

## DOLE-NRCO offers livelihood kits to ex-OFWs



**Cebu City, Philippines.** At least fifteen distressed female returning OFWs in Central Visayas recently received starter kits worth of PHP10,000.00 each set, the National Reintegration Center for OFWs (NRCO-7), a bureau of the Department of Labor and Employment yesterday confirmed in a statement.

Beneficiaries, who collectively received a total of PHP150,000.00 cash assistance for their Mini-Groceria project under the NRCO's BalikPinayBalikHanapbuhay Program, came from the Cities of Cebu, Mandaue, Lapu-Lapu, Naga and the municipalities of Cordova, Consolacion, and Daanbantayan as well as from the Provinces of Bohol and Negros Oriental.

According to Mr. Dexter F. Paro, NRCO-7 Regional Coordinator, beneficiaries used to be working as domestic workers, dressmakers, sewers, cooks, and teachers in Hong Kong, Malaysia, Thailand, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Kuwait, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), and Djibouti, East Africa.

Considered distressed, Paro explained, said OFWs were victims of either maltreatment, unpaid salaries, abuse, illegal termination, illegal deployment, contract violation, imprisonment, or end of contract, among others.

"These are some of the clear-cut reasons why OFWs return to the country. These conditions prompted the DOLE-NRCO to devise a program that would address the needs of affected returning OFWS by implementing the BalikPinayBalikHanapbuhay program," said OIC-Assistant Regional Director Lilia A. Estillore, who attended the BalikPinayBalikHanapbuhay ProgramBigasancum Mini-Groceria Livelihood and Financial Literacy held at the DOLE Regional Office.

Eligible and priority beneficiaries, according to her, are distressed workers sheltered by The Philippine Overseas Labor Office (POLOs) at the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Resource Center (MWOFRFC) as well as other distressed and displaced women household service workers (HSWs).

In his report to DOLE-7 OIC-Regional Director Cyril L. Ticao, Paro said that each OFW received starter kits composed of sacks of rice and grocery items.

“Apart from the starter kits, beneficiaries including some 14 other participants were provided learning sessions not only by the DOLE-NRCO but also by other partner agencies,” he added.

The NRCO and the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA-7) gave a brief orientation on their respective OFW Reintegration programs and services.

Other agencies actively participating the activity were the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI).



DTI provided a learning session on business management, while the Regional Tripartite Wages and Productivity Board (RTWPB-7) introduced the participants to the basics of Inventory and Bookkeeping. Other partner groups handled the discussion on Child and Maternal Health Care Programs and Financial Literacy.

The DOLE-NRCO also gave special credit and thanks to the Commission on Filipino Overseas (CFO)-Cebu; Glory Reborn Organization, Inc.; and PRU LIFE UK.

The BalikPinayBalikHanapbuhay Program, explained Director Ticao, is a training cum-employment intervention intended to bring about improved socioeconomic well-being of distressed female returning OFWs for productive reintegration to the country.

“With this program, we hope to reduce their socio-economic vulnerability by expanding their employment opportunity through the provision of livelihood projects,” the DOLE-7 Head added.

The program, he said, is a convergent initiative among the DOLE-NRCO, POLO, and the OWWA. The NRCO manages and monitors the overall implementation of the project and provides for its funding requirement of the starter kits. It’s the POLO’s task to identify and profile beneficiaries and submit the list of avalees upon completion of any training they have facilitated to the NRCO, among others.

***End/LSenarlo-Taniza***

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