KOREAN MIGRATION TO THE PHILIPPINES

Data Snapshot
UP CIFAL Philippines wishes to thank Bae Kyung Min from the University of the Philippines (UP) Korean Research Center, Park Kidong from the Embassy of the Republic of Korea in the Philippines, Lee Hyun Joo from the United Korean Community Association, and the Korea Chamber of Commerce Philippines, Inc. for their assistance to the development of this report.
The University of the Philippines – CIFAL Philippines takes pride in sharing this data snapshot on “Korean Migration to the Philippines” researched and produced by CIFAL’s Rodalyn Apple Ariola and Luke Dominic Talavera. Congratulations to both.

This piece of work is part of UP CIFAL Philippines’ modest contributions to the run-up to the launch of the United Nations’ Global Compact for Migration (GCM) in 2018. Migration has been a major global concern. Whilst migration faces many challenges, it also offers opportunities. “Korean Migration to the Philippines” highlights the possibilities and opportunities both for the Philippines and for South Korea. However, it also points out the challenges that migration offers. The work defines the profile of Korean migration inflow, a reverse flow of what is usually depicted, namely outmigration.

This contribution is a snapshot and thus is only a beginning of what may be a deeper investigation on migration inflow. UP CIFAL Philippines invites scholars and professionals to look profoundly into migration inflow for purpose of shaping policies or for whatever practical value the study may advance.

I hope you enjoy browsing UP CIFAL Philippines’ experiment.
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OVERVIEW

The influx of South Koreans in the Philippines during the 21st century generates a host of questions, most of which remain unanswered. How did the pattern of Korean migration in the Philippines evolve over the last decade? Why do some Koreans choose to stay in the Philippines longer than the others? How did the government adjust its legal and institutional frameworks to incorporate the foreign migrants effectively?

This snapshot intends to highlight these concerns on the contemporary Korean migration in the Philippines by providing information on the profile and location of migrants, typology and drivers of their migration, and some key challenges in migrating to the country. As this report emphasizes the role of the Philippines as a recipient country of Korean migrants, it also draws some recommendations for delivering a sustainable and inclusive migration in the country.

About UP CIFAL Philippines

The University of the Philippines Centre International de Formation des Autorités et Leaders (UP CIFAL) Philippines was established in March 2016 through a cooperation between UP and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR).

As a UP program affiliated with the UNITAR, UP CIFAL Philippines works on enhancing data on the Philippine migration and contributing to develop sound public policies.

UP CIFAL Philippines also works around capacity building to mainstream and localize Sustainable Development Goals in the Philippines.
Since 2006, South Koreans ranked first among the foreign tourist arrivals in the Philippines, over-ranking the visitors count from the USA, Japan, China, and Australia, among others.

After 11 years, the data for the foreign tourist arrivals in the Philippines show that the Korean market consistently provides the biggest number of incoming foreigners in the country with more than 1.6 million arrivals or 25% of the total foreign arrivals in the Philippines (DOT, 2018).

In December 2017, Korea is also recorded to be the top foreign spending market in the Philippines with receipts amounting to Php 4.30 billion, overtaking the US market with total spending of P3.60 billion (DOT, 2017).

Alongside the influx of Korean tourists in the country is the modest increase in the number of Koreans taking business ventures, employment, education, residency, and retirement. This trend suggests that the Philippines is becoming a preferred venue for Koreans, not only for tourism, but also for their second home.

### TOP FOREIGN ARRIVALS IN THE PHILIPPINES OVER THE DECADE: HIGHLIGHTS OF 2005, 2006 & 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>Koreans</td>
<td>1,607,821</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>968,447</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>Americans</td>
<td>957,813</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4th</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>584,180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5th</td>
<td>Australians</td>
<td>259,433</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>Koreans</td>
<td>572,133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>Americans</td>
<td>566,355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>421,808</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4th</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>133,585</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5th</td>
<td>Taiwanese</td>
<td>114,955</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>Americans</td>
<td>528,493</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>Koreans</td>
<td>498,465</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>415,465</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4th</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>107,456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5th</td>
<td>Taiwanese</td>
<td>122,946</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: DOT, n.d.

### THE PHILIPPINES IS AMONG THE TOP 10 COUNTRIES TO HOST KOREAN MIGRANTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Russia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Kazakhstan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Uzbekistan</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Philippines</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: MOFA, 2017

### DEFINING KOREAN MIGRANTS

As defined by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) in South Korea, Korean migrants refer to individuals who have Korean citizenship at birth or those who acquired the nationality of another country but whose parents or grandparents had Korean citizenship in the past. Korean migrants thus include naturalized citizens, Korean nationals with permanent residence in another country, and those who stayed long time overseas under non-immigrant visas for study, employment, and business, and other purposes.

Source: Korean Immigration Bureau, n.d.
The profile of Koreans in the Philippines suggests that they are staying longer in the Philippines.

**Total Number of Visas Granted to Korean Nationals From 2007—2017**

- **43,518** Non-Immigrant Visas (Section 9 Visas)
- **619** Immigrant Visas (Section 13 Visas)
- **6,666** Special Non-Immigrant Visas
- **784** Special Immigrant Visas

*Visa Categories Under the Philippine Immigration Act of 1940*

*Special visas are mostly given to retirees, entrepreneurs, and investors.*

*Source: BI, 2018*

**As of 2017, 93,093 Korean migrants are residing in the Philippines.**

*Source: MOFA, 2017*

**GENDER**

- **51%** Male
- **49%** Female

*Source: MOFA, 2017*

**MIGRANTS CAN BE CLASSIFIED IN ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING CATEGORIES (2017)**

- **STUDENTS:** 10.6%
  - This status consists of Korean students with a non-immigrant student visa.

- **PERMANENT RESIDENTS:** 1.2%
  - These are Koreans who have been issued the immigrant visas (either quota or non-quota Visas), mostly on the basis of marriage to Filipinos.

- **NATURALIZED CITIZENS:** 0.02%
  - These are Koreans who acquired foreign citizenships before entering the Philippines.

- **GENERAL RESIDENTS:** 81%
  - This status consists of all types of visas (other than the permanent, students, and naturalized citizens) such as tourists, retirees, and employees.

*Source: MOFA, 2017*

**GENDER BASED ON MARRIAGES IN THE PHILIPPINES (2015)**

- **914 Grooms**
- **30 Brides**

*Source: PSA, 2015*

**The total number of employment permits issued by the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) as of December 2017**

- **40,866** Employees

*Source: DOLE, n.d.*

**The total number of special residents retirement visas (SRRV) issued by the Philippine Retirement Authority as of May 2018**

- **11,753** Retirees

*Source: PRA, 2018*

**In 2017, 1,176 Korean nationals have permanent residence status in the Philippines, a 44% increase from 2016.**

*Source: MOFA, 2017*

**In 2017, 16,962 Koreans registered their information under the Embassy of Korea in the Philippines.**

*Source: MOFA, 2017*
HIGHLIGHTS

- The locations of the main international airports in the Philippines, with direct flights to South Korea, are also the preferred locations for residency and retirement among Koreans.
- Cebu hosts the largest number of Korean migrants in the Philippines.
- Metro Manila Region hosts the largest number of employed Koreans in the country.
- There are significant numbers of Koreans in Mindanao who stayed for different purposes such as retirement, employment and residency.

Sources: PRA, 2018; MOFA, 2017, Unpublished data, DOLE, n.d.
HIGHLIGHTS

- There is a significant presence of Korean businesses in Davao and Cagayan de Oro despite the travel advisory in those areas in 2017.
- Type of business industries in some key areas:
  - **Davao**: Diverse industries (wholesale, advertising, vehicle parts, fishing, recreational and sports activities, and mining)
  - **Misamis Oriental**: mostly real estate and recreational activities
  - **Metro Manila**: Diverse industries (hotel and restaurants, motels, real estate, private education, telecommunications, and advertising)
- The closure of Boracay Island in 2018 affected the Korean businesses that are mostly into tourism industry.

Sources: Unpublished data, SEC, n.d.
**Typology and Drivers of Korean Migration to the Philippines**

### Early Significant Settlements

**18th Century to 1970s**
- **Religious Refugees, Soldiers & War Brides**

#### Political migration and international marriages

- Between Korean brides and Filipino soldiers who participated in the Korean War accounted for the early settlements of Korean migrants in the Philippines.

**1980s**
- **Business Ventures**

#### Rapid economic development in South Korea

- Drives the migration of labor extensive industries and the first waves of businessmen in the Philippines.

### Business Ventures

- **1969**: Korean Association Philippine, Inc. (now called United Korean Community Association in the Philippines)
- **1974**: Manila Korean Union Church
- **1975**: Mother’s Association
- **1991**: Overseas Korean Traders
- **1995**: Korean Restaurant Association
- **1995**: Korean Chamber of Commerce
- **1997**: Construction Association

Source: Kutsumi, 2004

### Early 2000s

- **Student Migrants and Repeat Travellers**

#### Demand for English Education in Korea

- In 2003, DOT’s marketing campaign “Philippines English as a Second Language Tour Program” attracted more Korean visitors.

#### The Adventure of Migration

- The increase in cheap travels and special working permit visa given to Koreans to be a tourist guide drives tourist migration.

Source: Miralao, 2007

### 2000 Onwards

- **Entrepreneurs, Missionaries, Volunteers**

#### Social migration

- Through religious communities, built infrastructures, and small businesses (Korean stores, noraebang) caters to the growing number of Korean migrants.

#### Volunteer migration

- Through church, non-government organizations and official development assistance programs of Korea to the Philippines encourages migrants integration to the local community.

Source: Kutsumi, 2004

### Expat and Families

- **Investments of Korean Businesses** in the Philippines encourages more expats to move to the Philippines with their families. Younger kids of expats also study in Philippine schools.

### Marriage Migrants

- **Family reunion** is one of the key drivers of marriage migration in the Philippines in which a member of a family (i.e. fiancée, dependent children, or civil partner) comes to the Philippines.

Source: Kutsumi, 2004

### Retirees

- **Philippine policy for retirement** attracts more retirees to move with their families. Marketing the Philippines as a retirement haven is one of the success drivers of migration from the government.

Source: Kutsumi, 2004
CURRENT CONCERNS ON KOREAN MIGRATION TO THE PHILIPPINES

A

CONCERN ON SAFE AND ORDERLY MIGRATION

3,190 crimes

involving Korean victims were reported in the Philippines between 2009 to 2014.

This is the highest number of crimes with Korean victims reported among the Southeast Asian countries.

786 Korean victims

78 Korean criminals

in 2014

Source: Korean National Police Agency, 2015 in Kim 2018

Source: Korean Institute of Criminology, 2014

Typical Crime Cases Involving Korean Victims (based on 2014 data)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crime Type</th>
<th>Number</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thefts</td>
<td>678</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murders</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robberies</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Assaults</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fraud Cases</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abductions</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rapes</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Korean Institute of Criminology, 2014

Decreasing number of Korean students in the Philippines, a repercussion of increasing crime rate?

Number of Student Migrants in the Philippines (2005-2017)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>2,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>19,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>29,122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>29,545</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>12,527</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>7,285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>9,903</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: MOFA, 2017

Events Concerning the Safe Migration of Korean Nationals in the Philippines

Oct. 2010

Korean community requested for a Korean Help Desk under the Phil. National Police.

July 2011

Installation of Korean Help Desk with Filipino officers

May 2012

Establishment of Help Desk with Korean officers

2014

Korean Embassy warned Korean businesses on the crime incidents in the Philippines.

2015

MOFA released a travel warning in the Philippines related to increasing crime rates.

2017

MOFA released a travel ban in Bohol and Mindanao citing public insecurity. Lifted travel ban in Bohol.

2018

Lifted travel ban in Davao and Cagayan de Oro

Sources: Kim, 2018; Korea Joongang Daily, 2015, Embassy of the Republic of Korea, 2014, 2018
B  COST OF DOING BUSINESS IN THE PHILIPPINES

From 2015 - 2017, Vietnam over-ranked the Philippines as the top destination for Korean migrants in the SEA.

Interestingly, this migration trend draws attention to the increasing Foreign Direct Investment in Vietnam in which South Koreans emerged as their largest foreign investors.

Korean Business Organization expressed that, “There’s an increasing case of Korean companies leaving the Philippines for Vietnam mainly because of high cost of doing businesses in the Philippines.”

Source: The Philippine Star, 2017

C  INCREASING NUMBER OF KOREAN MIGRANTS IN THE PHILIPPINES BUT AT A DECREASING RATE

Source: MOFA, 2017
How did the pattern of Korean migration in the Philippines evolve over the last decade? Why do some Koreans choose to stay in the Philippines longer than the others?

- The number of Korean students declines which reflects the issue of safe and orderly migration in the Philippines.

- The Korean business organizations in the country expressed their thoughts on the high costs of doing business in the country which might potentially lead to Korean businesses leaving the Philippines.

- The number of registered Koreans under the Embassy of Korea in the Philippines increased which implies that more migrants shared their information in case of any emergency or any opportunities.

- The numbers of retirees, employees, and permanent residents increased which illustrate that Korean migrants, though staying temporarily in the country, tend to stay on a longer basis.

- The presence of organizations in the country and the Korean establishments has driven the longer term migration of Koreans in the Philippines.

How did the Philippines adjust its legal and institutional framework to incorporate these foreign migrants effectively?

- The Department of Tourism and Department of Labor assisted the Korean nationals to have a special working permit in the country with the increasing demand on the tourism business among Koreans.

- In early 2000s, the Philippines relaxed visa extension for students migrants. In 2013, the Bureau of Immigration relaxed immigrant visas (specifically quota visa) to Korean nationals recognizing their importance as investors in the country.

- The Embassy of the Republic of Korea in the Philippines and the Philippine National Police made a joint effort to promote migrant security by installing Korean Help Desks.
The following can be initiated and further analyzed to help shape directions toward a better understanding of Korean inward-bound migration to the Philippines:

**Generate data collection to deeply understand the situation of the migrants at the local level.** In the case of Korean migration to the Philippines, most of the available data sources are collected at the national level and can only answer the big questions of migration. A closer look at the local-level reports will help shape a better understanding and prospects for appropriate policy direction on Korean migration depending on specific geographic conditions in the Philippines. Some cases that can be enlightened by this recommendation are the key challenges experienced by the Korean immigrants in Cagayan de Oro and Davao where travel bans were issued and in Boracay Island which is temporarily closed for businesses and tourism.

**Define migration concepts for a common understanding in reading and preparing migration reports.** The definition of concepts used in administrative data collection, such as the concept of *temporary* and *permanent migration*, can be challenged by researchers to be redefined based on the new trends and drivers of migration.

**Improve public access to administrative data.** An easier access to the data collected by the government agencies, both in the Philippines and South Korea, is a first step in order for the researchers and development practitioners to make a sound-policy recommendation for improving the Philippines’ competitiveness to be a host country. The translation of the “Overseas Korean Report” by the South Korea Foreign Ministry to the English language, for instance, can outset a better data sharing between South Korean and the Philippine organizations.

**Strengthen Korea to Filipino community-based relations and promote policy advocacies for a safe and orderly migration.** Various ways to strengthen community-based relations such as intercultural links, educational and historical promotion, food culture sharing can be explored by different Korean and Filipino organizations. The active cooperation between the Korean communities and local government can also help ensure that services and safe environment will be delivered to both the local citizens and migrants.
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The Philippine Star
ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Rodalyn Apple Ariola
Master of Public Administration

Ariola earned her Master’s degree at the Park Chung Hee School of Policy and Saemaul of Yeungnam University in South Korea under a scholarship grant of the Nonghyup Bank. Before moving back to the Philippines in early 2018, she served as an intern at the Sports and Community Development Department of the Mungyeong City Hall in North Gyeongsang Province, South Korea. She obtained her bachelor’s degree in Sociology from the University of the Philippines Diliman in 2013 and was an exchange student to Chonnam National University in South Korea in 2011.

Luke Dominic Talavera
BA Sociology

Talavera is a senior project assistant at UP CIFAL Philippines. He earned his Bachelor’s degree in Sociology from the University of the Philippines Diliman in June 2018. His research interests include international migration, public transportation, and rural and urban development.