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Administrative Order 05
Series of 2006

Subject : Omnibus Guidelines on the Implementation
of International Social Welfare Services for Filipino
Nationals (ISWSFN) Project

I. Background/Rationale

Republic Act No. 8042 also known as the "Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipino Act of 1995" stipulates that a Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Resource Center shall be established in countries where there are large concentrations of Filipino Migrant Workers". Further, in countries categorized as highly problematic by the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) and the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) and where there is a concentration of Filipino migrant workers, the government must provide a lawyer and a social worker for the Center.

Hence, a Memorandum of Agreement between the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and the DOLE on the implementation of an Overseas Comprehensive Social Service Package (OCSSP) was signed in February 2002.

Relatedly, in 2002, the Department started the deployment of DSWD senior staff as Social Welfare Attache' in Malaysia in recognition of the needs of migrant Filipinos in the said country, particularly the illegal entrants and undocumented Overseas Filipino Workers.

Lastly, on February 24, 2004 the Department entered into a Memorandum of Agreement with the International Social Service in Japan and Hongkong for internship of DSWD social workers with other National Government Organizations abroad.

These developments led to the piloting of the ISWSFN project. Considering the implementation of this project since 2002, there is a need to update and consolidate its various policies and guidelines.

II. Legal Basis

- Republic Act 8042 - Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipino Act of 1995

Section 19 - In countries where there are large concentrations of Filipino Migrant Workers, there shall be established a migrant workers and Other Overseas Filipino Resource Center.

- Labor Code of the Philippines - 1999 Edition

Article 21 item a - To provide all Filipino workers within their jurisdiction assistance on all matters arising out of employment.

- Executive Order No. 15 series of 1998

The DSWD should provide assistance to LGUs, NGOs and other GA in effectively implementing programs, projects and services that will alleviate poverty and empower disadvantaged individuals, families and communities for an improved quality of life.

III. Target Beneficiaries

Migrant Filipinos and other Overseas Filipinos and their Families

IV. Objectives

In coordination with DFA, DOLE and International NGOS, the ISWSFN Project hopes to achieve the following:

General:

Institutionalize a system of providing social welfare services to Filipinos in a foreign country to promote their best interest and general welfare.

Specific:

1. Implement comprehensive and appropriate social welfare services to overseas Filipino and their families.
2. Establish a network among welfare agencies and service providers of overseas Filipino workers.
3. Provide technical assistance along social welfare and to NGOs and other GOs concerned with the welfare of OFW whenever indicated.

V. Description of the Project:

The International Social Welfare Services for Filipino Nationals shall be undertaken through the deployment of the following under the corresponding schemes:

- a) Social Welfare Attache' in Philippine Embassies through the DFA
- b) Technical Assistant to the Labor Attache' through the DOLE
- c) Social Work Interns through the ISS of Japan and Hongkong
- d) Social Worker as part of Philippine Humanitarian Missions

The above mentioned workers will work as a member of the Philippine Team at the Consular Office to strengthen the one-country approach in foreign service except those deployed in inter-national NGOs. Their main function is to provide psychosocial interventions and other social welfare services.

VI. Core Social Welfare Services

Whenever indicated, based on the assessment of the concerned social worker, the following can be accessed by the migrant worker or any overseas Filipino:

1. **Social Integration Services**- refers to all efforts at helping the new migrant workers and other overseas Filipinos for settlement and integration into the culture of the host country. This also involves conduct of socio-cultural activities and networking to strengthen camaraderie with other Filipinos. This activity shall be jointly undertaken with the DFA, DOLE, concerned NGOs and other Filipino associations in the host country.
2. **Counseling Services**- refers to the provision of individual, group or family counseling services to those in crisis to enable them to cope with homesickness and other related problems. Intensive therapeutic counseling to extreme cases of abuse/maltreatment particularly of women and children, shall likewise be provided.
3. **Critical Incident Stress Debriefing** - refers to the conduct of group sessions to relieve stress to those who have experienced traumatic events.
4. **Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situation** - refers to the provision of limited financial and material assistance to meet a crisis situation.
5. **Referral** - refers to facilitating access to services of other concerned GO's, NGO's to meet the needs of OFWs.

6. **Repatriation**– refers to assistance provided to an OFW to facilitate his/her safe return to the Philippines, particularly if OFW cannot complete her/his work contract by reasons of health, abuses and other circumstances that warrant his/her immediate repatriation to the country and ensuring that the OFW's family is prepared to receive him/her and assistance provided to children of OFW's to facilitate their reunification to their biological family/relative who is willing and capable to take care of them in the country.

7. **Child Placement** (for ISS Japan and Hongkong only) –refers to the provision of foster care or other alternative family care to abused, neglected and/or abandoned transnational children of OFWs in preparation for their return to their biological families in the Philippines or to a more permanent placement.

VII. General Policies

1. The welfare of the migrant workers and other overseas Filipinos is the primordial consideration in the deployment of DSWD social workers to foreign countries.

2. The deployment of any DSWD Social Worker to a foreign country will be for a maximum period of two years subject to evaluation after the first year and to availability of funds.

3. Field Offices can recommend several applicants to the Posts but only one (1) nominee will be selected per Field Office.

4. The DSWD–Regional Director may only endorse one Social Worker in the entire four schemes. The deployment of DSWD Social Workers to foreign countries shall not disrupt delivery of social welfare services at the local level, hence, DSWD Regional Directors shall ensure that posts vacated by said workers are attended to by other organic staff of the Department.

VIII. Implementing Details

1. Selection Committee

The Human Resource Management and Development Service (HRMDS) shall review and assess the documents submitted by the applicants and shall recommend to the selection committee those who passed the 1st level screening.

1.1 Composition

The Selection Committee will be headed by the Assistant Secretary for Policy & Programs Group with the Directors of the following Bureaus/Service as members:

- Social Technology Bureau
- Program Management Bureau
- Social Welfare & Institutional Development Bureau
- Human Resource Management & Development Service

The secretariat services will be provided by the Human Resource Management and Development Service.

1.2 Functions

- Receive, review and evaluate applications and documents of regional applicants.
- Prepare a list of applicants who qualify for the post
- Conduct interview and administer written examination of applicants
- Deliberate on the results of the interview and examination.
- Recommend qualified nominee for approval of the Secretary.

2. Criteria

The Department will limit selection of the applicants to the following levels indicated opposite the specific scheme:

- A. Social Welfare Attache' – SWO V
- B. Technical Assistant to Labor Attache' – SWO IV
- C. Social Work Intern to International NGOs – SWO II
- D. Social Worker as part of the Philippine Humanitarian Mission – SWO III

The following qualifications will be required from applicants to any of the above mentioned scheme:

- Graduate of Bachelors Degree in Social Work
- Duly Registered Social Worker
- At least with a 3 year experience in direct social work practice particularly in handling cases in crisis situations/ difficult circumstances
- Holder of a permanent position
- Has served DSWD for at least 5 years
- With Very Satisfactory rating for the last 2 rating periods
- Proficient in written and oral communication in English
- Physically and mentally fit
- Has no pending scholarship (local or abroad)
- Has no pending administrative case
- Has not availed of similar posting for the last 5 years.

3. Duties and Responsibilities

Below are the roles and responsibilities that should be performed by the following social welfare officers.

- Establish a network with the host country social welfare agencies and/or individuals and groups that maybe mobilized in the provision of appropriate social services to overseas Filipinos.

- ❑ Establish and maintain a system of data banking and documentation of overseas Filipinos and their families who sought help from the social workers.
- ❑ Provide overseas Filipinos services and intervention appropriate to their needs.
- ❑ Perform other tasks as maybe required by the Head of Mission or head of the agency in the care of ISS.

A. Social Welfare Attache'

Under the One Country Team, the Social Welfare Attache' shall undertake the following in collaboration with other members of the team as needed."

- Undertake surveys and prepare official social welfare situationers on the overseas Filipinos in the area of assignment including those who are undocumented and their families.
- Establish a network with overseas-based social welfare agencies and/or individuals and groups which maybe mobilized to assist in the provision of appropriate social services.
- Respond to and monitor the resolution of problems and complaints/queries of overseas Filipinos and their families so that appropriate social welfare services can be more effectively provided.
- Establish and maintain a system of data banking and documentation of overseas Filipinos and their families and other Filipino nationals so that appropriate social welfare services can be more effectively provided.

- Submit regular reports to the DSWD and DFA Home Office on plans and activities undertaken, recommendations, and updates on the situation of the overseas Filipinos particularly those encountering difficulties in the host country. Said report may form part of the Semi-Annual Report to Congress as provided under Section 33 of RA 8042.
- Provide information about DSWD and its attached agencies and services.
- Perform other related functions in the delivery of social services, as maybe directed by the Head of the Diplomatic Post in the area of assignment.

B. Technical Assistant to the Labor Attache'

Implement the approved work program/plan including but not limited to the following activities:

- Provision of counseling and other social welfare assistance to OFWs
- Development and implementation of alternative measures to alleviate stress
- Periodic hospital and jail visitations, if allowed by the host country
- Participation in special projects/programs for the OFW community
- Maintenance of a registry of wards in the FWRC
- Monitor the situation of cases of OFWs who are in distress, specifically those who are traumatized or in pain.

- Submit monthly performance/accomplishment reports and other reports that may be required by the Head of POLO, copy furnished DSWD-Central Office
- Perform other tasks as may be required by the Labor Attache'

C. Social Work Interns of International NGOs

- Provide counseling services to OFWs and other Filipino nationals.
- Assist the other social worker in managing the ICC shelter.
- Supervise the Migrants Programme volunteers during the packaging of the Mobile Information Service Kits which are distributed to new arrivals by the Information Ambassadors at the Airport.
- Receive telephone inquiries and provides information and counseling to callers
- Receive and act on cases referred by the Ambassadors of other countries.
- Link clients to Consular offices and other agencies in the community for required services.

D. Social Worker as part of the Philippine Humanitarian Mission

- Implement the work program/plan as approved by the Head of the Philippine Humanitarian Mission.



4. Tour of Duty

The deployment of DSWD social workers to foreign countries will be for a maximum period of 2 years subject to evaluation after the 1st year as well as availability of funds:

- Orientation and Debriefing

To allow interfacing, the outgoing social workers shall report to the DSWD Central Office immediately after their arrival in the country to attend the post debriefing session and participate in the Pre-departure Orientation Seminar (PDOS) for the incoming social workers. During the PDOS, social workers shall have an opportunity to share and exchange information, issues and concerns relative to their assignments. Likewise it shall also be a venue for turn over of duties and responsibilities.

The incoming social workers shall be deployed at the most two weeks after the PDOS and upon receipt of confirmation and acceptance by the post.

- Grounds for Pre-termination of Contracts

- a) Unavailability of funds

- b) Threat to life of the concerned social worker

- c) There are due and valid complaints from OFWs, Filipino communities, work mates or Supervisor. Valid complaints shall include but not limited to the following:

1. Disrespect to authority and culture of the host country
2. Violation of professional ethics (e.g. accepting bribes, using client's money, etc.)

3. Signs or symptoms of psychological imbalance of the detailed employees
4. Serious acts compromising the Embassy/POLO/DSWD (e.g. illicit relationship)

The pre-termination of contract shall be upon the recommendation of the Labor Attache'/ISSJ Hongkong and Japan and approval by the DSWD Secretary.

Disruptions due to heightened conflict situation such as war will be decided by the DSWD Secretary and the Partner Agency.

5. Reporting, Monitoring and Evaluation

All DSWD workers deployed to foreign countries are required to submit on quarterly basis their accomplishment reports properly noted by the Head of the Embassy/Consular Diplomatic Post. The report (ANNEX A) to be submitted to the concerned undersecretary should contain the following:

- Nature of cases
- Number of cases served (male/female)
- Services provided
- Status of cases

Monitoring of the cases handled by the deployed social worker will be the responsibility of the Bureau implementing the ISWSFN Project.

The evaluation of the performance of the deployed social worker shall be based on the approved Performance Contract (ANNEX B) and will be jointly conducted by the Head of Embassy or consular and the Director of the Bureau implementing ISWSFN.

IX. Institutional Arrangements

1. Department of Social Welfare and Development

- 1.1 Enter into a Memorandum of agreement with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Department of Labor and Employment for the deployment of DSWD workers.
- 1.2 Identify and nominate through a broad based selection the most qualified personnel to be deployed as social welfare attache'/social worker in embassies or representatives in consulates.
- 1.3 Provide available training and other related activities to the social welfare attache'/social worker to promote efficiency and effectiveness in the discharge of functions and duties prior to deployment with the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Department of Labor and Employment.
- 1.4 Exercise technical supervision, including the site visitation and monitoring, over the deployed personnel in coordination with the DFA and DOLE and other relevant agencies.
- 1.5 Ensure that required reports are furnish by the social welfare attache'/social worker at posts to Head of Posts/Labor Attache'.

2. Department of Foreign Affairs

- 2.1 Enter into a Memorandum of Agreement with the Department of Social Welfare and Development and facilitate/issue consular accreditation to the deployed personnel as part of the embassy staff.
- 2.2 Conduct pre-deployment orientation/training program and assist in facilitating requisites for deployment.

2.3 Undertake administrative and operational supervision of the social welfare attache' and the Philippine humanitarian mission.

2.4 Provide basic logistical support to the Attache' including adequate office space whenever feasible.

3. Department of Labor and Employment

3.1 Enter into a Memorandum of Agreement with the Department of Social Welfare and Development for the deployment of social workers abroad.

3.2 Identify overseas post where the services of a social workers is most needed.

3.3 Undertake pre-departure orientation training to the identified social workers in coordination with DSWD.

3.4 Allocates funds for the provision of basic welfare services needed by the OFWs.

3.5 Provide for the salary and other benefits/allowances of the deployed social worker of DSWD.

3.6 Undertake administrative supervision of the deployed social worker.

4. International Non-Government Organization/ ISS

4.1 Enter into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the Department.

4.2 Provide for allowances and other benefits e.g. accommodation, office space, etc. to the deployed social worker.

4.3 Exercise administrative and operational supervision to the deployed social worker.

4.4 Determine the need and the period of deployment of social worker in coordination with DSWD.

4.5 Provide proper orientation to the deployed social worker to the nature of work and culture of the host country.

X. Effectivity

This Order shall take effect immediately and revokes /rescinds all previous orders inconsistent herewith.

Issued in Quezon City, this 1st day of Sept. 2006.


DR. ESPERANZA I. CABRAL
Secretary 
