THE SOCIAL COST OF MIGRATION

What is happening to the Filipino Family?

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The OFW: “Our new heroes”

Without their remittances, our economy will instantly collapse.

(well-acknowledged and celebrated economic benefit)
Voice in the wilderness – social cost is easier to deny, ignore and pay token attention to.

What happens to children and families left behind?

What happens to children and families adjusting to foreign culture?
STRESSES that impact on Filipino families:

- Increased violence in the streets and the homes.
- Advances in technology
- Power of media/ Moral degradation
STRESSES that impact on Filipino families:

- Disasters, pollution, crowdedness
- Changing role of women (parents)
- Separation or disintegration of families due to global migration. (most significant)
The stress experienced by one inevitably affects ALL members of the SYSTEM.

“Ang sakit ng kalingkingan ay nararamdaman ng buong katawan.”
Metaphor of the MOBILE

Take out one part  the system changes.

∴ Not the same mobile anymore.

Relationships – family dynamics change.

“Seasonal orphans”

Reintegration problem
OFW Phenomenon Research:

- Father away
- Mother away (most detrimental)
- Both parents away
In-depth study of children and families left behind by OFW mothers

TIME Magazine:
“The light of the home is gone.”

Are we raising motherless generations?
(Feminization of migration)
Nawala ang Ilaw ng Tahanan
(Carandang, Sison, Carandang, 2004)
RESULTS

- Impact:
  1. Pervasive, extreme, almost unbearable SADNESS
  2. Fathers – at a loss
  3. Children become the parents (burdened).
What do they say?
What do they say?

- boy
- no face
- alone
- no feeling
What do they say?
How do they cope? What helps them?

1. PLAYING
   - Music
   - Arts
   - Expressive arts

2. Regular, constant, genuine, communication with mothers.

3. Going to school
   - relate to peers, belong to group, talk to TEACHERS.
Families overseas: CONCERNS

1. Identity as Filipinos
2. Adjusts to foreign culture
3. Cultural heritage
4. Dual roles of mothers/fathers left behind
1. Bullying in schools
School

Becomes the stable, predictable "refuge" of the child

TEACHERS are FRONTLINERS
Basic attitudes and skills:

1. Start with real awareness and understanding of the child’s family situation.

2. Leads to openness, compassion, and sensitivity to their needs.

**NOTE:** The manual is silent on the socio-emotional concerns of migrant children.
Basic Skills

- Active listening – paying full attention; non-judgmental
- Facilitate expression of feelings through expressive arts – play, arts, music, dance, drama, etc.
- Stress management and burnout prevention (self-care, care for carers)
- Recognize symptoms of burnout – body, heart, mind, spirit.
Recommendations

- Provide workshops on basic skills and stress management for teachers and guidance counselors, parents and guardians.
Recommendations

- Provide workshops on capacity-building of teachers and parents supported by administrators.
- Build centers or training workshops for fathers (e.g., AMMA)
- Build family centers and youth groups
- Harness community support
- Provide counseling centers, e.g., Bayanihan Center (Hong Kong)
NGOs involved

- Atikha – Batangas
- UGAT Foundation
- MLAC Institute
Let us pay real attention now.

The family is still the most powerful social unit one can ever belong to...
The family is the backbone of the nation.

We can still strengthen and keep the Filipino family from falling apart.

Let us start NOW!