



# Overseas Filipino Worker Voices

**A Study of Forced Labor Among Transnational Migrant  
Workers from the Philippines**

**March 2022**



*Overseas Filipino Worker Voices: A Study of Forced Labor Among Transnational Migrant Workers from the Philippines* was conducted in Luzon, Philippines, and digitally across Asia and the Middle East from January 2019 to March 2022 by Two Six Technologies in collaboration with scholars at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). This study was funded by a grant from the United States Department of State through the Global Fund to End Modern Slavery (GFEMS). The opinions, findings, and conclusions stated herein are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Department of State or GFEMS.

This team was supported by data collection and grantee programming performed by the University of the Philippines Centre International de Formation des Autorités et Leaders (CIFAL), the Fair Employment Foundation, and Blas Ople.

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Recommended citation:

Two Six Technologies, University of California, Los Angeles, and the Global Fund to End Modern Slavery. (2022). *OFW Voices: A Study of Forced Labor Among Transnational Migrant Workers from the Philippines*.

## Acronyms

DOLE	Department of Labor and Employment
DW	Domestic Worker
CIFAL	Centre international de formation des autorités et leaders (International Training Centre for Authorities and Leaders)
CPDEP	Comprehensive Pre-Departure Education Program
FEA	Fair Employment Agency
FEF	Fair Employment Foundation
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FL	Forced Labor
FTC	Fair Training Center
GFEMS	Global Fund to End Modern Slavery
IACAT	Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking
HSW	Household Service Workers
ICMS	Integrated Case Management System
ILO	International Labour Organization
IRB	Institutional Review Board
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
OFW	Overseas Filipino Worker
OWWA	Overseas Workers Welfare Administration
OUMWA	Office of the Undersecretary for Migrant Workers Affairs
PAOS	Post-Arrival Orientation Seminar
PDOS	Pre-departure Orientation Seminal

PEOS	Pre-Employment Orientation Seminar
PII	Personally Identifiable Information
POEA	Philippine Overseas Employment Agency.
PSA	Philippine Statistics Authority
PSSC	Philippine Social Science Council
RC	Regional Centers
SSERB	Social Science Ethics Review Board
TIP	Trafficking in Persons
TIP Office	U.S. Department of State Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons
TLS	Time-Location Sampling
TST	Two Six Technologies
UP	University of the Philippines

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## Executive Summary

Overseas labor migration has been a feature of the Filipino economy for over a century.<sup>1</sup> Over the last thirty years, overseas labor migration has become an increasingly important part of the country's economy, reducing unemployment and strengthening US dollar reserves.<sup>2</sup> However, many Overseas Filipino Workers' (OFW) working arrangements—particularly those employed as domestic workers (DWs) or in occupations viewed as “low-skilled”—are often subject to unethical recruitment mechanisms, deceptive hiring practices, and forced labor conditions after arriving in the receiving country. This situation has been exacerbated by the profound economic, public health, and other impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, which have caused uncertainty, skyrocketing unemployment, and large-scale repatriation among migrant workers globally.

This study sought to determine the pathways leading to forced labor/trafficking in persons (TIP) and the distribution of forced labor indicators among samples of OFWs in several destination countries and industries. The researchers registered 7,526 unique and eligible participants and gathered data surrounding the labor experiences of 6,085 registered OFWs. In concert with GFEMS, the University of Philippines Centre International de Formation des Autorités et Leaders (CIFAL), and grantee organizations including the Fair Employment Foundation (FEF), Two Six Technologies (TST) implemented this multi-cohort survey effort and examined the occurrence, distribution and dimensions of labor exploitation among study participants in three distinct study cohorts.

The motivation for this study was twofold. One, GFEMS sought to understand the effectiveness of specific interventions in reducing the prevalence of forced labor. As part of the study, grantee Fair Employment Foundation (FEF) provided pre-departure training, ethical recruitment, and ethical placement services to OFWs. GFEMS monitored outcomes among this cohort alongside those of OFWs who did not participate in FEF programming. Second, the researchers sought to understand the pathways and circumstances leading to high-risk work situations for OFWs working abroad, including forced labor conditions. This information can be used to inform better safeguards against forced labor, and better monitoring policies and processes while OFWs are working abroad. In addition, this information can provide a macroscopic picture of who is susceptible to exploitation and which industries and geographies are high-risk for OFWs, particularly in light of the profound new economic and public health realities that have emerged as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The research team operated within the context of several material constraints as well as operational realities that both enabled and bounded research design, data collection, and analysis. A number of these constraints emerged as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Components of the relevant ethical review organizations and legal review offices were shuttered due to the pandemic for 6 months to 1 year. In-person pre-departure training for OFWs was digitized in response to the pandemic, precluding time-location sampling from being performed by CIFAL to build a “control” cohort. The OWWA pre-departure seminars were subsequently re-established, but with social distancing requirements and subject to countrywide community quarantine guidelines. FEF training was initially

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<sup>1</sup> Garica, K., Habaña, K., Canto, D. (2022). The effects of labor migration and OFW remittances on the level of poverty in the Philippines. *Journal of Economics, Finance and Accounting Studies*, 4(1), 203–221. <https://doi.org/10.32996/jefas.2022.4.1.13>

<sup>2</sup> Garica, K., Habaña, K., Canto, D. (2022). The effects of labor migration and OFW remittances on the level of poverty in the Philippines. *Journal of Economics, Finance and Accounting Studies*, 4(1), 203–221. <https://doi.org/10.32996/jefas.2022.4.1.13>

shuttered due to the Enhanced Community Quarantines imposed by the Government of the Philippines, then reinstated with strict training class size limits.

The research team was also limited in its mechanisms for recontacting OFWs in the CIFAL and FEF cohorts who were registered in the Philippines prior to migrating. Social chat and mobile messaging applications offered multiple mechanisms for recontact; however, some of these mechanisms, such as SMS, depend on phone numbers that may have changed after OFWs departed the Philippines. Moreover, these digital messaging-driven approaches are “lightweight” as opposed to phone or in-person interviews in that they do not immediately alert the respondent or require an immediate response from them. As a result, they may have resulted in increased attrition instead of other contact mechanisms.

## Participant Demographics

Participants were non-randomly recruited via three different mechanisms: first, by digital recruitment using social chat applications at OFW Pre-Departure Orientation Seminars (PDOS) in the Philippines, relying on a modified time-location sampling strategy; second, when trainees graduated from training and placement via Fair Employment Foundation-provided OFW support services; and third, via social media-based targeted recruitment advertisements fielded in destination geographies (these included Hong Kong, Japan, Taiwan, Malaysia, Singapore, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates).<sup>3</sup> Across all three cohorts, the median age range for all respondents who followed up ( $n=6,085$ )<sup>4</sup> was 35–39, and roughly two-thirds (65.9%) of respondents were female. In general, female OFWs were statistically more likely to be younger and more likely to report Mindanao or Visayas as their islands of origin, domestic work as their industry, lower levels of education, debt owed, and lower wages earned relative to male OFWs. Of the female OFWs who participated in the study, approximately 61.9% were DWs.

## Forced Labor

For the analysis, forced labor was categorized by levels of severity with Tier 1A being most severe and including threats of violence to self or family, restricted movement, and debt bondage. Tier 1 included both threats and restricted movement. Tier 2 does not include threats of violence or restricted movement but may include working more hours than agreed upon, working on rest days, and debt bondage.

Across all participant cohorts, the researchers observe that 1.9% of surveyed OFWs experienced Tier 1A (most severe) forced labor conditions, 3.3% experienced Tier 1 conditions, and 26.4% experienced Tier 2 conditions (Table 1). Moreover, across all examined tiers of forced labor, female OFWs faced more than twice the forced labor rates of male OFWs.

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<sup>3</sup> Recruitment from PDOS events used a time-location sampling approach to probabilistically sample from the population of OFWs planning to imminently depart from the Philippines. Recruitment from FEF support services targeted all graduates or recipients of FEF services. Recruitment via social media ads used Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) OFW Census data to weight strata to approximate demographic representativeness while relying on a non-probabilistic river sampling approach. 1,101 participants were registered via PDOS events; 429 participants were registered via FEF; and 5,996 participants were registered via social media. The researchers caution that, due to large-scale repatriation and closure of migration pathways during the COVID-19 pandemic, there are no reliable and current external benchmark data points that may be used to either weight collected samples or validate their representativeness. The researchers also note that cross-cohort comparisons are generally avoided in the analysis of survey response data for this study, owing to the different sampling strategies used to build each participant cohort.

<sup>4</sup> 29 participants who registered via PDOS events actually migrated and completed follow-ups; 60 participants registered via FEF actually migrated and completed follow-ups.



**Table 1. Forced Labor Distribution by Gender**

Tier	Women	Men
Tier 1A	2.5%	1.1%
Tier 1	4.3%	1.8%
Tier 2	35.7%	12.2%

(n=5,642)

Domestic work—a female-dominated profession among OFWs—is associated with an even higher rate of forced labor across all examined tiers, with 42.9% of DWs experiencing conditions meeting at least Tier 2 conditions (Table 2).

**Table 2. Forced Labor by Profession (Domestic Worker vs. Other)**

Tier	Domestic Worker	Non-Domestic Worker
Tier 1A	3.3%	1.1%
Tier 1	5.5%	2.0%
Tier 2	42.9%	16.0%

(n=5,996)

The participant group consisting of less-educated, younger, female OFWs from Mindanao and Visayas who migrated to work as DWs, faces significantly higher levels of forced labor risk than other OFW sub-populations. This finding is especially critical due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, as Philippine Statistic Authority surveys from 2019 and 2020 suggest that DWs tended to remain employed while OFWs working in other professions were repatriated.

External survey data also suggests that proportionally more women remained abroad while men repatriated.<sup>5</sup> In Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, the two destination countries featuring the highest level of every examined tier of forced labor, the percentage of female OFWs employed in occupations categorized as “low-skilled” such as domestic work grew in 2020 relative to 2019. As of 2020, these two countries alone accounted for 37.1% of the global population of female OFWs.<sup>6</sup> At the same time, this study finds that at least 60% of female DWs working in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Qatar experience at least Tier 2 forced labor conditions. Therefore, relative to other OFW populations, proportionally more DWs—the *most vulnerable* workgroup—have continued to work through the risks and vulnerabilities exposed by the pandemic in the *highest-risk* destinations and occupations. In contrast, proportionally more OFWs in lower-risk occupations or with lower-risk demographic characteristics have repatriated.

<sup>5</sup> Philippine Statistics Authority. (2022, March 7). Overseas Filipino Workers are estimated at 1.77 million. <https://psa.gov.ph/press-releases/id/166375>

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

In addition, among those who carry debt burdens, the rates of forced labor at all tiers of severity are significantly higher than among those who do not.<sup>7</sup> The COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically increased the percentage of OFWs who carry debts, with 49% of surveyed respondents indicating that they carry a debt, and 62% of OFWs who carry debts stating that their debts are a result of the pandemic. This finding suggests a dramatic increase in the overall vulnerability of OFWs at-large due to the pandemic.

## Intervention Effectiveness

Since recipients of FEF training and placements were selected according to a non-probability sampling strategy, the study could not directly compare their outcomes with those of other cohorts in the study, which were sampled under different strategies. The study instead used a quantitative sample matching technique to provide a “best-possible” comparison between FEF recipient and non-FEF recipient OFWs, matching the two samples using all available participant characteristics with any relationship to forced labor outcomes.<sup>8</sup> The researchers found that **FEF participation is statistically significantly associated with a lower level of forced labor.**

Furthermore, the researchers examine the statistical effect of pre-departure training attendance, one service provided by FEF and the government of the Philippines that has been touted as a mechanism for reducing vulnerability to forced labor, and find that among OFWs already working abroad, pre-departure training is **not** statistically significantly associated with a lower level of forced labor.

## Policy Recommendations

**First, apply new research and policy findings to enhance pre-departure training** to include content that better prepares workers for the risks they may face abroad. In particular, mandatory training programming should be enhanced to further educate workers on their legal rights and protections. Best practices should also be employed to ensure OFW safety and contact with Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA), Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), and other agencies while abroad.

**Second, provide special protections to domestic workers and others in occupations categorized as “low-skilled” as well as those from disadvantaged and higher-risk backgrounds.** These occupations have provided employment opportunities throughout the pandemic, but they expose workers to higher risks. Furthermore, workers from marginalized backgrounds—especially younger, less-educated female OFWs from Mindanao and Visayas—are at higher risk of exploitation than other OFW subpopulations. Interventions should address the dangerous relationships between demographics, work industry, and risk of forced labor.

**Third, engage with industry stakeholders, government offices, and nongovernmental organizations to improve mechanisms for both worker placement and debt relief** among workers intending to migrate abroad. Due to the pandemic, the rate of debt among OFWs has ballooned to the point that nearly half of all OFWs owe debts. As mentioned above, **among those who carry debt burdens, the rates of forced labor at all tiers of severity is significantly higher than among those who do not.** Many of these debts are assumed to ensure employment

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<sup>7</sup> The researchers note that debt is itself considered a risk indicator for certain tiers of forced labor. However, the presence of debts positively correlates with all tiers of forced labor, including those for which it is not considered a risk factor.

<sup>8</sup> For more information, please see the Comparative Cohort Analysis section.

abroad; however, this need not be the case. The study findings support the view that ethical placement systems have a significant positive effect on the safety of OFWs, even in high-risk industries such as domestic work.

## Introduction

Each year, an estimated 2.2 million Filipinos work overseas—nearly one million of whom are hired into low-skilled occupations (e.g., construction, domestic work, and transportation).<sup>9</sup> The World Bank reports that remittances from overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) comprised 9.7% of the GDP of the Philippines in 2020.<sup>10</sup> However, the risks to which migrant worker populations, including OFWs, are exposed, especially those moving into low-skilled jobs, increase their susceptibility to unethical recruitment practices and exploitative and dangerous labor conditions. Moreover, the transience of migrant labor and the global footprint of the OFW population pose challenges to authorities responsible for responding to incidents of exploitation, who may lack the tools and capacity to do so rapidly and effectively.

The COVID-19 pandemic has and continues to dramatically alter the composition and experiences of the OFW labor force. More than one million Filipinos have repatriated to the Philippines since 2020, amounting to what the Philippine Secretary of Foreign Affairs described as the largest repatriation in the history of the Philippines.<sup>11</sup> In April 2020, Two Six Technologies (TST) surveyed approximately 6,000 OFWs, finding that in the first few months of the pandemic, more than 75% of the surveyed OFWs in GCC countries reported facing new financial hardships due to the pandemic. Up to 20% of respondents in the early months reported job losses in multiple countries, including UAE and Kuwait, which collectively host nearly 20% of all OFWs globally.<sup>12</sup> The OFW population continues to feel the pandemic's impact, which has exposed OFWs and their families to new risks and hardships.

The government of the Philippines has passed legislation to reduce forced labor among overseas workers, including government-provided pre-departure training and nationally established ethical recruitment standards. Moreover, a diversity of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) work to fill the gaps between policy and practice through a wide spectrum of efforts, including policy advocacy, pre-migration training, fair recruitment practices, rescue and repatriation, and reintegration into life and alternative livelihoods in the Philippines.

To counteract labor exploitation, FEF is focused on ethical recruitment methods for OFWs so they can migrate abroad safely, without facing any recruitment fees, and equipped with pre-departure training to ensure that they are well informed concerning issues of safety, their legal rights, and the psychological effects of living abroad. Operating the Fair Training Centre (FTC) in Manila and the Fair Employment Agency (FEA) in Hong Kong, FEF aims to shift the recruitment industry toward an ethical recruitment standard and protect millions of Filipino workers and their families.

TST, working in concert with the University of the Philippines CICAL, FEF, Blas F. Ople Policy Center and Training Institute (Blas Ople), and in coordination with GFEMS, performed a multi-year OFW Voices study that examined multiple cohorts of OFWs who departed from the Philippines to work abroad, or were already established and working abroad, from 2019 to 2021. TST assessed the pathways leading to forced labor/trafficking in persons (TIP) and the distribution of TIP indicators among three distinct samples of OFWs in several destination countries and

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<sup>9</sup> Mapa, C.D. (2020). *Total number of OFWs estimated at 2.2 million*. Philippines Statistics Authority. <https://psa.gov.ph/content/total-number-ofws-estimated-22-million>

<sup>10</sup> World Bank. (2020). *Personal remittances, received (% of GDP) - Philippines*. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.TRF.PWKR.DT.GD.ZS?locations=PH>

<sup>11</sup> Baclig, C. E. (2021, December 20). *OFWs: PH heroes even in time of COVID pandemic*. Inquirer.net. <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1530042/ofws-ph-heroes-even-in-time-of-covid-pandemic>

<sup>12</sup> Mapa, C.D. (2020). *Total number of OFWs estimated at 2.2 million*. Philippines Statistics Authority. <https://psa.gov.ph/content/total-number-ofws-estimated-22-million>

industries. TST also measured whether the programs implemented by FEF were associated with differences in outcomes in the labor experiences among OFWs.

## Existing Research

Overseas labor migration has been a feature of the Filipino economy for over a century.<sup>13</sup> Over the last thirty years, overseas labor migration has become an increasingly important part of the country's economy, reducing unemployment and strengthening U.S. dollar reserves.<sup>14</sup> However, many Overseas Filipino Workers' (OFW) working arrangements—particularly those in low-skilled or domestic jobs — are often subject to unethical recruitment mechanisms, deceptive hiring practices, and forced labor conditions after arriving in the receiving country.

Although many qualitative and quantitative studies on the causes and effects of trafficking in persons among OFWs exist,<sup>15</sup> many of these studies are now 10 or more years old. Few studies have comprehensively examined groups of migrants while they are currently abroad, providing first-hand reports from numerous destination countries at once concerning the distribution and extent of forced labor experiences and factors that increase the risk to OFWs. In the past few years, the Government of the Philippines has taken concrete steps toward consolidated data collection: the Inter-Agency Council against Trafficking (IACAT) launched an Integrated Case Management System (ICMS) in 2020 in which data from the various agencies servicing cases of TIP will be housed.<sup>16</sup> As a recent example of the Government of the Philippines' counter-trafficking efforts, the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) has instituted deployment bans on domestic workers (DWs) and construction workers to Saudi Arabia, which will be enforced until the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia complies with the Philippines' standards for fair treatment and protections of OFWs and pays withheld wages.<sup>17</sup>

Though the Government of the Philippines legal framework and sustained efforts toward the elimination of trafficking fully meet the U.S. State Department Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons' standards, a significant number of Filipino migrant workers every year are subjected to trafficking in persons (whether forced labor or sexual exploitation) in numerous industries, including industrial fishing, shipping, construction, healthcare,

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<sup>13</sup> Garica, K., Habaña, K., Canto, D. (2022). The effects of labor migration and OFW remittances on the level of poverty in the Philippines. *Journal of Economics, Finance and Accounting Studies*, 4(1), 203–221. <https://doi.org/10.32996/jefas.2022.4.1.13>

<sup>14</sup> Garica, K., Habaña, K., Canto, D. (2022). The effects of labor migration and OFW remittances on the level of poverty in the Philippines. *Journal of Economics, Finance and Accounting Studies*, 4(1), 203–221. <https://doi.org/10.32996/jefas.2022.4.1.13>

<sup>15</sup> See: Leones, C., & Caparas, D. (2003). Trafficking in human beings from the Philippines: A Survey of government experts and law enforcement case files. *National Police Commission, Republic of the Philippines*. [https://www.unodc.org/pdf/crime/human\\_trafficking/Exec\\_Summary\\_NAPOLCOM.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/pdf/crime/human_trafficking/Exec_Summary_NAPOLCOM.pdf); Junghus, C. & Olsen, A. (2021). Making decent work a reality for domestic workers: Progress and prospects in Asia and the Pacific, ten years after the adoption of the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189). *International Labour Organization*. [https://www.ilo.org/asia/publications/WCMS\\_800224/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/asia/publications/WCMS_800224/lang--en/index.htm)

<sup>16</sup> Department of Justice, Republic of the Philippines. (2020, July 28). *Press Release: IACAT launches digital case management system against trafficking of OFWs on world day against trafficking*. [https://www.doj.gov.ph/news\\_article.html?newsid=663](https://www.doj.gov.ph/news_article.html?newsid=663)

<sup>17</sup> Depasupil, W. (2022, February 10). Deployment ban to Saudi Stays – Bello. *The Manila Times*. <https://www.manilatimes.net/2022/02/09/news/deployment-ban-on-filipino-workers-to-saudi-arabia-stays/1832377>

domestic work, and other service industry jobs, particularly in the Middle East and Asia.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, research published since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic suggests that DWs, who have remained abroad in larger proportions than other professions,<sup>19</sup> have been exposed to uniquely heightened risk factors due to the pandemic.<sup>20</sup> However, there is limited research literature examining the labor outcomes among this key OFW population during the pandemic.

Many trafficked people consent to emigrate through recruitment agencies, direct hires, and other means, only discovering that they have been deceived after leaving the Philippines. Traffickers may also exploit Filipinos already working overseas through fraudulent employment offers to work in another country. For example, in 2019, a recruitment agency illegally transported dozens of OFWs from the United Arab Emirates to Damascus.<sup>21</sup> These workers endured physical and sexual assault, withholding of wages, imprisonment, and 18-hour workdays with no days off—all of which are hallmarks of forced labor, according to the International Labour Organization (ILO).<sup>22</sup>

The migration of OFWs is largely driven by relatively higher wages overseas, which are often sent home to families in the Philippines as remittances. In some cases, OFWs are required by the terms of their employment to pay various fees and the cost of their relocation, receive an advance from the employer or recruiter, or take a loan from the employer or recruiter, which can make migrants vulnerable to debt bondage and wage withholding.<sup>23</sup>

## Effects of the Coronavirus Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in unprecedented job losses, displacements, and repatriations of OFWs abroad.<sup>24</sup> The pandemic has caused confusion, isolation, and occasional panic; in 2020, temporary travel restrictions related to the pandemic prevented many OFWs from emigrating while host countries closed their borders.<sup>25</sup> The Government of the Philippines initially estimated that roughly 420,000 OFWs had repatriated by the end of 2020; by September 2021, the total number of repatriations was over 1.1 million.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> United States Department of State Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons. (2021). *Trafficking in Persons Report: Philippines*. <https://www.state.gov/reports/2021-trafficking-in-persons-report/philippines/>

<sup>19</sup> Philippine Statistic Authority. (2022). 2020 Overseas Filipino Workers (Final Results). <https://psa.gov.ph/press-releases/id/166375>

<sup>20</sup> Aoun, R. (2020). COVID-19 impact on female migrant domestic workers in the middle east. *GBV AoR Helpdesk*, 2020-05.

<sup>21</sup> McQue, K. (2021, January 24). Sold into Syrian servitude, Filipina workers tell of abuse, rape and imprisonment. *The Washington Post*. [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle-east/trafficking-migrant-workers-syria-uae/2021/01/24/1d79e43c-3f0d-11eb-b58b-1623f6267960\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle-east/trafficking-migrant-workers-syria-uae/2021/01/24/1d79e43c-3f0d-11eb-b58b-1623f6267960_story.html)

<sup>22</sup> International Labour Organization. (2022). *What is forced labor, modern slavery and human trafficking?* <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/forced-labour/definition/lang--en/index.htm>

<sup>23</sup> Larsen, J. (2010). Migration and people trafficking in Southeast Asia. *Australian Institute of Criminology*, 401. [https://apmigration.ilo.org/resources/resource-content/trends-issues-in-crime-and-criminal-justice-no.-401/leadImage/image\\_view\\_fullscreen](https://apmigration.ilo.org/resources/resource-content/trends-issues-in-crime-and-criminal-justice-no.-401/leadImage/image_view_fullscreen)

<sup>24</sup> <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1490532/number-of-filipinos-repatriated-during-pandemic-nears-1-5-million>

<sup>25</sup> Patinio, F. (2021, January 9). *3.4M workers get almost P30-B cash aid via Bayanihan laws: DOLE*. Philippine News Agency. <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1126872>

<sup>26</sup> Patinio, F. (2021, January 9). *3.4M workers get almost P30-B cash aid via Bayanihan laws: DOLE*. Philippine News Agency. <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1126872>

As travel and labor forced restrictions are lifting in some key markets,<sup>27</sup> the OFW labor force is presented with a post-pandemic opportunity to resume economic activity. However, economic conditions have changed, as have rules and norms surrounding migrant laborers. Whether OFWs return to a safer, more ethical labor environment depends on the research and policymaking efforts of key domestic and international stakeholders. By examining the occurrence and characteristics of forced labor among OFWs in several key destination geographies during the pandemic, this study seeks to provide insights into the new economic and public health realities faced by vulnerable migrant worker populations.

## Study Contributions

This study sought to determine the pathways leading to forced labor/trafficking in persons (TIP) and the distribution of forced labor indicators among samples of OFWs in several destination countries and industries. The researchers registered 7,526 unique and eligible participants and gathered data surrounding the labor experiences of 6,085 registered OFWs. In concert with GFEMS, the University of Philippines Centre International de Formation des Autorités et Leaders (CIFAL), and grantee organizations, TST implemented this multi-cohort survey effort and examined the distribution and dimensions of labor exploitation among study participants in three distinct study cohorts.

Soon after commencing initial data collection, the COVID-19 pandemic spread to the Philippines and led to a declaration by President Rodrigo Duterte of a state of General Community Quarantine, followed by a stricter Enhanced Community Quarantine. These quarantine measures persisted through 2021 and into 2022, and similar lockdown measures took place across much of the world. The pandemic dramatically altered the global labor landscape and raised an array of new questions and concerns regarding the safety of transnational migrant workers such as OFWs. During this period, the study adapted its sampling strategy and survey instruments to the logistical and operational realities on the ground; it also examined how the pandemic affected the labor status and safety of OFW populations in the key destination geographies of Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, Japan, Taiwan, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Kuwait, and Qatar. This study provides new empirical findings that shine a light on the experiences of OFW populations across these geographies during the pandemic and identifies OFW vulnerability profiles that have persisted and even grown in both size and severity during the pandemic.

The motivation for this study was twofold. One, GFEMS sought to understand the effectiveness of specific interventions in reducing the prevalence of forced labor. As part of the study, grantee Fair Employment Foundation (FEF) provided pre-departure training and ethical recruitment services to OFWs. FEF's training services included safety training, legal education, and life and emotional support skills for living and working abroad via the Fair Training Center (FTC). It also operates the Fair Employment Agency, an ethical placement agency in Hong Kong that ensures that no recruitment fees are imposed upon DWs for job placement, and an ethical labor exporting partnership with recruitment agencies in the Philippines. The researchers registered FTC training graduates upon completion of their training and followed up with them after migration to monitor their status and safety abroad.

Second, the researchers sought to understand the pathways and circumstances leading to high-risk work situations for OFWs working abroad, including forced labor conditions. This information can be used to improve safeguards against forced labor, monitoring policies and processes while OFWs are working abroad, and mechanisms for rescue and recovery when dangerous and exploitative situations arise. In addition, this information can provide a

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<sup>27</sup> Depasupil, W. (2021, November 23). *Dubai reopens labor market to Filipino workers*. The Manila Times. <https://www.manilatimes.net/2021/11/23/latest-stories/dubai-reopens-labor-market-to-filipino-workers>

macroscopic picture of who is susceptible to exploitation, which pre-departure demographic and economic characteristics correlate with experiencing forced labor conditions while working abroad, and which industries and geographies are highest-risk for OFWs, particularly in light of the profound new economic and public health realities that have emerged since the inception of the study in 2019.

## Study Overview

### Study Design

#### Data Collection and Enumerator Training

The data collection effort for this study consisted of two arms. One arm was a registration survey instrument and subsequent follow-up surveys to measure changes in employment and safety conditions, specifically in terms of forced labor indicators. The second arm was a combined registration and labor status survey, delivered to OFWs already located in destination countries via web and social media ads.

In the first arm, registration data was collected through partner organizations CIFAL and FEF. Staff from both organizations were trained by TST personnel before performing registration. A majority of these enumerators had previously conducted similar studies and understood the sensitivities towards OFWs and forced labor. CIFAL and FEF personnel went through a 2-day training program led by TST to standardize and verify survey delivery practices. The first day consisted of training on survey delivery (i.e., verifying comprehension and consent and providing information without making promises or biasing responses). On day 2, enumerators were introduced and trained on the technology. Initially, pre-pandemic, they were trained on the use of android tablets and the offline data collection software. These tablets collected data that was geo-tagged, timestamped, and locally stored until a data connection was available; once the tablets connected to WIFI, all locally stored data was automatically uploaded to TST servers.

CIFAL registrations occurred at OWWA Regional Centers (RCs), which held PDOS events during the second half of 2021. CIFAL worked directly with OWWA to develop a roster of all RCs, and obtained schedules of all PDOS events at the RCs as well as attendance numbers. Then, the OWWA RCs were probabilistically selected by CIFAL using a time-location sampling strategy. The selected RCs featured a training video developed by CIFAL for PDOS class attendees. At the end of the video, attendees were encouraged to register via a mobile-assisted self-interview process. Potential participants simply messaged TST a specific word through social chat applications like WhatsApp, Viber, and Signal, which prompted an immediate response containing mobile-friendly web survey links in multiple languages. Participants clicked on the link corresponding to their preferred language, and were presented with the instrument for self-administration. Approximately 61% of the registrants registered in Tagalog, 30% registered in English, 4% registered in Cebuano, 2% registered in Ilokano, and 2% registered in Bicolano. More information on the PDOS event sampling process utilized by CIFAL is provided in the Methodology section.

FEF registrations took place in person at the end of FEF training curricula and prior to deployment from 2019 through 2021. FEF personnel were trained to introduce the study to potential OFWs and provide them with printouts containing instructions on registering for the study. Before the pandemic, these registrations were enumerator-led tablet-assisted self-interviews ( $n=30$ ); during the pandemic, FEF graduates participated in the mobile-assisted self-interview process as detailed above ( $n=399$ ).



Due to the coronavirus pandemic and related restrictions, many OFWs found themselves unable to emigrate as planned. Restricted movement and migration had suspended overseas employment in many cases, resulting in OFWs not finding employment abroad and/or being unable to migrate for a job they may have already secured. Many OFWs who had already migrated lost their jobs or were otherwise unable to continue their work. Whether by choice or out of necessity, many OFWs returned home; others stayed put. To understand the effects of the pandemic on these workers and the market for overseas labor, TST modified survey questions to contextualize and identify the effects of the pandemic to the extent possible.

The pandemic made it increasingly difficult to register OFWs prior to departure. To supplement the data and ensure that we were collecting information regarding OFWs' labor status, TST also implemented a combined registration and labor status survey, delivered to OFWs already in destination countries through social media advertisements deployed over Facebook and Instagram. This instrument collected both background demographic information and labor status indicator data, and followed a unique sampling strategy. This second arm of study data was collected from June to December 2021, with periodic samples from the online population of OFWs living abroad taking place every 30 to 60 days.

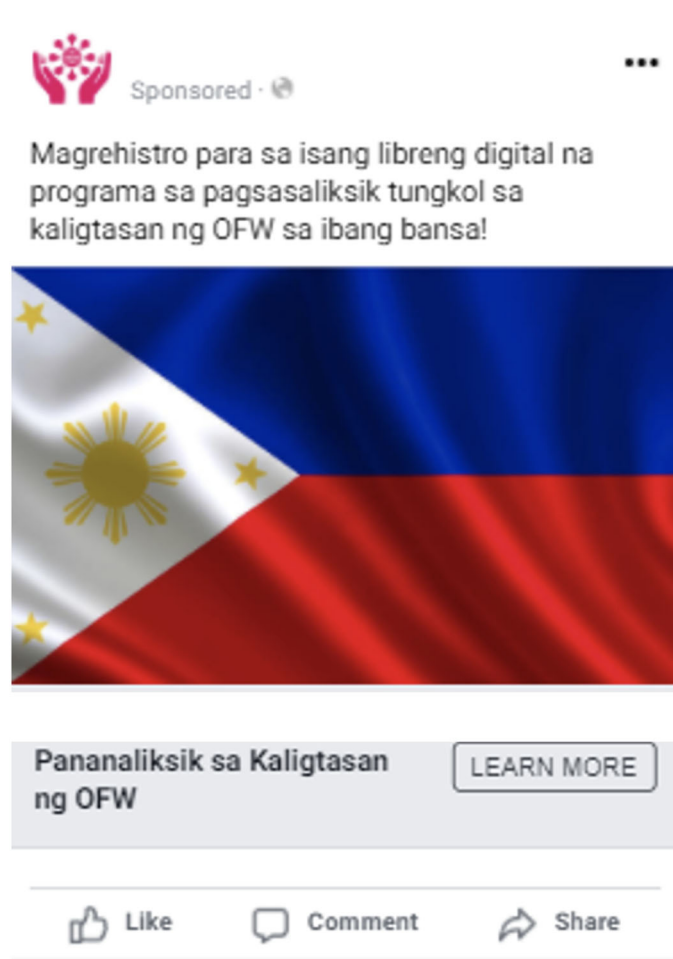
## **Initial Registration Survey (Arm One)**

Survey participants were solicited by partner organizations CIFAL and FEF. CIFAL registrations took place at OWWA RCs probabilistically selected using time-location sampling. FEF registrations took place in person at the end of FEF training curricula. Staff from both organizations provided background information about the study and the registration survey instrument. Consent was built into the survey. In face-to-face enumerator-assisted registrations, verbal consent was required prior to continuing the registration process.

The registration survey consisted of the consent section, which introduced the study and its goals, provided contact information for the principal investigator, and ensured participants that the survey was voluntary, and they could withdraw at any time during the study. This was followed by mandatory exclusion criteria (i.e., those not planning on working abroad in the next 12 months, those who were not of eligible age to participate in the study, or employees of a foreign government), an array of demographic questions, contact information for each participant, and contact information for immediate family members. This information was captured to ensure access to participants by organizations like IACAT and the Philippines Overseas Employment Agency (POEA) if the participants were subjected to forced labor conditions. The registration survey also captured information regarding their destination, job type, contract, debt, fees, and expected salary. For participants registered through FEF, there were also a series of questions related to which specific interventions the participant received.

At the end of the process, each participant was presented with the contact information of IACAT and POEA and urged to call if they had concerns related to their working conditions or were in danger. Participants were also asked about consent to participate in follow-up engagements to continue to monitor their labor status.

### BOX 1: Facebook Advertisement Displayed to OFWs



Note: Translation - "Register for a free digital research program on OFW safety abroad!"  
"OFW Safety Research"

## Follow-Up Survey (Arm One)

After registration and upon migration, study participants registered by partner organizations CIFAL and FEF were contacted via WhatsApp, SMS, and/or Facebook Messenger with introductory information to the follow-up engagements and links to the survey platform. Initial follow-up messages were sent one month after registration. The survey was offered in multiple languages to ensure comprehension (Tagalog, Bicolano, Ilocano, Cebuano, and English).

The follow-up questionnaire obtained consent for participation again and reviewed the respondent's current migration and employment status. Participants who reported changing jobs since their last contact were presented with a series of questions related to their new work, including industry, recruitment methods, fees, contract, and salary. These engagements also captured indicators of forced labor (see Table 3) and whether or not participants had reached out for any assistance during their stay in the destination country.

The design of follow-up engagements enabled researchers to identify participants in forced labor conditions and provide contact information of organizations mandated by the Filipino government to provide support and assistance.

## Combined Registration / Follow-Up Survey (Arm Two)

The pandemic and subsequent restrictions on travel made it more difficult to contact and gather data from OFWs who were registered in the Philippines and subsequently traveled to destination locations. To supplement data shortcomings and ensure forced labor indicators were captured from OFWs who were already placed into jobs in destination countries, a combined registration and follow-up engagement was conducted through social media on a bi-monthly basis. For these surveys, the Meta advertising platform was leveraged to recruit OFWs into the study via advertisements shown to OFWs as they used Facebook, Instagram, or other web sites with Facebook or Instagram integrations (see Box 1 for advertisement).<sup>28</sup> This sampling strategy is described further in the Methodology section.

The combined survey collected both demographic and background information about the respondent, such as their island of origin, age, and number of dependents, as well as their labor status. This reduced the risk of attrition by asking all relevant questions in a single survey, which was made possible by the fact that members of this cohort had already migrated and begun working abroad. During each wave of surveying, recruitment ads were fielded for 7 to 10 days at a time.

Data collected from both study arms were automatically segmented into forced labor tiers, as shown in Table 4.

## Forced Labor Conditions

In this study, working conditions featuring specific combinations of risk indicators establish the presence of forced labor. These conditions are based on various indicators derived from both the ILO definition of forced labor as well as the U.S. Government Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) of 2000 definition of labor trafficking, which states, “the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery.”<sup>29</sup> Although a large number of such indicators exist, the research team selected a concise set of indicators in order to obtain a sufficient number of completed surveys from the target populations, by minimizing survey fatigue and avoiding redundant items whenever possible. These indicators are categorized in Table 3 as evidence of Force, Fraud, or Coercion, and are also mapped to Menace of Penalty and Involuntariness. Menace of Penalty refers to punishments used to compel a person to work; Involuntariness refers to conditions that deny a worker freedom to leave a job at any time.<sup>30</sup> As summarized in Table 4, these indicators are further broken into tiers of severity; these tiers have previously been used in studies by TST and GFEMS as a means of succinctly quantifying severity in a valid and informative fashion.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> For more information on Meta’s advertising platform and integrations, see:

<https://www.facebook.com/business/tools/ads-manager>

<sup>29</sup> 22 U.S. Code § 7102. More information is available via the U.S. Department of Justice:

<https://www.justice.gov/humantrafficking>

<sup>30</sup> International Labour Organization. (2022). *What is forced labor, modern slavery and human trafficking?*

<https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/forced-labour/definition/lang--en/index.htm>

<sup>31</sup> Two Six Technologies, University of California, Los Angeles, and the Global Fund to End Modern Slavery. (2021). *Worker Voices: A Large-Scale Study of Migrant Construction Workers from Bundelkhand to Delhi, India.*

Table 3. Indicators and Categories

Category	Indicator	Description	Severity	ILO Category
Force	No freedom of movement (after work shift)	Restricted movement / isolation	High	Involuntariness
Fraud	Not paid on time	Wage withholding	Low	Menace of Penalty
	Not paid 2x for overtime - (those who worked more than 8 hours per day and reported no overtime payment)	Wage withholding	Low	Menace of Penalty
	Work more hours than agreed upon	Deception	Mid*	Involuntariness
	Not paid agreed upon wage	Deception	Mid*	Involuntariness
Coercion	Work on rest days for fear of being fired	Intimidation/Threats	Mid	Menace of Penalty
	Threat to self	Threats	High	Menace of Penalty
	Threat to family	Threats	High	Menace of Penalty
	Debt to employer	Debt bondage	Mid	Involuntariness
	Inability to leave job / employer	Debt bondage	Mid	Involuntariness

\* These fields are insufficient on their own to warrant a trafficking claim, and must be considered in concert with other present indicators.

Table 4. Forced Labor Indicators & Tiering Scheme

	TVPA Categories	Menace of Penalty		Involuntariness
Tier 1A	Force AND Coercion	Threat to self	AND	No freedom of movement AND Debt Bondage
		Threat to family		

<b>Tier 1</b>	<b>Force AND Coercion</b>	<b>Threat to self</b>	<b>AND</b>	<b>No freedom of movement</b>
		<b>Threat to family</b>		
<b>Tier 2</b>	<b>Force AND Coercion</b>	<b>Work on rest days</b>	<b>AND</b>	<b>No freedom of movement</b>
	<b>Fraud* AND Coercion</b>	<b>Threat to self</b>	<b>AND</b>	<b>AT LEAST ONE OF THE FOLLOWING: Debt bondage Inability to leave Fraud (Wages or hours)</b>
		<b>Threat to family</b>		
* These Tier 2 indicator combinations may include both Fraud and Coercion as identified by the TVPA, if the respondent works more hours than agreed upon; otherwise, they only include indicators of Coercion.				

## Intervention Group

To counteract labor exploitation, **FEF** is focused on ethical and zero-fee recruitment methods for OFWs so they can migrate abroad safely, equipped with pre-departure training to ensure that they are well informed concerning issues of safety, their legal rights, and the psychological effects of living abroad. Designed to achieve self-sustainability and rapid scalability, the GFEMS-FEF project aimed to shift the recruitment industry toward an ethical recruitment standard and protect millions of Filipino workers and their families.

In Hong Kong, the **Fair Employment Agency (FEA)** is an employment agency driving industry standards for hiring migrant DWs. Their focus is transparency and trustworthiness in placing workers in jobs.

The **Fair Training Center (FTC)** is a non-profit social business in Manila that prepares first-time migrant workers for life and work overseas. The training program addresses the following:

- professionalism and maintaining good relationships with employers
- parenting abroad
- financial literacy
- labor and individual rights education
- labor trafficking risk awareness
- anti-trafficking avoidance and resolution
- adapting to a new city
- dealing with difficult situations, such as homesickness
- other life skills workers need to be successful migrants


A third component of FEF’s work is ethical placement via partnerships with local groups in the Philippines to build an ethical exporting agency to elevate the standards for recruitment by partnering with demand-side markets. Placement among FEF graduates predominantly focused on Hong Kong (77.9%), with 13.6% of graduates who followed-up with TST indicating that they worked in Malaysia, and 8.5% residing in other countries, including UAE, Saudi Arabia, Taiwan, and Singapore, likely as a result of secondary migrations.

For FEF participants included in the study, we assess both: i) OFWs’ pre-departure circumstances and preparation, and ii) their experiences post-migration. The registration survey was administered both to OFWs in FEF’s training for departure and to FEF program participants who have already migrated, and subsequent follow-up surveys were fielded to measure changes in employment and safety conditions.

## At-Risk Protocols

Though TST cannot provide direct support to OFWs, all survey respondents were provided with information on emergency assistance at the beginning and end of the survey to encourage them to communicate their needs and concerns to external resources. Survey respondents were informed that any questions concerning aid, consent, and confidentiality with follow-up support should be addressed to the external resources.

As part of the design of the survey, all respondents, regardless of whether they opted to participate in the study, were provided with contact information for Blas Ople, the Philippines IACAT, and the National Mental Health Crisis Hotline in their language of choice during registration and follow-up engagements (Figure 1).



**Thank you for your participation.**

If at any time you believe you are in danger, please contact:

Blas Ople Center/Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking (IACAT):  
Unit A 2295 Wycliff Townhomes, Roberts St., Pasay City  
☎ +63 2 514-8100 / +63 2 833-9562  
✉ [info@blasoplecenter.com](mailto:info@blasoplecenter.com) / [blasoplecenter@outlook.ph](mailto:blasoplecenter@outlook.ph)  
Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/blasoplecenter>  
Skype: Blas Ople Center

If you experience any personal distress, assistance is available for free through the National Mental Health Crisis hotline:  
☎ +63 917-899-8727 / +63 917899-USAP

Figure 1. At-Risk Contact Information for Participants

In addition, FEF’s training educates OFWs on resources for assistance if they find themselves in an abusive or exploitative situation. Though FEF maintains a robust internal practice of checking in with workers post-migration, TST also instituted a protocol for FEF respondents that identifies survey responses that indicate danger or distress. Any OFW who indicates that they may currently be threatened with violence or other forms of coercion or restriction is flagged for contact by Fair Employment Foundation, provided that they have shared a means of contact.<sup>32</sup>

## Ethical Considerations

This study was reviewed and approved by the WCG Institutional Review Board in the United States and the Social Science Ethics Review Board (SSERB) of the Philippine Social Science Council (PSSC) in the Philippines. Dr. Edna Co, the Director of UP CIFAL, served as the Data Privacy Officer attached to the project. The Legal Office of the University of the Philippines provided invaluable legal guidance concerning both ethical review and the Philippines’ Data Privacy Act of 2012 regulatory compliance.

## Methodology

### Subject Selection and Sample Design

This study sought to understand forced labor experiences among new and long-term adult OFWs. The study included three separate samples of adult OFWs who either migrated to or intended to migrate for work in the following countries: Hong Kong, Japan, Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates.

**BOX 2: Overview of Study Arms**

Cohort	Intervention Received	n	Sampling & Enumeration Strategy	Follow-Up	Destinations
CIFAL	None	1,101	Time-Location Sampling; Opt-In via Video Advertisement	80	Global
Social Media	None	5,996	Weighted River Sampling; Opt-In via Digital Advertisement	N/A	Hong Kong, Japan, Taiwan, Malaysia, Singapore, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates
FEF	Pre-departure training and ethical	429	Recruitment of all Program Graduates; Web / Tablet-Assisted Self-Interview	175	Hong Kong, Malaysia

<sup>32</sup> OFWs are permitted to respond to the follow-up survey anonymously as they may face consequences from employers for participating if their participation is discovered. They may provide their name, phone number, emergency contact information, or none of the aforementioned.

	recruitment services				
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Participants were registered for the study using three approaches, none of which included registration incentivization. First, TST worked with **CIFAL** to recruit 1,101 OFWs using a variation of a time-location sampling (TLS) strategy at OWWA offices in the Philippines. Initially, this cohort had been targeted for collection via in-person tablet-assisted enumeration according to a TLS sampling frame developed by CIFAL and OWWA prior to the COVID-19 pandemic<sup>33</sup>, targeting specific OWWA Regional Centers (RCs) at specific times of day according to a probabilistic selection process. However, due to the pandemic, OWWA RCs closed for much of the study period, and formal migrant training was *de facto* suspended. Federally mandated lockdowns and quarantines also prohibited large, in-person gatherings for much of 2020 and 2021, resulting in the effective prohibition of in-person public enumeration in the Philippines.

Ultimately, once pre-departure orientation seminars (PDOS) were resumed, the team developed a variation of TLS in which specific OWWA PDOS were probabilistically selected from a roster of scheduled PDOS classes. The selected courses showed a study recruitment video with registration information to the seminar attendees. In the Philippines, PDOS course attendance is mandatory for all individuals intending to migrate abroad for work. Attendees who viewed the registration video were then free to register via a web registration link using their phones. This procedure ensured that social distancing and quarantine guidelines were not violated by the CIFAL team while enabling the registration process to take place flexibly and safely.

Registration took place from October to December 2021, and follow-up recontact occurred in January 2022. During registration, 61.5% of PDOS seminars were selected to show the training video, or 32 of the 52 seminars that took place between October and December. The percentage of PDOS attendees who saw the registration video and registered for the study is 22.4%, or 1,101 registrants out of the 5,152 overall PDOS attendees during this time period. The weighted average number of participants per PDOS session within all the randomly sampled dates conducted by the CIFAL team was 186.5. Follow-up instruments assessed (1) whether the respondent had migrated; and (2), if so, their labor status and safety at their new destination location. TST found that very few (n=80) respondents followed up; of those who did, fewer than half (n=29) had migrated as of the end of the study. We examine later on the factors that led to a lack of access to this cohort.

Second, TST used a tailored nonrandom sampling approach to recruit an additional 5,996 eligible OFWs who had already migrated and were working abroad using targeted **social media advertisements** (i.e., via Facebook, Instagram, and other web sites with Facebook or Instagram integrations). This cohort was recruited in response to ongoing COVID-19 public health restrictions imposed in the Philippines, which dramatically reduced overall migration and made surveying OFWs before departure from the Philippines impossible for significant periods in 2020 and 2021. Building a digital advertisement-driven survey sample constitutes a *river sampling* strategy.<sup>34</sup> To better approximate a probability sample of OFWs from the target geographies, TST leveraged the capabilities of its *Pulse* advertising and population engagement system, and weighted recruitment advertisement allocations according to externally collected geographic, gender, and age data, thereby seeking to recruit demographically representative samples of respondents to participate in the study. Details on recruitment by channel type as well as the demographic characteristics of those recruited are shared in the Findings section.

<sup>33</sup> For the TLS design and strategy, see: Appendix D

<sup>34</sup> For more information on river sampling in online survey use cases, see: <https://www.aapor.org/Education-Resources/Reports/Report-on-Online-Panels.aspx>



In order to tailor the composition of the recruited samples, TST designed advertisement campaigns that selectively advertised to specific age, gender, and geographic sub-populations of OFWs, and weighted the advertisement budgets in order to effectively over- and under-target OFW sub-populations in a manner that emulated the actual distribution of OFWs living abroad, according to population-level data from the Philippine Statistics Authority. The PSA data used provided population age distributions by country, as well as gender distributions by country, for OFWs living in Hong Kong, Japan, Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates.

This strategy leverages a number of services and optimizations performed by the Meta advertising system that seek to balance click rates on advertisements, account for small variations in cost-per-click values, and provide consistent advertising performance across a large and sophisticated ad campaign, ultimately aiming to produce click-through counts that are proportionate to the allocated budgets, and therefore also to the geographic and demographic distribution of the population of OFWs. Through this approach, the researchers strove to recreate a demographically representative sample via a non-probabilistic river sampling approach. However, the researchers caution that this approach is still a non-probability sampling approach, and is also sensitive to the comprehensiveness and reliability of the reference data used. In this case, PSA's 2020 and 2021 OFW Census data may not have fully reflected the entire distribution of OFWs inclusive of all informal migration channels, as well as in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting large-scale population shifts.<sup>35</sup>

The result is therefore an approximation of a probability sampling approach; however, it is distinct from probability sampling in that the probability of selection is not known for all population members, and selection is not fully random. Furthermore, digital recruitment generally poses different risks of coverage bias than in-person sampling methods—namely, that people who are not active on the web or on the social media platforms used for recruitment are not accessible. In the case of the Philippines, in 2020, the adult Filipino population was estimated to be roughly 67 million,<sup>36</sup> and the total number of *active adult Facebook users* located in the Philippines was estimated to be approximately 77.7 million.<sup>37</sup> This indicates high levels of internet and social media penetration among adults in the Philippines, as well as regular social media usage. Nonetheless, the researchers caution that it is still impossible to estimate whether the probability of selecting any Filipino social media user who *may* be recruited via digital means is equivalent or comparable to that of any other user in the same allocation.

OFWs recruited into this cohort participated in a single, comprehensive web survey, which collected information about their demographic characteristics as well as their labor status abroad, including forced labor indicators. Throughout 2021, this survey was run periodically, every 30 to 60 days, to capture and adjust for changes in labor trends over time, particularly as changes in the pandemic may have tightened or loosened labor restrictions in destination geographies. In the Findings section, the demographic and geographic composition of this sample is compared to the real-world OFW distribution described in PSA Census data.

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<sup>35</sup> For more information on the methodology used in the PSA Survey of Overseas Filipinos, see:

<https://psa.gov.ph/content/technical-notes-survey-overseas-filipinos-sof>

<sup>36</sup> Philippine Statistics Authority. (2010) Projected population, by age group, sex, and by single-calendar year interval, Philippines: 2010 - 2020 (Medium Assumption).

[https://psa.gov.ph/sites/default/files/attachments/hspd/pressrelease/Table4\\_9.pdf](https://psa.gov.ph/sites/default/files/attachments/hspd/pressrelease/Table4_9.pdf); World Bank. (2019). *Population ages, 15–64, total*. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.1564.TO?locations=PH>

<sup>37</sup> NapoleonCat. (2020). *Facebook users in Philippines: December 2020*. (Derived from Facebook Marketing API). <https://napoleoncat.com/stats/facebook-users-in-philippines/2020/12/>

Third, OFWs who were placed in employment by FEF were enrolled in staff-administered and self-administered registration on tablets after completing FEF ethical recruitment and training courses. These individuals were selected for FEF programming via a non-probabilistic sign-up process, advertised locally in the Philippines over print and digital media, and underwent training prior to departure for work abroad. Upon graduation, all FEF participants completed a registration survey, and then were recontacted with a follow-up survey one month after registration to collect information about their migration experiences and labor status. Beginning in Q3 2019, FTC in Manila and FEA in Hong Kong began enrolling their participants in the study. Where possible, enrollment was completed in person using a tablet provided by TST; a total of 30 graduates enrolled in this manner. Over time and in response to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, FEA and FTC's registration survey was instead sent to private Facebook groups created for current participants and alumni from FTC. In order to keep in touch and share timely information during the pandemic, each cohort of training graduates maintained a bespoke, private Facebook group, and registration surveys were sent to each group after each cohort completed graduation. OFWs who consented to participate in the study provided phone numbers through which they could be reached for remote follow-up recontact. Recontact attempts were made for all graduates who shared contact information, and TST made up to five recontact attempts for each respondent. See *Appendix F* for demographic characteristics of the FEF registrants.

As was the case for the CIFAL cohort of individuals registered prior to migration, this cohort also faced delayed emigration and reduced enrollments due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The original enrollment target for FEF program participants was 1,300. After deduplication and data cleaning, the total number of participants providing complete registration information (including phone number) was 429. Ultimately, the sample of OFWs who completed FEF training and placement, and completed a follow-up survey, totaled 175 individuals.

Within each sample, the researchers collected information from respondents about both respondent characteristics (i.e., demographic and background information) as well as their migration and labor status. Matching labor outcome data (i.e., forced labor indicators) to respondent demographic information (i.e., age, gender, island of origin, etc.) enabled the research team also to measure the occurrence and distribution of forced labor within key subpopulations of interest, as well as statistical associations between forced labor and other valuable demographic and labor information such as gender, geography, industry of employment, age, island of origin, and so on. Not all of the findings are easily comparable across study cohorts, particularly due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on both migration at large and the research team's ability to collect large and robust survey samples. The design and implementation of interventions and the means of access to each cohort necessarily affected the sampling strategy in conjunction with evolving on-the-ground realities. Cross-cohort analyses are further complicated by challenges with keeping in touch with migrant workers after migration during this period of uncertainty. However, in cases where data may be cross-analyzed, the TST team does so in the **Comparative Cohort Analysis** section with appropriate caveats and risks.

## Data Analysis

### Survey Data Processing

Registration and follow-up survey data were merged within each cohort, and then filtered to enable analysis by the research team. The filtering process ensured that duplicate entries were removed, individual respondents could be tracked across intervals, and common fields from different registration groups could be unified under a common schema. Moreover, response times were examined to look for anomalous survey responses such as responses that

took only a few seconds, as well as responses that appeared to contain noise or dishonest responses across the full battery of survey questions. Such responses were removed prior to analysis.

Registration data was deduplicated using a respondent’s phone number, removing any entries other than the first instance, then further removing individuals who did not qualify for the study (for instance, individuals who did not plan to migrate or who were under the age of 18). During registration, respondents provided up to three back-up phone numbers in case their primary phone number was disconnected. They were also given the option to provide the back-up contact information of a family member or friend in the event their safety should be at risk to assist with reporting and facilitation of rescue.

A similar process was employed for follow-up engagement data: Any respondent who did not meet the study inclusion criteria (as a secondary safeguard) or had not yet migrated was removed. Participant responses from follow-up engagements were then merged with their demographic data (collected during registration).

For respondents surveyed using the combined instrument, follow-up information was not required. However, responses were deduplicated using IP addresses as well as cryptographically derived unique identifiers that would flag duplicate phones or computers. Moreover, the research team followed the same filtration procedures in both study arms, in terms of removing respondents who were not eligible to participate in the study due to their age, migration status, or employment, as well as noisy or inconsistent responses.

Data was normalized prior to analysis. Incomplete and partially complete survey responses were included in the final dataset for analysis. However, depending on the analysis being conducted (e.g., correlations vs. descriptive statistics) observations were dropped where relevant variables had a blank response on a case by case basis (i.e., pairwise deletion).

## Sample Statistics

The researchers used statistical tests to examine associations between several participant data points and a series of labor trafficking indicators (Tables 5 and 6). These indicators were developed in coordination with GFEMS, the TIP Office, and external research advisors and reflect the TIP Office definition of forced labor and the ILO definition of forced labor. Based on guidance from GFEMS and the TIP Office, indicators were segmented into tiers of severity, with Tier 1a being the most severe (meeting both Tier 1 conditions and also facing debts), followed by Tier 1, and then Tier 2, the least severe set of conditions that still meet the definitions of forced labor.

**Table 5. Statistical Testing – Demographic Category Association**

		Age	Gender	Edu	Origin	Dest	Job	Wage	Dep
	Var Type	Ordinal	Binary	Ordinal	Nominal	Nominal	Nominal	Ordinal	Ordinal
Age	Ordinal		Rank Biserial + Wilcoxon	Polychoric	Chi-Sq / Fisher’s + Cramér’s V	Chi-Sq / Fisher’s + Cramér’s V	Chi-Sq / Fisher’s + Cramér’s V	Polychoric	Polychoric
Gender	Binary	Rank Biserial + Wilcoxon		Rank Biserial + Wilcoxon	Chi-Sq / Fisher’s + Cramér’s V	Chi-Sq / Fisher’s + Cramér’s V	Chi-Sq / Fisher’s + Cramér’s V	Rank Biserial + Wilcoxon	Rank Biserial + Wilcoxon
Edu	Ordinal	Polychoric	Rank Biserial + Wilcoxon		Chi-Sq / Fisher’s +	Chi-Sq / Fisher’s +	Chi-Sq / Fisher’s +	Polychoric	Polychoric

					Cramér's V	Cramér's V	Cramér's V		
<b>Origin</b>	<b>Nominal</b>	Chi-Sq / Fisher's + Cramér's V	Chi-Sq / Fisher's + Cramér's V	Chi-Sq / Fisher's + Cramér's V		Chi-Sq / Fisher's + Cramér's V	Chi-Sq / Fisher's + Cramér's V	Chi-Sq / Fisher's + Cramér's V	Chi-Sq / Fisher's + Cramér's V
<b>Dest</b>	<b>Nominal</b>	Chi-Sq / Fisher's + Cramér's V	Chi-Sq / Fisher's + Cramér's V	Chi-Sq / Fisher's + Cramér's V	Chi-Sq / Fisher's + Cramér's V		Chi-Sq / Fisher's + Cramér's V	Chi-Sq / Fisher's + Cramér's V	Chi-Sq / Fisher's + Cramér's V
<b>Job</b>	<b>Nominal</b>	Chi-Sq / Fisher's + Cramér's V	Chi-Sq / Fisher's + Cramér's V	Chi-Sq / Fisher's + Cramér's V	Chi-Sq / Fisher's + Cramér's V	Chi-Sq / Fisher's + Cramér's V		Chi-Sq / Fisher's + Cramér's V	Chi-Sq / Fisher's + Cramér's V
<b>Wage</b>	<b>Ordinal</b>	Polychoric	Rank Biserial + Wilcoxon	Polychoric	Chi-Sq / Fisher's + Cramér's V	Chi-Sq / Fisher's + Cramér's V	Chi-Sq / Fisher's + Cramér's V		Polychoric
<b>Dep</b>	<b>Ordinal</b>	Polychoric	Rank Biserial + Wilcoxon	Polychoric	Chi-Sq / Fisher's + Cramér's V	Chi-Sq / Fisher's + Cramér's V	Chi-Sq / Fisher's + Cramér's V	Polychoric	

Notes. For Chi-Sq / Fisher's, Fisher's Exact Test was used where  $n < 5$ .  
 Chi-Sq = Chi-Square Test; Cramer V = Cramér's V; Edu = Education; Dep = Dependents; Dest = Work Destination; Polychor = Polychoric Test; Var = Variable.

**Table 6. Statistical testing – Demographic Categories vs. Forced Labor Tiers and Indicators**

	Variable Type	Tiers (Categorical – Binary)	FL Indicators (Categorical – Binary)
<b>Age</b>	Ordinal	Rank Biserial + Wilcoxon	Pearson's r
<b>Gender</b>	Binary	Pearson's r	Pearson's r
<b>Education</b>	Ordinal	Rank Biserial + Wilcoxon	Rank Biserial + Wilcoxon
<b>Origin</b>	Nominal	Chi-Sq / Fisher's + Cramér's V	Chi-Sq / Fisher's + Cramér's V
<b>Destination</b>	Nominal	Chi-Sq / Fisher's + Cramér's V	Chi-Sq / Fisher's + Cramér's V
<b>Job</b>	Nominal	Chi-Sq / Fisher's + Cramér's V	Chi-Sq / Fisher's + Cramér's V
<b>Wage</b>	Ordinal	Rank Biserial + Wilcoxon	Rank Biserial + Wilcoxon
<b>Dependents</b>	Ordinal	Rank Biserial + Wilcoxon	Rank Biserial + Wilcoxon
<b>Debt</b>	Binary	Pearson's r	Pearson's r

Note. Fisher's Exact Test was used where  $n < 5$ . Chi-Sq= Chi-Squared

## Identifying and Measuring Forced Labor Rates

TST provides findings concerning the occurrence and distribution of forced labor within each study cohort separately, formulated as sample statistics. The researchers used participant characteristics to document each subsample's constitution and compare these findings to prior literature. Due to the diversity of sampling approaches used, the researchers do not generally make strong comparative assessments between the study cohorts. However, the researchers employ sample matching techniques to provide further insight into FEF training and placement effectiveness and performance as a prevalence or vulnerability reduction strategy. The comparative

analysis methodological strategy and findings are described in depth in the **Comparative Cohort Analysis** subsection.

The researchers examine the occurrence of and vulnerabilities associated with forced labor within each study cohort across Tiers 1, 1A, and 2 and use correlation tests to evaluate the relationships between several participant characteristics and forced labor indicators reported by study participants.<sup>38</sup> The researchers also evaluate their findings in the context provided by prior research about the labor experiences of OFWs and the labor experiences of other migrant populations in key destination geographies. Due to limitations in the study and because the demographics of OFWs as a labor population have dramatically changed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the researchers caution against attempts to generalize and make population-level estimates and assertions using weights or historical data that are no longer valid.

In all cases, the researchers report the eligible sample sizes, statistical test(s) used, strength of correlation or association, and effect size.

## Data Management Approach

TST maintained a common database to manage registration, follow-up, and combined survey records. In cases of follow-up outreach, TST personnel ran queries in the Pulse<sup>39</sup> system and assigned the system to reach out to OFWs automatically through Facebook and Instagram chat functions and SMS/Whatsapp without exporting and importing personally identifiable information. The database utilized was secured and encrypted using industry standards, to which only a small number of research team members held access. All members were trained and certified to handle human subject research data before receiving access to the data. In cases where registrations took place in disconnected geographies, tablets automatically uploaded registration data when Internet connectivity was re-established. Upon uploading the data, the tablets would erase their records to minimize the risk of spillage of personally identifiable information (PII). Two-Factor Authentication was also implemented to ensure only those permitted to access the database could do so.

## Considerations Due to COVID-19

Although this study began prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the pandemic defined the experiences of OFWs throughout 2020 and 2021. Throughout this report, the researchers refer to several dimensions in which **the COVID-19 pandemic impacted or altered the study, its design, sampling strategy, execution, and findings**. The researchers also identify **adaptations made** to operate under the new public health, logistical, and other realities across the Philippines and the numerous OFW destination geographies affected by COVID-19 throughout 2020 and 2021.

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<sup>38</sup> The researchers note that individual indicators of exploitation, such as wage withholding (a low severity indicator) or working more hours than agreed upon (a mid-level indicator), are not examined on their own. There may be a number of workers that are enduring exploitative conditions that are not counted in this analysis. We seek to measure high-severity instances of exploitation, and note that there are likely far more workers toiling in exploitative conditions that do not meet the technical standard of labor trafficking.

<sup>39</sup> Pulse is a technology platform maintained by Two Six Technologies used to communicate with remote populations through automated surveying and follow-up over multiple messaging platforms (e.g., SMS, WhatsApp).

With over one million OFWs repatriating and departures from the Philippines still significantly lagging behind pre-pandemic levels, the composition of the OFW labor force continues to change. The researchers note that a **key weakness** of OFW survey samples constructed during the pandemic is that, due to large-scale ongoing shifts in the composition and status of the OFW labor force caused by the pandemic, population-level data that previously could be used to inform sampling strategies, may no longer be reliably counted on to do so. For instance, the time-location sampling frame initially developed for registration via in-person enumeration at OWWA RCs became ineffective after in-person pre-departure training courses were canceled, rescheduled, and/or digitized. Similarly, the proportionate allocation-driven online sample of OFWs recruited at destination geographies (i.e., the “social media” cohort) relied on OFW population distribution data from a 2019 PSA OFW survey to apportion recruitment resources properly; however, the OFW population distribution data reported in this survey were no longer an accurate depiction of the number or distribution of OFWs working abroad by late 2020 or 2021. As such, the researchers caution against generalizing the findings of this study to make assertions concerning the entire population of OFWs living and working abroad at future dates. In the **Findings** section, the researchers specify how individual findings and measurements may be interpreted and to what extent they may be generalized.

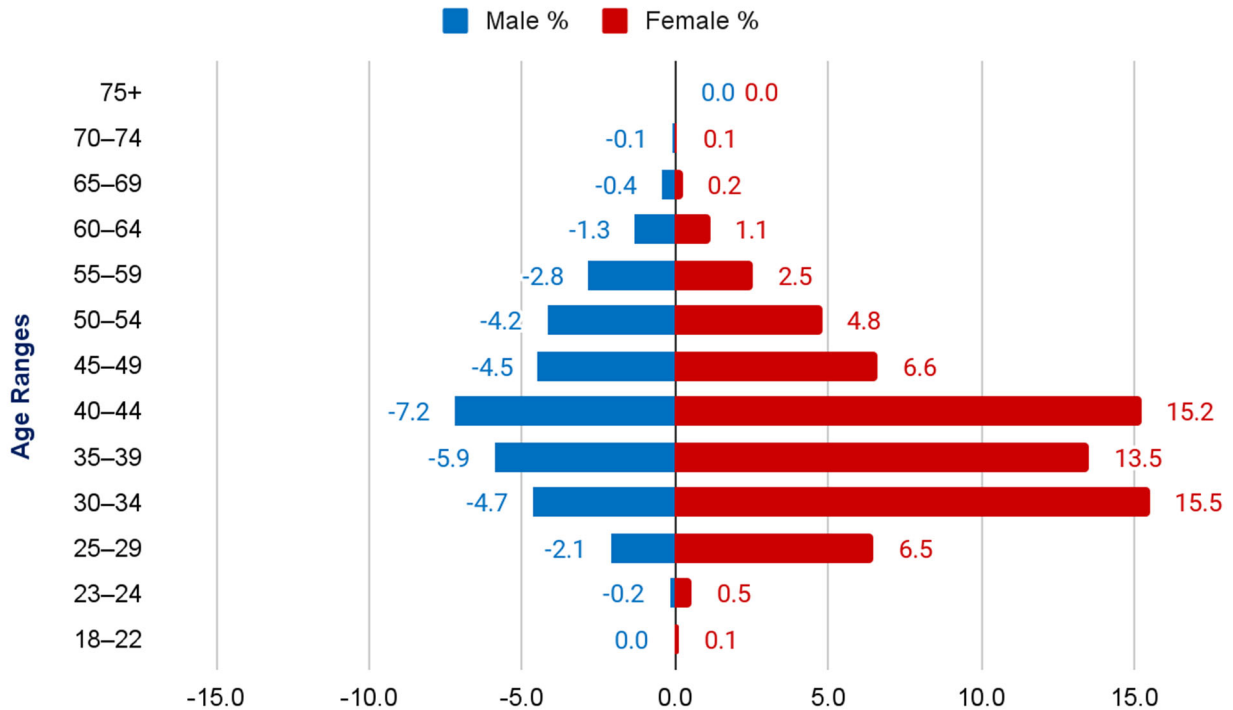
## Findings

### Sample Statistics

#### Demographic Statistics

Demographic data collected from all study participants are presented in aggregate below. The researchers compare these data with available data from the PSA’s *2020 Survey on Overseas Filipinos*, released publicly in March 2022, to evaluate the sample’s representativeness according to PSA Survey data. The PSA survey was conducted in the spring and summer of 2020; owing to the dramatic economic and migratory changes caused by the pandemic, the researchers speculate that even the 2020 PSA Survey is no longer representative of *current* OFW populations working abroad. Although the researchers caution against relying on either pre-pandemic or *early* pandemic data to weight samples or evaluate sample representativeness due to these changes, the researchers identify and contextualize similarities and differences between the observed respondent characteristics and previously reported data to better evaluate and understand the study’s respondents in the context of existing previous research.

Figure 2. Age / Gender Pyramid for Study Population (n=5,568)



Note: The graphic analyzes responses from all participants in the study across all cohorts.

Roughly two-thirds of study participants were female. In examining cross-tabulations between gender and work industry, among female respondents, approximately 62% of the female study participants were or had been employed as domestic workers. This reflects the fact that OFWs are disproportionately female according to both pre-pandemic and 2020 PSA Survey data,<sup>40</sup> in contrast to the global migrant labor population, which ILO noted was only 41.5% female as of 2021.<sup>41</sup> Reporting from OWWA in early 2021 also stated that 41.6% of returning OFWs were women, indicating that disproportionately more female OFWs remained abroad to continue working rather than returning home.<sup>42</sup> PSA data found that while the global population of OFWs was 55.4% female in 2019, it was 59.6% female in 2020. Prior research, PSA data, and this study's data all additionally support the notion that domestic worker jobs are predominantly held by women (prior research suggests roughly 73% of domestic helpers are women, globally, and PSA data from 2020 noted that 70.3% of female OFWs worked in occupations categorized as "low-skilled" including domestic work, an 8.2% increase from 2019).<sup>43</sup>

In contrast with many respondent samples derived from online recruitment methods, the respondents collected for this study are evenly distributed across age intervals, with relatively more 40-44-year-olds and fewer 25-29-

<sup>40</sup> Philippine Statistics Authority. (2022, March 7). *Overseas Filipino Workers are estimated at 1.77 million.*

<https://psa.gov.ph/press-releases/id/166375>

<sup>41</sup> Popova, N., & Özel, M. H. (2021). *ILO global estimates on international migrant workers.* International Labour Organization.

[https://ilo.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/41ILO\\_INST/1jaulmn/alma995006393502676](https://ilo.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/41ILO_INST/1jaulmn/alma995006393502676)

<sup>42</sup> Abao, C. V. (2021, March 8). *Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on women Overseas Filipino Workers.* BusinessWorld.

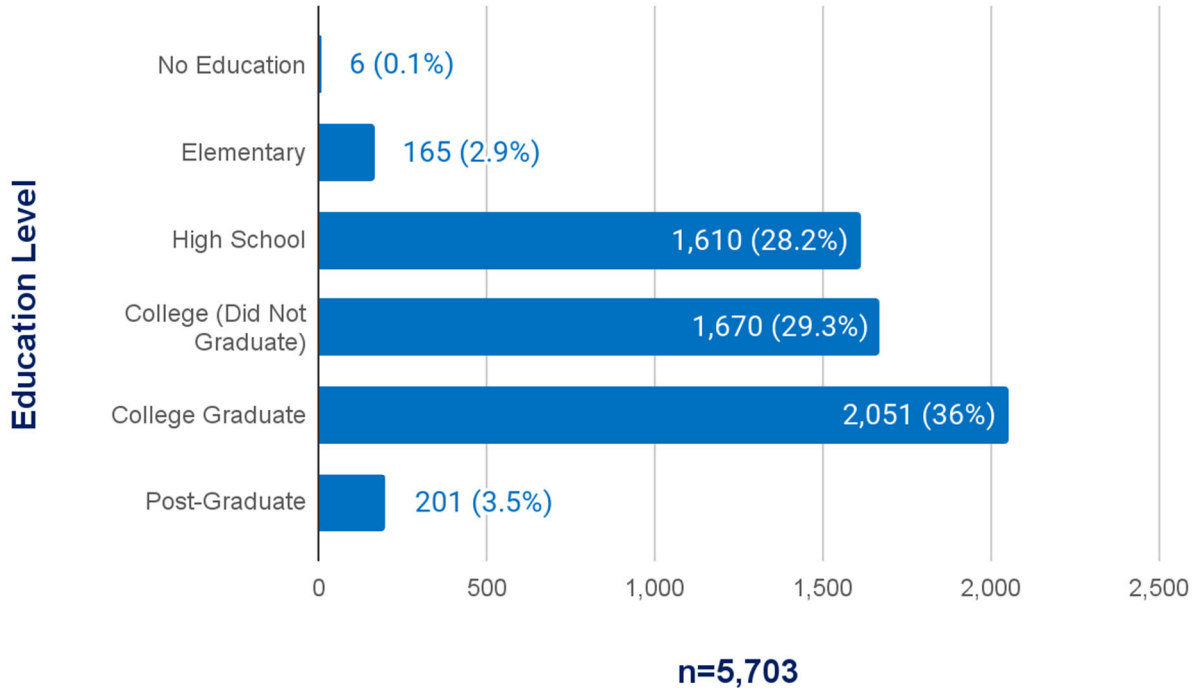
<https://www.bworldonline.com/impact-of-the-covid-19-pandemic-on-women-overseas-filipino-workers/>

<sup>43</sup> Gallotti, M., (2016). *Migrant domestic workers across the world: Global and regional estimates.* International Labour Organization.

[https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_protect/---protrav/---migrant/documents/briefingnote/wcms\\_490162.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---migrant/documents/briefingnote/wcms_490162.pdf)

year-olds than pre-pandemic and 2020 PSA data reports. The 2020 PSA population percentages for these age ranges are 19.0% and 15.2%, respectively, with the 25–29-year-old figures having shrunk and the 40–44-year-old figures having grown between 2019 and 2020. From a sampling perspective, the broad age coverage reflects the proportionate allocation-driven river sampling process, which weighted advertising budgets based on target age distributions. Additionally, online coverage of the Filipino population across all age ranges is among the highest of any population in the world (Figure 2).

**Figure 3. Distribution by Education Level**



*Note: The graphic analyzes responses from all participants in the study across all cohorts.*

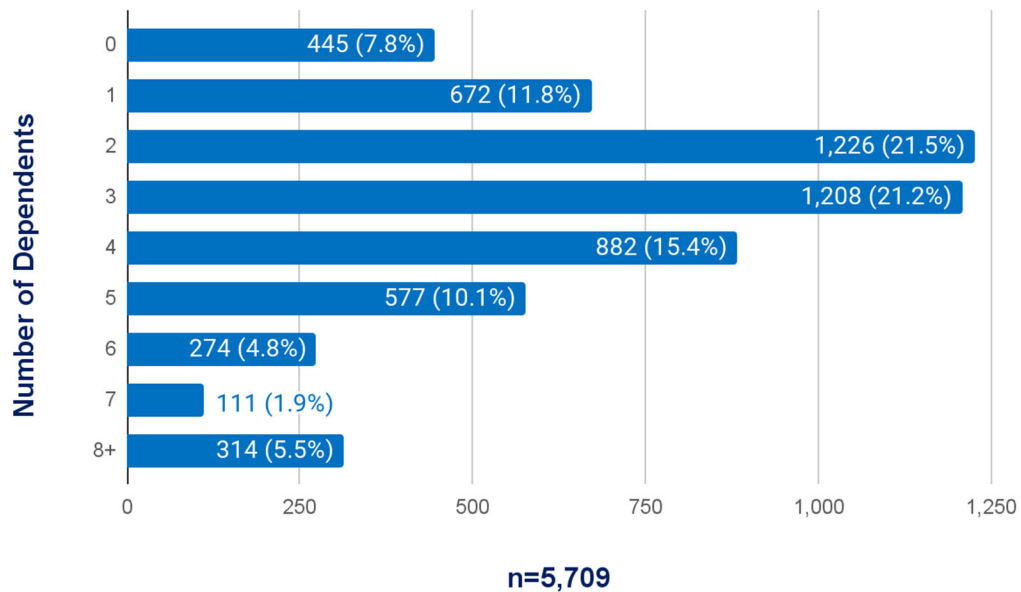
Although the PSA does not provide educational statistics as part of its OFW Surveys, in terms of educational distribution, the sample collected aligns with the prior findings of other research, including research conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic such as IOM’s 2022 study of repatriating OFWs,<sup>44</sup> showing that the overwhelming majority (i.e., more than 80%) of surveyed OFWs have completed high school, and more than 30% have completed undergraduate studies (Figure 3). The researchers found a statistically significant correlation between education and gender, observing that male respondents were more likely to have at least attended college ( $r = .20, p < .01$ ).<sup>45</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Kang, J. W., & Latoja, M. C. (2022). COVID-19 and Overseas Filipino Workers: Return Migration and Reintegration into the Home Country—the Philippine Case. *Asian Development Bank*, 21. <https://dx.doi.org/10.22617/WPS220002-2>

<sup>45</sup> Test used: Pearson’s  $r$



Figure 4. Distribution by Number of Dependents

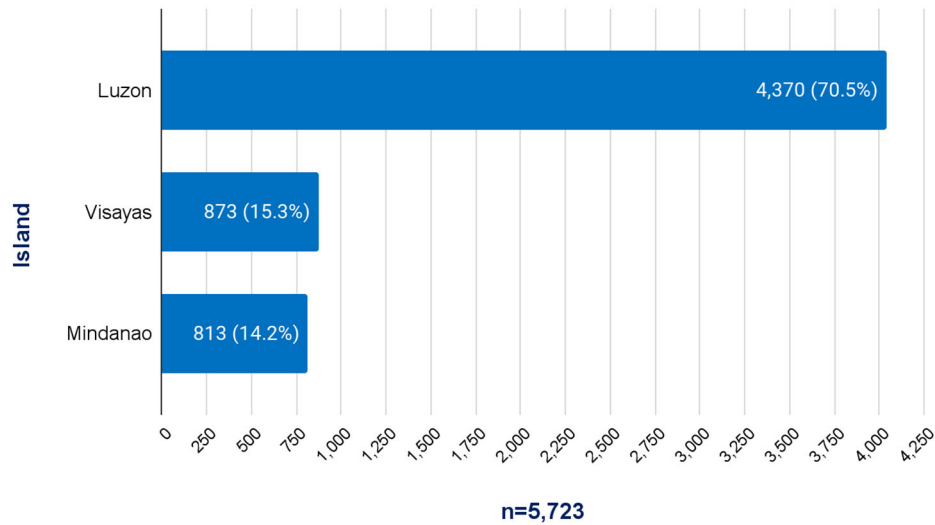


Note: The graphic analyzes responses from all participants in the study across all cohorts.

A majority of OFWs reported having 2–4 dependents, defined as individuals who are financially dependent upon the respondent (Figure 4). Respondents’ dependents may be either based in the Philippines or, less frequently, in destination geographies with the respondent. These dependents are often the recipients of remittances sent by respondents while working abroad. Number of dependents also correlates positively with working as a domestic worker ( $p < .01$ ) and with being female ( $p < .01$ ), negatively with reporting one’s island of origin as Luzon ( $p < .05$ ), and positively with reporting one’s island of origin as Visayas ( $p < .01$ ).<sup>46</sup>

<sup>46</sup> For correlation tests related to number of dependents, test used: Glass Rank-Biserial Correlation Test, Significance test used: Wilcoxon rank sum test.

**Figure 5. Distribution by Island of Origin**



*Note: The graphic analyzes responses from all participants in the study across all cohorts.*

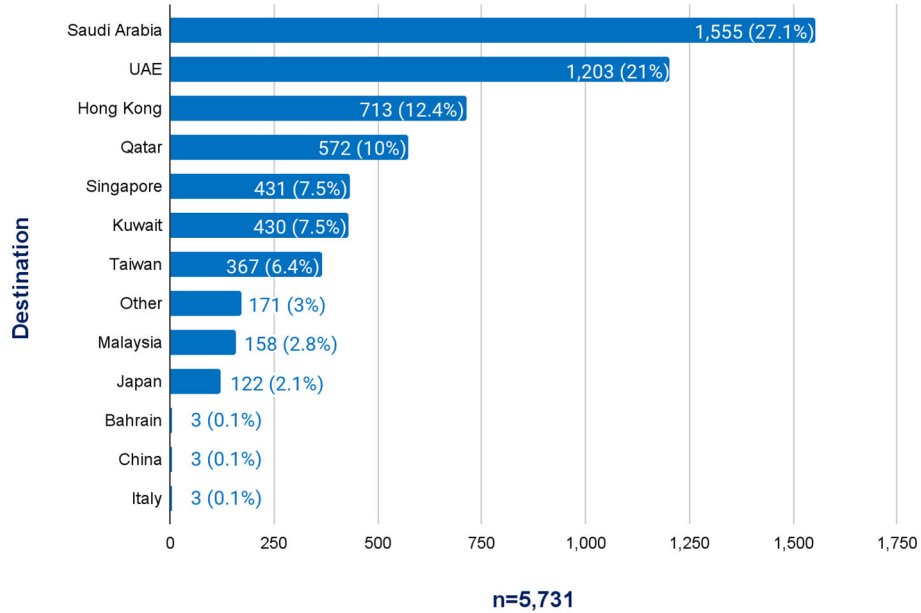
For island of origin, 70.5% of respondents reported Luzon, 14.2% reported Mindanao, and 15.3% reported Visayas (Figure 5). PSA OFW survey data from 2020 states that between 60% and 65% of OFWs reported their island of origin as Luzon, with 20% reporting Mindanao and 16.7% reporting Visayas. Moreover, whereas 63.4% of respondents from Luzon report their gender to be female, 75.2% of OFWs from Mindanao are female, and 74.8% of respondents from Visayas are female, indicating significant differences in the gender distribution between different islands of origin. 38.2% of respondents from Luzon, 52.3% of respondents from Mindanao, and 53.5% of respondents from Visayas worked as DWs, indicating that island of origin is significantly associated not only with OFWs' reported gender ( $p < .05$ ), but also whether or not an OFW ultimately serves as a domestic worker abroad<sup>47</sup> ( $p < .05$ ).

<sup>47</sup> For correlation tests related to island of origin, Pearson's  $r$  was used.

## Economic and Employment Statistics

### Destination Country

Figure 6. Distribution by Destination Country



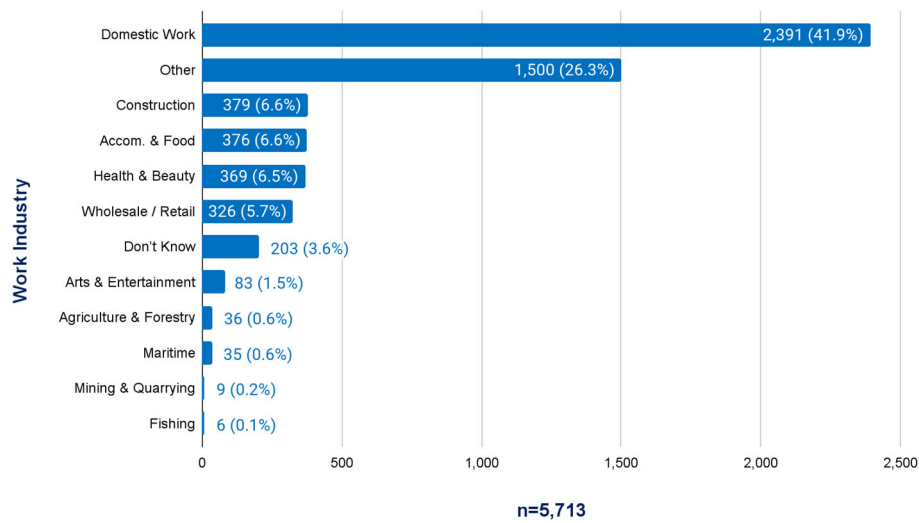
Note: The graphic analyzes responses from all participants in the study across all cohorts.

Roughly 25% of OFW respondents reported employment in Saudi Arabia, and slightly less than 25% of respondents reported employment in the UAE (Figure 6). Smaller percentages are reported working in Qatar, Kuwait, and other countries in the Middle East. This roughly follows the distribution reported by PSA in both 2019 and 2020, wherein the most OFWs report their country of employment as Saudi Arabia out of any single country in the Middle East (roughly 26.6% of all OFWs, globally, in 2020), followed by UAE (14.6%), Kuwait (6.4%), and Qatar (5.4%).<sup>48</sup> Within East Asia, 12.4% report employment in Hong Kong, 6.4% report employment in Taiwan, and 2.1% report employment in Japan, which also roughly follows the distribution reported by PSA (OFWs in these countries represent 6.3%, 4.8%, and 3.5% of the global OFW population, respectively)<sup>49</sup>. Lastly, in line with PSA reporting, smaller percentages (5.3% and 1.5%, respectively) report employment in Singapore and Malaysia.

<sup>48</sup> The researchers note that the sample developed for this study did not seek to accurately represent the *global* distribution of OFWs, but rather only the distribution across the target study countries.

<sup>49</sup> Philippine Statistics Authority. (2020, June 4). *Total number of OFWs estimated at 2.2 Million*. <https://psa.gov.ph/content/total-number-ofws-estimated-22-million>

**Figure 7. Distribution by Work Industry**



*Note: The graphic analyzes responses from all participants in the study across all cohorts.*

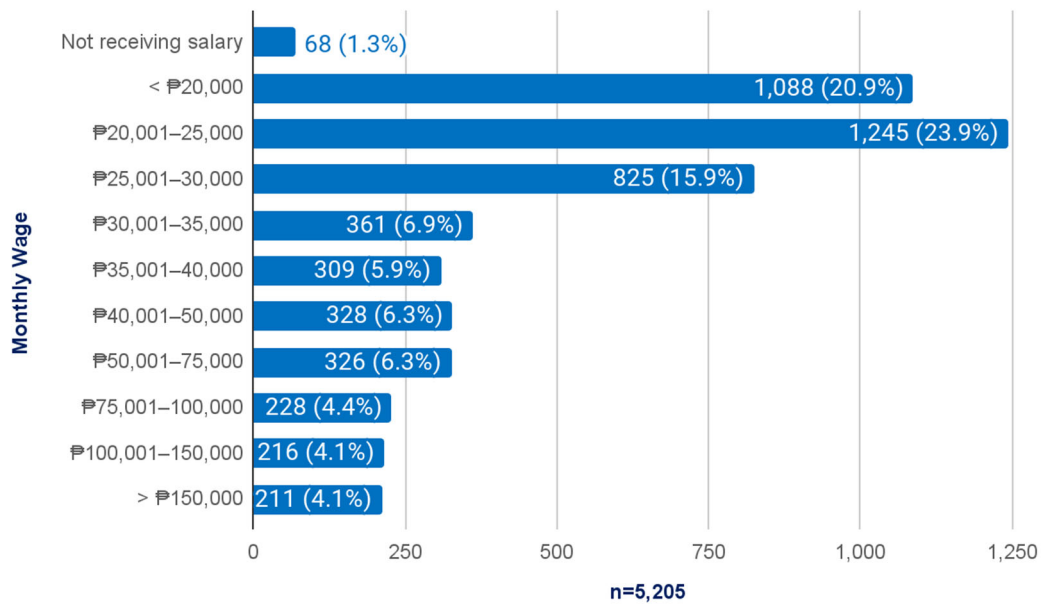
Of the surveyed OFWs, 41.9% report employment as DWs (Figure 7). Data from the 2019 pre-pandemic PSA survey indicated that 39.6% of OFWs were employed in occupations categorized as “low-skilled” including domestic work; however, the 2020 PSA OFW survey, in contrast, reports that 46.7% of all OFWs worked in these occupations. The respondents in this study sample, collected primarily in late 2021, reflect a proportionately larger cohort of DWs, which may reflect ongoing, large-scale shifts in the OFW labor force that has remained abroad during the pandemic. The experiences of DWs during the pandemic have been found in prior research to reflect different challenges and dangers than those of migrant workers in other industries.<sup>50,51</sup> In subsequent sections, where such findings are statistically significant and noteworthy, the researchers examine forced labor and other outcome reporting among DWs separately from other professions.

<sup>50</sup> Lui, I. D., Vandan, N., Davies, S. E., Harman, S., Morgan, R., Smith, J., Wenham, C., & Grépin, K. A. (2021). “We also deserve help during the pandemic”: The effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on foreign domestic workers in Hong Kong. *Journal of Migration and Health*, 3, 100037. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jmh.2021.100037>

<sup>51</sup> Aoun, R. (2020). COVID-19 impact on female migrant domestic workers in the Middle East. *GBV AoR Helpdesk*. <https://www.alnap.org/help-library/covid-19-impact-on-female-migrant-domestic-workers-in-the-middle-east>

## Monthly Wage

Figure 8. Distribution by Monthly Wage



Note: The graphic analyzes responses from all participants in the study across all cohorts Wage brackets in US Dollars: <400; 401-500; 501-600; 601-700; 701-800; 801-1000; 1001-1500; 1501-2000; 2001-3000; 3001+..

Most (62.0%) study participants report earning less than PHP 30,000 (approximately \$550 USD) per month abroad (Figure 8). Wages are also negatively correlated with being female, indicating that female OFWs are paid less<sup>52</sup> ( $p < .01$ ), and with working as a domestic worker<sup>53</sup> ( $r = -.49, p < .01$ ). In particular, 89.3% of DWs report earning less than PHP 30,000 per month. Prior research has found that the predominantly female OFW DWs face both lower pay and less legal and institutional support than other jobs, with the PSA 2020 OFW survey reporting that female OFWs also sent back smaller remittances than male OFWs (On average: PHP 60,860 per annum by female OFWs, versus PHP 126,160 per annum by male OFWs).<sup>54</sup> Wages are also positively correlated with reporting one's island of origin as Luzon ( $p < .01$ ), and negatively correlated with reporting one's island of origin to be either Mindanao ( $p < .01$ ) or Visayas<sup>55</sup> ( $p < .01$ ).

## Debt

Table 7. Distribution by Debt (Owed – Yes or No)

Debt?	n	% of dataset
Yes	2,994	49.2%

<sup>52</sup> Test used: Glass Rank-Biserial Correlation Test, Significance test used: Wilcoxon rank sum test.

<sup>53</sup> Test used: Glass Rank-Biserial Correlation Test, Significance test used: Wilcoxon rank sum test.

<sup>54</sup> Philippine Statistics Authority. (2022, March 7). *Overseas Filipino Workers are estimated at 1.77 million.* <https://psa.gov.ph/press-releases/id/166375>

<sup>55</sup> For correlation tests between wage and island, test used: Glass Rank-Biserial Correlation Test, Significance test used: Wilcoxon rank sum test.

No	3,091	50.8%
<b>Total</b>	6,085	

Approximately half of all surveyed OFWs reported owing a debt (Table 7). This is consistent with prior research, which has found that OFWs have assumed significant debts due to the pandemic. Of the respondents across all study cohorts who reported owing a debt, 62.4% stated that their debts resulted from the pandemic. The researchers found that owing debts is also positively statistically significantly correlated with being female ( $r = .07$ ,  $p < .01$ ), working as a domestic worker ( $r = .12$ ,  $p < .01$ ), and reporting island of origin to be either Mindanao ( $r = .05$ ,  $p < .01$ ) or Luzon<sup>56</sup> ( $r = .07$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

## Analysis of Forced Labor

The researchers find that overall, approximately 26.4% of all study participants report experiencing Tier 2 or worse forced labor conditions. When segmenting by industry of occupation, **the occurrence of Tier 2 forced labor among DWs is roughly 2.7x higher than for other occupations**, with 42.9% of DWs and 16.0% of non-DWs reporting Tier 2 or higher conditions. In examining individual forced labor indicators, roughly 49.2% of all OFW respondents owe a debt, roughly 35.1% work on rest days for fear of being fired, and 51.1% are not paid for their overtime work. Among DWs, these indicators are even more widespread, with 55.3% owing a debt, 53.0% working on rest days, and 65.4% not being paid for overtime work; furthermore, 53.3% of DWs are not free to leave their place of work after their work shift ends, and 28.5% of DWs are restricted from accessing their own passports by their employers. Lastly, the researchers find that, using a matched sample across factors including education, age, gender, work country, industry of employment, debt, number of dependents, and island of origin, **FEF recipients are significantly less likely to experience forced labor conditions than non-FEF study participants** ( $p < .05$ ).

## Forced Labor Indicators

**Social Media.** The Social Media group comprised the largest arm of this study with 5,996 participants. Just over half of Social Media participants (51.5%) reported not being paid overtime wages, 49.2% reported owing a debt to an employer, recruiter, or another entity, and 35.5% reported working on rest days for fear of being fired. Of note, 33.2% of these participants reported no freedom of movement (Table 8).

**CIFAL.** The CIFAL cohort included 1,101 registrants and 80 individuals who followed up. Three-quarters of eligible CIFAL participants who followed-up (29) reported owing a debt (75.9%), 44.8% reported no freedom of movement, and 27.6% reported not being paid for overtime.

**FEF.** The FEF cohort was the only study cohort to receive an intervention; 175 individuals from this cohort successfully followed up. Of the eligible respondents who followed up, 38.3% (60) reported owing a debt, and 21.7% reported not being paid overtime or having no freedom of movement.

**Table 8. Forced Labor Indicators – Non-Intervention (Social Media and CIFAL) vs. Intervention (FEF)**

Indicator	TVPA Classification	Description	Severity	Social Media (n=5,996)	CIFAL (n=29)	FEF (n=60)
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<sup>56</sup> For correlation tests related to debt, test used: Pearson's  $r$ .

Menace of Penalty				#	%	#	%	#	%
Work on rest days	Coercion	Intimidation / threat	Mid	2,126	35.5%	5	17.2%	3	5.0%
Threat to self	Coercion	Threats of violence	High	208	3.5%	1	3.4%	3	5.0%
Threat to family	Coercion	Threats of violence	High	104	1.7%	1	3.4%	0	0.0%
Not paid for overtime <sup>57</sup>	Fraud	Wage withholding	Low	3,090	51.5%	8	27.6%	13	21.7%
Involuntariness				#	%	#	%	#	%
Owe debt	Coercion	Debt bondage	Mid	2,949	49.2%	22	75.9%	23	38.3%
No freedom of movement	Force	Restricted mvmt / isolation	High	1,993	33.2%	13	44.8%	13	21.7%
No access to passport	Coercion	Restricted mvmt / isolation	High	1,149	19.2%	6	20.7%	1	1.7%
Work more hrs than agreed	Fraud	Deception	Mid	1,281	21.4%	1	3.4%	2	3.3%

## Forced Labor Tiers

Findings concerning the occurrence and distribution of forced labor conditions as defined for this study are based on aggregate, indicator-driven measures of forced labor using three tiers: Tier 1, Tier 1A (a subset of Tier 1), and Tier 2. By order of indicator severity, Tier 1A is considered most severe, then Tier 1, and then Tier 2. The following describes the occurrence and distribution of forced labor conditions among different study cohorts (Table 9).

**Social Media.** Of this group, 3.4% met Tier 1 criteria, most of whom reported a threat to self and no freedom of movement, and 2.1% met Tier 1A. Also, 26.6% reported factors meeting Tier 2 criteria. Most participants meeting Tier 2 criteria reported work on rest days (for fear of being fired) with no freedom of movement.

**CIFAL.** Of the CIFAL group, 1 (3.4%) met Tier 1 and Tier 1A criteria. Five participants from this group (17.2%) reported meeting Tier 2 criteria, all of whom reported working on rest days for fear of being fired and no freedom of movement.

<sup>57</sup> This indicator, while not used for the establishment of any forced labor tiers, is noteworthy due to the fact that more than 50% of OFWs state that they are not paid for overtime. This indicates that there may be significant, pervasive exploitative conditions present or emerging that do not rise to meet the operationalized definition of forced labor.

**FEF.** No participants from this subset met Tier 1 or 1A criteria compared to other participants. Ten percent of FEF participants met Tier 2 criteria, reporting work on rest days (for fear of being fired) with no freedom of movement or threat to self and one mild involuntariness indicator.

**Table 9. Forced Labor Tiers – Non-Intervention (Social Media and CIFAL) vs. Intervention (FEF)**

Category	Menace of Penalty	Involuntariness	TVPA	Social Media (n=5,996)		CIFAL (n=29)		FEF (n=60)	
				#	%	#	%	#	%
Tier 1	Threat to self	No freedom of movement	Force, Coercion	133	2.2%	1	3.4%	0	0.0%
	Threat to family	No freedom of movement	Force, Coercion	46	0.8%	1	3.4%	0	0.0%
Tier 1A	Meets either of the above + Owe Debt		Force, Coercion	123	2.1%	1	3.4%	0	0.0%
<b>Tier 1 n / % of overall dataset =</b>				203	3.4%	1	3.4%	0	0.0%
Tier 2	Work on rest days	No freedom of movement	Force, Coercion	1,295	21.6%	5	17.2%	3	5.0%
	Threat to self	Debt OR Work more hours than agreed	Fraud*, Coercion	188	3.1%	1	3.4%	3	5.0%
	Threat to family	Debt OR Work more hours than agreed	Fraud*, Coercion	93	1.6%	1	3.4%	0	0.0%
<b>Tier 2 n / % of overall dataset =</b>				1596	26.6%	5	17.2%	6	10.0%

Social media arm n = 5,996; CIFAL n = 29; FEF n = 60; % corresponds to % of participants in dataset meeting the category; Work on rest days *for fear of being fired*; No freedom of movement *after work*; Owes debt *to employer, recruiter, etc.*; MP = Menace of Penalty; INV = Involuntariness

\* These Tier 2 indicator combinations may include both Fraud and Coercion as identified by the TVPA, if the respondent works more hours than agreed upon; otherwise, they only include indicators of Coercion.

### Domestic Workers and Forced Labor Vulnerability

When specifically examining forced labor tiers among DWs in the social media-based respondent dataset, 3.3% (77) reported Tier 1A conditions, 5.5% (131) reported Tier 1 conditions, and 42.9% (1,013) reported Tier 2

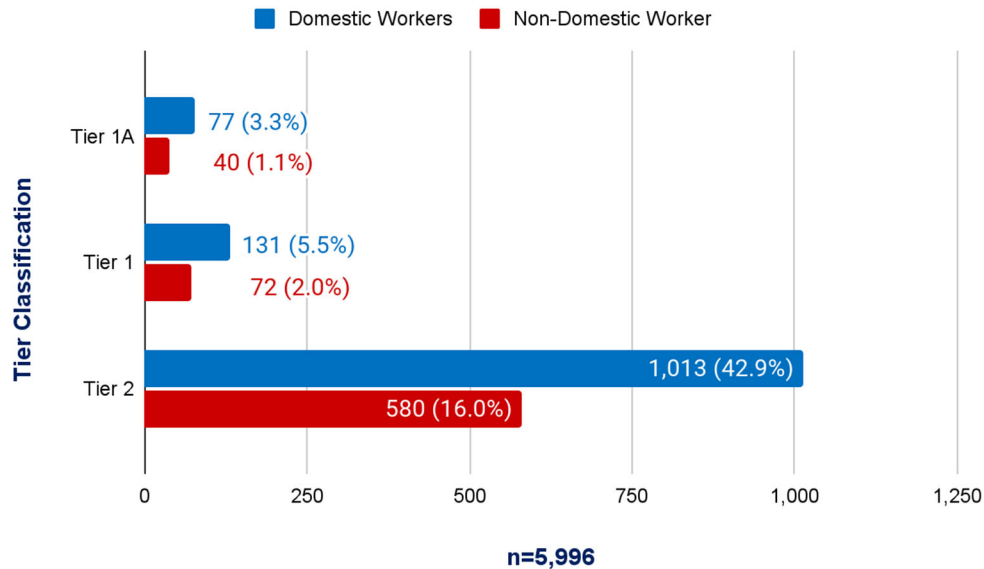


conditions. These rates are nearly twice the forced labor occurrence rates found among all OFWs in aggregate (Figure 9).

**Table 10. Forced Labor Indicators – Domestic Workers (Social Media Arm Only)**

TVPA Classification	Indicator	Description	Severity	Domestic Workers (Social Media Arm; n=2362)	
				#	%
<b>Menace of Penalty</b>					
Coercion	Work on rest days	Intimidation / threat	Mid	1,251	53.0%
Coercion	Threat to self	Threats of violence	High	126	5.3%
Coercion	Threat to family	Threats of violence	High	38	1.6%
Fraud	Not paid for overtime	Wage withholding	Low	1,544	65.4%
<b>Involuntariness</b>					
Coercion	Owe debt	Debt bondage	Mid	1,306	55.3%
Force	No freedom of mvmt	Restricted movement/ isolation	High	1,260	53.3%
Coercion	No access to passport	Restricted movement/ isolation	High	673	28.5%
Fraud	Work more hrs than agreed	Deception	Mid	678	28.7%
<p>Social media arm <math>n = 2,362</math>; % corresponds to % of participants in dataset meeting the category; Work on rest days <i>for fear of being fired</i>; No freedom of movement <i>after work</i>; Owe debt <i>to employer, recruiter, etc.</i>; MP = Menace of Penalty; INV = Involuntariness</p>					

**Figure 9. Forced Labor Tiers – Domestic Workers vs. Non-Domestic Workers (Social Media Arm Only)**



*Note: The graphic analyzes responses from the social media arm only.*

When looking at specific indicators, more than 50% of surveyed DWs reported facing four indicators: work on rest days, not being paid for working overtime, owing debts, and no freedom of movement after work (Table 10). Nearly 30% also reported having no access to their passports and working more hours than agreed upon with their employers.

## Comparative Cohort Analysis

Each OFW cohort in this study was recruited via different sampling strategies. As described previously, the sampling strategies iteratively and rapidly adapted due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic influenced sampling and survey deployment in several critical ways, through legal and logistical restrictions and challenges related to in-person enumeration, pre-departure training, international travel restrictions, large-scale repatriation, volatile employment opportunities at destination countries, unpredictable freedom of movement in destination countries with sporadic quarantines and lockdowns, stresses and changes to the remittance system,<sup>58</sup> among others.

As a result, direct comparison between the study cohorts is not a straightforward process as the samples may differ in statistically significant, impactful ways, which may impact the ability to distinguish between—for instance—whether a cohort that has experienced an intervention such as fair employment training, enjoys better labor outcomes as a result of this training, or due to their industry of employment, education level, age, or other factors unrelated to their training. In particular, although CIFAL cohort participants are drawn from a probability sample and are also recent migrants from late 2021 and early 2022, the FEF participants are drawn via a convenience sample and represent individuals who migrated in 2019, 2020, or 2021. In addition, the cohort

<sup>58</sup> J. Abel, G., & Gietel-Basten, S. (2020). International remittance flows and the economic and social consequences of COVID-19. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space*, 52(8), 1480–1482. <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0308518X20931111>

recruited from social media was recruited using a digital river sampling approach that balanced sampling efforts according to PSA OFW survey demographics. These respondents may have migrated at any time but participated in the study *while living and working abroad in 2021*. Therefore, differences in the sample compositions exist that may have explanatory power over the outcomes experienced in each cohort.

However, TST developed and employed a sample matching procedure to provide a *best-possible* comparative framework to further investigate the FEF suite of interventions as a forced labor risk reduction treatment. The researchers used this procedure to develop and evaluate a matched sample between non-FEF and FEF study participants while controlling for as many explanatory factors as possible within the datasets.

The researchers first evaluated many techniques from the literature to select the best approach for this study's design and data. Methods that included pre-treatment measurements of dependent variables, including Haviland and Nagin's propensity score matching process<sup>59</sup> and Li, Propert, and Rosenbaum's risk set matching function,<sup>60</sup> were determined to be inappropriate for use in this study, in which treatments are applied prior to the commencement of work abroad. The researchers opted to use a propensity score matching method from Dehejia and Wahba<sup>61</sup> and evaluated the available matching functions by examining the matched sample size (i.e., examining the number of dropped samples) and covariate means between the FEF and non-intervention matched samples.

Using the *MatchIt* package in R, the researchers found that sampling with replacement was not necessary to develop a complete and statistically indistinguishable matched sample (measured in terms of Welch two-sample *t*-tests between matched and treatment covariate means, with no covariates producing significant differences at either  $p < .05$  or  $p < .1$ ; Figure 10). The "nearest neighbor" function using propensity score difference as a distance measure and the "optimal" pair matching function produce matched samples that meet these two conditions.<sup>62</sup> TST matched using education, age, gender, work country,<sup>63</sup> industry of employment,<sup>64</sup> debt, number of dependents, and island of origin, as these covariates are each associated with forced labor outcomes. We note that the "treatment" of employment via FEF/FEA may itself affect the probability of employment in specific industries or locales, as FEA placement operations target specific destinations. Therefore, we also include an interaction variable to examine whether a significant interaction occurs between membership in the FEF cohort and placement in Hong Kong, vis-à-vis forced labor outcomes.

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<sup>59</sup> Haviland, A., Nagin, D. S., & Rosenbaum, P. R. (2007). Combining propensity score matching and group-based trajectory analysis in an observational study. *Psychological methods*, 12(3), 247. <https://doi.org/10.1037/1082-989x.12.3.247>

<sup>60</sup> Li, Y. P., Propert, K. J., & Rosenbaum, P. R. (2001). Balanced risk set matching. *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, 96(455), 870-882.

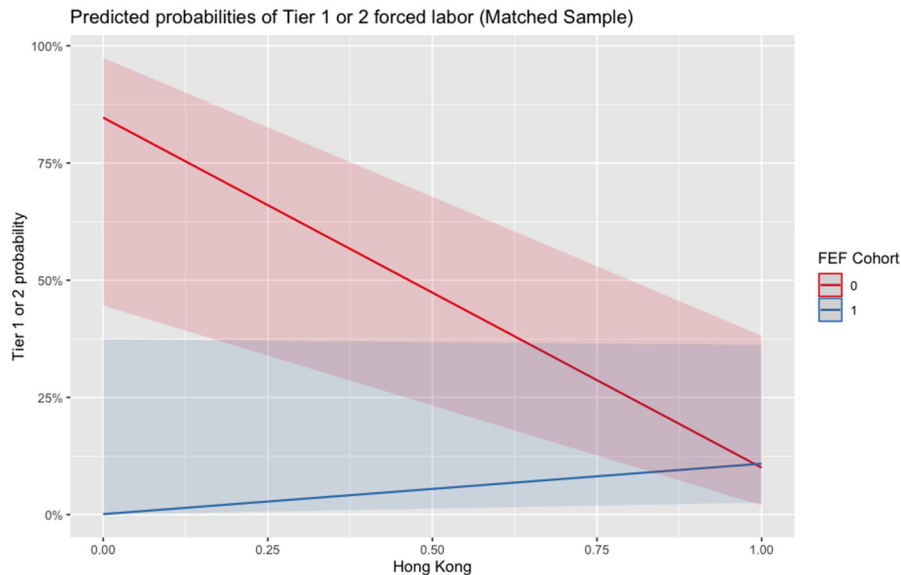
<sup>61</sup> Dehejia, R. H., & Wahba, S. (2002). Propensity score-matching methods for nonexperimental causal studies. *Review of Economics and statistics*, 84(1), 151-161.

<sup>62</sup> Austin, P. C. (2014). A comparison of 12 algorithms for matching on the propensity score. *Statistics in Medicine*, 33(6), 1057-1069. <https://doi.org/10.1002/sim.6004>

<sup>63</sup> Indicator variable for employment in Hong Kong.

<sup>64</sup> Indicator variable for employment as a domestic worker.

**Figure 10. Predicted probabilities of Tier 1 or 2 Forced Labor using matched sample: Interaction between FEF treatment receipt, placement in Hong Kong<sup>65</sup>**



Several factors have a significant relationship with forced labor outcomes using the matched sample. **FEF recipients are significantly less likely to experience forced labor conditions than non-FEF study participants** ( $p < .05$ ) in general, regardless of placement geography. Moreover, employment in Hong Kong, and the number of dependents also both have a negative relationship with forced labor (Table 11). When examining the interaction between FEF treatment and working in Hong Kong, a positive relationship with forced labor emerges. This suggests that individuals who have **not** received FEF treatments have an increased risk of forced labor when employed outside Hong Kong, but experience relatively safer working conditions in Hong Kong. This finding follows those concerning destination country and forced labor, described in greater detail in the **Economic Indicators and Forced Labor** section. Conversely, although FEF treatment recipients experience lower rates of forced labor conditions in general, FEF treatment recipients who work in other geographies experience statistically significantly lower rates of forced labor conditions than those working in Hong Kong. Hong Kong is, then, relatively safer for the general population of OFWs, but slightly higher-risk for recipients of FEF treatments as opposed to FEF recipients working in other geographies. The researchers note that, because the placement of FEF treatment recipients was predominantly focused on Hong Kong, findings specifically for FEF recipients in other geographies may be influenced by the smaller sample size.

<sup>65</sup> This figure illustrates the probability of falling into Tier 1 or 2 forced labor (shown on the y-axis), with the red line representing individuals who did not receive FEF treatment and the blue line representing those who did receive FEF treatment. The x-axis represents placement in Hong Kong, with the left side depicting those working in other countries, and the right side depicting those who are employed in Hong Kong. Employment in Hong Kong, *alongside* receipt of FEF treatment, has a significant effect on the probability of falling into forced labor, as evidenced by the difference between the red and blue lines.

**Table 11. Evaluating the Impact of FEF training and placement using matched sample**

Covariates	Estimate	Std. Err.	z	Pr(> z )	Significance
(Intercept)	5.3281	2.3564	2.261	0.02375	<.01
Formal Education	-0.8205	1.0527	-0.779	0.43574	<i>Not Sig.</i>
FEF Cohort	-8.5948	3.7808	-2.273	0.02301	<.05
Age Split	-2.0703	1.3519	-1.531	0.12569	<i>Not Sig.</i>
Gender Split	3.9391	2.4614	1.6	0.10952	<i>Not Sig.</i>
Hong Kong	-3.9064	1.4262	-2.739	0.00616	<.01
Debt Split	1.5021	1.0622	1.414	0.15732	<i>Not Sig.</i>
Mindanao	2.3301	1.6589	1.405	0.16015	<i>Not Sig.</i>
Luzon	-0.2504	0.9959	-0.251	0.80146	<i>Not Sig.</i>
Dependents	-0.8396	0.3893	-2.157	0.03103	<.05
FEF Cohort: Hong Kong	8.6868	3.9899	2.177	0.02947	<.05

The use of sample matching poses risks to any comparative analysis between study cohorts. In this study, one key difference between the sample strategies remains unaccounted for in the matching approach: individuals recruited via social media were already located in destination geographies, whereas FEF graduates migrated at some time in 2019, 2020, or 2021. As a result, the recentness of migration is a potentially important but unexamined factor in the above comparative analysis. However, given the logistical constraints of the study and its design, we provide the above analysis as a “best-possible” comparative evaluation, noting that it offers some empirical support to the notion that, **controlling for other covariates, FEF/FEA interventions reduce the risk of forced labor.**

## Other Key Findings

The researchers observed several correlations between participant characteristics and forced labor, suggesting a consistent, dominant vulnerability profile among study participants. In particular, the nearly 6,000 respondents from the cohort recruited at destination sites via social media reported statistically significant relationships between gender, island of origin, working as a domestic worker, age, wages, debt, and forced labor. Based on the descriptive statistical analysis of participant demographics, several associations also exist between these demographic characteristics: in particular, female OFWs were more likely to originate from Mindanao or Visayas, were more likely to work as DWs, were more likely to be younger, were less likely to be highly educated, and earned lower wages than male OFWs. The researchers found that the surveyed female OFWs experience forced labor conditions at more than twice the rate of male OFWs.

These findings are especially grave considering the ongoing population-level demographic changes among OFWs currently working abroad. In particular, although current demographic data do not exist, the PSA’s 2019 and 2020 OFW surveys show that, from 2019 to 2020, the global OFW gender distribution shifted 4.2% further female, with

women comprising 59.6% of all OFWs at the time of collection of the 2020 survey. It is challenging to speculate how and how much these demographics have changed since mid-2020. Reports in early 2022 suggest that remittances have increased year-over-year from 2020 to 2021.<sup>66</sup> However, OFW employment statistics are not available for 2021, and Philippine government statements have indicated that large-scale repatriation continued throughout 2021, suggesting employment rates, particularly among non-DWs, may not have significantly improved.<sup>67</sup> Moreover, reports about OFW DWs exposed to dangerous or extreme conditions due to the COVID-19 pandemic continue to emerge.<sup>68</sup>

## Age and Forced Labor

**Social Media.** In the Social Media cohort, age has a statistically significant, negative relationship with all tier criteria and four forced labor indicators (work on rest days, no freedom of movement, no access to passport, work more hours than agreed), indicating that younger participants are more likely to experience these indicators and meet Tier 1 or Tier 2 forced labor conditions. However, age has a significant *positive* relationship with owing debt; older participants (> 35 years) are more likely to report owing debts.

**CIFAL and FEF.** There were no statistically significant relationships between age and forced labor indicators in these cohorts (Table 12).

**Table 12. Forced Labor Indicators and Tiers: Significance of Age**

Indicators*	Social Media		CIFAL		FEF	
	Corr	P	Corr	P	Corr	P
Work on rest days	-.039	.003	.019	.920	.168	.199
Threat to self	-.022	.085	-.148	.444	-.152	.245
Threat to family	-.005	.711	-.148	.444	N/A	N/A
Not paid for overtime	-.004	.729	-.005	.978	-.123	.349
Owe debt	.060	<.001	-.057	.768	-.140	.286
No freedom of mvmt	-.073	<.001	-.133	.491	-.038	.772
No access to passport	-.059	<.001	-.048	.803	-.177	.175

<sup>66</sup> Venzon, C. (2022, February 15). *Philippines 'modern-day heroes' sent record remittances last year*. Nikkei Asia. <https://asia.nikkei.com/Economy/Philippines-modern-day-heroes-sent-record-remittances-last-year>

<sup>67</sup> See: Sarao, Z. (2021, September, 21). *Number of Filipinos repatriated during pandemic nears 1.5 million*. Inquirer.net.

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1490532/number-of-filipinos-repatriated-during-pandemic-nears-1-5-million>

<sup>68</sup> For example, in February 2022, significant news coverage focused on a number of OFW domestic workers in Hong Kong who were left homeless after being fired due to contracting COVID-19. See: ABS-CBN News. (2022, February 24). *Some fired COVID-positive OFWs in HK are homeless: NGO*. <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/02/24/22/some-sacked-ofws-in-hong-kong-are-homeless-says-ngo>

Work more hours than agreed	<b>-.060</b>	<b>&lt;.001</b>		-.148	.444		-.058	.658	
<b>Tier</b>	<b>Corr</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Corr</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Corr</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>n</b>
<b>Tier 1a</b>	<b>&lt;-.001</b>	<b>&lt;.001</b>	123	-.017	1.000	1	N/A	N/A	0
<b>Tier 1</b>	<b>&lt;-.001</b>	<b>&lt;.001</b>	203	-.017	1.000	1	N/A	N/A	0
<b>Tier 2</b>	<b>&lt;-.001</b>	<b>&lt;.001</b>	1,596	-.003	.882	5	-.025	.349	6

Social media  $n = 5,639$ ; CIFAL  $n = 29$ ; FEF  $n = 52$

\* Correlation / Significance: Pearson's  $r$  (where  $0 = < 35$ ;  $1 = \geq 35$ )

† Correlation: Rank Biserial Test; Significance: Wilcoxon Rank Sum Test

## Gender and Forced Labor

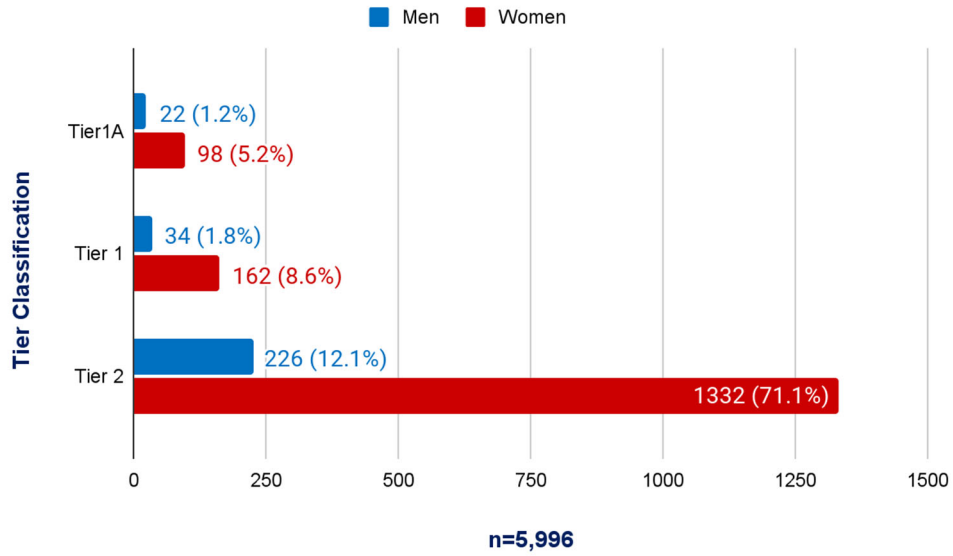
**Social Media.** In the Social Media cohort, gender has a statistically significant relationship with all forced labor indicators except for experiencing threats to the respondent's family. Consistent with numerous prior studies on gender and forced labor<sup>69</sup>, women are more likely to experience forced labor conditions and Tier 1 and Tier 2 criteria than men. In particular, among respondents in this cohort, 2.5% of women reported Tier 1A conditions, 4.4% reported Tier 1 conditions, and 40.3% reported experiencing Tier 2 forced labor conditions, whereas 1.1% of men reported Tier 1A conditions, 1.8% reported Tier 1 conditions, and 14.4% reported Tier 2 conditions. However, men are more likely to experience threats to their families.

<sup>69</sup> See, for instance:

Inglis, S. C. (2001). Expanding international and national protections against trafficking for forced labor using a human rights framework. *Buff. Hum. Rts. L. Rev.*, 7, 55.

EIDidi, H., van Biljon, C., Alvi, M. F., Ringler, C., Ratna, N., Abdulrahim, S., ... & Wu, J. (2021). *Reducing vulnerability to forced labor and trafficking of short-term, low-skilled women migrant workers in the South Asia to Middle East corridor* (Vol. 2049). Intl Food Policy Res Inst.

**Figure 11. Forced Labor Tiers: Men vs. Women (Social Media Arm Only)**



*Note: The graphic analyzes responses from the social media arm only.*

**CIFAL.** In this dataset, gender has a statistically significant relationship with loss of access to passport; in particular, female OFWs are more likely to experience this condition.

**FEF.** Statistically significant relationships were observed between gender and threats to self, as well as gender and Tier 2 of forced labor. This indicates that men in the FEF cohort are more likely to experience these threats as well as Tier 2 forced labor criteria in aggregate (Figure 11; Table 13).

**Table 13. Forced Labor Indicators and Tiers: Significance of Gender**

Indicators	Social Media		CIFAL		FEF	
	Corr	P	Corr	P	Corr	P
Work on rest days	<b>-.229</b>	<b>&lt;.001</b>	-.357	.057	-.076	.749
Threat to self	<b>-.059</b>	<b>&lt;.001</b>	-.148	.444	<b>.688</b>	<b>&lt;.001</b>
Threat to family	.034	.003	-.148	.444	N/A	N/A
Not paid for overtime	<b>-.217</b>	<b>&lt;.001</b>	-.323	.087	-.150	.527
Owe debt	<b>-.077</b>	<b>&lt;.001</b>	.109	.574	.313	.180
No freedom of mvmt	<b>-.261</b>	<b>&lt;.001</b>	-.276	.147	-.132	.578
No access to passport	<b>-.163</b>	<b>&lt;.001</b>	<b>-.400</b>	<b>.032</b>	-.053	.826
Work more hours than	<b>-.082</b>	<b>&lt;.001</b>	-.148	.444	-.076	.749



agreed									
Tier†	Corr	P	n	Corr	P	n	Corr	P	n
Tier 1a	-.048	<.001	120	-.148	.444	1	N/A	N/A	0
Tier 1	-.065	<.001	196	-.148	.444	1	N/A	N/A	0
Tier 2	-.251	<.001	1,558	-.357	.057	5	.459	.042	4

Social media  $n = 5,522$ ; CIFAL  $n = 29$ ; FEF  $n = 20$   
 Correlation / Significance: Pearson's  $r$

## Social Statistics and Forced Labor

**Social Media.** Education significantly and negatively correlates with all forced labor tiers and indicators, except for threats to family. Thus, less-educated participants are more likely to experience every other risk indicator and condition. Threats to family are not significantly associated with education.

**CIFAL and FEF.** Education does not significantly correlate with any forced labor indicators or forced labor tiers in these datasets (Table 14).

**Table 14. Forced Labor Indicators and Tiers: Significance of Education**

Indicators	Social Media		CIFAL		FEF	
	Corr	P	Corr	P	Corr	P
Work on rest days	<-.001	<.001	-.003	.903	-.048	.511
Threat to self	<-.001	<.001	-.074	.343	-.006	.915
Threat to family	<-.001	.187	-.074	.343	N/A	N/A
Not paid for overtime	<-.001	<.001	.044	.172	.032	.201
Owe debt	<-.001	<.001	.003	.957	-.020	.438
No freedom of mvmt	<-.001	<.001	-.044	.908	-.021	.401
No access to passport	<-.001	<.001	-.061	.118	N/A	N/A
Work more hours than agreed	<-.001	<.001	-.074	.343	-.048	.511

Tier	Corr	P	n	Corr	P	n	Corr	P	n
<b>Tier 1a</b>	<-.001	<.001	123	-.074	.343	1	N/A	N/A	0
<b>Tier 1</b>	<-.001	<.001	203	-.074	.343	1	N/A	N/A	0
<b>Tier 2</b>	<-.001	<.001	1,596	-.003	.903	5	-.018	.638	4

Social media *n* = 5,642; CIFA *n* = 29; FEF *n* = 32  
 Correlation: Rank Biserial Test; Significance: Wilcoxon Rank Sum Test

## Island of Origin and Forced Labor

**Social Media.** Island of origin has a significant relationship with Tier 1 and 2 forced labor, and a majority of examined forced labor indicators—excluding threats to family and owing a debt. After binarizing the islands of origin to establish directional correlations, further analysis reveals that participants from Mindanao are more likely to meet most forced labor indicators, except for threats to family. Similarly, participants from Visayas are more likely to experience working on rest days, no freedom of movement, loss of access to passport, and working more hours than agreed. Although participants from Luzon are more likely to owe a debt, they are less likely to experience threats to self or a loss of freedom of movement.

**CIFAL.** In this dataset, island of origin has a significant relationship with not being paid overtime and loss of freedom of movement. Island-specific analysis indicates that respondents from Luzon are less likely to experience no freedom of movement, and participants from Visayas are more likely to not be paid overtime and experience no freedom of movement.

**FEF.** Only one statistically significant relationship between any island of origin and any forced labor indicator or tier exists in this dataset; namely, participants from Visayas are more likely to work more hours than agreed upon (Tables 15–18).

**Table 15. Forced Labor Indicators and Tiers: Significance of Island of Origin**

Indicators	Social Media		CIFAL		FEF	
	Corr	P	Corr	P	Corr	P
Work on rest days	<b>.096</b>	<b>&lt;.001</b>	.141	.652	.246	.226
Threat to self	<b>.051</b>	<b>&lt;.001</b>	.170	1.000	.196	.411
Threat to family	.025	.179	.170	1.000	N/A	N/A
Not paid for overtime	<b>.075</b>	<b>&lt;.001</b>	<b>.472</b>	<b>.026</b>	.135	.690
Owe debt	.013	.612	.210	.702	.064	1.000

No freedom of mvmt	.122	<.001		.521	.018		.036	1.000	
No access to passport	.101	<.001		.309	.234		.111	1.000	
Work more hours than agreed	.074	<.001		.309	1.000		.326	.246	
<b>Tier</b>	<b>Corr</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Corr</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Corr</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>n</b>
<b>Tier 1a</b>	.029	.086	123	.170	1.000	1	N/A	N/A	0
<b>Tier 1</b>	.060	<.001	203	.170	1.000	1	N/A	N/A	0
<b>Tier 2</b>	.124	<.001	1,596	.141	.648	5	.263	.215	6

Social media  $n = 5,642$ ; CIFAL  $n = 29$ ; FEF  $n = 52$

Correlation: Cramér's V; Significance: Chi-Square Test

Note: As these are categorical statistical tests, correlations with specific islands of origin are not measurable. Table 16 includes measurable significance tests.

**Table 16. Forced Labor Indicators and Tiers: Analysis of Individual Islands – Social Media**

Social Media	Luzon	Mindanao	Visayas
Indicators	Corr	Corr	Corr
Work on rest days	-.021	.091***	.065***
Threat to self	-.278*	.048***	.022
Threat to family	-.011	.019	.019
Not paid for overtime	-.015	.067***	.024
Owe debt	.080***	.037**	.022
No freedom of mvmt	-.043***	.120***	.061***
No access to passport	N/A	.064***	.088***
Work more hours than agreed	-.018	.075***	.039**

Correlation / Significance: Pearson's  $r$ , where  $*p < .05$ ,  $**p < .01$ , and  $***p < .001$ ; no marking indicates no significance

**Table 17. Forced Labor Indicators and Tiers: Analysis of Individual Islands – CIFAL**

CIFAL	Luzon	Mindanao	Visayas
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Indicators	Corr	Corr	Corr
Work on rest days	-.139	.088	.082
Threat to self	.17	-.127	-.076
Threat to family	.17	-.127	-.076
Not paid for overtime	-.374	.086	.424**
Owe debt	-.184	.204	-.008
No freedom of mvmt	-.442**	.144	.444**
No access to passport	-.224	.025	.289
Work more hours than agreed	.17	-.126	-.076

Correlation / Significance: Pearson's  $r$ , where  $*p < .05$ ,  $**p < .01$ , and  $***p < .001$ ; no marking indicates no significance

**Table 18. Forced Labor Indicators and Tiers: Analysis of Individual Islands – FEF**

FEF	Luzon	Mindanao	Visayas
Indicators	Corr	Corr	Corr
Work on rest days	-.092	.035	.245
Threat to self	-.092	.208	-.061
Threat to family	N/A	N/A	N/A
Not paid for overtime	-.076	.14	.022
Owe debt	.05	-.01	.064
No freedom of mvmt	.005	.049	.022
No access to passport	.122	-.078	-.035
Work more hours than agreed	-.012	-.112	.322**

Correlation / Significance: Pearson's  $r$ , where  $*p < .05$ ,  $**p < .01$ , and  $***p < .001$ ; no marking indicates no significance

## Economic Indicators and Forced Labor

### Destination Country

**Social Media.** Among social media participants, the destination country has a significant relationship with all tiers and forced labor indicators except for threat to family and debt. Below, the researchers further examine the data by binarizing each destination option to obtain directional correlations and identify which destination countries are higher and lower risk.

**CIFAL and FEF.** Destination country does not have a significant relationship with any forced labor indicators or tiers in these datasets (Table 19).

**Table 19. Forced Labor Indicators and Tiers: Significance of Destination Country**

Indicators	Social Media			CIFAL			FEF		
	Corr	P		Corr	P		Corr	P	
Work on rest days	.148	<.001		.636	.122		.418	.120	
Threat to self	.098	<.001		.225	1.000		.574	.206	
Threat to family	.059	.03		.225	1.000		N/A	N/A	
Not paid for overtime	.228	<.001		.342	.880		.318	.517	
Owe debt	.069	.004		.418	.569		.403	.094	
No freedom of mvmt	.164	<.001		.605	.109		.244	.709	
No access to passport	.219	<.001		.694	.066		.075	1.000	
Work more hours than agreed	.154	<.001		.225	1.000		.107	1.000	
Tier	Corr	P	n	Corr	P	n	Corr	P	n
Tier 1a	.075	<.001	123	.225	1.000	1	N/A	N/A	0
Tier 1	.100	<.001	203	.225	1.000	1	N/A	N/A	0
Tier 2	.167	<.001	1,596	.636	.120	5	.476	.086	6

Social media  $n = 5,642$ ; CIFAL  $n = 29$ ; FEF  $n = 60$

Correlation: Cramér's V; Significance: Fisher's Exact Test

Note: As these are categorical statistical tests, correlations with specific destinations are not measurable.

Table 20 includes measurable significance tests.

After creating country-specific dummy variables, the researchers observe a number of destination country-specific correlations with forced labor tiers (Table 20). Hong Kong, Singapore, Japan, Taiwan, and UAE are all statistically significantly *negatively* correlated with at least one forced labor tier. Kuwait, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia are all statistically significantly *positively* correlated with at least one forced labor tier, with Kuwait ( $p < .05$ ) and Saudi Arabia ( $p < .01$ ) showing positive correlations with every tier, including the most severe forced labor category of Tier 1A.

**Table 20. Forced Labor Tiers by Destination Country (Social Media Arm)**

Destination Country	Tier 1a				Tier 1				Tier 2			
	Corr	<i>P</i>	n	%	Corr	<i>P</i>	n	%	Corr	<i>P</i>	n	%
Hong Kong	-.046	<.01	1	0.2	-.054	<.01	4	0.6	-.011	.41	168	25.2
Japan	-.012	.37	1	0.8	-.012	.29	2	1.7	-.059	<.01	10	8.3
Kuwait	.032	<.05	15	3.5	.063	<.01	32	7.5	.094	<.01	177	41.6
Malaysia	.001	.97	3	2.0	-.012	.34	3	2.0	.012	.33	45	30.0
Qatar	.020	.12	16	2.8	.024	.06	27	4.7	.056	<.01	195	34.3
Saudi Arabia	.047	<.01	47	3.0	.048	<.01	75	4.9	.103	<.01	529	34.3
Singapore	-.021	.11	4	0.9	-.031	<.05	6	1.4	-.041	<.01	86	20
Taiwan	.009	.47	9	2.5	.010	.44	15	4.1	-.027	<.05	80	21.9
UAE	-.007	.58	21	1.8	-.006	.65	38	3.2	-.045	<.01	271	22.6

Social media  $n = 5,996$

Correlation / Significance: Pearson's  $r$

## Work Industry

**Social Media.** Work industry has a significant relationship with all tiers and forced labor indicators except for threats to family. More specifically, after binarizing the work industry options and examining directional correlations, domestic helpers have significant, positive relationships with every forced labor tier and indicator except for threats to family.

**CIFAL and FEF.** Work industry does not have a significant relationship with any forced labor indicators or tiers in these datasets. As all FEF cohort members continued to work as DWs, this cohort has no variance in terms of work industry and is not examined (Tables 21 and 22).

**Table 21. Forced Labor Indicators and Tiers: Significance of Work Industry**

Indicators	Social Media			CIFAL		
	Corr	P		Corr	P	
Work on rest days	<b>.288</b>	<b>&lt;.001</b>		.306	1.000	
Threat to self	<b>.091</b>	<b>&lt;.001</b>		.127	1.000	
Threat to family	<b>.069</b>	<b>.007</b>		.127	1.000	
Not paid for overtime	<b>.189</b>	<b>&lt;.001</b>		.463	.439	
Owe debt	<b>.105</b>	<b>&lt;.001</b>		.521	.185	
No freedom of mvmt	<b>.338</b>	<b>&lt;.001</b>		.490	.189	
No access to passport	<b>.182</b>	<b>&lt;.001</b>		.342	.905	
Work more hours than agreed	<b>.156</b>	<b>&lt;.001</b>		.127	1.000	
Tier	Corr	P	n	Corr	P	n
<b>Tier 1a</b>	<b>.088</b>	<b>&lt;.001</b>	123	.127	1.000	1
<b>Tier 1</b>	<b>.114</b>	<b>&lt;.001</b>	203	.127	1.000	1
<b>Tier 2</b>	<b>.286</b>	<b>&lt;.001</b>	1,596	.306	1.000	5

Social media *n* = 5,642; CIFAL *n* = 29; FEF *n* = 42  
 Correlation: Cramér's V; Significance: Fisher's Exact Test

**Table 22. Forced Labor Indicators and Tiers: Significance of Domestic Worker**

Indicators	Social Media			CIFAL		
	Corr	P		Corr	P	
Work on rest days	<b>.295</b>	<b>&lt;.001</b>		.306	.106	
Threat to self	<b>.082</b>	<b>&lt;.001</b>		.127	.512	
Threat to family	-.008	.548		.127	.512	
Not paid for overtime	<b>.223</b>	<b>&lt;.001</b>		.248	.196	
Owe debt	<b>.124</b>	<b>&lt;.001</b>		.144	.456	

No freedom of mvmt	<b>.344</b>	<b>&lt;.001</b>		.305	.108	
No access to passport	<b>.191</b>	<b>&lt;.001</b>		.342	.069	
Work more hours than agreed	<b>.144</b>	<b>&lt;.001</b>		.127	.512	
<b>Tier</b>	<b>Corr</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Corr</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>n</b>
<b>Tier 1a</b>	<b>.076</b>	<b>&lt;.001</b>	123	.127	.512	1
<b>Tier 1</b>	<b>.096</b>	<b>&lt;.001</b>	203	.127	.512	1
<b>Tier 2</b>	<b>.297</b>	<b>&lt;.001</b>	1,596	.306	.106	5
Social media <i>n</i> = 5,642; CIFAL <i>n</i> = 29; FEF <i>n</i> = 42						
Correlation: Cramér's V; Significance: Fisher's Exact Test						

## Monthly Wage

**Social Media.** In this dataset, monthly wage has a significant, negative relationship with all forced labor tiers and indicators except for threats to the participant's family. This means that participants who earn less are more likely to experience all other forced labor conditions and associated indicators.

**CIFAL and FEF.** Monthly wage does not significantly correlate with any forced labor indicators or tiers in the CIFAL or FEF cohorts (Table 23).

**Table 23. Forced Labor Indicators and Tiers: Significance of Monthly Wage**

Indicators	Social Media		CIFAL		FEF	
	Corr	P	Corr	P	Corr	P
Work on rest days	<b>&lt;-.001</b>	<b>&lt;.001</b>	-.059	.239	-.040	.244
Threat to self	<b>&lt;-.001</b>	<b>&lt;.001</b>	-.094	.199	-.006	.919
Threat to family	<-.001	.113	-.094	.199	N/A	N/A
Not paid for overtime	<b>&lt;-.001</b>	<b>&lt;.001</b>	-.065	.135	.013	.359
Owe debt	<b>&lt;-.001</b>	<b>&lt;.001</b>	-.050	.870	.016	.105
No freedom of mvmt	<b>&lt;-.001</b>	<b>&lt;.001</b>	-.068	.179	.002	.574
No access to passport	<b>&lt;-.001</b>	<b>&lt;.001</b>	-.070	.088	.058	.185
Work more hours than	<b>&lt;-.001</b>	<b>&lt;.001</b>	-.094	.199	.083	.141



agreed									
Tier	Corr	P	n	Corr	P	n	Corr	P	n
Tier 1a	<-.001	<.001	104	-.094	.199	1	N/A	N/A	0
Tier 1	<-.001	<.001	170	-.094	.199	1	N/A	N/A	0
Tier 2	<-.001	<.001	1,419	-.059	.239	5	-.025	.445	6

Social media  $n = 5,133$ ; CIFAL  $n = 29$ ; FEF  $n = 43$   
 Correlation: Rank Biserial Test; Significance: Wilcoxon Rank Sum Test

## Debt

In this study, debt means the participant has financial obligations to an employer (current or previous), a recruiter, friends or family, a bank, or an unidentified source.

**Social Media.** Social media participants' responses reveal a significant, positive relationship with forced labor tiers and all indicators except for threats to self. These findings indicate that participants who owe a debt are more likely to experience all other forced labor conditions and associated tiers.

**CIFAL.** Debt does not significantly correlate with any forced labor indicators or tiers in this cohort.

**FEF.** Debt has a significant, positive relationship with threats to self and Tier 2 forced labor, indicating that participants who owe a debt are more likely to experience such threats as well as aggregated Tier 2 forced labor conditions (Table 24).

**Table 24. Forced Labor Indicators and Tiers: Significance of Debt**

Indicators	Social Media		CIFAL		FEF	
	Corr	P	Corr	P	Corr	P
Work on rest days	.117	<.001	.044	.820	.133	.309
Threat to self	.026	.044	.107	.582	.291	.024
Threat to family	.039	.004	.107	.582	N/A	N/A
Not paid for overtime	.079	<.001	-.012	.949	.001	.992
No freedom of mvmt	.121	<.001	.184	.338	-.082	.534
No access to passport	.110	<.001	-.110	.571	.165	.207
Work more hours than	.101	<.001	.107	.582	-.146	.264

agreed									
Tier	Corr	P	n	Corr	P	n	Corr	P	n
Tier 1a	.136	<.001	123	.107	.582	1	N/A	N/A	0
Tier 1	.044	<.001	203	.107	.582	1	N/A	N/A	0
Tier 2	.150	<.001	1,596	.044	.820	5	.309	.016	6

Social media  $n = 5,996$ ; CIFAL  $n = 29$ ; FEF  $n = 60$   
 Correlation / Significance: Pearson's  $r$

## Dependents and Forced Labor

Participants were asked the number of dependents they had to gauge the number of family members supported by the OFW as they work abroad. Dependents may reside in the destination country with the participant or may be family members who remained in the Philippines but remain financially dependent on the participant.

**Social Media.** The number of dependents in the social media group has a significant, positive relationship with Tier 2 criteria and most forced labor indicators except for threats to self and family. The more dependents a participant has, the more susceptible they are to forced labor conditions. However, in nearly all cases, the effect sizes for these relationships are smaller than .001, indicating negligible associations.

**CIFAL.** The number of dependents does not significantly correlate with any forced labor indicators or tiers in this cohort.

**FEF.** Debt has a significant, positive relationship with threats to self and Tier 2 forced labor, indicating that participants who owe a debt are more likely to experience both conditions (Table 25).

**Table 25. Forced Labor Indicators and Tiers: Significance of Dependents with Migrant**

Indicators	Social Media		CIFAL		FEF	
	Corr	P	Corr	P	Corr	P
Work on rest days	<.001	<.001	.017	.420	.030	.544
Threat to self	<.001	.118	.071	.386	-.065	.205
Threat to family	<-.001	.344	.071	.386	N/A	N/A
Not paid for overtime	<.001	.005	.119	.762	.021	.441
Owe debt	<.001	<.001	.052	.215	.045	.094

No freedom of mvmt	<.001	<.001		.058	.112		-.005	.919	
No access to passport	.132	<.001		-.072	.106		.028	.710	
Work more hours than agreed	<.001	<.001		.071	.386		.083	.307	
<b>Tier</b>	<b>Corr</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Corr</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Corr</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>n</b>
<b>Tier 1a</b>	<.001	.517	123	.071	.386	1	N/A	N/A	0
<b>Tier 1</b>	<.001	.284	203	.071	.386	1	N/A	N/A	0
<b>Tier 2</b>	<.001	<.001	1,596	.017	.420	5	-.019	.639	6
Social media $n = 5,642$ ; CIFAL $n = 29$ ; FEF $n = 38$ Correlation: Rank Biserial Test; Significance: Wilcoxon Rank Sum Test									

## Pre-Departure Training and Forced Labor

Several orientation seminars exist to support migrant workers. Most of these are elective, including the Pre-Employment Orientation Seminar (PEOS) provided by the POEA. PEOS is conducted to help aspiring migrant workers decide whether they will migrate or not. Another elective pre-departure program is the Comprehensive Pre-Departure Education Program (CPDEP), a multi-day program focused on domestic worker training that provides additional language and culture training conducted by OWWA. Recruitment agencies and CSOs offer supplemental in-house training courses to supplement PDOS. Finally, the Post-Arrival Orientation Seminar (PAOS) is conducted by the Office of the Undersecretary for Migrant Workers Affairs (OUMWA). Attendance of the PAOS is also optional and depends on the discretion of OFWs' employers.

Given that GFEMS grantee FEF also provides pre-departure training and placement services, the effectiveness of pre-departure training interventions is an important and central question to this study. Participants in the Social Media cohort were recruited digitally after migration, and their selection did not depend on whether or not they completed pre-departure training. As a result, the researchers collected information on whether these respondents attended the mandatory PDOS training and examined participation in the seminars as a forced labor reduction strategy within this cohort.

The researchers find that pre-departure training attendance is **not** statistically significantly associated with a reduction in forced labor rates at any tier of severity. Attendance is significantly negatively associated with two indicators: working overtime without pay ( $r = -.06, p < .01$ ), and loss of access to passport ( $r = -.03, p < .05$ ). However, attendance is positively correlated with threats to self ( $r = .03, p < .05$ ) and working on rest days ( $r = .04, p < .05$ ). Attendance also positively correlates with domestic work while abroad ( $r = .09, p < .01$ ). These findings suggest that current PDOS curricula are of limited effectiveness in reducing the risk of experiencing forced labor while abroad.

## Limitations

### Resource Constraints

The research team operated within the context of several material constraints as well as operational realities that both enabled and bounded research design, data collection, and analysis.

A number of these constraints emerged as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Components of the relevant ethical review organizations and legal review offices were shuttered due to the pandemic for 6 months to 1 year. In-person pre-departure training for OFWs, a requirement for OFWs seeking to work abroad, was digitized in response to the pandemic, precluding time-location sampling from being performed by CIFAL to build a “control” cohort. The OWWA pre-departure seminars were subsequently re-established, but with social distancing requirements and subject to countrywide community quarantine guidelines. FEF training was initially shuttered due to the Enhanced Community Quarantines imposed by the Government of the Philippines, then reinstated with strict training class size limits.

More broadly, Metro Manila remained under General or Enhanced Community Quarantine from spring 2020 through summer 2021, before moving to the Alert Level System (ALS) in September 2021. These quarantines drastically affected both the researchers’ ability to perform survey enumeration for the study as well as the underlying migration under study. OFW emigration fell drastically in 2020 and 2021, and repatriation soared. Many of the registered migrants reported that they did not ultimately migrate. These factors resulted in greater reliance on remote enumeration and survey data collection from OFWs who remained in destination geographies, and who faced great uncertainty and risk as a result of economic and public health crises experienced in destination geographies.

The research team was limited in its mechanisms for recontacting OFWs in the CIFAL and FEF cohorts who were registered in the Philippines prior to migrating. Social chat and mobile messaging applications offered multiple mechanisms for recontact; however, some of these mechanisms, such as SMS, depend on phone numbers that may have changed after OFWs departed the Philippines. Moreover, these digital messaging-driven approaches are “lightweight” as opposed to phone or in-person interviews in that they do not immediately alert the respondent or require an immediate response from them. As a result, they may have resulted in increased attrition instead of other contact mechanisms. However, owing to the numerous geographies under study and the fact that phone numbers of respondents were less reliable and persistent than messaging profiles on other applications (e.g., WhatsApp or Facebook Messenger), the researchers judged that the messaging-based recontact approach was the most reliable and methodologically sound approach available. Nonetheless, the available contact mechanisms will continue to change over time with the development of new technologies, and continual research is needed to identify and validate the best and most efficient technical channels for maintaining remote contact with large, transient populations.

### Exogenous Factors

Two large-scale events impacted the implementation of anti-trafficking efforts and the overall study. First, the 2019–2020 Hong Kong protests, also known as the Anti-Extradition Law Amendment Bill Movement, began in June

2019. Demonstrators numbered between hundreds of thousands to two million by some estimates.<sup>70</sup> These protests effectively shut down much of Hong Kong, halting the placement of migrant workers and suspending much of the city's economic activity.

Second, due to the coronavirus pandemic and related restrictions, many OFWs found themselves unable to emigrate as planned. Restricted movement and migration had suspended overseas employment in many cases, resulting in OFWs not finding employment abroad and/or being unable to migrate for a job they had possibly already secured. Many OFWs who had already migrated lost their jobs or were otherwise unable to continue their work. Whether by choice or out of necessity, over 1 million OFWs returned home; others stayed put. The pandemic resulted in a nearly complete redesign of the OFW Voices study; in numerous sections throughout the report, the researchers note updates to the design, methodology, instruments, and analysis plans to address the pandemic's impact on OFWs and their families.

To understand the effects of the pandemic on these workers and the market for overseas labor, TST also modified survey questions to contextualize and identify the effects of the pandemic to the greatest extent possible. This included adding numerous self-report questions inquiring whether any situations experienced resulted from the pandemic.

## Sampling Approach

The COVID-19 pandemic also affected the design and sampling approaches employed in the study. Initially, the study had two cohorts—one sample of FEF benefit “recipients” and one sample of probabilistically sampled “general population” migrant workers, registered at OWWA RCs across the Philippines via tablet-assisted face-to-face enumeration prior to their emigration and recontacted after migration. However, in the Philippines and especially in metro Manila, public health measures taken in response to the pandemic resulted in the effective shutdown of affordable emigration pathways such as regular flights and the mandatory in-person pre-departure seminars at OWWA RCs. As a result, the time-location sampling frame initially developed for use at OWWA RCs became impractical and non-representative. Pre-departure seminars were not taking place, effectively shutting down migration, and flights were canceled or reduced for several months throughout 2020 and early 2021.

In addition, quarantines in the Philippines resulted in the effective ban of in-person survey enumeration for a majority of 2020 and early 2021 in general. These lockdowns also precipitated a cessation of in-person training, resulting in fewer OFWs participating in FEF programs and lower enrollment in the study's FEF cohort than anticipated.

Through close coordination between TST, CIFAL, the legal office of the University of the Philippines, OWWA, and the SSERB at the Philippine PSSC, the team adapted to add a new cohort, recruited at destination geographies via a quota-based digital river sampling approach that leveraged social media and online advertisements for recruitment into the study, and developed and employed an updated strategy to recruit imminent migrants from OWWA RCs without requiring face-to-face enumeration. Under the new strategy, OWWA PDOSs were selected probabilistically according to a time-location sampling process based on a roster of PDOS classes and anticipated class sizes. A training video introduced the OFW Voices study and provided digital registration points of contact

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<sup>70</sup> New York Times. (2019, June 16). *Huge turnout by protesters keeps heat on Hong Kong's leader*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/06/16/world/asia/hong-kong-protests.html>

was shown at these seminars. Through this new TLS-informed remote river sampling mechanism, 1,101 individuals were registered into the “CIFAL cohort” in late 2021 prior to migration.

## Attrition and Delayed Migration

Both of the cohorts that required follow-up survey engagements showed dramatic levels of attrition. In combination with a lack of current, reliable external data about OFWs working abroad during the COVID-19 pandemic, the attrition levels ultimately resulted in prohibitively small samples that affected the ability to use these cohorts to support generalizable forced labor prevalence estimation. A larger sample of successful follow-ups from respondents who had migrated would also enable more statistical tests to be conducted and more correlations to be observed and examined. However, lack of migration, repatriation, and low follow-up response rates via social chat and mobile messaging applications all led to smaller samples within these cohorts.

Although FEF enrolled trainees on-site during their training and disseminated the link to the registration survey via Facebook groups, follow-up participation was limited. Respondents registered under the CIFAL-led video registration cohort also did not follow up in large numbers. Follow-up surveys were further hampered by difficulty reaching OFWs post-migration, as many either changed their phone numbers or did not provide a valid phone number during registration.

Moreover, many OFWs who received the survey link did not respond because they had not migrated despite the option to respond in the follow-up survey. Among OFWs who did complete follow-up surveys, more than half had not yet migrated as of the end of the study. This “delayed migration” factor, specifically due to the COVID-19 pandemic, has been observed by other researchers among specific OFW populations, such as aspiring seafaring OFWs,<sup>71</sup> dating back to 2020. Among registered respondents in either CIFAL or FEF cohorts who did not migrate, roughly two-thirds stated that the reason for the delayed or canceled departure was a personal decision. 19.3% stated that their emigration was delayed or canceled due to quarantine or other legal requirements and restrictions; 10.0% stated that their emigration was delayed or canceled due to job loss, and 5.0% cited an employer request as the cause of the delay (Table 26).

**Table 26. OFW Reasons for Emigration Delay**

Reason for Delay	Responses (%)
Quarantine / Legal Requirement	19.3%
Employer Request	5.0%
Personal Decision	65.7%
Job Loss	10.0%

Owing to the challenges of maintaining contact throughout transnational migration and the repatriation and lack of migration caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the researchers observed significant hurdles precluding the conducting of longitudinal OFW research at scale. Due to the extreme and overwhelming amount of attrition from

<sup>71</sup> Galam, R. (2020). Futures on hold: The Covid-19 pandemic, international seafaring and the immobility of aspiring Filipino seafarers. *Saw Swee Hock Southeast Asia Centre*. <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/seac/2020/09/22/futures-on-hold/>

the CIFAL cohort, the researchers do not further analyze the data for signs of non-random attrition, arguing that there is insufficient data to make the case that attrition may have been non-random. However, the researchers performed an attrition regression analysis on the FEF recipient cohort, finding that FEF recipients who owed debts were significantly *less likely* to attrit ( $p < .01$ ) and no other significant relationships. Because debt is significantly positively associated with forced labor outcomes, this finding suggests that FEF graduates, in aggregate, may have a *lower* rate of forced labor than observed and evaluated in this report. This result is a promising indicator that FEF’s ethical training, recruitment, and placement processes may be even more effective at reducing the risk of experiencing forced labor than reported in the comparative analysis section (Table 27).

**Table 27. FEF Cohort: Attrition Analysis (Binomial Logistic Regression)**

Covariates	Estimate	Std. Err.	z	Pr(> z )	Significance
(Intercept)	-1.28252	0.69598	-1.843	0.06537	<i>Not Sig.</i>
Age Split	-0.29375	0.39417	-0.745	0.45612	<i>Not Sig.</i>
Luzon	-0.45116	0.45271	-0.997	0.31896	<i>Not Sig.</i>
Mindanao	-0.5447	0.65583	-0.831	0.40623	<i>Not Sig.</i>
Edu Split	-0.67357	0.40696	-1.655	0.0979	<i>Not Sig.</i>
Dependents	-0.02828	0.12503	-0.226	0.82104	<i>Not Sig.</i>
Debt Split	1.02248	0.39226	2.607	0.00914	<.01

## Conclusion

### Policy Recommendations

To reduce vulnerability and lower the occurrence rates of forced labor among OFWs, the following policy recommendations are posited to inform action:

1. First, apply new research and policy findings to enhance pre-departure training courses to include content that better prepares workers for the risks they may face abroad. In particular, mandatory training programming should be enhanced to further educate workers on their legal rights and protections as well as best practices for ensuring their safety and maintaining contact with OWWA, DOLE, and other agencies while abroad.
2. Second, provide special protections to domestic workers and others in occupations categorized as “low-skilled” as well as those from disadvantaged and higher-risk backgrounds. These occupations have provided employment opportunities throughout the pandemic but expose workers to higher risks. Furthermore, workers from marginalized backgrounds, especially younger, less-educated female OFWs from Mindanao and Visayas, are at higher risk for exploitation than other OFW subpopulations. Interventions should address the dangerous relationships between demographics, work industry, and risk of forced labor.
3. Third, engage with industry stakeholders, government offices, and nongovernmental organizations to improve worker placement and debt relief mechanisms among workers intending to migrate abroad. Due

to the pandemic, the rates of debt among OFWs have ballooned such that nearly half of all surveyed OFWs face debts. Among those who carry debts, the rate of forced labor at all tiers of severity is significantly higher than among those who do not. Many of these debts are assumed to ensure employment abroad; however, this need not be the case. The researchers find that ethical placement systems have a significant positive effect on the safety of OFWs, even in high-risk industries such as domestic work.

## Methodological Recommendations

This collaborative study used innovative technologies and methodologies to examine a hard-to-reach, globally distributed population in flux. Multiple stakeholders came together to adapt to numerous challenges, ranging from public health restrictions and legal barriers resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic to technological and logistical hurdles needed to ensure that OFWs—before, during, and after migration as well as during and after repatriation—could participate in the study and provide information concerning their experiences while working abroad. This study is the second technology-enabled study focused on labor experiences, trafficking in persons, and migrant populations conducted by teams of researchers, NGOs, and other grantee organizations led by Two Six Technologies, with the first having examined labor conditions among domestic migrant construction workers in the Delhi/National Capital Region of India. Based on these experiences, the researchers offer the following recommendations to future research efforts that use remote survey methods to examine the conditions faced by hard-to-reach and hidden migrant populations:

1. Communicate early and often with all relevant stakeholders to anticipate and adapt in response to exogenous events. As a study (and survey sample) grows in size, complexity, and geographic distribution, collaboration and adaptation become all the more important.
2. A contact management and recontact scheduling system is critical to enable timely follow-up recontact at scale. Integrating a CMS with survey systems and emergency referral systems offers a seamless and simple workflow for re-engagement, reducing data entry errors and data loss.
3. Phone numbers may change, and SMS and WhatsApp messages may be left unread. Whenever possible, choose *less passive* and *more permanent* recontact mechanisms, and design an analysis plan with attrition in mind. Individuals migrating great distances, especially during periods of logistical and economic volatility such as the COVID-19 pandemic, may face unpredictable paths forward and lose contact more quickly and easily as they endeavor to find and maintain work and residency at destination geographies.
4. Consider sampling strategies given available access points to the target population and the overall study objectives and the probability that and manners by which target population characteristics may change during the study period. Technological integrations and multiple approaches to key research questions can ensure that the research team can adapt to new on-the-ground circumstances quickly and effectively.
5. The researchers recommend including open-ended questions, particularly when asking about vulnerabilities and/or stigmatized conditions. In particular, local conditions, socioeconomic and cultural concerns, and the unique experiences of respondents will always result in unanticipated feedback that can be critical for adaptation and future follow-up.
6. A majority of prior literature on forced labor has treated it as a static phenomenon. However, forced labor conditions arise and occur in myriad ways, but they may also be dynamic. Future research programming related to labor conditions should consider and evaluate how these conditions evolve.



## Appendix A: Protocol



**Protocol Title:** Prevalence of Forced and Bonded Labor Among Overseas Filipino Workers

**Protocol Number:** N/A

**Date:** February 2020

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## Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine the prevalence of forced and bonded labor among Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs). The Global Fund to End Modern Slavery (GFEMS) intends to assess the capability of various deterrence models in reducing the prevalence of labor exploitation among OFWs for replication and scaling in regions where migration is viewed as an economic driver; however, such an assessment requires a baseline and post-intervention measurement to compare the degree of change. In support of GFEMS and its grantees, IST Research (IST) will assess the experience of OFWs by comparing their levels of exploitation against a control group. This protocol describes the methods and approaches IST will employ to conduct data collection and analysis.

## Background

Each year, an estimated 2.3 million Filipinos migrate overseas for work—nearly one million of whom are hired into low-skilled occupations (e.g., construction).<sup>72</sup> The situation of OFWs—specifically, those moving into low-skilled jobs—increases their susceptibility to unethical recruitment practices, such as employee-pays models. However, while the prevalence of migrant worker exploitation is unknown, it is estimated to be high, and authorities responsible for responding to incidents of exploitation lack the tools and capacity to do so effectively.<sup>73</sup>

While OFW protection efforts are tenuous, non-governmental organizations such as the Fair Employment Foundation (FEF) and Blas Ople possess the desire and capability to reduce this segment of modern slavery. FEF intends to establish a Manila-based recruitment agency using an employer pay model that the organization has successfully implemented in Hong Kong. Through this agency, FEF plans to train workers to work locally and abroad to meet employment needs in domestic markets (e.g., housekeeping, technology). Their goal is to place over 3,000 Filipinos in jobs during the two-year period of performance. Blas Ople intends to (1) develop and deploy a digital case management system—in concert with relevant stakeholders and government agencies—that formalizes and streamlines existing systems designed to respond to OFW modern slavery cases and (2) create formal processes in the Philippine government to manage and prosecute labor trafficking cases.

In this study, IST will assess the pathways leading to forced labor/trafficking in persons (TIP) and the prevalence of potential TIP indicators among a representative sample of OFWs in several destination countries and industries. IST will also measure whether the programs implemented by the aforementioned organizations are associated with longitudinally measured differences in outcomes in the prevalence of exploitation among OFWs.

## Criteria for Subject Selection

This study involves structured longitudinal migration tracking (LMT), to include an initial registration survey and follow-up surveys (i.e., 1 week, 1 month, 3 months, 6 months, and 1 year post migration) for participants meeting the inclusion criteria (see “Philippines LMT Subject Selection Criteria”). Since it is possible some study participants may find themselves in positions of forced or bonded labor during the study period, we include questions in the survey to determine whether someone meets the criteria of

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<sup>72</sup> Global Fund to End Modern Slavery. (2018). GFEMS Portfolio Study: Program to End Modern Slavery [PDF file]. Available upon request.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

forced or bonded labor. If a participant meets the criteria, we assist these individuals by executing the At-Risk protocol (see "At-Risk Engagements" under *Methods and Procedures*).

### **Philippines LMT Subject Selection Criteria**

The target audience for this study is adult Filipinos, 18 years of age or older, who have either migrated or intend to migrate for work. We are interested in Filipinos who intend to work or are working in Hong Kong, Japan, Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, or Australia. Individuals who wish to participate in the LMT but have yet to migrate will be registered for the study and contacted after their indicated time of migration. Pregnant women will be included in this research if they meet the above criteria. Individuals not meeting study criteria will be excluded.

We set the minimum participation age at 18 years to ensure our research included adults rather than children. While we understand children, particularly adolescents under the age of 18, may also be trafficked for labor, we believe the risks of human subject research targeting children on this topic outweigh the benefits and chose to exclude children from demographic targeting in engagements.

Participants will be registered for the LMT study using three approaches. First, we intend to recruit ~1,500 OFWs using time location sampling (TLS) at Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) offices in the Philippines. These locations will be indexed, and IST and trained enumerators will use randomized selection to target specific venues and times. A systematized approach will be used for respondent selection to ensure a random sample of departing OFWs is recruited for the LMT.

Second, we intend to recruit an additional 2,500 to 5,000 OFWs using targeted social media advertisements (i.e., Facebook, Instagram).

Third, FEF will enroll up to 1,300 Filipinos who are participating in their placement and skilling programs (designed to prepare Filipinos for work abroad) in the LMT study through staff-administered and self-administered registration on tablets post training.

To characterize the differences in migration experiences in each area with some degree of statistical power, we seek to obtain samples of 500 to 1,000 OFWs (or Filipinos who intend to migrate) among study participants for each destination of interest.

IST will pursue multiple large-scale registration efforts and re-sample to achieve our study goal.

### **At-Risk Participants**

Subjects identified for the at-risk engagements must be registered in the LMT study and provide responses that indicate some form of forced labor and/or physical or sexual abuse.

These subjects will be provided with the number for a hotline of the Philippines Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking (IACAT) to report instances of potential trafficking. When OFWs or their families contact the IACAT hotline, details concerning the case will be filed in IACAT's Integrated Case Management System (ICMS). The ICMS team will verify the report/case, refer the report/case to concerned agencies for action, conduct case coordination/follow-up, monitor the progress of the case,

and notify associated agencies and stakeholders when a case is closed. (Partner agencies are listed in Annex A.)

All LMT respondents will receive contact information for the Philippines embassy, Philippine Overseas Labor Office (POLO) in their destination countries, and the Philippines Overseas Employment Agency (POEA; see Figure 1 for detailed contact information).

**I-REPORT** ang mga kaso ng human trafficking sa:

**IACAT Action Line**  
**1343** (Metro Manila)  
**02-1343** (Probinsya)

Sakaling makaranas ng paglabag sa iyong kontrata o ng pagmamaltrato, magreport sa:

**POEA HOTLINE:**  
**(632) 722-1144 / 722-1155**  
[facebook.com/poea.official](https://facebook.com/poea.official)  
or [mypoea](https://mypoea.com)

Isulat ang contact details ng lokal na POLO o embahada ng Pilipinas sa iyong bansang pinagtatrabahuhan:





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**PHL EMBASSY- RIYADH**  
D3 Collector Road C,  
Diplomatic Quarter, Riyadh 11693  
tel. (+9661) 482-3615,  
482-0507/1801/3816/4354/  
0474; 488-0835, 480-3662

.....

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No. 35 Beirut St.,  
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mobile: (+971) 50 654-4047

.....

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tel. (+974) 4483-1585 | ATN: (+974) 4483-2560

**PHL EMBASSY- KUWAIT**  
Villa 153, Nouman bin Basher  
St. cor. Damascus St. Block 6,  
Faiha, Kuwait  
tel. (+965)2252-8422|  
mobile:(+965) 6518-4433

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**PHL CONSULATE GENERAL HONG KONG**  
14th Floor, United Centre,  
95 Queensway Admiralty,  
HK SAR  
tel. (+852) 2823-8501,  
915-54023, 680-8323(Labor),  
634-59324 (OWWA)

Figure 1. PACT Trafficking in Persons Protection Card

During follow-up engagements, which will occur in five predetermined intervals post migration (see “Philippines LMT Research Design” under *Methods and Procedures*), the IACAT hotline and its purpose will be reiterated.

The hotline will offer participants the option to have their case referred to POLO/POEA and investigated for possible TIP. The IACAT ICMS will manage OFWs who contact the hotline with the support of our local partner, Blas Ople. The toll-free hotline number is 1-800-200-0211.

## Methods and Procedures

The following delineates the methods and procedures for this study. We have divided this content into the approaches for the overall LMT study and at-risk engagements.

### Philippines LMT Research Design

The LMT survey will assess OFW working conditions and the effects of interventions between workers who remained in the Philippines and those who migrated for work. The survey was developed in collaboration with academic researchers from the United States and the Philippines and reviewed by local institutional partners for quality, accuracy, language, and ethical content. All communications with study participants (including consent, surveys, advertisements, and engagements) will be offered in English and in languages local to the Philippines (referenced as “Filipino” in this protocol; these languages include Tagalog, Cebuano, Ilocano, and Hiligaynon).

Qualified participants, upon consent, will be contacted intermittently over 12 months to understand the prevalence of potential TIP in migrant communities and to assist in evaluating whether the recruitment and training models employed by grantees effectively reduce these instances. This study will include follow-up surveys with OFWs over social media and web surveys at 5 different intervals throughout the 12-month tracking period (i.e., 1 week, 1 month, 3 months, 6 months, and 1 year post migration) to assess their working conditions. Data gathered will be uploaded to IST’s secure server.

See “Philippines LMT Subject Selection Criteria” under *Criteria for Subject Selection* for specifics regarding subject recruitment approaches.

### At-Risk Engagements

IST has developed an algorithm that will flag LMT participants who participate in the follow-up engagements that indicate actual or potential exploitation. Four tiers will be designed based on the severity of potential exploitation.

In instances of possible TIP, IST will send an automated message to the affected individual that (1) informs the OFW he/she may be in an exploitative situation based on responses provided during follow-up engagements and (2) contains the OFW the IACAT hotline and support resources (e.g., contact information for the Philippines embassy in the country where the OFW is working). This message will also indicate that external resources are *not* under the purview of IST. Therefore, any questions concerning aid, consent, and confidentiality with follow-on support should be addressed to the external resources.

LMT participants that fall into the top tier of potential trafficking conditions will also be shared with Blas Ople for outbound engagement to ensure the safety and security of these OFWs.

### Data Analysis and Data Monitoring

IST will examine the proportion of respondents who indicate experiencing previously identified and vetted labor trafficking criteria while working abroad as OFWs. This information will be used to inform

the prevalence of labor trafficking at different destinations and will be studied relative to respondent metadata (such as the industry in which the OFW is working, whether or not they participated in training, and whether or not they registered as an OFW in the Philippines).

Data will also be assessed using a quasi-experimental design (post-treatment, non-equivalent group design). The analysis will consist of weighting and then comparing the data gathered from the initial LMT survey and follow-up surveys to gauge OFW experiences by destination and the impact of interventions administered by partner organizations. Data rebalancing will be needed during this step because significant differences will likely exist between the representative sample and the pool of respondents who participate in interventions.

### **Data Storage and Confidentiality**

Data collected from the surveys will be immediately anonymized (i.e., stripped of any personal identifier) and stored on a secure, IST-hosted server. This server will be password protected with two-factor authentication, and all data will be encrypted with industry-standard practices and security measures. The survey results will only be accessible by the IST project team and relevant individuals within GFEMS. Subject identifiers (i.e., phone number) will only be shared with IST, GFEMS, and partners to conduct at-risk engagements with individuals who consented to participate and have their information shared.

### **Transition from Research Participation**

Due to the nature of this research (i.e., survey vs. medical/clinical trials), transition procedures are not applicable.

## **Risk/Benefit Assessment**

### **Risk Category**

The research presents minimal risk to subjects.

### **Potential Risk**

Participants in this study may face consequences from employers for participating if their participation is discovered. Study participants may encounter other risks we can neither foresee nor control. Participation is purely voluntary, and the decision not to partake in this study will not have any negative consequences on subjects.

### **Protection Against Risks**

In consideration of the risk associated with the discovery of participation by an employer, all responses will be kept confidential, and all response information will be secured in industry-standard encrypted servers with stringent access controls. Also, the survey is designed for delivery over common messaging platforms used by Filipinos to avoid raising attention to its delivery. There is no time requirement for completion. Participants will be informed to complete the survey when they are free and judge that it is safe to do so.

We have outlined processes elsewhere in our design to combat potential issues associated with at-risk laborers, including assistance and intervention.

Subjects with questions, concerns, or complaints concerning the study may contact the principal investigator or representative.

### ***At-Risk Engagements***

While the risk to subjects participating in the at-risk engagements is minimal, IST cannot control the events and communications after an OFW is referred to an external source for support (see “Assistance” under *Methods and Procedures*). OFWs will be informed that any questions concerning aid, consent, and confidentiality with follow-up support should be addressed to the external resources.

### ***Assistance and Intervention***

IST cannot provide direct support to OFWs who are flagged as "at risk" or self-identify as "at risk"; however, IST will provide OFWs with information to receive assistance. Since support entities are outside the purview of IST, we cannot speak directly to risks. Still, we can help OFWs manage expectations by informing them to communicate their needs and concerns to external resources before committing to support.

### **Potential Benefits to the Subjects**

#### ***Participation in LMT Study***

Participation in the LMT study has the potential to help respondents who are subject to forced labor/TIP conditions. Further, information gathered from this research may guide the development of solutions to eliminate TIP and forced labor among OFWs and improve conditions for workers within the Philippines.

#### ***Participation in At-Risk Engagements***

At-risk engagements will help our partners better understand the working conditions of OFWs and enable them to provide support and assistance where applicable.

### **Alternatives to Participation**

Aside from not participating, there are no alternatives to participating.

## **Subject Identification, Recruitment, and Consent/Assent**

### **LMT Study**

#### ***Subject Identification and Recruitment***

Study participants will be recruited using TLS at points of departure from the Philippines. These locations will be indexed, and IST and trained enumerators will use randomized selection to target specific venues



and times. A systematized approach will be used for respondent selection to ensure a random sample of departing OFWs is recruited for study participation. Participants will be screened prior to registration to confirm they are planning to migrate for work abroad.

Study participants will also be recruited using targeted Facebook and Instagram advertisements and through registrations conducted by partner organization (grantee) post-intervention administration. Since these social media platforms allow businesses to create targeted advertisements based on specific user features—such as demographics, location, interests, and behaviors—we will use this capability to advertise our survey to users who meet the inclusion criteria (see “Philippines LMT Subject Selection Criteria” under *Criteria for Subject Selection*.)

### ***Process of Consent***

Participants will be required to give their consent before beginning the survey. The participant will receive a consent notice that describes the purpose, nature, risks (minimal), benefits, incentives (none), and costs (none). The participant will be required to select "I consent" to proceed with the survey. If the participant does not consent, they will not be directed to the survey. Of note, each follow-up survey will remind participants of the purpose of the study and their consent to participate. Further, the participant will be able to withdraw from the study at any point without consequence.

### ***Subject Capacity***

In-person registrations will be conducted by trained enumerators who will confirm as part of the consent process that the subject understands the nature of the study. For participants recruited via social media advertisements, all participants are assumed to be literate and possess the capacity to understand the nature of the study.

### ***Subject/Representative Comprehension***

IST will perform cognitive interviews with a small number of individuals in the Philippines prior to launching the surveys to assess survey/study comprehension. During TLS recruitment, subjects will be informed of the study purpose, duration, and the anonymity of their results in Filipino before registering to participate in the study.

For social media recruitment, we will be unable to determine whether the subject or subject’s authorized representative understands the information presented. However, subjects will be informed of the study purpose, duration, and the anonymity of their results in Filipino before beginning the survey. Further, subjects may withdraw from the study at any point and for any reason during the study without consequence.

Grantees registering workers for LMT post-intervention administration will receive training on the purpose of the study, the approach, eligibility requirements, risk (minimal), benefits, incentives, and associated costs (none). Grantees will be required to communicate these components to potential participants.

### ***Consent Forms***

Prior to completing the survey, participants will be provided a verbal (for TLS) or digital (for social media-based recruitment) consent notice, which will describe the purpose of the study, the approach, eligibility requirements, risks (minimal), benefits, incentives, and associated costs (none). Participants will be required to verbally state “I consent” or select an icon that indicates “I consent” to continue to the survey.

## **At-Risk Engagement**

### ***Subject Identification and Recruitment***

Subjects for at-risk engagements include those individuals who have registered and consented to participate in the LMT survey and either (1) meet potential TIP criteria (as described under *Criteria for Subject Selection*) during the follow-up surveys or (2) self-identify as a victim of potential TIP by contacting the IACAT hotline directly.

### ***Process of Consent***

If an OFW meets the aforementioned criteria, we will provide them with government resources to receive support (e.g., IACAT hotline and contact information for the Philippine embassy in their location of work); however, we cannot track consent or control the support the individual receives once the OFW reaches out to an external agency for assistance.

### ***Subject Capacity***

For at-risk engagements, only subjects with the capacity to consent will be permitted to participate in this research.

### ***Subject/Representative Comprehension***

Since at-risk engagements may happen across a range of modalities, we will often be unable to determine whether the subject or the subject’s authorized representative understand the information presented. Subjects will be informed of the study purpose, duration, and the anonymity of their results in Filipino before beginning the survey. Further, subjects may withdraw from the study at any point and for any reason during the study without consequence. In cases where the respondent is contacted via an international call center, the trained enumerator leading the interview will verbally inform the subject of the study purpose, duration, and the anonymity of responses and will ask the participant whether they understand the information provided before proceeding to the LMT questionnaire.

### ***Consent Forms***

At-risk participants will have consented to the study during registration. While we can gain OFW consent for all processes before recommending they seek external help (e.g., IACAT hotline, government resources), we do not have control of consent once the individual engages external resources.

### ***Debriefing Procedures***

There are no debriefing procedures required by the LMT study or at-risk engagements.

### **Costs to the Subject**

Subjects will incur no costs in participating in the LMT study or at-risk engagements.

### **Payment for Participation**

Subjects will receive no payment for participation in the LMT study or at-risk engagements.

## **Annex A | Key Partners for the Integrated Case Management System**

### **Blas Ople**

Blas Ople will lead project monitoring for the ICMS in terms of strategic guidance, negotiations with government agencies and stakeholders, guidelines (to check and document progress), overseas facilitation, reintegration support (i.e., aid the Coalition for OFW Reintegration and Empowerment [CORE] strategies and approaches), and ethical recruitment (i.e., aid in developing standards for this initiative).

### **Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA)**

The POEA is the sole government authority that regulates private recruitment agencies. It leads the anti-illegal recruitment campaign and has the mandate to blacklist abusive agencies and foreign employers. The POEA will be at the forefront of efforts to promote ethical recruitment practices and will be a partner of the Ople Center in the campaign against trafficking and towards more ethical recruitment practices for domestic workers' deploying agencies.

### **Coalition for OFW Reintegration and Empowerment**

CORE is a coalition of sea-based and land-based agency associations and recruitment agency owners as well as NGOs committed to the effective reintegration of OFWs. Set up but not run by the Ople Center, it has a partnership with the Overseas Workers Welfare Association (OWWA). CORE will engage top business corporations for CSRs involving the reintegration of distressed returning OFWs. It will also be the training arm of the Ople Center concerning financial literacy, ethical recruitment, and reintegration opportunities.

### **Fair Employment Foundation (FEF)**

FEF is a Hong Kong-based NGO and ethical recruiter that trains domestic workers and promotes transparency and full disclosure as well as other fair employment principles in the hiring of OFWs.

### **Department of Foreign Affairs**

The Department is in charge of the Assistance to Nationals (ATN) program of the government. It is also the agency providing support and direct supervision to heads of missions, posts, and their staff. They are vital since diplomatic posts are often the first line of contact for distressed OFWs.

### **Office of the Presidential Adviser on OFWs and Muslim Affairs**

The agency advises the President on matters regarding OFWs and the plight of Muslim Filipinos – a crucial dual function, considering it is postulated that a significant portion of abused domestic workers come from the Middle East Commission on Filipinos Overseas. The CFO heads the IACAT Advocacy Committee and is in charge of the operations of the 1343 Anti-Trafficking Action Line.

### **Commission on Human Rights (CHR)**

The CHR will establish its own Migrant Workers' Rights Observatory and will review a rights-based approach to overseas employment. Technical advice and reference materials from CHR can help shape the project's thrust on reintegration services and ethical recruitment principles and practices.

## Appendix B: Registration Survey Instrument

Introduction

English
<p>Thank you for agreeing to participate in the International Worker Study. This is a follow up survey that should only take about 10 minutes to complete. All responses are completely anonymous, and all data collected for this study will be disposed of 12 months following the final report to further ensure the safeguarding of your responses. If there is any point we feel it beneficial to your safety to share your responses with assistance organizations including IACAT and POEA, we will only do so with your consent.</p> <p>If you need to exit the survey at any time, please click on the “Home” screen of your phone.</p> <p>If you are in need of immediate rescue or assistance, you may contact the Blas F. Ople Policy Center and Training Institute or the Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking (IACAT). Their contact information is:            Address: Unit A 2295 Wycliff Townhomes, Roberts St., Pasay City, Philippines            Hotline: +63 2 514-8100 / +63 2 833-9562            Email: <a href="mailto:info@blasoplecenter.com">info@blasoplecenter.com</a> / <a href="mailto:blasoplecenter@hotmail.com">blasoplecenter@hotmail.com</a>            Facebook: <a href="http://www.facebook.com/blasoplecenter">http://www.facebook.com/blasoplecenter</a>            Skype: Blas Ople Center</p>
<p>Some questions in this survey may bring up uncomfortable thoughts or feelings. Please know that you may exit the survey at any time.</p> <p>Furthermore, while taking this survey, if you experience any personal or emotional distress as a result of earlier traumatic situations, it may be helpful to stop the survey and speak to someone about your experiences. Professional assistance is available for free through the National Mental Health Crisis hotline:            o 0917-899-8727 / 0917-899-USAP</p> <p>In addition, if you experienced discomfort and distress while completing the survey and would not like to continue, merely message us on Facebook saying “stop” and we will not send you any further check-ins about your status and safety as part of this research project.</p> <p>Your participation is greatly appreciated and will help organizations better understand the conditions of Filipino workers locally and overseas. Are you still interested in participating in our study? Please click "yes" below to begin the short follow up survey.</p> <p>- Yes            - No</p>
<p>Yes</p> <p>No</p>
<p><b>Are you currently abroad for work?</b></p> <p>yes</p> <p>no</p>
<p><b>In what country are you currently working?</b></p> <p><i>Philippines</i></p> <p><i>Saudi Arabia (KSA, Riyadh, Jeddah)</i></p> <p><i>United Arab Emirates (UAE, Dubai, Abu Dhabi)</i></p>

	<i>Kuwait</i>
	<i>Hong Kong</i>
	<i>Qatar</i>
	<i>Singapore</i>
	<i>Malaysia</i>
	<i>Taiwan</i>
	<i>Japan</i>
	<i>China</i>
	<i>Italy</i>
	<i>Bahrain</i>
	<i>Other: (please specify)</i>
<b>If "ABROAD" = NO</b>	<b>Did you return to the Philippines due to the pandemic?</b>
	<i>Yes</i>
	<i>No, my return to the Philippines was unrelated to the pandemic.</i>
	<i>No, I did not leave the Philippines</i>
<b>IF "ABROAD" = YES</b>	<b>Will you return to the Philippines as a result of the pandemic?</b>
	<i>Yes, this country's laws require me to return home.</i>
	<i>Yes, I am returning because I do not have a job anymore.</i>
	<i>Yes, I will return by my own choice.</i>
	<i>No, I am under quarantine by law.</i>
	<i>No, my employer will now allow me to leave.</i>
	<i>No, I will remain here by my own choice.</i>
<b>IF "RETURN" = YES</b>	<b>Do you plan to work abroad again once the pandemic has ended?</b>
Contact at a later date.	<i>Yes, and I have a planned departure date</i>
Contact at a later date.	<i>Yes, but I don't know when</i>
Remove from study.	<i>No</i>
Contact at a later date.	<i>I don't know</i>
<b>IF "PLANNED DEPARTURE DATE" = YES</b>	<b>When do you expect to depart?</b>
<b>IF "ABROAD" = YES</b>	<b>Will you return to the Philippines as a result of the pandemic?</b>
	<i>Yes, this country's laws require me to return home.</i>
	<i>Yes, I am returning because I do not have a job anymore.</i>
	<i>Yes, I will return by my own choice.</i>
	<i>No, I am under quarantine by law.</i>

	<p>No, my employer will now allow me to leave.</p> <p>No, I will remain here by my own choice.</p>
	<p><b>Have you changed jobs since the last time we spoke?</b></p> <p>Yes - Working at a different or working at the job we talked about last time</p> <p>No - Working at the same job since the last time we spoke</p>
<b>Following questions are only asked if an OFW has changed jobs</b>	
	<p><b>Were you charged a transfer fee by your employer to change jobs?</b></p> <p>Yes</p> <p>No</p>
	<p><b>How much were you charged for the transfer fee?</b></p> <p>Please enter amount in PHP</p>
	<p><b>Did you use any of the following to secure your current job?</b></p> <p>Recruiter/Recruitment Agency</p> <p>Employer</p> <p>None of the above</p>
	<p><b>Do you have a written contract for the your current job?</b></p> <p>Yes</p> <p>No</p> <p>-</p>
	<p><b>Do you have a verbal agreement for your current job?</b></p> <p>Yes</p> <p>No</p>
	<p><b>Did you or will you receive an advance payment for your current job?</b></p> <p>Yes, received an advance payment for current job</p> <p>Yes, will receive an advance payment for current job</p> <p>No</p>
<b>IF YES</b>	<p><b>Is this as a result of the pandemic?</b></p> <p>Yes</p> <p>No, the situation is the same as before.</p> <p>I don't know</p>
	<p>How much did you or will you receive?</p> <p>Please enter amount in PHP.</p>
	<p><b>Did you or will you receive a loan for your current job?</b></p> <p>Yes, received a loan for the job</p>



	<i>Yes, will receive a loan for the job</i>
	<i>No</i>
<b>IF YES</b>	<b>Is this as a result of the pandemic?</b>
-	<i>Yes</i>
-	<i>No, the situation is the same as before.</i>
-	<i>I don't know</i>
	<b>How much was your loan?</b>
	<i>Please enter amount in PHP.</i>
	<b>Were you charged a Fee by any of the following?</b>
	<i>Employer</i>
	<i>Recruitment Agency</i>
	<i>Other</i>
	<i>None</i>
	<i>I prefer not to answer</i>
	<b>Did you pay any of the following fees? Please select all that apply.</b>
	<i>processing fee</i>
	<i>application fee</i>
	<i>visa fee</i>
	<i>medical fee</i>
	<i>transportation fee (airline tickets, train tickets, etc.)</i>
	<i>placement fee</i>
	<i>training fee</i>
	<i>NONE</i>
	<i>Other (please specify)</i>
	<i>I prefer not to answer</i>
	<b>What is the total amount you paid to secure this job? Please include ALL the fees you paid to secure this job in the total amount.</b>
	<i>###</i>

<b>IF YES</b>	<b>Is this as a result of the pandemic?</b>
	<i>Yes</i>
	<i>No, the situation is the same as before.</i>
	<i>I don't know</i>

	<b>Who paid for your travel costs to your current job? Please select all that apply.</b>
	<i>Myself / My Family</i>
	<i>Recruiter/recruitment agency</i>
	<i>Employer</i>
	<i>Sponsor</i>
	<i>Personal Loan</i>

*I don't know*

*no travel required, -/working in the same country as before*

*Other*

**These questions are asked of all OFWs abroad**

**Do you owe a debt to any of the following? Please select all that apply.**

- Recruiter/recruitment agency*
- Friends/family*
- Current employer*
- Previous employer*
- Bank or money lender*
- Other*
- I do not owe a debt*
- I prefer not to answer*

<b>IF YES</b>	<b>Is this as a result of the pandemic?</b>
	<i>Yes</i>
	<i>No, the situation is the same as before.</i>
	<i>I don't know</i>
	<b>Has your current employer ever threatened to turn you over to authorities without reason or cause?</b>
	<i>Yes</i>
	<i>No</i>
<b>IF YES</b>	<b>Is this as a result of the pandemic?</b>
	<i>Yes</i>
	<i>No, the situation is the same as before.</i>
	<i>I don't know</i>
	<b>Sometimes migrants' families are threatened with physical and sexual violence. This is an issue that we want to understand and measure so that there is more awareness of the issues that migrants face and assistance can be provided. For you, personally, are you currently experiencing or at risk of experiencing physical or sexual violence? Please mark all that apply and remember that all your responses will be held in strict confidentiality.</b>
	<i>Yes, physical violence</i>
	<i>Yes, sexual violence</i>
	<i>No</i>
	<i>I prefer not to answer</i>
<b>IF YES</b>	<b>Is this as a result of the pandemic?</b>
	<i>Yes</i>
	<i>No, the situation is the same as before.</i>
	<i>I don't know</i>

**To the best of your knowledge, are any of your family members currently experiencing or at risk of experiencing physical or sexual violence? Please remember that all your responses will be held in strict confidentiality.**

*Yes*

*No*

*I prefer not to answer*

*My family did not accompany me to my job abroad*

**IF YES**

**Is this as a result of the pandemic?**

*Yes*

*No, the situation is the same as before.*

*I don't know*

**Have you experienced physical violence in the past? Please remember that all your responses will be held in strict confidentiality.**

*Yes*

*No*

*I prefer not to answer*

**To the best of your knowledge, have any of your family members experienced physical or sexual violence in the past? Please remember that all your responses will be held in strict confidentiality.**

*Yes*

*No*

*I prefer not to answer*

**Have you been threatened with being sent back to the Philippines even though you are performing your assigned duties?**

*Yes*

*No*

**IF YES**

**Is this as a result of the pandemic?**

*Yes*

*No, the situation is the same as before.*

*I don't know*

**Do you have access to your passport?**

*Yes*

*No*

**IF NO**

**Is this as a result of the pandemic?**

*Yes*

*No, the situation is the same as before.*

*I don't know*

**Are you paid on time for your work?**

*Yes*

No

<b>IF NO</b>	<b>Is this as a result of the pandemic?</b>
	Yes
	No, the situation is the same as before.
	I don't know
	<b>Are you paid at the same salary that you were promised?</b>
	Yes
	No
<b>IF NO</b>	<b>Is this as a result of the pandemic?</b>
	Yes
	No, the situation is the same as before.
	I don't know
	<b>What is OR WAS your monthly salary abroad? (enter amount in Philippine Pesos [PHP])</b>
	less than 20,000
	PHP 20,000 - 25,000 (400-500 USD)
	25001-30,000 (501 - 600 USD)
	30,001-35,000 (601 - 700 USD)
	35001-40,000 (701 - 800 USD)
	40,001 - 50,000( 801 - 1000 USD)
	50,000 - 75,000 (1000-1500 USD)
	75,001 - 100,000 (1501 - 2000 USD)
	100,000 - 150,000 (2001 - 3000 USD)
	more than 150,000 (3001+ USD)
	I don't know
	<b>How many hours a day are you required to work?</b>
	[1 through 24]
	I currently cannot continue my work.
	<b>Does your employer force you to work more hours than agreed in your contract?</b>
	Yes
	No
	<b>How many days a week are you required to work?</b>
	[1 through 7]
	I currently cannot continue my work.
	<b>Are you compensated if you are required to do extra work?</b>
	Yes
	No
<b>IF NO</b>	<b>Is this as a result of the pandemic?</b>
	Yes
	No, the situation is the same as before.

	<i>I don't know</i>
	<b>Do you work on rest days (or sick days) for fear of being fired?</b>
	<i>Yes</i>
	<i>No</i>
<b>IF YES</b>	<b>Is this as a result of the pandemic?</b>
	<i>Yes</i>
	<i>No, the situation is the same as before.</i>
	<i>I don't know</i>
	<b>After your shift is over at work, are you able to move around freely in the city where you live?</b>
	<i>Yes</i>
	<i>No</i>
<b>IF NO</b>	<b>Is this as a result of the pandemic?</b>
	<i>Yes</i>
	<i>No, the situation is the same as before.</i>
	<i>I don't know</i>
	<b>Are you unable to leave your current job for any of the following reasons?</b>
	<i>I am in debt to my employer</i>
	<i>My employer has taken my passport/ID documents away from me</i>
	<i>My employer threatens me</i>
	<i>My employer threatens my family</i>
	<i>None of the above</i>
	<i>Other</i>
	<i>I prefer not to answer</i>
	<b>Have you ever reached out for help to get out of an abusive/exploitative work situation?</b>
	<i>Yes</i>
	<i>No</i>
<b>IF YES</b>	<b>Is this as a result of the pandemic?</b>
	<i>Yes</i>
	<i>No, the situation is the same as before.</i>
	<i>I don't know</i>
	<b>Whom did you contact? Please select all that apply.</b>
	<i>Family/friends</i>
	<i>Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE)</i>
	<i>Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD)</i>
	<i>Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking (IACAT)</i>
	<i>Philippine Overseas Labor Office (POLO)</i>
	<i>Philippines Embassy</i>
	<i>Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA)</i>
	<i>Police</i>
	<i>Barangay officials</i>

*Recruitment agency*

*Media (ex: Tulfo)*

*Other (please specify)*

---

**When was the last time your contacted someone for help?**

*DD/MM/YYYY*

---

**How long did it take for someone to provide you assistance? [drop down]**

[ # ] Days

I have not yet received assistance

---

**How satisfied were you with the help you received?**

*Very satisfied*

*Satisfied*

*Neutral*

*Not Satisfied*

*Very Unsatisfied*

*I did not receive any assistance*

---

*Thank you for the time you spent taking this survey.*

**Prefer contact via Facebook messenger? Please text "OFW" to Digital Humanity.**

**If at any time you believe you are in danger:**

Please call IACAT Action Line 1343 (Metro Manila); 02-1343 (Province)

**In the event of a breach of your contract, please contact:**

POEA HOTLINE: (632) 722-1144 / 722-1155

POEA Facebook

POEA Website: mypoea

**If at any time you believe you are in danger:**

Please call IACAT Action Line 1343 (Metro Manila); 02-1343 (Province)

**In the event of a breach of your contract, please contact:**

POEA HOTLINE: (632) 722-1144 / 722-1155

POEA Facebook

POEA Website: mypoea

## Appendix C: Follow-Up Survey Instrument

ENGLISH

There are 40 questions in this survey.

## SCREENING QUESTIONS

Thank you for participating in this International Worker Study. We are interested in understanding the recruitment, agency, and employment experiences for Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW). This research is being conducted in collaboration with the University of the Philippines to better inform public policy, approaches to improving OFW experiences, and to inform grant development and programming for the International Development Community. This project includes a registration survey, conducted today, as well as short follow-up contacts after you have migrated.

Please be assured that your responses will be kept completely confidential. The questions in this survey should take you around 10 minutes to answer, and each follow-up survey should take 5 minutes or less. Your participation in this research is voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any point during the study, for any reason, and without any prejudice. To learn more about this research, you may contact the Head Researcher in the study by emailing Sam Blazek at [sam.blazek@istresearch.com](mailto:sam.blazek@istresearch.com) or [\\_\\_\\_\\_\\_ at \\_\\_\\_@\\_\\_ who is with UP-CIFAL](#). By continuing with this survey and providing your signature below, you acknowledge that your participation in the study is voluntary, you are 18 years of age or older, and that you are aware that you may choose to terminate your participation in this study at any time and for any reason.

Do you wish to continue with this survey? \*

\*

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

Yes

No

Please add your signature here:

Do you expect to start working abroad within the next 12 months? \*

Please choose **only one** of the following:

Yes

No

I don't know

What is your full name?

*This will ONLY be used for further contact through social media for the LMT study and will NEVER be used outside this program.*

Do you have a Facebook account? \*

Please choose **only one** of the following:

Yes

No

Please go to [www.facebook.com/digihumanity](http://www.facebook.com/digihumanity) (on Facebook, search: "digital humanity" and go to "Pages") and hit "Send message", and send 123. \*

Please choose **only one** of the following:

Done

Not done



*This section contains questions on the work you plan to do abroad, as well as any past work abroad*

Where do you plan to work within the next 12 months? Select all that apply.

\*

Please choose **all** that apply:

Saudi Arabia (KSA, Riyadh, Jeddah)

United Arab Emirates (UAE, Dubai, Abu Dhabi)

Kuwait

Hong Kong

Qatar

Singapore

Malaysia

Taiwan

Japan

China

Italy

Bahrain

Other:

When do you plan to go abroad for work? \*

Please choose **only one** of the following:

within a week

2 - 4 weeks from now





5 - 8 weeks from now

8 - 12 weeks from now

more than 12 weeks from now

I don't know

How long do you think you will work abroad? \*

Please choose **only one** of the following:

less than 6 months

6 -12 months

13 - 18 months

19 - 24 months

more than 2 years

I don't know

Which labor category best describes the work that you plan to do abroad? \*

Please choose **all** that apply:

Construction

Domestic Work

Agriculture, Forestry

Fishing (based on land)

Maritime / seafaring

Mining and Quarrying

Wholesale and Retail Trade

Accommodation and Food Service Activities

Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation

Health and Beauty Services

I don't know

Other:

Do you already have a job abroad? \*

Please choose **only one** of the following:

Yes

No

Do you have a pending application for work abroad? \*

Please choose **only one** of the following:

Yes

No



How did you find out about this job? \*

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Recruiter/Recruitment Agency
- Direct hire (migrant himself applied directly with employer)
- Training center
- Family/friend
- Internet advertisement
- Supervisor
- Job Fair
- Radio
- Television
- Billboard / Newspaper
- Other

Do you have a contract for the job abroad? \*

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- yes, I have a verbal agreement but no written contract
- yes, I have written agreement/contract
- none at all

Did you or will you receive an advance payment for the job?

\*

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Yes, received an advance payment
- Yes, will receive an advance payment
- No

How much will you or did you receive as an advance?

*Please enter amount in PHP*

\*

Please write your answer here:

Did you or will you receive a loan for the job?

\*

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Yes, received a loan for the job
- Yes, will receive a loan for the job
- No



How much will you or did you receive as a loan?

*Please enter amount in PHP*

\*

Please write your answer here:

Were you charged a fee by an employer, recruitment agency, or recruiter to secure this job? \*

Please choose **only one** of the following:

Yes

No

Did you pay any of the following fees (Select all that apply) \*

Please choose **all** that apply:

NONE

processing fee

application fee

visa fee

medical fee

transportation fee (airline tickets, train tickets, etc.)

placement fee

training fee

certification of skills fee

Other:

How much did you pay in total for everything including all fees to secure this job?

*Please enter amount in PHP*

\*

Please write your answer here:

Do you owe a debt to any of the following? Select all that apply \*

Please choose **all** that apply:

Yes - I owe a debt to the recruiter/recruitment agency

Yes- I owe a debt to family/friends

Yes- I owe a debt to the employer

Yes - I owe a debt to a bank or money lender

No - I do not owe a debt

Who will be paying for your relocation costs/travel costs? \*

Please choose **all that apply**:

Myself

My family

the Recruiter/recruitment agency

employer

I don't know

Other

Will your family be traveling with you? \*

Please choose **only one** of the following:

Yes - My family will travel abroad with me

No - My family will travel to follow me later

No - My family will not travel abroad with me, they will stay in Philippines

I don't know

What is your expected monthly salary abroad (PHP) \*

Please choose **only one** of the following:

less than 20,000

PHP 20,000 - 25,000 (400-500 USD)

25001-30,000 (501 - 600 USD)

30,001-35,000 (601 - 700 USD)

35001-40,000 (701 - 800 USD)

40,001 - 50,000( 801 - 1000 USD)

50,000 - 75,000 (1000-1500 USD)

75,001 - 100,000 (1501 - 2000 USD)

100,000 - 150,000 (2001 - 3000 USD)

more than 150,000 (3001+ USD)

I don't know

How many hours do you expect to work on a typical day abroad? \*

Please choose **only one** of the following:

Less than 8 hours

8–10 hours

11–12 hours

13–14 hours

More than 14 hours

I don't know / I'm not sure

While abroad, will you still have access to your passport or other identification documents? \*



Please choose **only one** of the following:

Yes

No

I don't know / I am not sure

Will you attend a pre-departure training prior to leaving the Philippines? \*

Please choose **only one** of the following:

Yes

No

I have already attended a pre-departure training

In the past 10 years, have you ever worked abroad? \*

Please choose **only one** of the following:

Yes

No

Which countries have you worked in the past 10 years? Select all that apply \*

Please choose **all** that apply:

Saudi Arabia (KSA, Riyadh, Jeddah)

United Arab Emirates (UAE, Dubai, Abu Dhabi)

Kuwait

Hong Kong

Qatar

Singapore

Malaysia

Taiwan

China

Italy

Bahrain

Other:

**This next section includes some quick demographic questions**

How old are you?

\*

Please choose **only one** of the following:

under 18

18 - 19

20 - 24

25 - 29

30 - 34

35 - 39

40 - 44

45 - 49

50 - 54

55 - 59

60 - 64

65 - 69

70 - 74

75+

What is your gender? \*

Please choose **only one** of the following:

Male

Female

Transgender

I prefer not to answer

Other

Are you the primary breadwinner for your family? \*

Please choose **only one** of the following:

Yes

No

Half-Half or Shared Expenses

What is the highest level of education you have completed? \*

Please choose **only one** of the following:

No formal education

Primary

Post primary - vocational

Secondary

Some college

College graduate

Bachelor's Degree

Post-graduate school

What is your religion? \*

Please choose **only one** of the following:

Roman Catholic

Protestant

Islam

Iglesia Ni Cristo (Philippine Church of Christ)

Buddhist

NONE

I prefer not to answer

Other

What is your marital status? \*

Please choose **only one** of the following:

Single

Married

Widowed

Separated

Live-in

Divorced

How many dependents do you have? Dependents are family members that you have to support financially \*

Please choose **only one** of the following:

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

More than 10

What Region, Province, City/Municipality, and Barangay are you from?

Do you have difficulty with any of the following? \*

Please choose **all** that apply:

Vision (even with glasses)

Hearing (even with a hearing aid)

Walking or climbing steps



- Remembering or concentrating
- Self-care (such as dressing yourself)
- Communicating (in known language)
- None of these apply to me
- Other:

Are you willing to provide your phone number?

\*

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Yes
- No

What is your primary phone number? Please include the country code:

\*

Please write your answer here:

Do you have another phone number where you can be reached? If yes, please enter it here, otherwise leave this question blank.

Please write your answer here:

If we lose contact with you, are you willing to provide a family member or friend's contact information so that we can contact them and ask about your status and safety?

\*

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Yes
- No

What is your family member or friend's phone number? Please include the country code:

\*

Please write your answer here:

If we lose contact with you, are you willing to provide an email address at which we can contact you?

\*

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Yes
- No





What is your email address?

\*

Please write your answer here:

Thank you for your time taking this survey. If you have concerns related to your working conditions or if you are in danger, please call:

IACAT Action Line 1343 (Metro Manila); 02-1343 (Province)

In the event of a breach of your contract or of maltreatment, please contact:

POEA HOTLINE: (632) 722-1144 / 722-1155

[facebook.com/poea.official](https://www.facebook.com/poea.official)

or [mypoea](https://www.mypoea.com)

Submit your survey.

Thank you for completing this survey.

## Appendix D: Registration and Follow-Up Survey Instrument (Combined – Digital)

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the International Worker Study. This is a survey that will take ten (10) minutes to complete. All your responses we guarantee are confidential or anonymous. Your participation in this survey is greatly appreciated and it will help organizations to better understand the condition of Filipino workers inside and outside the country. Are you still interested in participating in this study? Please just click Get Started below to get started.

"Details:

Thank you for participating in the OFW survey. We are interested in understanding the recruitment, agency and employment -related experiences of Filipinos working abroad. This study is being conducted in collaboration with the University of the Philippines to further enhance public information provision, approaches to enhance the OFW experience, and provide information on grant development and program adjustment for the global development community. . This project includes survey registration, which is being conducted today, as well as quick follow-up after you emigrate.

We make sure your responses remain confidential. It will take about ten (10) minutes to answer. Participation in this survey is voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any time for the duration of the study period for any reason, and you will not be judged. By continuing the survey and signing, you certify your voluntary participation in the study, are 18 years of age or older, and are aware that you may discontinue your participation in the study at any time for any reason. Just send a "" stop "" or "" stop "" Facebook message and we will no longer send you a check-in status for this study.

In case you experience any personal or emotional distress, professional help is free at the National Mental Health Crisis hotline: 0917-899-8727/0917899-USAP.

For more information, you can contact the project's Head Researcher by emailing Sam Blazek at [sam.blazek@istresearch.com](mailto:sam.blazek@istresearch.com).

Do you want to continue the survey?

"

Yes

No

**Are you currently working abroad?**

Yes

No, I am in the Philippines = exit survey

**In what country do you currently work?**

**Which category of labor best describes the work you plan to do abroad?**

**Do you already have a job?**

Yes, there is a verbal agreement

Yes, there is a written agreement/contract

Nothing

I do not know

**Did you receive or will you receive a down payment for your work?**

Yes

No

**How much will you get or get a down payment?**

**Did your employer, recruitment agency or recruiter charge you a fee to get the job?**

Yes

No

**Did you pay any of the following fees?**

None

Processing fee

Application fee

Visa fee

Medical fee

Transportation fee (airline tickets, train tickets, etc.)

Placement fee

Training fee

Certification of skills fee

[Transfer fee \(for changing jobs\)](#)

Other

**How much did you pay altogether to get the job?**

**Do you owe any of the following? Select all that apply.**

Recruiter/recruitment agency

Family or Friends

Current Employer

Dating Employer

Bank or lender

I owe nothing to anyone

I prefer not to answer

**Is it caused by a pandemic?**

Yes

No, the pandemic has nothing to do with the situation

I do not know

**Who will pay for your overseas travel/overseas expenses?**

- Self/family
- The recruiter or recruitment agency
- Employer
- I do not know
- Others

**Are you with your family on your departure?**

- Yes - I am with my family going abroad
- No - my family will be next

I am not with my family. They will remain in the Philippines.

**What is your monthly salary?**

- Varies
- I am not currently receiving a salary
- Less than PHP 20,000
- PHP 20,000 - 25,000 (400 - 500 USD)
- PHP 25,001 - 30,000 (501 - 600 USD)
- PHP 30,001 - 35,000 (601 - 700 USD)
- PHP 35,001-40,000 (701 - 800 USD)
- PHP 40,001 - 50,000 (801 - 1,000 USD)
- PHP 50,000 - 75,000 (1,001 - 1,500 USD)
- PHP 75,001 - 100,000 (1,501 - 2,000 USD)
- PHP 100,000 - 150,000 (2,001 - 3,000 USD)
- Over PHP 150,000 (3,001+ USD)

**How many hours a day are you required to work?**

- Less than 8 hours
- 8 - 10 hours
- 11 - 14 hours
- More than 14 hours

**Will you attend a pre-departure training before leaving the Philippines?**

- Yes
- No.
- I do not know

**In the past ten (10) years, have you worked abroad?**

- Yes
- No.

**In which country have you worked abroad?**

**“The next section contains some quick personal questions on the state of life.**

**How old are you?**

- Less than 18 years old
- 18 - 22 years old
- 23 - 24 years old
- 25 - 29 years old
- 30 - 34 years old
- 35 - 39 years old
- 40 - 44 years old
- 45 - 49 years old
- 50 - 54 years old
- 55 - 59 years old
- 60 - 64 years old
- 65 - 69 years old
- 70 - 74 years old
- More than 75 years old

**What is your gender?**

- Men
- Woman
- Transgender
- I wanted not to answer
- Others

**Are you the main supporter of your family?**

- Yes
- No.
- Divide or work together on family expenses

**What is the highest level of education you have completed?**

- Uneducated
- Elementary
- High school
- College but never graduated
- Graduated from college
- Post-graduate school

**Religion**

- Catholic
- Protestant
- Islam
- church of Christ
- Buddhism

Nothing

I wanted not to answer

Others

**Marital status**

Single

Married

Widow

Separate

Live in

The marriage was annulled

**How many are your dependents?**

None

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

More than 10

**What island group are you from?**

Luzon

Visayas

Mindanao

Region

Province

City

**Do you have difficulty with any of the following?**

Sight (even with glasses)

Hearing (even with hearing aids)

Walking or climbing stairs

Notation or focus

Self-care (such as dressing oneself)

Communication (in known language)

None of this applies to me

Others

**Has your current employer threatened to bring you to the authorities for no reason or cause?**

Yes

No.

**There are times when the migrant family experiences threats of physical or sexual abuse. This is one of the issues we want to understand and know in order to provide broad awareness on the issues that OFWs face and be given. they get the right help.**

**Are you currently experiencing or threatening to experience physical abuse or sexual abuse?**

Yes, physical abuse

Yes, sexual abuse

No.

I prefer not to answer

**In the event that you ACCOMPANY any member of your family going abroad to work, are they experiencing or at risk of experiencing physical or sexual abuse?**

Yes

No.

I wish I hadn't answered it

I am not with my family abroad

**Have you experienced physical abuse before, while you were abroad?**

Yes

No.

I wish I hadn't answered it

**In the event that you HAVE BEEN WITH any member of your family going abroad to work, have they EXPERIENCED physical or sexual abuse?**

Yes

No.

I wish I hadn't answered it

**Were you threatened to be sent home to the Philippines even though you were doing your job?**

Yes

No.

**Is it caused by a pandemic?**

Yes

No, the pandemic has nothing to do with the situation

I do not know

**Do you have access to your passport?**

There is

Nothing

I do not know

**Is it caused by a pandemic?**

Yes

No, the pandemic has nothing to do with the situation

I do not know

**Do you get your salary on the due date?**

Yes

No.

[I don't know/I don't have a contract](#)

**Is it caused by a pandemic?**

Yes

No, the pandemic has nothing to do with the situation

I do not know

**Are you being forced by your employer to work more than the hours stated in your contract?**

Yes

No.

[I don't know/I don't have a contract](#)

**Is it caused by a pandemic?**

Yes

No, the pandemic has nothing to do with the situation

I do not know

**How many days in a week is it necessary to work?**

**Do you get paid extra when you do extra work?**

Yes

No.

[I don't know/I don't have a contract](#)

**Is it caused by a pandemic?**



Yes

No, the pandemic has nothing to do with the situation

I do not know

**Do you work on your day off (or day when you are sick) for fear of being fired?**

Yes

No.

I do not know

**Is it caused by a pandemic?**

Yes

No, the pandemic has nothing to do with the situation

I do not know

**After working hours, do you move around in the area where you live?**

Yes

No.

**Is it caused by a pandemic?**

Yes

No, the pandemic has nothing to do with the situation

I do not know

**Are you unable to leave your current job due to the following reasons?**

I owe my employer

My employer took my passport or other identification document

My employer is threatening me

My employer is threatening my family

Nothing

Others

I prefer not to answer

**Have you ever asked for help to get out of an abusive/exploitative work situation?**

Yes

No.

**Is it caused by a pandemic?**

Yes

No, the pandemic has nothing to do with the situation

I do not know

**Who did you contact? Please select all possible**

Family/friends

DOLE (Department of Labor and Employment)

DSWD (Department of Social Welfare and Development)

IACAT (Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking)

POLO (Philippine Overseas Labor Office)

Philippine Embassy

POEA (Philippine Overseas Employment Administration)

The police

Barangay officials

Recruitment agency

Media (e.g., Tuflo)

Others

**When was the last time you asked for help from anyone?**

**Did you receive help?**

Yes

No.

I'm waiting for help

**How long have you received help**

**Did you enjoy the help you received?**

Very satisfied

Satisfied

Just right

Not satisfied

Extremely dissatisfied

I didn't get help

**"Thank you so much for your participation.**

**If you are in danger, please call:**

**Blas F. Ople Policy Center or the Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking (IACAT):**

**Address: Unit A 2295 Wycliff Townhomes, Roberts St., Pasay City**

**+63 2 514-8100 / +63 2 833-9562**

**✉ info@blasoplecenter.com / blasoplecenter@outlook.ph**

**Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/blasoplecenter>**

**Skype: Blas Ople Center**

**Should you ever experience any personal or emotional distress, professional help is free at the National Mental Health Crisis hotline:**

**+63 917-899-8727 / +63 917-899-USAP "**

## Appendix D: Original Time-Location Sampling Design

Using a three-stage time-location sampling, IST Research will build a diverse and representative sample of OFWs departing from the Philippines. Time-location sampling, also known as time-space sampling or venue-based sampling, is widely used to access and study hidden populations in many countries and contexts to estimate the prevalence of HIV/AIDS and IV drug use<sup>74</sup>.

Through UP-CIFAL Philippines, IST Research will build a sampling frame of accredited providers of online pre-departure orientation seminars (PDOS) with information from the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) – PDOS Development and Monitoring Unit (PDMU). The first stage of TLS will involve the random selection of PDOS providers (location) and the second stage will involve random selection of PDOS sessions (time). The ultimate sampling unit is all Filipino PDOS participants in the sampled list of providers and PDOS sessions.

For the first stage of sampling, IST Research and UP-CIFAL Philippines will randomly select 56 locations from the 112 OWWA-accredited online PDOS providers with each provider having a 1/112 chance of being selected. Initially, IST Research and CIFAL considered major transit hubs as venues from which to sample respondents; however, these may produce coverage error (e.g. irregular migration may not take place primarily through these venues). Furthermore, it is possible that individuals traveling with traffickers will be forbidden from answering the registration surveys at transit hubs; performing the survey days or weeks in advance of migration at a different setting where OFWs congregate will minimize this risk. Additionally, prior to the 2020 coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, IST Research and CIFAL planned to conduct a face-to-face survey registration in the vicinity of OWWA regional centers. However, due to nationwide lockdowns, the survey registration will be done online instead of on-site. In lieu of the face-to-face participant recruitment in OWWA regional centers, IST and CIFAL will randomly select accredited online PDOS providers from a comprehensive roster of providers across the country.

The second stage will involve the random sampling based on PDOS schedules. Based on preliminary data provided by OWWA, it is estimated that 112 PDOS providers will conduct two sessions per week with 30 participants each on average. For the data gathering period of three months, the total estimated number of PDOS sessions is 2,688 and the total number of participants is 80,640. Among the sample size of 56 PDOS providers, the research team will randomly select one PDOS session for each of the 56 PDOS providers, from all of their scheduled orientation within the data gathering period of three months. This can generate a potential respondent list of 1,680. All participants of the randomly selected online PDOS sessions will automatically be asked to register for the survey until the target number of 1,385 registrants is met. The margin of error for 1,385 participants is +/- 2.61% at the 95% level of confidence. The period may be extended, and additional registrants may be invited from randomly selected PDOS sessions following the same process, if necessary, until the target number of registrants is reached.

The random selection involved at each stage of the sampling process reduces the risk of selection bias. It also offers an opportunity to collect a representative sample of OFWs departing the Philippines. This survey registration through accredited online PDOS providers will be conducted prior to migration. However, this study will also aid in facilitating

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<sup>74</sup> Raymond, H., Ick, T., Grasso, M., Vaudrey, J., McFarland, W. 2007. Resource Guide: Time Location Sampling (TLS), 2nd Edition. San Francisco Department of Public Health.



rescue of those who face difficult situations abroad. For this reason, this study can contribute to monitoring and ensuring OFWs' safety by involving those who are abroad.

## Appendix E: Forced Labor Indicators and Tiers by Work Industry

Indicators	TVPA Category	Accommodation and Food Services	Agriculture, Forestry	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	Health and Beauty Services	Construction	Manufacturing	Maritime	Mining and Quarrying	Office	Domestic work	Fishing	Wholesale and Retail Trade
Work on rest days	Coercion	174 (40.28%)	10 (28.57%)	28 (31.46%)	144 (29.75%)	61 (16.01%)	66 (22.76%)	8 (22.86%)	6 (42.86%)	38 (15.57%)	1251 (52.96%)	2 (33.33%)	83 (24.85%)
Threat to self	Coercion	21 (4.86%)	0 (0%)	1 (1.12%)	14 (2.89%)	6 (1.57%)	5 (1.72%)	2 (5.71%)	1 (7.14%)	4 (1.64%)	126 (5.33%)	0 (0%)	6 (1.8%)
Threat to family	Coercion	13 (3.01%)	0 (0%)	4 (4.49%)	3 (0.62%)	13 (3.41%)	4 (1.38%)	2 (5.71%)	1 (7.14%)	4 (1.64%)	38 (1.61%)	0 (0%)	4 (1.2%)
Not paid for overtime	Fraud	244 (56.48%)	15 (42.86%)	40 (44.94%)	239 (49.38%)	158 (41.47%)	88 (30.34%)	19 (54.29%)	6 (42.86%)	135 (55.33%)	1544 (65.37%)	3 (50%)	177 (52.99%)
Owe debt	Coercion	288 (66.67%)	22 (62.86%)	52 (58.43%)	301 (62.19%)	247 (64.83%)	187 (64.48%)	21 (60%)	9 (64.29%)	156 (63.93%)	1532 (64.86%)	4 (66.67%)	196 (58.68%)
No freedom of movement	Force	145 (33.56%)	8 (22.86%)	18 (20.22%)	108 (22.31%)	44 (11.55%)	52 (17.93%)	10 (28.57%)	6 (42.86%)	32 (13.11%)	1260 (53.34%)	1 (16.67%)	76 (22.75%)
No access to passport	Coercion	43 (9.95%)	5 (14.29%)	2 (2.25%)	30 (6.2%)	11 (2.89%)	11 (3.79%)	1 (2.86%)	0 (0%)	9 (3.69%)	298 (12.62%)	1 (16.67%)	25 (7.49%)

Work more hours than agreed	Fraud	337 (78.01%)	31 (88.57%)	73 (82.02%)	421 (86.98%)	304 (79.79%)	269 (92.76%)	30 (85.71%)	12 (85.71%)	214 (87.7%)	1952 (82.64%)	4 (66.67%)	294 (88.02%)
Tier													
Tier 1a		11 (2.55%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (0.83%)	3 (0.79%)	3 (1.03%)	0 (0%)	1 (7.14%)	0 (0%)	83 (3.51%)	0 (0%)	2 (0.6%)
Tier 1		15 (3.47%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	6 (1.24%)	3 (0.79%)	3 (1.03%)	1 (2.86%)	1 (7.14%)	1 (0.41%)	120 (5.08%)	0 (0%)	3 (0.9%)
Tier 2		111 (25.69%)	5 (14.29%)	11 (12.36%)	83 (17.15%)	36 (9.45%)	32 (11.03%)	8 (22.86%)	6 (42.86%)	12 (4.92%)	920 (38.95%)	1 (16.67%)	47 (14.07%)
Total		432	35	89	484	381	290	35	14	244	2362	6	334

## Appendix F: FEF Cohort Demographic Sample Statistics (Complete Responses from Those who Migrated Only)

Total number of registrations for the FEF cohort was 429.

Not all respondents provided answers to every demographic question at the time of registration since these questions were optional.

### Age

Sample	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50+	All
Registration	11	49	90	139	74	34	17	414
Follow-Up	1	4	8	23	11	3	2	52

### Gender

Sample	Female	Male	All
Registration	180	2	182
Follow-Up	58	2	60

### Education

Sample	College	Primary	Secondary	Some College	Vocational	Post-graduate	All
Registration	108	3	111	105	19	8	354
Follow-Up	12	2	16	11	2	0	43

### Dependents



Sample	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7+	All
Registration	2	37	62	77	59	42	11	11	301
Follow-Up	0	3	10	7	7	7	3	1	38

**Island of Origin**

Sample	Luzon	Mindanao	Visayas	All
Registration	262	50	92	404
Follow-Up	32	4	16	52