

Office of the President of the Philippines
COMMISSION ON FILIPINOS OVERSEAS

2016 HIGHLIGHTS OF MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

I. Commission on Filipinos Overseas: An Overview

Established on 16 June 1980 through *Batas Pambansa 79*, the Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO) is an agency of the Philippine Government under the Office of the President tasked to promote and uphold the interests, rights and welfare of overseas Filipinos and strengthen their ties with the Motherland. Section 3 of BP 79 state the following functions and power:

- a. Provide advice and assistance to the President of the Philippines and the *Batasang Pambansa* in the formulation of policies and measures affecting Filipinos overseas;
- b. Formulate, in coordination with agencies concerned, an integrated program for the
- c. promotion of the welfare of Filipinos overseas for implementation by suitable existing agencies;
- d. Coordinate and monitor the implementation of such an integrated program;
- e. Initiate and directly undertake the implementation of special projects and programs, whenever necessary, to promote the welfare of Filipinos overseas with respect to their interests and activities in the Philippines;
- f. Serve as a forum for preserving and enhancing the social, economic and cultural ties of Filipinos overseas with their motherland;
- g. Provide with liaison services to Filipinos overseas with appropriate government and private agencies in the transaction of business and similar ventures in the Philippines;
- h. Promulgate rules and regulations to carry out the objectives of this Act;
- i. Call upon any agency of the government, including government-owned or controlled corporations, to render whatever assistance is needed in the pursuance of the objectives of this Act; and
- j. Perform such other related functions as may be directed by the President or assigned by law.

The amendment of the Republic Act No. 8042 or the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995 and its implementing rules in 2010, through Republic Act No. 10022, expanded the definition of “overseas Filipinos” to “migrant workers, other Filipino nationals and their dependents abroad.” Because of this, the clientele of CFO has been expanded, emphasizing the inter-agency coordinative character of the Commission which includes in its board all the Secretaries of migration-related government agencies: the Department of Foreign Affairs, the Department of Labor and Employment, the Department of Tourism, the Department of Education, the National Commission on Culture and the Arts, the Department of Justice, and the Press Secretary.

- Filipino permanent residents abroad
- Filipinos who have been naturalized in other countries
- Filipinos overseas who hold dual citizenship

- Filipino spouses and other partners of foreign nationals
- Descendants of Filipinos overseas
- Filipino youth overseas
- Exchange Visitor Program participants
- Filipino Au-pair participants
- Migrant workers and their dependents abroad

The CFO's vision is to have a productive and well-integrated Filipinos overseas active in local development initiatives. This goal is carried out through programs, activities and projects aimed to address varied interests and advocacies of over 10.24 million overseas Filipinos, a group that continue to grow in number and significance as evidenced by their US\$30 billion remittance in 2015 according to World Bank.

II. Comparative Budget FY2015-2016

The actual budget expended by the CFO for 2015 and programmed for 2016 respectively are P91.987 million and P88.750 million covering personnel services, maintenance and other operating expenses and capital outlay. For 2017, the CFO proposes a budget of P87.400million.

III. Highlights of CFO's 1st Semester of 2016 Accomplishments

REGULAR PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

1. Policy Review and Formulation

As an important mandate, CFO provides advice and assistance to the executive and legislative branches of the government on matters pertaining to the political, economic and social concerns, rights and obligations of overseas Filipinos. Following are some of its inputs:

A. Position Paper on Senate Bill No. 1158 (An Act Amending Article 26 of Executive Order No. 209, otherwise known as the Family Code of the Philippines as Amended) and House Bill No. 5907 (An Act Recognizing the Capacity of the Filipino Spouse to Remarry when the Alien Spouse has Obtained a Foreign Judicial Decree of Absolute Divorce)

The CFO appreciated and supported the proponents of the bills in safeguarding the rights of Filipino women as the bills aim to ease the latter's psychological and emotional abuse and help them cope with their lives from their unpleasant marital experiences.

Further, CFO proposed an additional provision that would give considerations for survivors of mail-order bride scheme and trafficking in the guise of intermarriage. Specifically, it proposed that "*finding the Filipino spouse a victim of mail-order bride scheme or trafficking in the guise of marriage*" should suffice the dissolution of the marriage with the foreign spouse.

In support of its proposal, CFO cited a case it once handled. After a Philippine court's ruling finding a Filipino spouse a victim of mail-order bride scheme, her marriage with her foreign spouse still subsists. This was due to a law requiring her to file a separate case in court that would nullify their marriage, thereby causing another tedious and a traumatic process that she has to go through.

B. Position Paper on Senate Bill Number 2955 (An Act Governing the Operations and Administration of the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration)

Already signed into a law, the CFO supported the bill that sought the institutionalization and strengthening of the government's support to overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) and their families by introducing reforms to the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) Charter.

Under the proposed measure, OWWA is declared as a national government agency and an attached agency of the Department of Labor and Employment vested with a special function of developing and implementing welfare programs and services that respond to the needs of its member-OFWs and their families.

CFO however, pointed out that with its initiatives in mainstreaming migration and development-related programs and activities, the proposed function of OWWA under Section 6, paragraph c of Chapter II¹ under the migration and development agenda should be without prejudice to the existing related on-going activities of other government offices. It should likewise take into account the elements of collaboration and coordination amongst government agencies in implementing migration and development-related activities, and not solely OWWA's mandate.

C. Request for the repeal of Administrative Orders 247 and 248 issued by then President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo in 2008

In support of the Philippine Migrants Rights Watch's clamor, which strongly objects to the passage of the AOs and has been calling for its repeal since 2008, CFO requested former President Benigno Aquino to repeal without replacement Administrative Orders 247 and 248 issued by then President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo in 2008.

AO 247 mandates the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) to "execute a paradigm shift by refocusing its functions from regulation to full blast markets development efforts, the exploration of frontier, fertile job markets for Filipino expatriate workers. The target shall be to increase the countries hosting Filipino workers and break through the 200-country barrier."

AO 248, on the other hand, instructs the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) and the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) to institute "a program of full reciprocity for the heroic efforts of the expatriate Filipino workers. The first component of the reciprocity program shall be the setting up of a Filipino

¹ Nature, Scope and Functions of OWWA) which defines one of the functions of OWWA, being "To provide social and welfare programs and services to member-OFWs, including social assistance, education and training, cultural services, financial management, reintegration, and entrepreneurial development services."

Expatriate Livelihood Support Fund in the amount of P250 million to be financed by OWWA and supported by government lending institutions. The second component shall be the full government support in helping the returning expatriate Filipino workers find remunerative jobs”.

The CFO which has been advocating for the cause, welfare and well-being of Filipinos overseas, is of strong view that the AOs are no longer effective and have become outdated or inconsistent with new policies, programs and services passed.

In its request to the former President, CFO reasoned out that AO 247, which promotes aggressive overseas deployment as a government policy, is contradictory to his policy pronouncement as stated in his 16-point Social Contract with the Filipino People. It is also against the provision of RA 8042 (as amended by RA 10022) or the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act, which states “*Sec. 4. The State shall allow the deployment of overseas Filipino workers only in countries where the rights of Filipino migrant workers are protected.*”

AO 248, which was passed eight years ago to help OFWs affected by the 2008 Global Financial and Economic Crisis, is no longer being implemented, and was replaced by two more comprehensive programs instituted by the DOLE, OWWA and National Reintegration Center for OFWs (NRCO). First is the P2 billion National Reintegration Program Fund for OFWs, a special loan program of the OWWA in partnership with the Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP), and the LandBank of the Philippines (LBP) intended to support enterprise development among OFWs and their families. Second is DOLE’s Assist W.E.L.L. (or W-elfare, E-mployment, L-ivelihood, and L-egal Services) Program, a one stop-shop reintegration services for returning Filipino migrant workers displaced from their jobs due to war, epidemic, calamities, and other critical situations at their worksites.

CFO further mentioned that the repeal of the AOs will greatly help the agency implementers and stop the public from being misinformed by these outdated policies.

D. Inputs to SB No. 3209 and HB No. 5527 (An Act Providing Stronger Measures against Unlawful Practices, Businesses and Schemes of Matching and Offering Filipinos to Foreign Nationals for Purposes of Marriage or Common-Law Partnership, Repealing for the Purpose Republic Act No. 6955, also referred to as the Anti-Mail Order Bride Law.

When sought for its comments and recommendations on the said consolidated bill, CFO informed the Office of the Deputy Executive Secretary for Legal Affairs that most of its proposals were already incorporated in the enrolled bill. Its proposals include (a) Prohibiting the matching of both Filipino men and women for marriage or common-law partnership to foreign nationals; (b) Declaring unlawful the operation of the mail-order spouse industry through the internet; (c) Confiscation and forfeiture of proceeds and instruments derived from committing the prohibited acts in favor of the government; (d) Mandatory services to victims of mail-order spouse scheme to ensure their recovery and rehabilitation; (e) Provision on the formulation of an implementing rules and regulations; and (f) Stiffer penalties on its violation

This legislative measure with an aim of strengthening the Anti-Mail Order Spouse efforts of the government lapsed into law on July 21, 2016. It was mainly sponsored by Senator Pia Cayetano (Senate) and Congressman Alfred Vargas III (House of Representatives), and was fully supported by the CFO, as the lead government agency that caters to the interest and welfare of Filipino marriage migrants.

To quote Senator Cayetano, there is an undeniable existence of exploitation upon men and women hiding behind the intermarriage façade. This reality will now be confronted by the newly passed-law that will protect Filipinos against abuse, prostitution, and exploitation from schemes which offer Filipinos marriage to unscrupulous foreign nationals.

It also repeals the 1990 Anti-Mail Order Bride Law, which only covers Filipino women under the protection of the law against acts of matching Filipinos to foreign nationals and offering of foreign nationals to Filipinos. The new law expanded the coverage of mail order spouse to also include Filipino men, spouses, or common law partners.

The new law mainly prohibits anybody engaging in any business or profitable schemes that match and/or offer a Filipino to foreign national for marriage or common law partnership purposes through mail-order basis, personal introduction, email or websites in the Internet. Other prohibited acts include exhibiting, printing, or distributing materials which promote the mail-order spouse industry; attracting or inducing any Filipino to join any club or association that matches Filipino nationals to foreign nationals for the purpose of marriage or common law partnership for a fee, and; using postal service or websites on the internet in promoting this law's prohibited acts.

Under the new law, any person found guilty of committing or cooperating in the prohibited acts shall suffer 15 years of imprisonment and shall pay a fine ranging from Php 500,000 to Php 1 million. If committed by a syndicate or committed on a larger scale, the offender shall suffer 20 years of imprisonment and a fine ranging from Php 2 million to Php 5 million.

With stiffer penalties already in place, the CFO believes that the newly-passed law would encourage victims to file and pursue their cases against their perpetrators or marriage brokers.

Below is the complete list of 45 CFO policy inputs in 2016 that were submitted to various agencies, institutions and organizations:

1. Inputs to the response of the Philippine government to the concerns raised by the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) Committee to the Philippines combined 7th and 8th CEDAW Report.
2. Inputs to the Department of Foreign Affairs' proposal to re-open the Philippine Embassy in Stockholm, Sweden.

3. Submitted an article entitled “CFO Continuously Links and Connects with the Filipino Diaspora” to the Bureau of Communications Services for its Ugnay Magazine.
4. Recommendation to the Office of the Executive Secretary that both the Philippine and Indonesian governments consider an exchange of detainees as a possible way to save both Ms. Mary Jane Veloso and Indonesian woman, Ms. Dwi Mulandari who has been incarcerated after being arrested for smuggling of cocaine at the NAIA in 2012.
5. Position paper on the consolidated bill (SB No. 3209/HB No. 5572) entitled An Act Providing Stronger Measures Against Unlawful Practices, Businesses, and Schemes of Matching and Offering Filipinos to Foreign Nationals for Purposes of Marriage or Common-Law Partnership, Repealing for the Purpose Republic Act No. 6955, also referred to as the Anti-Mail Order Bride Law.
6. Inputs on the Draft Migrants in Countries in Crisis (MICIC) Principles, Guidelines and Practices.
7. Inputs to the Regional Consultation Meeting with Heads of Post in Europe regarding Safeguarding the Welfare of Filipinos in Europe, The Diamond Hotel, Manila, 11 January 2016.
8. Forty Years of Migration: Changes in the Field, Lessons for Home” for the publication of the University of the Philippines.
9. Inputs to the Transnational Migration and the Philippine Response, U.P. Asian Center Forum on Transnational Migration, May 6, 2016.
10. Inputs to the Publication of the Manual of Policies Standards and Regulations for Philippine Schools Overseas, 3rd edition in the official Gazette (May 2016).
11. Inputs in the revision of Executive Order 252 “Establishing the Inter-Agency Committee on PSOs, defining its Composition, Structure, and Functions”.
12. Inputs to the No Objection Statement (NOS) guidelines of the Exchange Visitor Program.
13. Inputs to the Proposed legislation on the Creation of Department of OFW/Migration and Development (House Bills No. 192 and 822 and Senate Bill No. 146).
14. Position Paper on SB 1158 entitled an Act Amending Article 26 of Executive Order No. 209, otherwise known as the Family Code of the Philippines, and HB 5907 entitled an Act Recognizing the Capacity of the Filipino Spouse to Remarry When the Alien Spouse has obtained a Foreign Judicial Decree of Absolute Divorce.

15. Position Paper introducing reforms to the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) Charter.
16. Inputs to the Joint Memorandum Circular on Mainstreaming Migration in the Regional and Local Development Planning and Annual Investment Programming between DBM, DILG, DOLE, NEDA and CFO.
17. Submission of CFOs' article about its Publications to the Bureau of Communications Services for its Ugnay publication.
18. Recommendation to Repeal of AO 247, which promotes aggressive overseas employment as a government policy, and AO 248, which is no longer being implemented, then issued by President Macapagal-Arroyo.
19. Inputs to the consolidated enrolled bill HB No. 5780/ SB No. 449 on Filipino Centenarians.
20. Formulation of Guidelines for Overseas Centenarians in accordance with Republic Act No. 10868.
21. Response to the Memorandum of the Cabinet Secretary regarding Streamlining Frontline Services in accordance with the President's directive to all Heads of Department and Agency with frontline services to streamline processes into three days, September 2016.
22. Inputs on the Third Questionnaire for Dashboard of policy and institutional coherence for migration and development (PICMD) Indicators, June 2016.
23. Inputs to the Regional Launch of the Human Development Report 2015 regarding "Improving the Quality of Work vis-à-vis the SDGs with Migration and Development Perspective", The Peninsula Manila, Makati City, January 2016.
24. Inputs to the International Dialogue on Migration 2016 regarding the Follow-up and Review of the Migration-Related Targets of the SDGs Conference United Nations Headquarters New York, March 2016.
25. Inputs on the ASEAN-Korea Migration Network Project submitted to the IOM Migration Research and Training Centre, May 2016.
26. CFO's compliance to Executive Order No. 2 on Freedom of Information (FOI) People's Manual that provides guidelines in the filing and processing of requests for information received.
27. Inputs to the 9th Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) specifically on Migration, Diversion and Harmonious Society in Dhaka, Bangladesh, 11 December 2016.
28. Inputs to the 1st State of the Nation Address of President Rodrigo Duterte.

29. Inputs on the Memorandum Circular of the Civil Service Commission regarding the employment in the government service of Filipino citizens with dual citizenship.
30. Inputs to the proposed Philippines Youth Development Plan 2016-2022: The Need to Include the Overseas Filipino Youth.
31. Inputs to the community-based Tourism Forum of the Department of Tourism that value the assets of women and men in the facilitation and generation of socio-economic and tourism opportunities.
32. Inputs to the proposed agreement on Social Security between the Republic of the Philippines and the Republic of India.
33. Inputs to the 3rd Philippine-Norway Political Consultations.
34. Inputs to “The Challenge of Letting Off Care Workers from the Philippines to Japan (domestic and care giving works): A review of Transnational Marriage and Local World in East Asia” of Kobe University (June 2016).
35. Inputs to the 3rd International Conference on Multiculturalism among Asian Societies: “Children voices matters: Facing multiculturalism challenges in Korean and Philippine Education Society”
36. Inputs on CFO-Scalabrini Migration Center project on “Towards an Enabling Environment for Children of Migrant and Multicultural Families in the Philippines, Japan and South Korea (Nov 2015-Oct 2016)
37. Inputs to the Impact of Migration to Families Left Behind, St. Paul Manila (March 2016).
38. Inputs to the “Digital Innovations in Philippine Remittance Services” Financial Inclusion in the Digital Economy Multifunction, ADB Headquarters, 24-25 May 2016.
39. Inputs on Financial inclusion 2016 on How Remittances, Financial Technology, Financial Products and Social Enterprises can Play a Significant Role in Fostering Financial Inclusion and Inclusive Development 28 April 2016, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, Manila.
40. Inputs to the Importance of Public-Private Partnership in Financial Inclusion National Strategy for Financial Inclusion Tactical Plans: Working Together with the Private Sector Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, Manila, April 11, 2016
41. Inputs to the Causes for Refugees and Migrants Movements Refugees and Migration in Europe and Asia Policy Conference Manila, Philippines, April 4-5, 2016

42. Inputs to the International Dialogue on Migration 2016 regarding the Follow-up and Review of the Migration-Related Targets of the SDGs Conference, United Nations Headquarters New York, March 01, 2016.
43. Inputs to the Inception Workshop: Achieving Skills Mobility within ASEAN under the AEC on “Achieving Skills Mobility within ASEAN under the AEC” February 11, 2016, ADB Headquarters, 6 ADB Ave, Metro Manila.
44. Inputs to the Regional Launch of the Human Development Report 2015 regarding “Improving the Quality of Work vis-à-vis the SDGs with Migration and Development Perspective” January 2016, The Peninsula Manila, Makati City.
45. Inputs on the ASEAN-Korea Migration Network Project submitted to the IOM Migration Research and Training Centre, May 2014.

2. Pre-Departure Orientation Seminar (PDOS) for Emigrants

Filipino emigrants are those individuals who leave the country to settle permanently abroad. They are required to register with the CFO and attend the Pre-Departure Orientation Seminar (PDOS) which prepares them for settlement overseas. The PDOS is intended for Filipino emigrants 20 to 59 years old with a core objective of addressing their concerns while permanently residing overseas.

Various topics discussed in the country-specific PDOS include: travel regulations; immigration procedures; cultural differences; settlement concerns; employment and social security concerns; and the rights and obligations of Filipino migrants.

In 2016, CFO registered **89,503 emigrants**. The following countries with the highest number of Filipino immigrants include United States of America; Canada; Australia; Japan; Italy; New Zealand; Spain; United Kingdom; South Korea and Germany.

The PDOS has since been conducted at the CFO Manila and Cebu offices, but in 2012, the CFO brought the PDOS closer to its clientele. CFO implemented eight (8) Mobile PDOS in 2016 in Lingayen, Pangasinan; Davao City and Naga City; with 925 registered emigrants and 264 marriage migrants.

Along with the provincial governments, the registrants expressed their appreciation and gratitude to the **Mobile PDOS** as the activity has saved their travel costs by not having to travel to the main office of CFO in Manila and attend the mandatory orientation seminar.

3. Peer Counseling Session

The Peer Counseling Session is required for Filipino emigrants 13 to 19 years old. The sessions aim to provide a venue for the young migrants to discuss their concerns about leaving their country of birth. This program enables the youth themselves to bring up their issues: from their unfamiliarity with the foreign language of the host country to fear of rejection, from their separation from friends in the

Philippines to the possibility of bullying in their new schools, from feelings of isolation and depression to culture shock.

While sessions are not country specific, country profiles and settlement concerns are also discussed. No other government agency provides this specialized pre-departure program for migrating Filipino youth.

CFO provided services to **13,613 peer counselees** in 2016.

4. Guidance and Counseling Program (GCP)

The Guidance and Counseling Program (GCP) is mandatory for Filipinos leaving the country as a spouse or fiancé(e) of a foreign national. The program does not only provide information about the country of destination, but it also allows the counselees to have a one-on-one session with the guidance counselors of CFO.

During this time, counselors are able to address on a personal level the issues of the counselees towards empowering them in dealing with the realities of intermarriage. Apart from counseling, certain sessions also require an additional two-day cultural orientation program in order to address the need of Filipino spouses/partners in understanding thoroughly the cultural differences. This approach has been envisaged to eventually lessen the communication gap between the Filipino spouses/partners with their respective foreign spouses/partners and would later help them integrate easily within the community.

It's worth mentioning that for the past three decades, the CFO has been implementing the GCP and that other Philippine government agencies also recognize its importance especially in combating human trafficking in the guise of marriage. Completion of the program is required in order to secure or renew a Philippine passport. Other foreign governments such as South Korea also require proof of completion of the program before a spouse visa is issued to a Filipino. This measure reduces the incidences of fake marriages and mail-order spouse. Furthermore, Republic Act 10364 (An Act Expanding the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2012) requires the conduct of mandatory counseling services for Filipinos in intermarriages.

CFO counseled **22,482 spouses and partners of foreign nationals** in 2016. The following countries with highest number of Filipino spouses and partners of foreign nationals include United States of America; Japan; Australia; United Kingdom; Canada; South Korea; Germany; Taiwan; Norway and Netherlands.

5. Country Familiarization Seminar (CFS) for Europe-bound Au Pairs

Filipinos leaving the Philippines for Europe as au pairs are required to register with the CFO. An au pair is described as a young Filipino citizen, between 18 – 30 years of age; unmarried and without any children who is placed under a cultural exchange arrangement with a European host family for a maximum stay of two years.

One of the CFO's registration requirements for au pairs is attendance to the Country Familiarization Seminar (CFS) to prepare them for immersion program in cultural and

language learning in the specific European country of destination. The CFS is a vital tool for the au pair participants to equip them with adequate information on topics such as settlement concerns, values, cultural and social realities in the host countries, health and safety issues, airport and travel procedures and support networks.

CFO registered **2,070 au pair participants** in 2016. The following countries with highest number of au pair participants include Denmark, Norway, Netherlands, Switzerland, Germany, Belgium, Sweden, Iceland, Austria and Luxembourg.

6. Community Education Program (CEP)

The CEP is an annual information campaign conducted nationwide by the CFO in coordination with various government agencies, non-government organizations, local government units and academic institutions.

It seeks to assist prospective migrants in making informed decisions regarding working or settling abroad, as well as in generating community involvement on migration concerns. It also aims to raise public awareness about issues concerning migration, inter-marriages, and existing government policies and programs directed against illegal recruitment, documentation fraud and trafficking, among others.

In 2016, there were **9,190 participants** of the information campaign on migration from the following **43 areas** (provinces, cities and municipalities):

Province of Agusan del Sur

- Bayugan
- Prosperidad

Province of Surigao del Sur

- Bislig
- Hinatuan
- Lazi
- Siquijor

Province of Negros Oriental

- Bais City
- Guingulngan City

Province of La Union

- San Fernando
- Bacnotan

Province of Pangasinan

- Rosales

NCR

- Valenzuela
- Caloocan
- Pasig
- Mandaluyong
- Las Pinas
- Paranaque
- Muntinlupa
- Taguig

- Province of Albay
 - Guinobatan
 - Polangui
- Province of Masbate
 - Masbate City
 - Milagros
- Province of Zamboanga del Norte
 - Dipolog City
 - Dapitan City
- Province of Zamboanga del Sur
 - Pagadian
 - Molave
- Province of Cagayan
 - Tuguegarao
 - Aparri
- Province of Isabela
 - Ilagan City
 - Santiago
- Province of Davao del Norte
 - Samal
 - Tagum City
- Province of Davao del Sur
 - Davao City
 - Digos City
- Province of Tarlac
 - Tarlac City
 - Camiling
- Province of Nueva Ecija
 - Cabanatuan
 - Gapan
- Province of Lanao del Norte
 - Iligan City
 - Linamon
- Province of Misamis Oriental
 - Cagayan de Oro
 - El Salvador

7. Philippine Schools Overseas

Philippine Schools Overseas (PSOs) are duly-registered educational institutions operating outside the Philippines and implementing the basic education curriculum of DepEd. PSOs are established to address the educational needs of children of Filipinos overseas, and eventually facilitate their reintegration into the Philippine educational system. The schools also provide a venue for the teaching and propagation of the Filipino culture and heritage among Filipino youth overseas, and serve as a locus for Filipino community activity.

The Inter-Agency Committee on Philippine Schools Overseas (IACPSO) was established through Executive Order No. 252 to serve as policy-making body and forum for discussion and resolution of issues concerning the establishment,

operation and management of PSOs. Composed of five (5) member-agencies, the Committee is co-chaired by the DepEd and the Department of Foreign Affairs. Other members are the Department of Labor and Employment, the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration, and the CFO, which also serves as the Committee Secretariat.

Seventy representatives from 31 Philippine schools in Bahrain, China, East Timor, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman, and United Arab Emirates and one alternative learning center in Sabah came to Manila on 17 – 20 May 2016 to attend the 14th Conference of Philippine Schools Overseas at The Diamond Hotel Philippines.

The conference theme, “*K to 12 and the PSO Community – the Best is Yet to Come!*” highlights the value of the basic education reform and the key role of the Philippine Schools Overseas (PSO) to produce globally competitive graduates.

This year’s conference aimed to provide updates on the emergent concerns and issues relative to the implementation of K to 12 in PSOs and to share experiences in the management of change during the transition period. The conference also intends to identify innovative methodologies and resource gaps in the delivery of the K to 12 curriculum and the corresponding solutions to meet accreditation requisite.

The annual conference is a regular activity to promote and strengthen Philippine curriculum-based education overseas to ensure a continuing education for Filipino expatriate students and support the unification of the Overseas Filipinos families.

In 2016, there are **41 PSOs** operating in 10 countries with an estimated **33,000 students** currently enrolled, from pre-elementary, elementary, and high school levels.

8. Sabah Project

There are about 30,000 stateless children of Filipino ancestry in Sabah who do not have access to Malaysian education because of their undocumented status which has led to widespread illiteracy among the children. Many end up as child laborers or take to the streets and eventually become juvenile delinquents.

In 2014, six alternative learning centers (ALCs) in Sabah, operated by some concerned Filipino groups, signed the Memorandum of Understanding on Community-Based Education Program (CBEP) with the CFO, DepEd, and the Philippine Embassy in Kuala Lumpur. These ALCs teaches the children basic reading, writing and arithmetic.

Together with DepEd and the Philippine Embassy in Kuala Lumpur, the CFO organized and facilitated the capacity-building workshop for teachers and volunteers in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah.

In 2016, CFO undertook following efforts in helping an estimated **2,500 Filipino** children in Sabah:

- Advocated to PRC and CHED regarding the conduct of LET in Sabah and on-line distance education, respectively.
- Coordinated with various colleges and universities to inquire about on-line distance education.
- Solicited educational materials from various publishers and educational institutions in the Philippines, and have gathered the following:
 - A total of 18 boxes of books from Phoenix Publishing House, Inc.; Sibs Publishing House, Inc.; La Salle Greenhills; C&E Publishing House, Inc.; F&J De Jesus, Inc.; Abiva Publishing House, Inc.; and
 - A total of 13 boxes of school supplies (pencils, papers, etc.) from De La Salle College of Saint Benilde.
- Met with Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) and proposed an extensive and regular registration of the undocumented children of Filipino ancestry in Sabah.
- Turned over books and educational materials to 5 ALCs in 2016 in partnership with Air Asia.

9. Lingkod sa Kapwa Pilipino (LINKAPIL)

In 2016, **P119,493,475.60 million** worth of donations were channeled thru the LINKAPIL Program helping 75,611 beneficiaries from 24 provinces, including Metro Manila.

A. Health and Welfare - Medical Missions

15,121 individuals from El Nido, Palawan, Olongapo City, Zambales, Calbayog City, Western Samar, Borongan, Eastern Samar, Tayug, Pangasinan, and Trece Martirez, General Trias, Amadeo and Tanza, Cavite benefitted from the dental, medical and surgical mission conducted by six (6) organizations from the USA. They are as follows:

1. Arkansas Medical Mission
2. Philippine Medical Association in Chicago
3. Society of Philippine Surgeons of America
4. Philippine American Medical Mission Foundation of Michigan
5. Palawenos of the Midwest
6. Partnership in Mission-Catholic Diocese of Joliet

An estimated worth of the services rendered reached **PhP87,655,000.00**.

PhP 21,797,500.00 was also accounted for the donation of medicines, medical supplies and other health related supplies during the said mission benefiting **36,345 patients**.

B. Livelihood Project

Three (3) livelihood projects were funded by overseas Filipino organizations and individuals benefitting 6,200 individuals. An estimated amount of PhP309,150.45 was accounted these projects as follows:

1. Compostela Valley Livelihood Project under the ECARE Compassionate Ministries, Inc. in the amount of PhP118,627.03

2. Cooperative Market-Livelihood Project under the Center for Rebuilding Initiatives for Social Empowerment, Inc. in the amount of PhP279,150.45.
3. Vegetable Farming Project under the Samahan ng mga Magulang at Guro ng Pinagbayanan Elementary School in Pila, Laguna in the amount of P30,000.00.

C. Gift-Giving Project

The gift-giving activities were facilitated in the municipalities of Imus and Rosario in Cavite, Municipality of Alangalang in Leyte, Municipality of Calauan in Laguna, Quezon City, Pasig City and San Juan City sponsored by Feed the Hungry, Inc. (FtH) for **1,951 individuals** amounting to **Php1,164,989.13**.

D. Calamity Relief

For the 1st Semester of 2016, around 490 families and victims of typhoon Nona in Sorsogon received relief assistance and hand-held solar lamps from overseas donors in United States of America. The assistance amounted to P132,000.00.

E. Feeding Program

Three (3) feeding programs in 2016 were implemented and supported by Filipino organizations overseas amounting **PhP247,558.82 benefiting 220 undernourished school children**. These feeding programs were as follows:

1. Bunguan Elementary School in Capiz
2. Lupang Pangako Elementary School in Quezon City
3. Barangay Paliparan II in Dasmarias, Cavite

F. Small – scale Infrastructure Projects

The projects facilitated and accomplished under the small-scale infrastructure component of the LINKAPIL are construction of eleven (11) new classrooms, one (1) classroom repair or rehabilitation, construction of two (2) school library or reading centers, and installation of a water supply system and playground equipment. These projects were implemented in the following:

1. Tapaz Central School in Tapaz, Capiz
2. Dayap Elementary School in Calauan, Laguna
3. Sto. Niño dela Paz Elementary School in Loon, Bohol
4. Taliptip National High School in Bulacan, Bulacan
5. San Antonio Elementary School in Ormoc, Leyte
6. Homapon High School in Legaspi City, Albay
7. San Emilio National High School in San Emilio, Ilocos Sur
8. Rizal High School in Pasig City
9. Barangay Bito-on in Carles, Iloilo
10. Hilltop Elementary School in San Jose, Occidental Mindoro

The amount of **P7,451,139.20** worth of assistance for classroom, water supply system, and other infrastructure projects benefitted **14,370 individuals** from this endeavor. Majority of these beneficiaries were students, and they came from the

provinces of Capiz, Bohol, Laguna, Ilocos Sur, Bulacan, Leyte, Albay, Iloilo, Pasig City, and Occidental Mindoro.

G. Education and Scholarship

Twenty-Two (22) scholars were supported under the Adopt-a-Scholar Project of the Lingkod sa Kapwa Pilipino (LINKAPIL) Program for S.Y. 2016-2017, and two (2) scholar under the Enhancement Training Sponsorship Program of the Exchange Visitor Program. The assistance amounted to a total of P661,338.00, which include provision of educational materials to students.

An amount of P69,800.00 was also granted to support the needs of various schools in Manila, Cavite, Benguet, and Misamis Oriental for school supplies, painting of school fence, books, and other educational equipment.

10. Exchange Visitor Program (EVP)

Exchange Visitor Program (EVP) refers to the international exchange administered by the United States to implement the Mutual and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961. It is a result of an agreement between the United States of America and Philippines to allow the exchange of their nationals for training in both countries. It aims to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries by means of educational and cultural exchanges.

Filipinos leaving the country to participate in the EVP are required to register with the CFO. Part of its registration is the attendance to Pre-departure Orientation Seminar (PDOS) to inform them about the conditions and responsibilities as a J1-visa holder as they are not expected to stay permanently in the US.

In the first semester of 2016, CFO registered 7,108 EVP participants (6,404 new and 704 revalidation).

11. Virtual Sentro Rizal

The “Virtual Sentro Rizal” (VSR) project brings the traditional mode of appreciating Filipino heritage into the digital age. It is a portable collection of essential Filipina references in DVD format which were primarily culled from the current library catalogue of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA), with additional materials sourced from cooperating producers and publishers.

This initiative was undertaken in compliance with Section XII of Republic Act No. 10066 – National Cultural Heritage Law (2009) – which calls for the institutionalization of Sentro Rizal(s) to serve as venues for the promotion of Philippine arts and culture in areas with significant numbers of Overseas Filipinos. While the virtual nature of the collection allows cultural dissemination beyond borders and is purposively designed to appeal to the tech-savvy, this initial compilation is a modest attempt to introduce the Philippines via distance learning but does not preclude the establishment of corresponding physical facilities.

With NCCA funding support, the VSR 1st Edition was produced and disseminated to the 40 Philippine Schools Overseas (PSO). Subsequently, a teacher-training

program was conducted to demonstrate its usage as a teaching-learning tool. The VSR 2nd Edition is currently being completed to include 50 additional entries and translations of the Annotations from English to Filipino, Cebuano, Ilocano, Bicolano, Maranao, and Spanish in support of the country's national language development program/Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education and to pilot foreign language versions.

134 copies have been distributed to government officials, Philippine Embassies, foreign diplomats and overseas Filipino leaders and organizations in 2016.

12. CFO Information Systems Strategic Plan 2013- 2016

The CFO Information Systems Strategic Plan (ISSP) for 2013-2016 provides the roadmap to guide the agency's Information and Communications Technology (ICT) efforts for the next four (4) years. The plan confirms the critical role of Information and Communication Technology as an enabler of success for the CFO to achieve its new ten point goals in line with objectives of Philippine Development Plan for 2011 to 2016 and the Government Information Systems Plan (GISP).

In 2016, following information systems and websites were developed and enhanced:

A. NEW SYSTEMS DEVELOPED	B. EXISTING SYSTEMS ENHANCED
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Human Resource Information System (HRIS) 2. Management Information Systems Division ICT Equipment Monitoring 3. New Emigrant Encoding Information System 4. Exchange Visitor Program Utility 5. Frontline Monitoring System (FMS) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Filipinos Overseas Information System (FOIS) 7. Guidance and Counseling Information System (GCIS) 8. Reservation and Registration Online System for Pre-departure Orientation Seminar 9. Time Monitoring System 10. Official Receipt Printing 11. On-line Verification System 12. Guidance and Counseling Program On-line Appointment System
C. ADDITIONAL WEBSITES DEVELOPED	D. WEBSITES ENHANCED
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 13. Bacoor City Localized BaLinkBayan Website <i>http://bacoor.balinkbayan.gov.ph</i> 14. Legaspi City Localized BalinkBayan Website <i>http://legazpi.balinkbayan.gov.ph</i> 15. Tabaco City Localized BaLinkBayan Website <i>http://tabaco.balinkbayan.gov.ph</i> 16. Ligao City Localized BaLinkBayan Website 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 23. CFO Website <i>http://cfo.gov.ph</i> 24. Presidential Awards for Filipino Individuals and Organizations Website <i>http://presidentialawards.cfo.gov.ph</i>

<p>http://ligao.balinkbayan.gov.ph</p> <p>17. Sorsogon Province Localized BaLinkBayan Website http://sorsogonprovince.balinkbayan.gov.ph</p> <p>18. Sorsogon City Localized BaLinkBayan Website http://sorsogoncity.balinkbayan.gov.ph</p> <p>19. Masbate City Localized BaLinkBayan Website http://masbatecity.balinkbayan.gov.ph</p> <p>20. Cagayan de Oro City Localized BaLinkBayan Website http://cagayandeoro.balinkbayan.gov.ph</p> <p>21. CFO-SIS Guidance and Counseling Service for Youth and Marriage Migrants https://sis.cfo.gov.ph</p> <p>22. ASEAN Migration Network Website http://aseankoreamigration.net</p>	
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13. BaLinkBayan

The BaLinkBayan is the Overseas Filipinos' (OFs) one-stop online portal for diaspora engagement, offering an integrated and unique platform to re-engage with the Philippines through the so-called D2D (Diaspora to Development) program of the Commission on Filipinos Overseas with the support and help of several government agencies such as the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Department of Agriculture (DA), Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

Examples of the D2D programs that are part of the portal are: diaspora philanthropy, medical mission coordination, doing business in the Philippines, tourism initiatives and investment for overseas Filipinos.

A locally-funded national E-Government Project, the term BaLinkBayan is a play on the Filipino words Balikbayan (returning migrant), balik (return), bayan (country) and the English word "Link," that refer to the world wide web. As a portal for diaspora engagement, it seeks to bring together 10.24 million Filipinos in the diaspora into an integrated and comprehensive platform that taps into their knowledge, expertise, skills, networks, material and financial resources to contribute to the development of the Philippines.

BaLinkbayan works at two levels, first, it links OFs to development oriented diaspora initiatives in the Philippines and second, it provides options for business and investment opportunities both at the national level and at their respective hometowns. The latter would link, among others, to automated transactional processes at the LGU level. Thus, in 2014, for the furtherance of its aims and purposes, BaLinkbayan concluded partnerships with different government agencies

and other organizations such as National Poverty Commission, Cagayan de Oro City, Philippine Health Insurance Corporation, Land Registration Authority and National Youth Commission.

From 2015 to the first semester of 2016, orientation and capacity building activities were conducted for local governments in the Bicol Region, Northern Mindanao, Western Visayas and CALABARZON to introduce the BaLinkBayan, and offer the platform as a medium for them to showcase programs and services for overseas Filipinos and their families.

In 2016, the implementation of the BaLinkBayan Project accomplished the following:

CAPACITY BUILDING

A. Localization Program – Completed localized web pages of the following:

1. Sorsogon City
2. Sorsogon Province
3. Ligao City
4. Tabaco City
5. Legazpi City
6. Masbate City
7. Bacoor City
8. Cagayan de Oro City
9. Antique
10. Iloilo City

Finalized the Naga - Online Real property tax assessment and payment

B. Conducted orientation and capacity building seminars for the BaLinkbayan website and localization program

1. Strategic planning workshop on the Balinkbayan Capacity Building for CALABARZON LGUs for the Development and Use of
2. BaLinkbayan as Online Migrant Resource Center with 74 participants
- Capacity building for Quezon City Migration and Development Council on the
3. Development and Use of the BaLinkBayan Portal
4. Capacity Building and Stakeholders Meeting for Bacoor City on Migration and Development, and BaLinkBayan

C. ICT Trainings

1. Administrators' Training for 6 LGUs in Bicol
2. Administrators' Training in Bacoor City
3. Administrators' Training in Cagayan de Oro City

4. Administrators' Training in Iloilo City and Antique
5. Social Media Training and Coaching

D. Partnerships and Cooperation

Established and proposed partnerships with the following LGUs for the localization of the BLB:

1. Sorsogon City
2. Sorsogon Province
3. Ligao City
4. Tabaco City
5. Legazpi City
6. Masbate City
7. Bacoor City
8. Cagayan de Oro City
9. Province of Antique
10. Province of Iloilo
11. Quezon City
12. Province of Pangasinan

D. BALINKBAYAN MARKETING ACTIVITIES

Participated in meetings and conferences to promote BaLinkbayan:

1. JMDI Mainstreaming M&D in Local Development Planning in Northern Mindanao
2. Regional Meeting of Local League of Planners and Development Coordinators in Western Visayas in San Jose de Buenavista, Antique
3. Pangasinan Migration and Development Council Meeting
4. 6th Multi-Agency Service Mission in Phnom Penh, Cambodia
5. Migrant Health Fair in Batangas City
6. NEDA Ambisyon 2040 Summit
7. Regional Reintegration Summit in Iloilo and General Santos City
8. Meetings with Local Executives

OTHER PROGRAMS/INITIATIVES OF CFO

1. Inter-Agency Partnerships

In 2016, CFO has established the following partnerships with various government and non-government agencies either by entering into an agreement and/or collaboration of relevant activities:

MOAs/ MOUs

1. MOU with IOM-MRTC on ASEAN Migration Network

2. MOU with the Global Fund to End Slavery on sharing or relevant data on emigration, employment and human trafficking

TWGs/IACs

1. Launching of Itanong mo Kay SIS partnerships:
2. ASEAN Migration Network Project: 1ST International Experts Meeting: “Fostering Intra-Regional Cooperation on Migration towards Achieving Sustainable and Inclusive Development”
3. Partnership on Online-Counseling with Rikkyo University (March 2016)
4. Partnership with Kobe University (June 2016)
5. Children and Youth Wellness Technical and Advocacy Center (CYWTAC)
6. Partnership on Online-Counseling with the Philippines Guidance and Counseling Association (PGCA)
7. Partnership on Online-Counseling with Philippine Normal University
8. Partnership on Online-Counseling with National University
9. Partnership on Online-Counseling with Far Eastern University
10. Partnership on Online-Counseling with Lyceum of the Philippines-Manila
11. Partnership on Online-Counseling with Ateneo De Manila University
12. Partnership on Online-Counseling with San Beda College
13. Partnership on Online-Counseling with University of the East
14. Partnership on Online-Counseling with Bulacan State University
15. Partnership on Online-Counseling with Polytechnic University of the Philippines
16. Integrated Professional Counselors Association of the Philippines (IPCAP)
17. Inter-Agency Coordination Framework on Countering Violent Extremism under the Office of the President- Anti-Terrorism Council
18. Canadian Immigrant Integration Program (CIIP)
19. Partnership on Online-Counseling with University of San Carlos (Cebu)
20. Partnership on Online-Counseling with University of San Jose Recoletos
21. Partnership on Online-Counseling with DSWD – Cebu Regional Office
22. OWWA Cebu Stakeholders’ Forum – Migrant Workers’ Da 10 Jun 2016
23. National Reintegration Center for OFWs (NRCO) - Region 7
24. International Justice Mission (IJM) – Cebu

2. Technical and Secretariat Support to Inter-Agency Activities

CFO continued to strengthen its linkages with relevant agencies in the Philippines and host countries to enhance programs and services for Filipino migrants, and to ensure accessibility in addressing specific needs and interests.

In 2016, CFO provided technical assistance and secretariat support to the following inter-agency committees:

1. Migrants in Countries in Crisis (MICIC) Initiative;
2. Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development (KNOMAD) Project;
3. Exchange Visitor Program Committee;
4. IACPSO;
5. NEDA Social Development Committee –Committee on International Migration and Development;

6. Inter-Agency Council against Trafficking (IACAT)
7. Migration and Health Network
8. Remittance for Development Council (ReDC)
9. International Metropolis Steering Committee
10. Human Resource for Health Network
11. International Migration Statistics TWG
12. Senate Consultation Meeting on the Amendment of the RA 6955 or the Anti-Mail Order Bride Act
13. National Law Enforcement Coordinating Committee (NALECC)
14. IAC-Month of Overseas Filipinos
15. ASEAN-Korean Migration Network

Aside from its regular programs and services, the CFO is also currently spearheading the following other programs/initiatives, in partnership with other government agencies and civil society organizations for the promotion of the interests and well-being of overseas Filipinos and their families:

3. Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking – Advocacy and Communications Committee (IACAT-ADVOCOM)

In December 2010, the CFO became an ex-officio member of the IACAT and was delegated to head the Advocacy and Communications Committee (ADVOCOM).

The creation of the IACAT-ADVOCOM is in line with one of the functions of the IACAT as stipulated in Section 21 (e) of RA 9208 which is to coordinate the conduct of massive information dissemination and campaign on the existence of the law and the various issues and problems attendant to trafficking through the local government units, concerned agencies, and NGOs. The Rule VIII, Article II, Section 132 of the Revised Implementing Rules and Regulations of the RA 9208, as amended by RA 10364, also stipulated that the ADVOCOM shall be primarily responsible for the development and implementation of the IACAT's communication program, and the conduct of research and study on the patterns and schemes of trafficking in persons for policy formulation and program direction. As amended by RA 10364

Among its strategies is to engage and mobilize various stakeholders and target groups such as the national and local government agencies; civil society groups; media institutions; international organizations; foreign government agencies; migrant associations; and other non-government organizations.

1. In 2016, Conduct of regular ADVOCOM meeting
2. Meeting with the Bureau of Immigration on the proposed inclusion of CFO in the conduct of Border Control Officers Course Module for new immigration officers
3. Organized and conducted the Seminar-Workshop on the Issues of Filipinos in Inter-marriage in Batangas City
4. Presentation on the Overseas Filipinos' Proactive Role in Fighting Human Trafficking during the Regional Summit for Filipinos in the Middle East and Africa

5. Orientation on human trafficking to OFWs in Dubai
6. Orientation on human trafficking to employees of Philippine Statistical Authority (PSA) Region 4A
7. Presentation on CFO anti-trafficking programs during the Foreign Service Officers' Cadetship Course Module on Diplomatic and Consular Practice and Skills in handling ATN
8. Launching of the partnership of DOTC, International Justice Mission, National Youth Council, World Vision and 1343 Actionline on anti-trafficking campaign
9. Coordinated for the conduct of a Forum on Exchange Visitor Program (EVP)
10. Coordinated with KBP, PIA and DOJ for the World Day Against Trafficking activities re media releases
11. Served as a resource speaker on CFO programs for the Bureau of Immigration's Border Control Officers Course Module for new immigration officers
12. Provided 1343 materials for Greater Lagro Overseas Workers Family Circle and Provincial Family Welfare Association of Sultan Kudarat
13. Radio Interview with Eagle Broadcasting hosted by Jerome Alcantara regarding Anti Mail-Order Spouse law for the radio interview
14. Presented the ADVOCOM programs and prevention campaign situationer during the National Anti-Trafficking Summit the following series of activities were conducted:

4. 1343 Actionline against Human Trafficking

To make the government services more accessible to the public, the IACAT through its ADVOCOM launched the 1343 Actionline Against Human Trafficking on 15 March 2011. It is a 24/7 hotline facility that responds to emergency or crisis calls from victims of human trafficking and their families. The 1343 Actionline likewise provides a venue for the public to be engaged in the fight against trafficking in persons. Its creation is also in line with the core message of the IACAT which is, *Laban kontra Human Trafficking, Laban nating Lahat.*

As an expansion of the service of the 1343 Actionline, accessibility through text messaging/short messaging services (SMS), on-line through e-mail and its official website www.1343actionline.ph, social media networks, mobile applications and international hotlines were developed as alternative reporting vehicles.

On July 2014, the 1343 Actionline has launched its mobile application for Android and IOS mobile phone users.

Breakdown of Received Reports

In 2016, there were 67 actual cases reported thru the 1343 Actionline. 18 were directly related to human trafficking, 4 were illegal recruitment, 11 labor exploitation related, 2 labor dispute, 5 were prostitution, 3 were location of whereabouts, 2 were

drug trafficking, 1 was harassment, 6 domestic violence, while 15 calls were classified as unrelated.

To further improve its institutional and human capacities to fight trafficking in persons, CFO undertook the following activities and initiatives:

- Regular attendance and active participation at meetings of IACAT
- Close monitoring of laws, regulations, institutions and mechanisms which support and complement the government's fight against human trafficking.
- Maintenance of close working relationships with international organizations and civil society organizations, including Filipino associations and organizations abroad to intensify information awareness to combat human trafficking.

5. Financial Literacy Program

In line with the national development goal of financial inclusion, CFO has specifically put a focus on the financial literacy of overseas Filipinos and their families left behind.

In October 2013, the CFO, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme and with the support of the Western Union Foundation, launched the Philippine Financial Freedom Campaign or PESO Sense in order to help overseas Filipinos and the families left behind to develop or enhance personal strategies, skills and knowledge in attaining financial freedom.

This nation-wide Financial Literacy Campaign started with the main objective of improving financial literacy by promoting productive expenditures, greater savings and entrepreneurship among overseas Filipinos and the beneficiaries of their remittances.

With more than 10 million overseas Filipinos in more than 200 countries worldwide, the task of inculcating the importance of financial literacy has been challenging more than ever.

PESO Sense utilizes new technology to reach out to all Filipinos, whether sender or receiver of remittances. The PESO Sense campaign makes use of all forms of communications such as the internet, social media and mobile applications. The online PESO Sense financial literacy module is designed with 6 targeted profiles in mind: those of Students, Young Adults, Business Owners, the Employed, Home Makers and Retirees.

Now, PESO Sense and has come a long way since its inception and we developed the following:

1. PESO SENSE KNOWLEDGE MATERIALS

One of the major components of the PESO Sense is the production of knowledge materials consisting of bookmarks, brochures and videos that are customized based on the six selected profiles of our targeted publics.

Our bookmarks are expressed in very succinct and user-friendly manner financial tips which are tailored-fit to the recipients of remittances ranging from children and students to young professionals, from entrepreneurs to homemakers to retirees. They are distributed regularly at CFO and in our various events and activities in and outside the country, reaching as far as Europe and the Middle East. These bookmarks can be downloaded from the PESO Sense website.

In addition, we have created videos that have been uploaded online in our official PESO Sense Facebook and YouTube Pages which have generated in the first semester of 2016 almost 900,000 followers with weekly reach of 8 to 10 Million Facebook users weekly.

2. SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM

As of today, we have almost more than 1.5 million likers/followers reaching more than ten million users weekly from all over the world. Our followers, whom we affectionately call our “Ka-PESO”, are coming from countries such as (a) Saudi Arabia; (b) United Arab Emirates; (c) Hong Kong; (d) Singapore; (e) United States of America; (f) Qatar; (g) Japan; (h) Taiwan; and (i) Kuwait.

These countries have high concentration of overseas Filipinos. The official page (<https://www.facebook.com/pesosenseph>) is being updated on a daily basis with various posts, inspirational quotations, saving and budgeting tips, stories, provocative questions related to financial literacy and insightful articles that directly help our audiences in realizing the importance of managing their money for their future.

3. WEBSITE

The free online training modules featured in the PESO Sense website is the heart of the campaign. Consistent with the campaign’s strategy, each training module is customized per target remittance recipient.

The 30-minute modules have specific learning materials for students, young adults, professionals, homemakers, micro and small-scale entrepreneurs, seniors and retirees. These free online modules feature, among other things, videos, games, online mentors, reflection exercises.

At the end of every module, online learners are encouraged to answer our feedback form to help us improve our materials. In addition, after finishing the modules, they receive an online certificate, proof that they have completed the training.

4. PESO SENSE MOBILE APPLICATION

From handy bookmarks to regular maintenance and enhancement of the PESO SENSE website to maximizing the incredible benefits and outreach of the social media platform, the financial freedom campaign have been brought to a new and innovative level by developing and launching on August 2015 the PESO SENSE MOBILE APPLICATION. Countries of origin of the mobile app users are from (a) Saudi Arabia; (b) United Arab Emirates; (c) Qatar; (d) Singapore; (e) Kuwait; (f)

South Korea; (g) United States of America; (h) Canada; and (i) Hong Kong. To date, the app is available on Android and will soon be available on iOS.

This mobile app has the following features:

A. PESO Sense News Feeds

All posts that are posted in the PESO Sense Facebook page are automatically synchronized and posted in this feature of the PESO Sense mobile app.

The knowledge materials that were developed by the campaign such as the bookmarks, brochures and videos are featured from time to time in the News Feeds portion of the app.

News feeds from partner agencies are also featured including daily financial tips and entrepreneurial-related initiatives of the government. These partner agencies include Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA), Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA), Home Development Mutual Fund (PAG-IBIG Fund) and Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

B. PESO Sense Store

This provides a free platform for products to be sold online that would increase their marketability, in and outside the country. There is a 24 to 48 hour verification period for approval before products are posted. More than 40 products have been posted as of to date.

C. PESO Sense Bills

With the help of Bayad Center the PESO Sense Mobile App allows overseas Filipinos and on-line users to directly pay utilities and other billers including payment for PhilHealth premium.

6. Joint Migration Development Initiative Phase II (JMDI II)

The Joint Migration and Development Initiative Phase II is a global program supported by the European Union and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. It is implemented in eight countries by United Nations Development Programme and its partners, International Organization for Migration, International Labour Organization, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, United Nations Fund Population and UN Women.

It aims to strengthen and reinforce the role of migration for development by upscaling and institutionalizing local migration and development (M&D) initiatives.

As it was in line with CFO's mission of promoting and mainstreaming policies, programs, and projects with migration and development as its framework, UNDP Philippines has designated CFO as the national government agency partner for the

JMDI II. CFO is working with the City Government of Naga City and NEDA IVA and their respective project partners in the implementation of the JMDI Bicol and Strengthening, Upscaling and Mainstreaming International Migration and Development (SUMMID) in Calabarzon projects.

In 2016, 200 local official were capacitated in the following areas:

A. Bicol LGUs

1. Naga City
2. Municipality of Pili
3. Iriga City
4. Municipality of Daet
5. Province of Sorsogon
6. Sorsogon City
7. Province of Camarines Norte
8. Ligao City
9. Municipality of Guinobatan
10. Masbate City
11. Province of Masbate
12. Province of Catanduanes
13. Municipality of Virac
14. Province of Albay
15. Legazpi City
16. Tabaco City

B. Western Visayas LGUs

1. Province of Iloilo
2. Iloilo City
3. Municipality of Sta. Barbara
4. Municipality of Oton
5. Province of Guimaras
6. Municipality of Jordan
7. Municipality of Buenavista
8. Municipality of Nueva Valencia
9. Province of Antique
10. Municipality of San Jose de Buenavista
11. Province of Aklan
12. Municipality of Kalibo
13. Municipality of Numancia
14. Municipality of Lezo
15. Municipality of Altavas
16. Municipality of Batan
17. Municipality of Ibajay
18. Province of Capiz
19. Roxas City
20. Municipality of Dumalag
21. Municipality of Mabusao
22. Municipality of Pontevedra
23. Municipality of Sapan

C. CALABARZON LGUs

1. Province of Batangas
2. Province of Cavite
3. Province of Rizal
4. Province of Laguna
5. Province of Quezon

Following activities were also concluded:

1. JMDI2 5th Follow-Up Committee Meeting, 29 January 2016, Makati City;
2. MDI-WV 4th Project Steering Committee meeting, 18 February 2016 resulted in the approval of the 2016 Annual Work Plan;
3. Interface among the Bicol Migrant Organizations and the Bicol Regional and Local Governments, 21 – 22 February 2016, Legazpi City;
4. JMDI2 6th Follow-Up Committee Meeting, 01 March 2016, Quezon City;
5. Mainstreaming M&D and strategic planning: A capacity building in the Province of Aklan and select municipalities, 2-4 March 2016, Kalibo, Aklan;
6. Mainstreaming M&D and strategic planning: A capacity building in the Provinces of Iloilo and Guimaras and select cities and municipalities, 21-22 March 2016, Iloilo City;
7. Mainstreaming M&D and strategic planning: A capacity building in the Province of Capiz and select city and municipalities, 4-5 April 2016, Roxas City, Capiz;
8. MDI-Western Visayas Forum with the Private Sector on Migration and Development, 21 April 2016, Iloilo City; and
9. MDI-QC M&D Council Knowledge Exchange Visit in Region V, 18-22 April 2016, Bicol

7. Migration and Development Initiative (MDI)

Based on an EU document on “Improving the International Migration Management System of the Philippines” dated 2011, it was noted that “in the strongly decentralized governance context, the role of the Local Government Units (LGUs) is critical but has largely been ignored in the migration field until now....It must be recognized at the outset that despite being at the forefront of migration management, LGUs have low awareness of and capacity related to migration and development.”

As a response, CFO along with NEDA - Region VI and Region I being the national and regional partners are implementing the Migration and Development Initiative (MDI) for Western Visayas and Ilocos Region. Calabarzon Bicol

MDI is a project related to the global JMDI II program with an aim to upscale and institutionalize Migration and Development (M&D). Specifically, it links with disaster risk reduction initiatives and to the local plans and investment programs of the two regions.

Following activities were implemented in 2016:

1. Forum on Migration and Development and PESO Sense Training in Venus Parkview Hotel, Baguio City – January 26, 2016

2. PESO Sense training in Happy Hollows National High School, Happy Hollows, Baguio City – January 27, 2016
3. PESO Sense Training in University of Baguio, Baguio City – January 28, 2016

8. Recognition of Overseas Filipinos

Recognizing the achievements, excellence and philanthropy of overseas Filipinos, the Philippine government honors them for their sacrifices and dedication to their work, family and the nation through the following programs:

A. Presidential Awards for Filipino Individuals and Organizations Overseas

The Presidential Awards for Filipino Individuals and Organizations Overseas, established through Executive Order No. 498 in December 1991, is a biennial award conferred to distinguished Filipino individuals and organizations in recognition of their outstanding contributions to national development efforts, or their outstanding achievements in their field of profession. The awards, implemented and managed by CFO, are also conferred to foreign individuals and organizations that provide assistance to the country or advance the cause of Filipino communities overseas.

Since inception, the awards have already been bestowed upon 437 Filipino individuals and organization overseas from 49 countries and territories. Beyond their recognizable contribution to humanity, the awardees also reinforce faith and confidence in the Filipino nation. They have given meaning to Filipino excellence and the time-honored values of pakikipagkapwa, pagtutulungan, and pagkakaisa.

For the 2016 Presidential Awards, CFO has received 103 nominations from 22 countries and 33 Philippine Embassies and Consulates.

9. Overseas Voting Campaign

Relative to government's extensive campaign in encouraging overseas Filipinos to register and exercise their right to vote for the 2016 Presidential Elections, the CFO, Commission on Elections and the Department of Foreign Affairs opened one of the Overseas Voters Registration Centers (OVRC) at CFO Manila on July 21, 2014.

In 2016, the CFO released a poster on overseas voting for distribution to Philippine embassies and consulates, as well as Filipino communities overseas, to bolster registration figures. It also shared some advisories and press releases of the Commission on Elections to different Filipino diaspora organizations.

10. Migrants in Countries in Crisis

A number of natural disasters and conflicts occurred over the past years and with more people living and working outside their home countries, the plight of migrants caught in crises has become increasingly palpable.

When countries experience such crises, migrants may lack adequate means to ensure their own safety and do not fall under a specific protection mandate. More often than not, they have a limited access to traditional humanitarian responses.

In response, the state-led initiative Migrants in Countries in Crisis (or MICIC), co-chaired by the Philippines and the United States of America was created following the UN High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development held in New York last October 2013.

Following the 2014 official launch of the MICIC Initiative at the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) in Stockholm, the co-chairs and the Working Group followed a broad and inclusive evidence-gathering process. Regional consultations, funded by the European Commission, were conducted with States and other key representatives from South and South-East Asia, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, West and Central Africa, Southern and Central America, North Africa and the Middle East, and East and Southern Africa.

In 2016, CFO actively participated in the following regional consultations and developed two 2 training modules on Crisis Preparedness and Contingency Planning with International Center for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD):

- Regional Consultation for Southern and Central America – February 17-18, 2016 in San Jose, Costa Rica
- Regional Consultation for Middle East and North Africa – March 14-15, 2016 in La Valletta, Malta
- Regional Consultation for East and Southern Africa – May 4-5, 2016 in Kigali, Rwanda

The United States and Australia, likewise funded targeted stakeholder consultations held in Geneva with actors from the private sector (2015), civil society (January 28-29, 2016), and the international organizations (March 16-17, 2016), and with participating States and partners of the Inter-governmental Consultation (IGC) on Migration, Asylum, and Refugees (2015). Additional evidence, insights and recommendations were also gathered through other means, including side events at global gatherings, briefings, webinars and issue briefs. CFO who served as one of the focal points of the Philippines to the MICIC Working Group were greatly involved in the planning and preparations of these stakeholder consultations and events and in the drafting MICIC related materials and reports.

The non-binding and voluntary ***Principles, Guidelines, and Practices*** (or simply the “**MICIC Guidelines**”) are the culmination of all these efforts. Recently launched on June 15, 2016 in the UN Headquarters in New York and June 27, 2016 in Geneva, the MICIC Guidelines are very crucial towards strengthening local, national, regional and international action to better protect migrants caught in countries experiencing conflict or national disaster. The *Principles, Guidelines and Practices* can be used to plan, prepare, and asses actions and to improve response for the benefit of migrants, their families and societies. They are intended to be a useful reference for actors to implement or adapt to the dynamics of a crisis at hand. They complement, but are not a substitute for, professional standards and other efforts to share good practices.

11. Metropolis Asia

As the Asian arm of Metropolis International, Metropolis Asia is directed towards the development of strategic responses to the effects of international migration and capacity building of its partners in the Asia-Pacific region via information and data sharing. This purpose is expected to be achieved through the establishment of a virtual research network that gathers key resources in which one of the primary channels would be the organization's website.

The website, www.metropolisasia.org was created and launched by the CFO in collaboration with the other members of the Metropolis Asia Secretariat namely the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Philippines, IOM Migration Research and Training Centre Korea and the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS). The Metropolis Asian Secretariat supports the Metropolis International Steering Committee (ISC) through ensuring adequate communication among partners as well as taking direct responsibility for the implementation of ISC-approved work program in Asia.

The network aims to centralize relevant research and information on migration and development and to offer a virtual space for exchange and learning. It intends to support and encourage coordination and cooperation between Metropolis Asia, Metropolis International and its stakeholders.

CFO, in 2016, rendered assistance in organizing the 2016 International Metropolis Conference in Aichi-Nagoya Japan as the Metropolis Asia Secretariat in Manila. It also prepared and organized 3 Workshop Proposals for the 2016 International Metropolis Conference such as (a) The Situation of Migration of Health Professionals Across the Globe (b) International Cooperation on Migration Data Collection and Management in the Context of the Sustainable Development Goals; and (c) Human Smuggling/Human Trafficking in the Asia Pacific.

IV. FY2017 CFO Budget Summary

For 2017, of CFO's proposed budget of Php 87.400 million, 42% or 36.596 million will be obligated for Personnel Services, 53% or PhP46.381 million for Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses and 5% or PhP4.423 million for Capital Outlay.

In terms of staffing, 61 out of 64 plantilla positions are currently filled.

Our projected revenue for 2017, is PhP38.939 million, roughly 45% of our budget, of which PhP1.460 million represent Documentary Stamp tax and PhP37.479 million as Service Income. These will be derived from the registration fees of emigrants, au pairs, and EVP participants. CFO remits all of its service income to the National Treasury.