture 4: A total of 13 OFWs taking a baking training at FWRC in a small classroom

The content of the training is different per program. From the interviews with Marilou U. Salero and other personnel it was concluded that the programs that are given are: body massage, dress making, breeds craft, baking, meat processing and cooking. All programs supposedly last between one day (meat processing) and 6 months (for dress making). The teachers of the trainings, even though very knowledgeable about what their subjects were mostly composed of former students. They get remunerated by the Philippine government for their teaching.

- Facilities:

Noteworthy is the fact that the FWRC has a rather small amount of space and few facilities. Indeed, it has a cafeteria and only four rooms where the training could take place which is why different trainings are given in the same area (sometimes at different times but sometimes not) and some are given the reception area (like breeds craft). In all cases the programs are quite full and the 10-15 participants per training have little room to move (see picture here above).

This also explains why some trainings have waiting lists of several months: “there simply is no

space” explained a teacher. As will be shown subsequently Bayanihan training center has a larger space, more training options and more generally more professional training conditions.

7.2.2. Bayanihan Training Center

The Bayanihan Kennedy located in Town Centre is a converted school where domestic workers in Hong Kong can spend their day off. Officially, “*Bayanihan* provides Filipinos working abroad with skills on how to become heroes to themselves and become better heroes for their families in the Philippines” (One Core Foundation 2010). In practice however it hosts not only trainings but also seminars and other activities (such as big movie and beauty pageants). Indeed, according to the director of the center, Tess Ibañez Ubamos (interview 1/05/11) it provides cultural and vocational activities for Filipino domestic workers even though more and more domestic workers with other nationalities (Indonesian, Thai) are paying for and joining the programs. The centre attracts between 5000 – 10000 people every weekend for different activities but only a couple of dozen actually participate in trainings there.

It is important to mention that the Bayanihan training center receives much less support from the Philippine government/Consulate than the FWRC. This was mentioned by Ibañez Ubamos but was also observed at different moments of the study. Indeed, contrarily to FWRC, the Bayanihan does not directly receive support from the Filipino authorities in terms of equipment, salaries and fee sponsoring. The Philippine government did however spend over 2 million Philippine Dollars for the renovation of the facility a couple of years ago and it frequently and repeatedly promotes the center. Financial sponsoring is limited though it sometimes happens

The quality of the courses that is offered was greatly improved several years ago when the director of the center decided that the trainings “were not focused on the objective of the center, which is providing skills training and alternative sources of livelihood for Filipina domestic helpers, while helping them prepare for their eventual return to the Philippines” (Baking Teacher, Interview 01/05/11)).

- Content of the training Programs:

Bayanihan also has a wide range of options in terms of vocational skill trainings. These however fluctuate according to availability of teachers and funds. The most popular 1-2 month training however are: culinary arts, sewing and design, hair and beauty culture, waiter and banquet service. Furthermore the center gives several computer courses (lasting several hours every Sunday) ranging from the basics to more advanced modules (i.e. in which PowerPoint, Access, Maintenance and Assembling Windows are taught). Finally, it offers various one day courses (labeled as “demo courses”) which include Chinese cooking, candle making, flower arrangements¹⁴.

¹⁴ It also provides fun courses like dancing and martial arts, but these are, again, not taken into account (cf. page 60-61).

It is remarkable that the training programs are much more specific (and arguably professional) than the ones offered at FWRC. For instance, the 150 Dollar FWRC the training called “dress making” (lasting between 3 and 6 months) covers several aspects of the profession (such as sowing, making skirts and dresses for women, suits for men etc.) but the Bayanihan Trust Center on the other hand offers different levels of this training: ranging from “Introduction to Fashion and Design: Sewing Machine Operation and Troubleshooting” to “Level 6: Tailoring Men’s Wear and Level 7: Upholstery”. Each level (1 to 7) lasts 6 Sundays and is held for 2 hours, and each costs 500 Hong Kong Dollars (hence 3500 for the full acquisition of tailoring skills).



Picture 5: Two OFWs taking a Hair Culture training course, supervised by their teacher, at Bayanihan

According to Irene Coles Pejil this center has linked up with the University of the Philippines Open University (UPOU) for post baccalaureate distance education and with the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) for training in hotel and restaurant management and food processing technology. This was however not confirmed by the interviews from held at the center.

In addition, The Bayanihan training center also hosts a series of college level-exams that allow women who failed their exam in the Philippines to have a second chance and to be able to formally have their diploma before they go back to the Philippines. In April 2011, at least 117 Filipinos based in Hong Kong benefited from the Philippine Professional Regulation Commission (PRC)’s first licensure examinations for nurses and midwives there.



Picture 6: A busy computer training course at Bayanihan Training Center

Further research could go further into the details of these and the other trainings given at FWRC that are less popular and not listed in their official brochure.

- Facilities:

The list of facilities is much more extensive than for the FWRC. The Bayanihan Center benefits from 5 floors with over 8 different classrooms, an auditorium, a library, a music room, a cinema, a canteen, a beauty salon, a remittance counter, photocopying machines and telephones for both local and long-distance calls. Most of the furniture and equipment being used for Bayanihan's programs for domestic helpers were either donated, like the ceiling fans, air-cons, and sound systems, or bought.

Compared to the FWRC, Bayanihan thus has much more space: not only physical but also the classes have a smaller number of participants (see picture) hence allowing better teaching and training.

The problem however is that there has been a scarcity of funds, according to the interviews made to the director and teachers of the center: "the administration cost is what we need to address now. We need to raise funds for this" said Ibañez Ubamo, director of the center.

One final comment to this chapter is that the training programs offered at the FWRC and the Bayanihan training center were much less criticized than the pre-departure trainings. During the focus group discussions most of the questions from the survey questionnaire were asked and re-adapted to situation of the Hong-Kong based trainings. For instance the women were asked whether they had heard or seen any cases of abuse/exploitation, whether the equipment was broken during the training etc. There were virtually no positive answers to these questions. The only mild criticism to these programs was that they were sometimes overcrowded (especially at the FWRC)

8. EFFECTIVENESS OF THE HONG KONG REINTEGRATION SKILL PROGRAMS

As was previously mentioned, these trainings are/can be useful for different reasons. First, according to the FGDs, the Bayanihan and FWRC centers represent initiatives of the Philippine Government to lower the concentration of women that gather in Central who often use that space to protest against the injustices and (in)actions of the Filipino government¹⁵ (see for instance picture 7 and 8 below). This is probably only partly true and only partly actually works like that; in reality the two centers can only hold a couple of hundreds OFWs while there are thousands of them at Central and other parks and public spaces.

Something that is worth remembering is that these public centers also host a series of courses that are specifically intended to facilitate the lives of FDWs in Hong Kong. Two examples of such courses are Cantonese and Chinese cuisine. The FGDs showed that those women who participated in them thought their time (and money) was not wasted on these trainings but on the contrary stated that these trainings were valuable in the sense that they made work easier and their (Chinese) employers happier. These trainings do however fall outside the scope of this paper.

Picture 7: Example of a demonstration of FDWs in Central
(picture taken by author 5/05/11)



Picture 8: Another (silent) protest of FDWs in Central *(picture taken by author 27/02/11)*



Also interesting is the fact that the women during the focus group discussions declared that they voluntarily participated in these training programs because it is a social experience in which they can

¹⁵ Even very recently (in the beginning of August) several dozen foreign domestic helpers have staged a protest in Central, urging the government to uphold their rights

meet people while at the same time learning something useful or something they simply like doing. Remarkably, both during the FGDs and the visits several women admitted having participated in numerous trainings because they are a good opportunity to meet people (4 out of the 20 women in the four FGDs and 2 of the interviewed at the centers stated this). As one woman at the FWRC explained “This is my fourth training here. I have already done meat processing, food court cooking and I recently finished basic tailoring. I will soon have 4 different training certificates. I enjoy spending time here and I have made many friends here. It is also fun to meet new people who have recently arrived here or that have returned to Hong Kong” (Isabela, baking student at FWRC, 8 years in Hong Kong).

This last statement however raises the central question of this section: do the trainings offered at FWRC and Bayanihan serve their main purpose? In other words, are they effective at giving FDWs new vocational skills that will benefit them later on? To this question the answer most likely is “yes even though some programs seem to be more useful than others” (see Chapter 9).

Previous studies have shown that “domestic workers find the computer literacy and dressmaking courses offered by the Filipino Workers Resource Center (FWRC) quite useful upon their return” (ILO study 2002 written by Villalba). From the FGD it was also concluded that cooking courses (in particular those intended for food courts and catering) are beneficial since they can serve the returned OFWs in the opening of a food business. At least 5 out of 20 participants in the discussions expressed interesting in starting such a business. Also popular were the tailoring training “that can offer self-employment since tailors are needed in many town in the Philippines” (FGD 10/04/11) and computer trainings that according to the director of Bayanihan can definitively improve the odds of the women to find office work. Other trainings such as massage, cake decoration and candle making are “not. Maybe the women will be hired for a special event in their own town but it will not guarantee a job. At most they can serve to have lucrative hobbies but not a stable job” (Tess Ibañez Ubamos interview 1/05/11).

In any case, a great advantage of these trainings is that they do not involve large costs (i.e. the benefits of the training might in this case outweigh the costs). “The training is good. It is for free or almost without cost” (Dolores Balladares-Pelaez, UNIFIL, interview: 12/05/11). To this we can add that “even though they maybe do not always guarantee new employment opportunities to a 100% of the women who take them, at least it gives them an alternative option of employment. Filipinas who return have very limited employment opportunities, perhaps even less than when they left [...] These skill trainings give them new skills that can help them, for instance, to start a small business and hence avoid total unemployment once they are back in the Philippines” (Leonida Romulo, Labor Attaché from the Consulate of the Philippines, 17/03/11). Unfortunately the reality is “there are however few Filipinas who take these courses” (Irene Coles Pejil, 24/04/11). More information about the long-term impacts of these trainings will be provided in the next chapter

9. RESKILLING THE SKILLED?

In the previous sections the different stages of the migration have been clearly explained and analyzed: soon after graduating from college many medium and highly educated Filipino women find themselves in less than desirable working situations, often suffering from unemployment or having to engage in low-skilled work (sales person, factory work etc.) or part-time work. Those that do manage to obtain a decent job frequently work part time or are underpaid. Many women therefore decide to migrate to places such as Hong Kong for several years as domestic workers where their salaries are generally much higher. In order to be able to do this they have to undergo a government-certified household training. After several years and once they decide to return home, FDWs are encouraged to become entrepreneurs. They are offered business loans and types of support such as training programs (tailoring, baking, hairdressing etc) with the intention that once they go back to the Philippines the former domestic workers can be self-employed instead of finding themselves again in the unemployment cycle.

This section will go further into detail about this change of career prospect. It will also specifically address the issue of skills and look at the general skill development (and changes) of FDWs throughout their migration.

This section will thus attempt to give an answer to the fourth sub-question which is “*What are the long-term consequences of this migration on the skill development of the FDWs and how do the training programs (by either ‘reskilling’ or ‘deskilling’ them) change the lives of these women?*”. First there will be a discussion about the long-term consequences of the migration. The argument will be that due to a lack of job opportunities and the fact that their tertiary education skills/knowledge has become outdated and uncompetitive over the years, most women are permanently de-skilled after their long stay in Hong Kong. Then, a discussion will follow addressing the effects of the two training programs. It will introduce the notions of ‘deskilling’ and ‘reskilling’ and determine to what extent the FDWs’ lives can change as a result of this. The main argument will be that the Hong Kong-based training programs can help mitigate the effects of this by re-skilling them with new skills and offering them new employment opportunities.

In this section it will also be proven that the Philippines- Hong Kong migration is often cyclical and occasionally also repeated¹⁶ in spite of the FDWs’ complaints about the work abroad and the expressed desires to return to the Philippines.

9.1. MIGRATION: PERMANENTLY DE-SKILLING THE FILIPINAS?

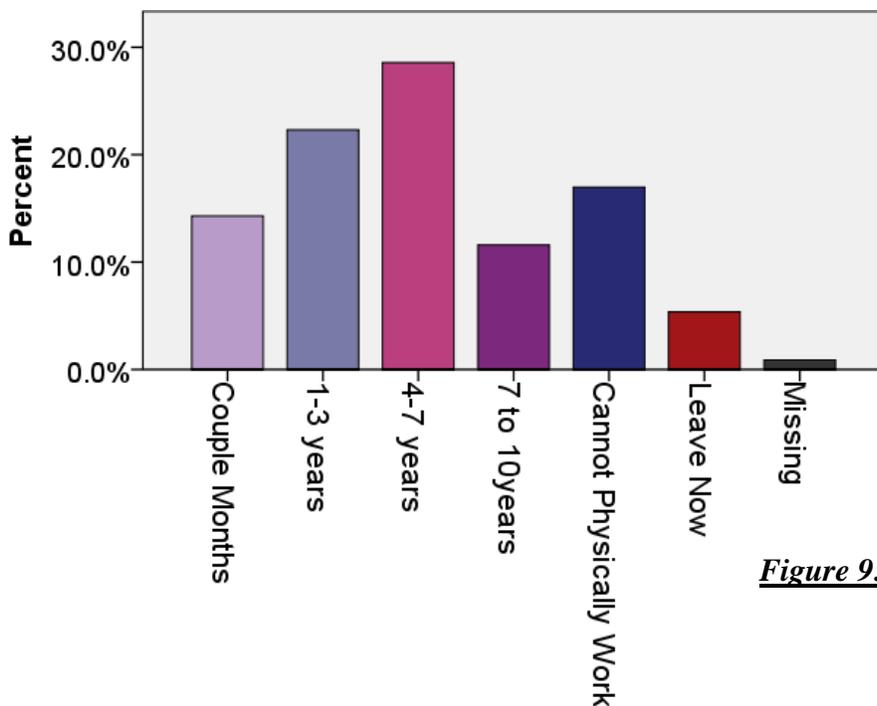
“If we go home we’re back to zero” (Maria, FGD 10/04/11)

¹⁶ This might however be subject to change since recently the Hong Kong government has threatened to limit the number of consecutive contracts that the women can have. On the 08th of August (2011) many protested against this.

A typical migration of FDWs to Hong Kong and back takes several years, or even decades. Even though the employment contracts have to be renewed every 2 years the fact is that many Filipinas do this several times over and remain in Hong Kong for many years (see also Constable 1999). Indeed, in spite of the fact that many current FDWs claim that they intend to leave very soon/ ‘now’ (5% of the participants claimed this in the survey questionnaire, see Figure 9) or that they intend to stay in Hong Kong for a short time (between a couple of months and 1-3 years: 36% in total), the reality is that many have plans for several years (28% are considering 4-7 years) and 30% in total would like to work in Hong Kong between 7 years and until they cannot physically work anymore.

The FGDs and interviews confirmed this: 13 out of 20 women that participated in focus group discussions agreed with the fact that Filipinas often stay in Hong Kong for many years, often longer than they initially planned. Many of them claimed that Filipinas keep renewing their contracts and keep going back to Hong Kong after a holiday back home. Here are some explanations and quotes that might elucidate this:

- *“Most of us have been here for a long time because we came to realize that one contract was not enough to make enough money and go back home”* (in this Focus Group Discussion there were three women who had been in Hong Kong for 8, 12 and 17 years, date: 10/04/11).
- *“I do not know what is waiting for me if I go back home, maybe I’ll find a job but maybe I won’t. I know that in Hong Kong there is always going to be a job for me [...] Life in Hong Kong...you get used to it. Before you know it you have grown old here”* (Maricel, 34, 08/05/11).
- *“We all want to take care of our family. Even though the salary of a household worker in Hong Kong is as high as the salary of an executive worker in the Philippines it requires several years to be able to save enough money to live comfortably back home”* (Anonymous, FGD 17/04/11).
- *“First I wanted to stay 2 years, then I renewed my contract, then I changed from employer. I then*



found a better employer and I am still working for him after 8 years. I see my family once a year during my holidays but I always go back. When am I permanently going home? I don’t know, not now, perhaps never” (Esther, 36, 08/05/11).

Figure 9: Plans of FDWs about their stay in Hong Kong

Interestingly this seems to be the case despite the numerous complaints expressed by FDWs concerning their job and their living situation. Indeed, 10% of the women claimed suffering from 6 or all 7 symptoms of depression listed in the survey, many women complained about the long hours they had to work, 15% complained about having switched from employers between 3 and 7 times, 26% claimed that they had had serious problems (such as abuses) with a former employer, 49% claimed not having their own private space to live, 16% claimed not receiving the legal 1 day-off on a weekly basis, 30% reported not having a day-off on statutory holidays, 44% stated they are not allowed the annual leave to go back home and 10% claimed they were at least once not paid or not paid on time (for more information see ANNEX 3).

Yet similar statements to the ones of the FDWs written above were recorded during the interview with different experts. Tess Aquino (interviewed 07/03/11) from the MFMW phrased it in the following words: “initially women consider one or two contracts but then they do not want, or cannot, leave”. Dolores Balladares-Pelaez from UNIFIL agrees “Filipinas often desire to stay 2 to 5 years but they are often in Hong Kong for decades” (12/05/11) “The reason is, of course, a lack of opportunities which is perhaps more important than before the migration takes place” (Chloe Belle, 08/05/11). Thus, again unemployment and underemployment seem to be crucial factors in the FDWs’ decision to find and keep their work abroad. Without getting too much into this, since it was already discussed at the beginning of this paper it is then interesting to ask the question: what are the consequences of this long-term migration on the skill development of FDWs?

The answer to this question is rather simple. Perhaps not surprisingly the fact that Filipinas stay in Hong Kong for a long time (often for many years or even decades) makes the diplomas, knowledge and skills that they acquired via their tertiary education less valuable. As previously mentioned, the women engaged in domestic work overseas face an important problem: they have to abandon their academic or professional career in the Philippines when they decide to work overseas, which not only gives little opportunity for them to acquire new skills applicable after return and but also makes the skills from their former education uncompetitive and out-dated. As Tess Aquino clearly stated: “If they stay here in Hong Kong too long their previous education is pointless.. staying here in Hong Kong is not desirable if these women ever want to get rewarded for their years of study and qualification”. Dolores agrees “Most of the time the education...and the skills are lost for good”. Perhaps the most explicit explanation was given by one of the participants in a FGD: “Say that I am a teacher but I have cleaned houses for the past 12 years...what school would want to have me? There are so many teachers so schools are all looking for teachers with experience or perhaps recently graduated. I have no experience and an old diploma so by the time I go back to the Philippines my teacher education will be almost worthless...it will be expired. Chances of finding a good job are minimal. This means that 300 thousand Philippines were wasted on my education and I studied for nothing for almost 5 years of my life” (Anonymous, 21/03/11).

The result of FDWs' circular migration to Hong Kong is that in the end they will most likely find themselves again in a situation of unemployment (or underemployment). As one participant affirmed: "if we go home we're back to zero" (Irene Pejil, 24/04/11). Several interviewed experts indeed believe that when the FDWs go back it is even harder for them to find a job and that this means that they again face the option/decision to migrate. Concretely this means that the migration is often repeated (often back to Hong Kong but the country of destination occasionally also changes). In other words, this migration that Filipinas undertake can- and often does- "permanently deskill the women".

Another interesting question is how the FDWs cope with the deskilling that they (consciously or subconsciously) undergo. She told me various stories of women she had met and about how these women coped with the 'de-skilling'. For instance, some women attempted to use their 'teacher' skills as much as possible when interacting with the kids in the houses they worked in- sometimes referring to themselves as 'tutors' to the children, and not as domestic helpers or cleaners when they talked to families or friends.

9.2. TRAINING PROGRAMS: DE-SKILLING OR RE-SKILLING?

Before the discussion continues it is perhaps interesting to define the most important concepts that will be used in this section. The following table provides the three most important terms with their respective definitions which will be used in and are applicable to this study.

Skilling	To develop abilities acquired by training The process of teaching workers the skills that they need for a job
Re-skilling	To acquire new or improved skills To improve the aptitude for work of (a person) by additional training, upskilling
De-skilling	To cause (skilled persons or a labor force) to work at a job that does not utilize their skills/education Decrease in the quality and range of the practical knowledge of individuals

Table 9. Definitions Skilling, re-skilling, de-skilling. (Source: *The Free Dictionary and MacMillan Dictionary 2011*)

With the previous definitions in mind, it is possible to say that the pre-departure training programs (even though they are intended to professionalize and upgrade the women's household skills) 'de-skill' the women, especially compared to their skill situation before the migration. This is rather obvious since these trainings *prepare* the women to work at a low-skilled job that does not utilize the skills they acquired through their education. Instead of promoting "new and improved skills" they merely review (and subsequently certify) the household skills that most women already possess. In other words the pre-departure household trainings trigger and are part of the long-term deskilling process. As soon as the skilled workers are trained domestic workers there is a dangerous switch of skills that is difficult to undo; as Mercurio (2004) properly states: "The case of Filipino nurses

[switching to] domestic work is a classical example of deskilling” skilled workers and the same is true for other (semi)skilled professions.

The question then is: what about the Hong-Kong based training programs? The answer to this question is a bit more elaborate. On the one hand yes, the trainings are intended to encourage entrepreneurship and give FDWs an opportunity to escape domestic work once they migrate back to the Philippines (this important since back home there are few opportunities of paid domestic work for these women and the salary and working conditions are worse than in Hong Kong). Even though the trainings offer the women medium-low skills (tailoring, meat processing, computer etc.) they are relatively higher than the household skills they have developed (during the pre-departure training and their work). In particular, within the context of opening a business they in fact foster the development of a whole new range of (entrepreneurship-related) skills that can positively affect their future.

Differently put, the women are worse off not taking the training program since (as was explained in chapter 8) the skills they acquire give them more (and perhaps better) employment opportunities. Several Filipinas seem to be aware of this, for instance one of the students at the FRWC (a tailoring student and a teacher by profession) claimed: “I don’t think I will ever teach again. There are no opportunities in the Philippines but I want to open a business. I have heard many successful stories and I think I will be successful too, there is always demand in the Philippines for tailors that can make school uniforms for instance”.

From the FDWs’ point of view opening a business is the only way that they will find employment hence these training programs can serve them for this purpose. During the focus group discussions the women repeatedly stressed that the dream of every returning FDW is (apart from being able to properly take care of their family) to buy a piece of land and/or to become entrepreneurs. One woman convincingly told the others “business opportunities exist!” (FGD 08/05/11). Many also shared stories of women who had successfully done this. In short, for these OFW the supposedly “simple” skills they learn from the training programs given in Hong Kong offer them new opportunities for the future.

Some experts agree that re-educating and re-killing the FDWs with new and better skills (after they have been deskilled from their tertiary education) is the right way to go. Tess Ibañez would even go as far as saying “The dream of every household service worker, besides supporting the children, is either to be able to buy land or to start a business. The training programs at Bayanihan and the FWRC given in Hong Kong are thus doors to this dream”.

An interesting small interview was held with Rosela Patricio Pioig, a FDWs about to go back to the Philippines after 12 years of work in Hong Kong. She explained her fear and frustration about going back home and not knowing what is expecting her. In terms of work opportunities she was unsure what would happen but feared that her qualifications (such as her Liberal Arts college degree) are

most likely outdated. She recently took a computer course in Hong Kong and hopefully her certificate will help her in obtaining a job.

For the sake of clarity, one last point/ question that might be important to address is: what is the difference between brain drain¹⁷ and de-skilling? Essentially there is not much difference in the sense that the main idea (i.e. that there is a shift, a movement of talent) is the same. Nevertheless brain-drain often looks at that the losses of talent for a city, country and region meaning that there is always a geographical dimension/emphasis. When brain drain is researched (for instance the causes or consequences of it on a country), the countries in question play an important role in the arguments/theories that are presented; they are sometimes even the main focus of the study. Deskilling on the other hand is more of an individual process that can happen to any individual at any time under different circumstances (for instance with the introduction of high technology or when there is a lack of learning opportunities). It does not necessarily have a geographical dimension and the research on it is more often geared towards the migrants themselves who ‘undergo’ (or chose to undergo) this process. In other words there is a focus on the skill shifts of migrants and not on the shifts of skills across space.

The term brain drain is thus not applicable to this study since it again looks at the effects of the changes of skills on the lives of FDWs and *not* on the countries. Still, the literature about brain drain can be interesting. A rather vast amount of information can be found on the “brain drain” that is supposedly affecting the Philippines. In the past, but also recently scholars like Alburo and Abella have argued that “the Philippines is undergoing a brain drain, as many migrants are highly skilled” (2002). Even though this falls outside the scope of this paper, this argument is incorrect since migrants do often return home. Yet the problem remains that once they are back home they have (again) small chances of using their ‘brains’.

Now that the training programs have been elaborately analyzed and compared, and their impacts broadly discussed, it is time to look at how they can be improved. The following chapter will give recommendations on how to improve the training programs and make sure their positive impacts are maximized. Also future research possibilities will be addressed.

¹⁷ Defined as the loss of skilled intellectual and technical labor through the movement of such labor to more favorable geographic, economic, environments (Free Dictionary 2011)

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on what has previously been argued and on the most important results of this research, the following recommendations (to improve the two training programs and ultimately to improve the general situation of OFW during their entire migration process) can be give presented. For the sake of clarity, the recommendations will be divided in three parts: general recommendations, recommendations for the pre-departure trainings and finally recommendations for the vocational Hong Kong-based training programs. Towards the end of this chapter some recommendations for future research will also be presented.

General recommendations:

- To have a better monitoring and evaluation of the training programs. The Consulate of the Philippines repeatedly stressed that in the cases of both training programs some evaluations are done to assess their quality. In the case of the pre-departure training programs private companies are hired to assess and give recommendations. This should also be done for the FWRC and Bayanihan training center. More regular and thorough inspections can make it easier to detect cases of corruption, illegal free work and psychological pressures and abuses (both during the trainings and at work in Hong Kong).
- To use these two training programs as sites where additional pre-migration, migration and post-migration information are given. They are good spaces for instance to remind women of their rights and advance different (training, employment...) options for the near present and the future that they can take into account. It is also a good opportunity to share information about (government or migrant) organizations that can help them in cases of need.
- To give the Filipinas more opportunities to reskill themselves after they have been deprived of (high)skilled jobs for several years, and specifically to encourage entrepreneurship (once they decide to abandon the domestic work in Hong Kong) since it can positively impact their future in the Philippines
- To make it easier for Filipinas to find (highly) skilled jobs in Hong. Current legislation makes it very difficult for medium- and even highly-skilled workers to find a job there. Of course this would mean a fiercer competition for the skilled Hong-Kongers yet a compromise can be reached between the two countries in order to encourage for example exchanges (such as job internships) or seasonal skilled employment.

Recommendations for the TESDA pre-departure training program:

- To reevaluate and redefine the content of the pre-departure training programs. As was explained, the POEA guidelines have a very general description of the competencies/skills that should be offered in these training programs. The women who migrate usually already

have most of the household skills that are being taught (using the washing machine, cooking, cleaning etc.). Of course, giving a recap or reinforcing these skills is not harmful; however there should be a greater emphasis on skills like baby-sitting and taking care of the elderly- which are not being offered in all training centers. More crucial are the Chinese Language and Culture courses that are surprisingly only offered by some training programs and often not in enough depth. Hong Kong is a multi-cultural society but many Filipinos work for Chinese households. This is why a basic Cantonese (and basic knowledge about Chinese culture and cuisine) is often both quality and a necessity.

- To reevaluate the length of the training programs. On the basis of the above, the government agency TESDA should have a clearer idea of what the goal of the training programs should be: if the goal is merely to develop the household skills then a couple of days or a week should be enough for them to reinforce those skills (which they usually already possess). It is recommended however that if that all training center offer the “Chinese language and culture” package, the training programs should be extended, especially to allow for a better knowledge of this difficult language which they will most probably need for their work and daily activities.
- To make more investments to de-centralize the trainings by opening more local or regional training centers. It was observed that training centers are still mostly located in Metro Manila Province. This poses many problems and inconveniences to the aspiring migrants (extra costs, finding a place to stay when there is no training camp, leaving the families behind etc.)
- Make regular inspections and give maintenance to the materials/equipments that are being used during the trainings. The machines are often very old-fashioned and broken, which almost defeats the purpose of teaching women how to use them.
- Allow the women in training camps to contact their families (at least during breaks and eating times). The migration towards Hong Kong is stressful enough for most women and even though they will have to be separated from their families eventually, allowing communication between the family members will make a positive (emotional) difference for the women who have assimilated the trainings houses to prisons. The fact that they are barely allowed to contact their families also makes it more difficult to monitor the housing conditions and trainings.
- Reduce the training fees. As a way of recognizing the skills of Filipino household service workers, skills certification is arguably desirable. The problem lies in the payment of the training fees that can sometimes go up to 10, 000 or 15,000.00 Php. The prospective FDWs should not be burdened with training fees. If the government considers skill certification as necessary to market “super maids”, then it should shoulder the cost of the skills training and the certification. The government can also compel the recruitment agencies to shoulder the training cost. In any case, taking into account the price and the previous comments, it seems that the Philippine government is currently benefiting more from the existence of these programs than the women themselves.

For the reintegration skill/vocational training programs:

- (Again...) To promote these programs. Even though the certificates of the FWRC and Bayanihan do not guarantee new employment opportunities for *all* women who have them, at least they can serve as an option to fall back on- in case the returning OFWs indeed do not find a job and have to rely in self employment. The majority of the returning migrants does not however take part in these optional trainings. An even larger number is unaware of the existence of these training programs due to lack of sufficient information dissemination.
- To request more help from the Philippine government to both institutions; in particular the Bayanihan Trust Center. The advantage of Bayanihan (compared to FWRC) is that it has a much bigger, modern, adequate and useful infrastructure. It can therefore host different training programs better.
- To learn from the past by recording the successful cases of OFW that did undertook a training program and (easily) found employment once back in the Philippines. Without knowing who is returning and what occupations, proficiency areas, income levels, industry fields, and future preparations exist or are desired, it is difficult to offer suitable vocational trainings. Therefore it is important to properly document and assess the successful cases of employment reintegration for possible replication.
- To give the FDWs a better chance to re-connect with their former profession (or to pursue their career wishes) by offering and promoting courses or examinations of those professions in question. This is already done for teachers and nurses at Bayanihan: those FDWs with some level of teaching and that still aspire to be teachers once back in the Philippines can take the national teaching exams, which, if they pass will eventually guarantee them a teaching place when they migrate back (even though the waiting list can be 1 year). This initiative seems to be successful and even though it was not researched in this paper) it would seem to be a good option for most professions

Finally and needless to say, in a perfect world Filipino women would not have to migrate to find better jobs or better remuneration; they would contribute to the national economy by doing jobs they deserve and studied for.

It is crucial for the Philippines to work on improving the (employment) situation of the youth and of women. Even though the Migrant Workers Law states that “the State does not promote overseas employment as a means to sustain economic growth and achieve national development...The State, therefore shall continuously create local employment opportunities and promote the equitable distribution of wealth and the benefits of development” (Women International Network News 1992) it seems that there are still no adequate employment opportunities.

The mismatch between the supply of graduates and the actual demand in the labor market needs to be urgently addressed. Job creation must also receive more attention. In addition, in order to improve the welfare of young workers, especially the “out-of-work” youth, there is an urgent call for reforms within the educational system.

Admittedly it is understandable why the Philippine government has not fully committed itself to reducing the unemployment: remittances of deployed workers sustain the Philippine economy with the smooth flow of foreign currency. Without labor migration (and without alternative options for migrants) the rate of unemployment would in fact increase by 40 percent (Castles and Miller 1998).

Yet in the absence of any fundamental change in local conditions, the migration of young people overseas is likely to continue. Starting to properly solve the unemployment and underemployment is an urgent matter because with the current economic situation- and in particular with the increase of competition in the (domestic) service sector- it is mostly likely that the Philippines will not be able to export (a large portion of) its medium- and highly- educated women forever.

Recommendations for the future research on the topic of training for FDWs:

- Future research should evaluate the different (vocational) training programs offered by institutions such as NGOs and banks. These institutions have their own training programs (such as financial trainings that deal with issues of money) and it would be interesting to see the outcomes and benefits for the Filipinas
- Future studies should also focus on the loaning programs that are offered by the Philippine government (but also by other institutions). While this paper repeatedly stressed that Filipinas should as much as possible be trained in order to be self-employed and avoid unemployment back home, it is obvious that without (sufficient) capital starting a business is not possible. It would be interesting to address the effectiveness of these loans and the costs they represent for the women.
- Even though this paper briefly addressed them, researchers in the future should directly go and visit the training camps (i.e. the houses of residence) of the pre-departure trainings. Accessing them may be a problem yet it is important since many women spent several days, weeks and sometimes months in them. Due to various reasons it was not possible to directly visit these sites yet it is the only and best way to get a proper overview of the training camp conditions.
- Researchers should also in the future study the so called “Board-exams” which are a series of college level-exams (in teaching, nursing etc.) that allow women who failed their exam in the Philippines to have a second chance and to be able to formally have their diploma before they go back to the Philippines. This is a remarkable new initiative from the Philippine government (with perhaps promising results) and deserves to be researched.
- The Hong-Kong based trainings such as Cantonese lessons and Chinese cooking (that are intended to benefit the women during their work and not during their reintegration back in the Philippines) that are also given at the FWRC and Bayanihan center might be interesting to research. To what extent do these trainings facilitate and improve the stay of Filipinas in Hong Kong.

11. CONCLUDING REMARKS

This research intended to compare the two government-sponsored training programs (the pre-departure household training and the Hong-Kong based training programs that are given at the FWRC and Bayanihan center) and to evaluate their effects. Doing this is important due to the fact that these training programs only recently promoted and implemented on a large scale (2007 was the year in which the pre-departure trainings became mandatory and approximately around the same time the Hong Kong vocational skill trainings received increasing attention from Filipino decision makers). An evaluation and impact assessment of these trainings also seems indispensable in a time where education and training are highly valued and determine the future of many workers and professionals.

The goal of this paper was to shine a light on the training programs and gather information not only from second hand sources, but also from interviews, focus group discussions and a survey questionnaire. This paper was very much interested in transmitting the perspectives and views of the women who have participated in the trainings.

The main research question was: *How do the pre-departure and Hong Kong-based training programs implemented by the Philippine government differ, and what is their impact on the lives of the Filipino Female Domestic Workers that have migrated to Hong Kong?*

A precise and concise answer this question can be formulated as follows:

The two-training programs are fundamentally different both in their goals and their conditions (sub-questions 1 and 2). While the pre-departure trainings are mandatory for all women now migrating to Hong Kong¹⁸ and only teach household skills, the Hong-Kong based trainings given at FRWC and the Bayanihan Center are optional and offer different specialized skills (tailoring, computer etc.) It was shown that the conditions of the two training programs are different in several aspects. Even though they are both sponsored by the government, the pre-departure trainings are in fact in the hands of private corporations, making them difficult to control and supervise. It was shown that while some women were trained for only a couple of days, others were busy for several weeks. A few cases of abuse were reported. Nevertheless the overall conclusion is that the training conditions are decent. Some things like the training equipment and contact with the family were subjects of criticism but the facilities, food and overall cleanness were respectable.

The Hong Kong-based trainings are not as intensive (they are only given on Sundays), they are cheaper and not as much criticized by the FDWs. Virtually no cases of abuse/exploitation and broken equipment were reported. On the contrary, these training programs were enjoyed by the women who saw them as not only a personal development experience but also a social experience.

¹⁸ And other places of course

In terms of the usefulness and impact (sub-questions 3 and 4) the two training programs also greatly vary. In order to understand how, first there needs to be an evaluation of how migration affects the women('s future). The argument was be that due to a lack of job opportunities and the fact that their tertiary education skills/knowledge has become outdated and uncompetitive over the years, most women are permanently de-skilled (i.e. suffer from a downward occupational mobility) after their long stay in Hong Kong. (How) Do training programs change this? The answer was that the Hong Kong-based training programs can help mitigate the negative effects of the migration by re-skilling them with new skills and offering them new employment opportunities.

To the question (alluded to several times, particularly in the literature review): *is the migration a vector of self-development* in the case of the circular Philippines- Hong Kong migration of FDWs? If 'self-development' is used within the context of *skills* then the answer is probably (and unfortunately) 'no' since the skilled women are being de-skilled, first through a training program then through their domestic work, for several years and even decades. Only the Hong-Kong based trainings that intend to turn FDWs into entrepreneurs can somewhat reskill or 'upskill' (i.e. raise the skills) of the women and prevent them from being trapped (again) in unemployment or low-paid work.

Whatever the case may be, the two training programs in question need restructuring and reforms. The varying training conditions and the unfocused contents do not necessarily outweigh the benefit of having done the training and obtained the TESDA NC2 certificate. Also the two trainings given in Hong Kong require better contents and teachers and more support from the government.

This paper also wanted to stress the importance of government efforts to reduce unemployment and underemployed (either by creating new jobs or by promoting self-employment). The unemployment rate of Philippines is clearly higher than the unemployment rates observed in other South Asian and Pacific countries with similar level of development. The government should attempt to facilitate the reintegration of returning migrant workers into mainstream Philippine society not only through training but also through local employment, entrepreneurial and livelihood activities because, despite complaints about the work abroad and the expressed desires to remain in the Philippines, the women often do not have another choice but to leave their homes and migrate (again) abroad. This means that the Philippines- Hong Kong migration is not only cyclical but also repetitive.

The lack of employment opportunities is, in other words, the trigger of the entire migration (and deskilling) process. Again, because soon after graduating from college many medium and highly educated Filipino women find themselves in less than desirable working situations, often having to engage in low-skilled work (sales person, factory work etc.), part-time work or finding themselves unemployed. Those that do manage to obtain a decent job either also work part time or are underpaid. Many women then decide to migrate to places such as Hong Kong for several years as

domestic workers where their salaries are generally much higher. When they come back without any new skills they are very likely to finding themselves again in the unemployment cycle.

In conclusion, whether this dissertation will in fact produce a butterfly effect and encourage reforms to the training programs is a yet-to-be-answered question, however one thing that is certain is that eventually the Philippines will have to cure the patient: the (youth and women's) unemployment. It cannot outsource its women forever and hope to solve the problem simply by providing skills for their market competitiveness and self-employment. As one participant during the focus group discussion rightfully stated: "more skills are not, and will not always be the solution".

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- **Belle, C.** 08/05/11 at Chater Road (Central)- Hong Kong
- **Cataran, N.** (17/03/11) at the Consulate of the Philippines- Hong Kong
- **Coles Pejil, I.** 24/04/11 at Chater Road (Central)- Hong Kong
- **Ibañez Ubamos, T.** (01/05/11) at Bayanihan training center- Hong Kong
- **Romulo, L.** (17/03/11) at the Consulate of the Philippines- Hong Kong
- **Salero, M.U.** (09/04/11) at Chater Garden (Central)- Hong Kong

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs):

- N°1: 21/03/11, at Chater Garden (Central)- Hong Kong
- N°2: 10/04/11, at Kantine Café(Central)- Hong Kong
- N°3: 17/04/11, at Kantine Café (Central)- Hong Kong
- N°4: 08/05/11 , at Chater Garden (Central)- Hong Kong

Dictionaries:

- The Free Dictionary: <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/>
- McMillan Dictionary: <http://www.macmillandictionary.com/>

13. GLOSSARY¹⁹

De-skilling= to cause (skilled persons or a labor force) to work at a job that does not utilize their skills; decrease in the quality and range of the practical knowledge of individuals

Domestic or household service= The Labor Code of the Philippines defines it as “service in the employer’s home which is usually necessary or desirable for the maintenance and enjoyment thereof and includes ministering to the personal comfort and convenience of the members of the employer’s household, including services of family drivers.

Female Domestic Helper (FDH) or worker (FDW = “In Hong Kong these are commonly referred to as domestic helpers. Typically work reserved for women, domestic workers perform services dealing with the household. The work carried out is on behalf of the direct employer [...]and their workplace is confined to the private home” (Adapted from Ignacio and Mejia 2008:34)

Reintegration= refers to “a re/inclusion or re/incorporation of a migrant into the society of his&her country of origin” (IOM, 2005:54)

Re-skilling= to acquire new or improved skills; to improve the aptitude for work of (a person) by additional training, upskilling

Self-development= Development of one's capabilities or potentialities; the state or process of improving or developing oneself, in this paper applied within the context of migration

Skilling= to develop abilities acquired by training; the process of teaching workers the skills that they need for a job

Unemployment= an unemployed individual is one: 1. not having, or not able to find work 2. without remunerative employment; out of work

Underemployment= an underemployed individual is one who is: 1. Employed only part-time when one needs and desires full-time employment. 2. Inadequately employed, especially employed at a low-paying job that requires less skill or training than one possesses. 3. Not fully or adequately used or employed

Vocational training= in this paper refers to a certain type of training whose main objective is preparing people for a vocation, as opposed to professional or academic training. Probably, this is the simplest and most commonly used definition of vocational training. More specifically it should be oriented to provide qualifications for wage employment or contract work.

¹⁹ Unless differently stated most definitions are taken from: The Free Dictionary and McMillan Dictionary

14. ANNEXES

1: The survey questionnaire

Location of Interview:

Date of Survey: ____/____/2011

Questionnaire: Skill training Foreign Domestic Helpers in Hong Kong

My name is Renske van Milink, I am a Master student from the Netherlands doing a research here in Hong Kong. This questionnaire is designed to gather information about your working and training experience (as stated by the POEA Guidelines). Please answer the questions as accurately as possible and to the best of your knowledge. **Your information will be kept strictly confidential** and will only be used by the University of Utrecht researchers and the Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants to assess the conditions and effects of skill training programs. Thank you for your time and attention.

Please complete each question and check box where indicated.

A. Basic Information						
COUNTRY and PROVINCE of origin:	AGE:					
Marital Status:						
<input type="checkbox"/> Single	<input type="checkbox"/> Married	<input type="checkbox"/> Divorced/Widowed				
Do you have children?						
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	If yes, what ages? _____	<input type="checkbox"/> No				
Your highest level of education is:						
<input type="checkbox"/> Primary	<input type="checkbox"/> Some Secondary	<input type="checkbox"/> High School Graduate	<input type="checkbox"/> Some College	<input type="checkbox"/> College Graduate	<input type="checkbox"/> Post-Graduate	<input type="checkbox"/> No Education
Did you have a full-time job in your country before arriving to Hong Kong?						
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes my job was: _____						
<input type="checkbox"/> No, I had a part-time job . My job was _____						
<input type="checkbox"/> No, I was unemployed						
When did you first arrive in Hong Kong? Year: _____ Month: _____						
How did you get your job when you arrived in Hong Kong?						
<input type="checkbox"/> Direct/Name Hire						
<input type="checkbox"/> Recruiting Agency: _____						
<input type="checkbox"/> Government office: _____						
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify): _____						

B. General information Pre-Departure Training	
1. Did you do a training program before arriving to Hong Kong?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes (Please continue to next question)	<input type="checkbox"/> No (Please go to Section E)
2. If yes, in what year _____	3. What type of training: _____
4. Was the training certified by the government? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
5. How long was the training program: _____ (specify: months/weeks?)	

C. Other information and views on Pre-Departure Training

6. Where did the training take place?
 Metro Manila province Your own province Other: _____

7. What sort of things did you learn during the training? Please tick.
 Using washing machine Chinese language
 Using ironing machine Chinese cooking
 Using vacuum cleaner Chinese history
 Cleaning the household How to deal with employers
 Baby care/sitting Other (please specify if anything is missing on this list):
 Taking care of old/sick people

8. How much did you pay for the training program? _____ (please specify currency: Hong Kong dollars or Peso?)

9. Keeping the quality and length of the program in mind, what do you think of the price?
 The price is cheap The price is okay The price is expensive

10. What do you think of the length of the training program?
 It is too long It is appropriate It is too short

11. Did you use the skills/knowledge you acquired during your program in your jobs here in Hong Kong?
 Yes very often Only sometimes No

12. Are the skills you learned useful only here in Hong Kong or also if you have a job in the Philippines?
 Only here in Hong Kong In both countries I don't know

13. Did you think the training was useful **BEFORE** you arrived in Hong Kong?
 Very useful Useful Satisfactory Not useful Pointless

14. Do you still find the training useful **AFTER** you started your work in Hong Kong?
 Very useful Useful Satisfactory Not useful Pointless

15. If you can please mention some good things or things that you liked, about the training program: _____

16. If you can please mention some bad things or things that you disliked, about the training program: _____

17. Overall, how would you rate the quality of the training:
 Very good Good Mediocre Bad Very bad

18. What changes would you like to see in the training program?

19. Did you stay at a camp during the training? Yes (please continue) No (please go to section E)

D. Information training camp and training conditions

20. How would you rate the sanitary conditions (cleanness) of the camp?
 Very Clean Clean Decent Dirty Very Dirty

21. How would you rate the quality of the facilities (toilets, beds etc.) of the training camp?
 Very good Good Decent Bad Very bad

22. How would you rate the quality of the food in the training camp?
 Very Clean Clean Decent Dirty Very Dirty

23. During the training, were you allowed to contact your friends and family (by phone, mail...)?
 Yes No

24. Please make a small list with all the **equipment** that you used or learn how to use during the training:

25. Was the equipment (machines etc.) used at the training old or new?
 New Old I don't know

26. Was the equipment used at the training sometimes broken or damaged? Yes No

27. During the training work were you made to work at a place other than the training center?
 No Yes, at: Agency owner's house
 Agency owner's office
 Other households

28. Were there any cases of **abuse or exploitation** that you or any of your friends experienced or were aware of during the training? Please check all that apply.
 None Sexual harassment Other (please specify): _____
 Corruption Rape
 Physical abuse Verbal abuse

E. Information past and current work

29. Do you have a job now? Yes. How many hours per day do you work on average? _____
 No.

30. How many contracts have you had since you arrived in Hong Kong? _____ in total.

31. How much longer would you like to stay in Hong Kong working as a domestic worker?
 Only a couple more months Another 4-7 years Until I cannot (physically) work anymore
 Only 1-3 more years Another 7-10 years I would like to leave now
Please explain why: _____

32. Have you ever had any serious problems with your past/ current employers? Yes No
If yes, explain shortly: _____

33. Where do you sleep? _____

34. Do you share a room? No Yes. With whom? _____

35. Are you allowed the following? Check all that apply.
 One rest day per week All statutory holidays Annual leave

36. In your job now, or in the past, did you do anything **NOT** included in your original contract?
 Yes. Explain: _____
 No

37. Has there been a time when you did not receive your wage?
 No Yes. Why? _____

38. Have you in the last few weeks or are you currently experiencing the following? Check all that apply.
 Loss of weight Lack of energy; tired Lack of motivation Feeling worthless
 Problems sleeping Difficulty concentrating Feeling hopeless None

END OF QUESTIONNAIRE. THANK YOU!

2: Province of Origin of the Survey Participants

Abra	2
Agusan	1
Aklan	
Albay	
Antique	
Apayao	
Aurora	
Basilan	
Bataan	
Batanes	
Batangas	
Benguet	
Biliran	
Bohol	1
Bukidnon	2
Bulacan	1
Cagayan	
Camarines	2
Camiguin	
Capiz	1
Catanduanes	
Cavite	
Cebu	
Compostela Valley	
Cotabato	
Davao	3
Eastern Samar	
Guimaras	
Ifugao	2
Ilocos	2
Iloilo	3
Isabela	7
Kalinga	5
La Union	
Laguna	
Lanao	1
Leyte	
Maguindanao	
Marinduque	
Masbate	
Misamis Occidental	
Misamis Oriental	1
Mountain Province	9
Negros Occidental	
Negros Oriental	
Northern Samar	
Nueva Ecija	
Nueva Vizcaya	4
Occidental Mindoro	1
Oriental Mindoro	
Palawan	
Pampanga	
Pangasinan	11
Quezon	1
Quirino	
Rizal	1
Romblon	
Samar	1
Sarangani	
Siquijor	
Sorsogon	
South Cotabato	
Southern Leyte	
Sultan Kudarat	
Sulu	
Surigao	
Tarlac	3
Tawi-Tawi	
Zambales	1
Zamboanga	
Metro Manila	4
Unknown	42

* Note: Those provinces divided into "North" and "South" were taken as one.

3: Information from survey questionnaire concerning the FDWs' work conditions

Declared Number of hours of work per day

		Frequency	Percent	Percent without missing data
Valid	8	5	4.5	7.5
	9	2	1.8	3.0
	10	4	3.6	6.0
	11	2	1.8	3.0
	12	9	8.0	13.4
	13	5	4.5	7.5
	14	4	3.6	6.0
	15	4	3.6	6.0
	16	13	11.6	19.4
	17	6	5.4	9.0
	18	2	1.8	3.0
	24	11	9.8	16.4
	Total	67	59.8	100.0
	Missing Data	45	40.2	
	Total	112	100.0	

Number of Symptoms of Depression among FDWs of the survey

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	None (0)	24	21.4
	1	21	18.8
	2	19	17.0
	3	15	13.4
	4	7	6.3
	5	14	12.5
	6	3	2.7
	All 7	8	7.1
	Total	111	99.1
	Missing Data	1	.9
Total	112	100.0	

Serious Problem?

Share Room?

One Rest Day/Week?

	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
No	80	71.4	55	49.1	18	16.1
Yes	30	26.8	55	49.1	93	83.0
Total	110	98.2	110	98.2	111	99.1
Missing Data	2	1.8	2	1.8	1	0.9
Total	112	100.0	112	100.0	112	100.0

Statutory Holidays?

Annual Leave?

No Wage Received?

	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Valid No	30	26.8	60	53.6	100	90.1
Yes	81	72.3	50	44.6	11	9.8
Total	111	99.1	110	98.2	111	99.1
Missing Data	1	0.9	2	1.8	1	0.9
Total	112	100.0	112	100.0	112	100.0

Dedicated to the devoted actions of the Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants:



Let us indeed “dream of a society where families are not broken up by the urgent need for survival” and work together for a “homeland where there is opportunity for everyone to live a decent and humane life” (APMM Slogan, Website 2011)

Renske van Milink

August 2011