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# KOREAN MIGRATION TO THE PHILIPPINES

DATA SNAPSHOT

About the photo: Korean establishments along the street of Malate Manila exhibit the ubiquitous presence of the Koreans in the Philippines whom according to data are staying in the country in a temporary long-term basis.

Photo Credit: mithunonthe.net

## OVERVIEW OF THIS DATA SNAPSHOT

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 Internationale de Formation des Autorites et Leaders (UP– CIFAL Philippines) was established on March 2016 through a co-operation between the University of the Philippines (UP) and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR).

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

UP– CIFAL Philippines also serves as a hub for capacity building on how to implement the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals at the local level.

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# PHILIPPINES AS A DESTINATION FOR SOUTH KOREANS

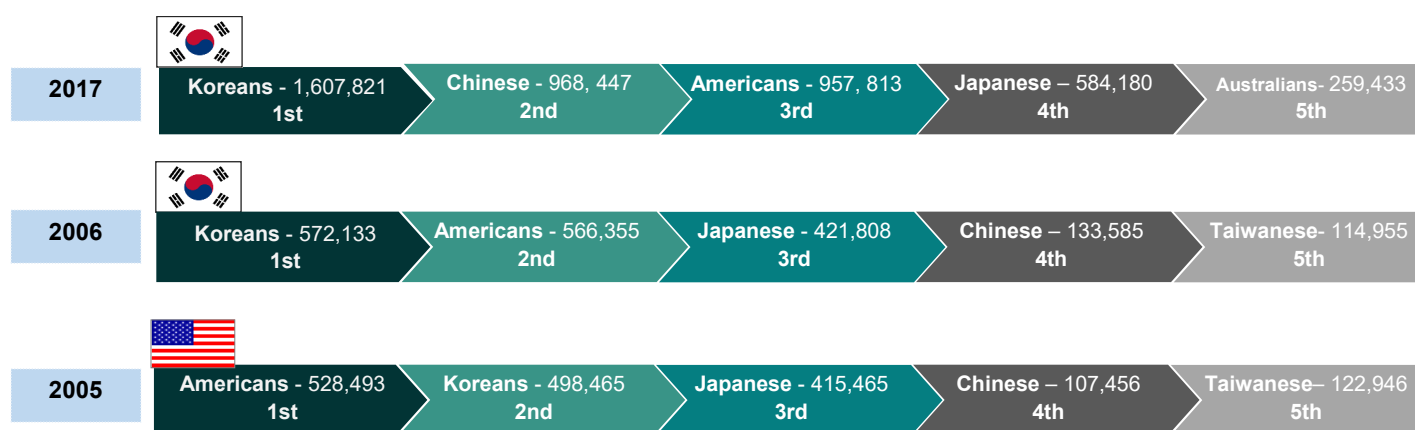
Since 2006, South Koreans ranked first among the foreign tourist arrivals in the Philippines, over-ranking the visitors count from the USA, Japan, China, and Australia, among others.

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



Source: DOT, n.d.

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

Rank	Country	Rank	Country
1	China	6	Australia
2	USA	7	Russia
3	Japan	8	Vietnam
4	Canada	9	Kazakhstan
5	Uzbekistan	10	Philippines

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.

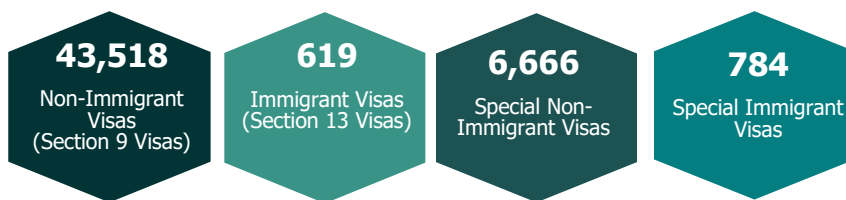
Source: Korean Immigration Bureau, n.d.

# PROFILE OF KOREAN MIGRANTS IN THE PHILIPPINES

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

Source: MOFA, 2017

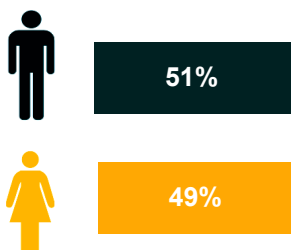
## Total Number of Visas Granted to Korean Nationals From 2007—2017



*Visa Categories under the  
Philippine Immigration Act of 1940*

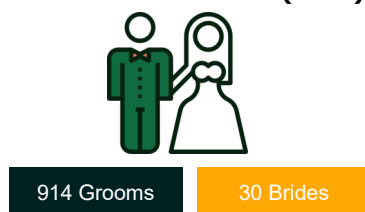
*Special visas are mostly given  
to retirees, entrepreneurs, and investors.*  
Source: BI, 2018

### GENDER



Source: MOFA, 2017

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



Source: PSA, 2015

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



### STUDENTS

This status consists of Korean students with a non-immigrant student visa.



### PERMANENT RESIDENTS

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

These are Koreans who acquired foreign citizenships before entering the Philippines.



### GENERAL RESIDENTS

This status consists all types of visas (other than the permanent, students, and naturalized citizens) such as tourists, retirees, and employees.

Source: MOFA, 2017

The profile of Koreans in the Philippines suggests that they are staying longer in the Philippines.



### 40,866 Employees

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

Source: DOLE, n.d.



### 11,753 Retirees

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

Source: PRA, 2018



### +44% Increase in the No. of Permanent Residents

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

Source: MOFA, 2017

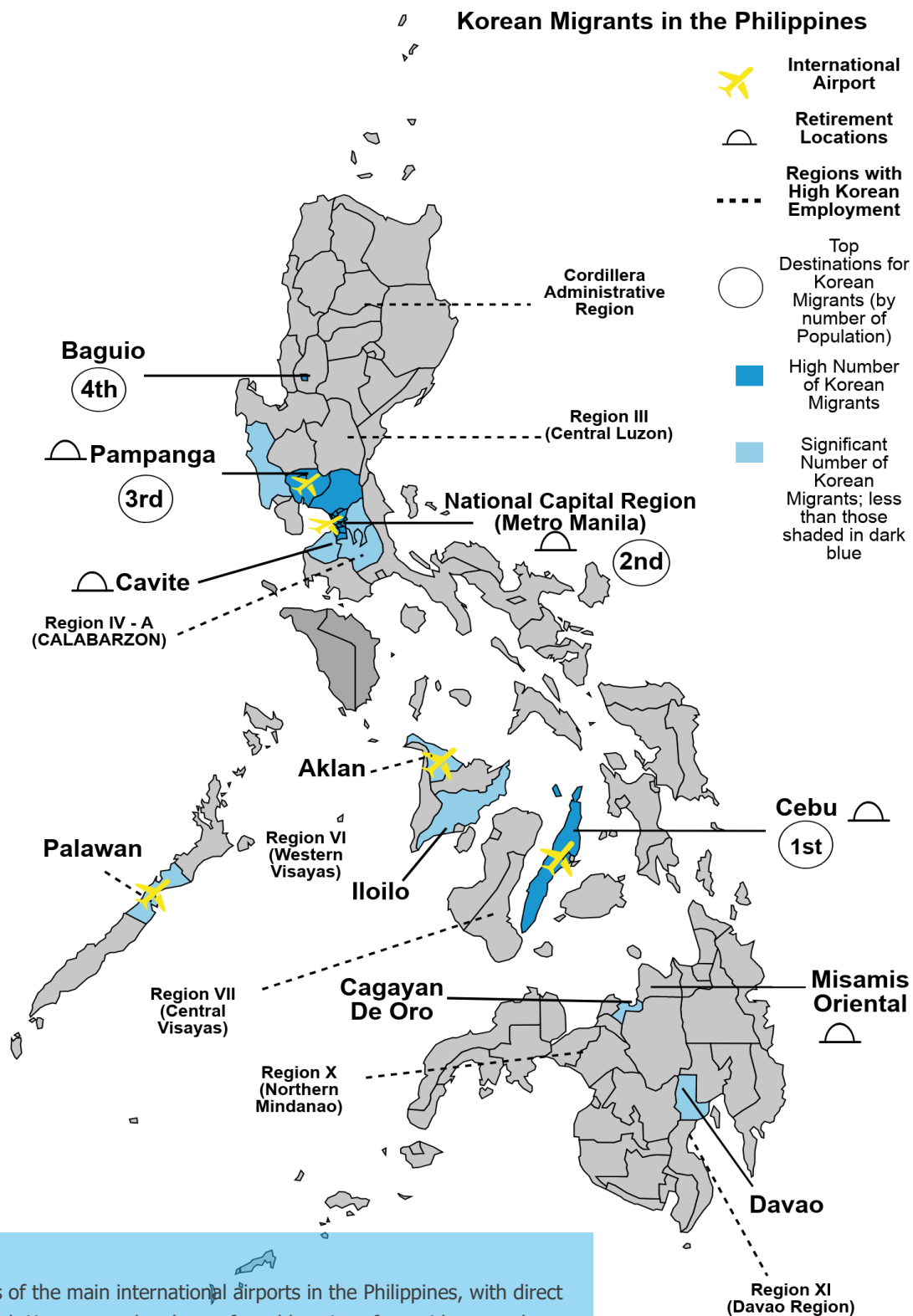


### +66% Increase in the No. of Registered Koreans

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

Source: MOFA, 2017

# LOCATION OF KOREAN MIGRANTS IN THE PHILIPPINES



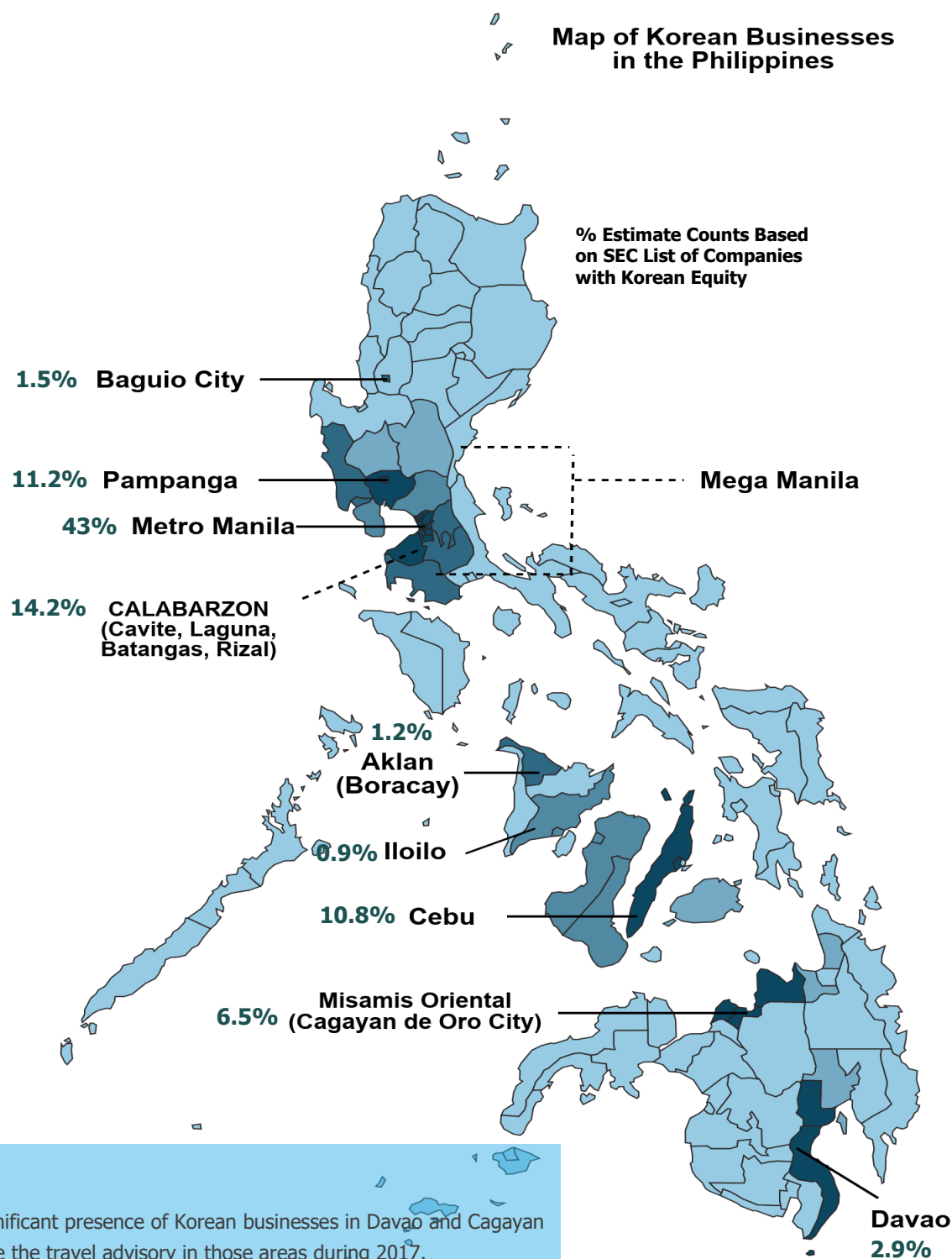
## HIGHLIGHTS

- \* 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.



# LOCATION OF KOREAN MIGRANTS IN THE PHILIPPINES



## HIGHLIGHTS

- \* There is a significant presence of Korean businesses in Davao and Cagayan de Oro despite the travel advisory in those areas during 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.

# TPOLOGY 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.

Source: Kutsumi, 2004

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.

Source: Kutsumi, 2004

Earliest Korean Organizations Formed

- 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

## PEAK OF MIGRATION

Early 2000s

STUDENT MIGRANTS AND REPEAT TRAVELLERS



**Demand for English Education in Korea**



**The Adventure of Migration**



**Ease of Travel and Stories**

In 2003, DOT's marketing campaign "Philippines English as a Second Language Tour Program" attracted more Korean visitors.

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

Source: Miralao, 2007

## CURRENT AND LONGER PATTERNS OF MIGRATION

EXPATS AND FAMILIES



**Investments of Korean businesses** in the Philippines encourage 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, civil partner) comes to the Philippines.

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.

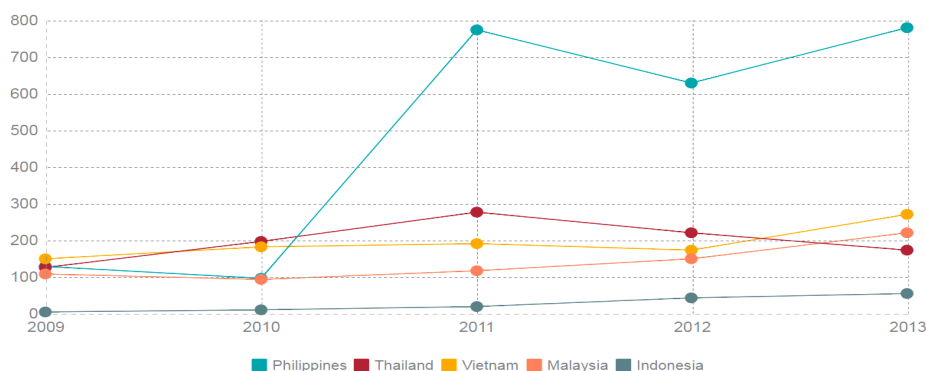
This is the highest number of crimes with Korean victims reported among the Southeast Asian countries.

**786 Korean victims**

**78 Korean criminals**

in 2014

NUMBER OF CRIMES INVOLVING  
KOREAN VICTIMS IN SEA (2009—2013)



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)

678  
**Thefts**

13  
**Murders**

12  
**Robberies**

12  
**Physical Assaults**

10  
**Fraud Cases**

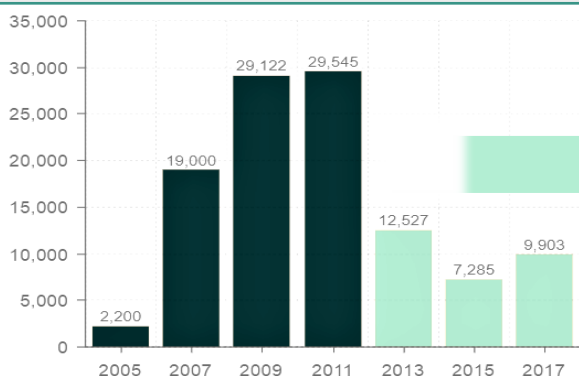
9  
**Abductions**

2  
**Rapes**

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)



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

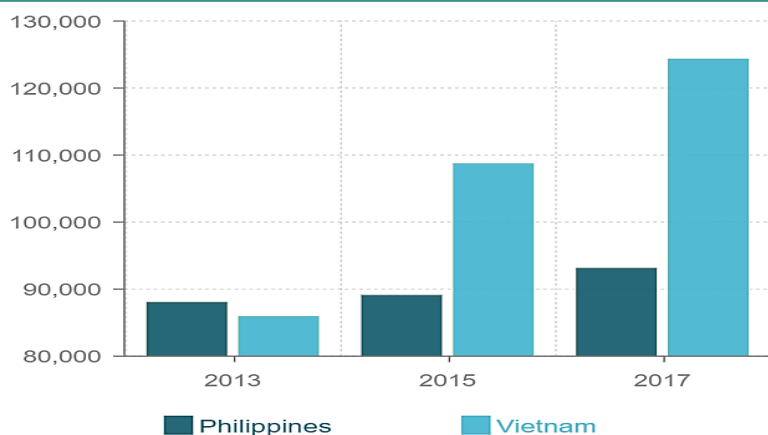
Sources: Kim, 2018; Korea Joongang Daily, 2015, Embassy of the Republic of Korea, 2014, 2018

# CURRENT CONCERNS ON KOREAN MIGRATION TO THE PHILIPPINES

## B COST OF DOING BUSINESS IN THE PHILIPPINES

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

**A COMPARISON OF THE TOTAL NUMBER OF KOREAN MIGRANTS IN THE PHILIPPINES AND VIETNAM (2013, 2015, 2017)**



Source: MOFA, 2017

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



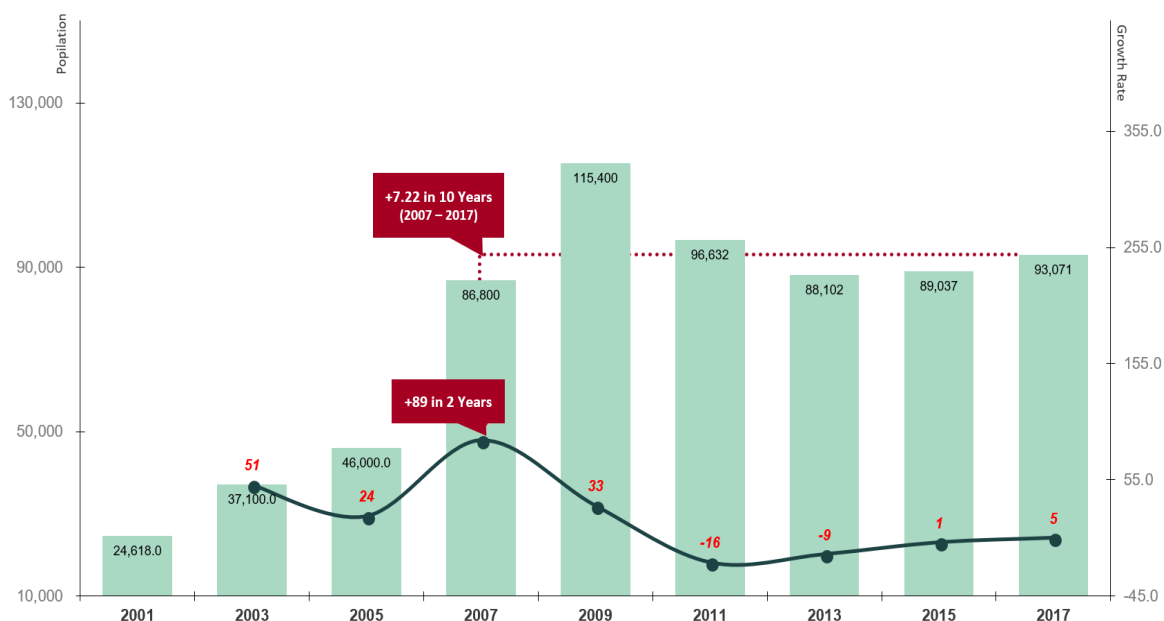
Korean Business Organization expressed that,

*"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 IN A DECREASING RATE

**POPULATION AND GROWTH RATE OF KOREAN MIGRANTS IN THE PHILIPPINES (2001—2017)**



Source: MOFA n.d., 2017



# Korean Migration to the Philippines:

## Highlights of this Data Snapshot

### 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.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

As recommendations, 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 researches 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.

# Korean Migration to the Philippines

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