



What Is This Module About?

There are many Filipinos in other countries. Most of them go there to work as Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs). This is because there are very few high-paying job opportunities in our country. Their primary reason in becoming OFWs is to provide a better life for their families. A lot of them were successful, but there were a few who were not so lucky.

What do you know about OFWs? What can you say about their economic, social and political life? What problems do they face as OFWs?

In this module, you will learn more about OFWs.

The module has two lessons. These are:

Lesson 1 – *What and Where Are OFWs?*

Lesson 2 – *Bring Us Back to the Philippines!*



What Will You Learn From This Module?

In this module, you will be able to understand some of the issues concerning OFWs and their possible effects on the diplomatic relations among nations. You will also understand some of the policies that our government is implementing in response to these issues.

After reading this module, you should be able to:

- ◆ describe some of the reasons why some Filipinos work abroad;
- ◆ identify the benefits and problems of being an OFW;
- ◆ read and interpret maps to determine countries which are common destinations for OFWs;
- ◆ gather information about OFWs from articles in newspapers read;
- ◆ discuss the problems faced by illegal OFWs; and
- ◆ estimate the peso equivalent of salaries of OFWs who are paid in dollars.



Let's See What You Already Know

Before reading the module, answer this test to determine how much you already know about the topics in the module.

Answer the following:

1. Give at least three reasons why some Filipinos go to other countries to work.

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

2. Put a check (✓) in the space provided if you think this benefits the family of an OFW. If you think the statement describes a problem for the family of an OFW, put an X-mark (X) in the space before the statement.

_____ a. Some families of OFWs overspend the money sent to them.

_____ b. Children of OFWs are able to go to school and finish their degrees.

_____ c. Some OFWs are able to save some amount enabling them to start their own businesses.

_____ d. Some OFWs become victims of illegal recruiters.

_____ e. Some OFWs were jailed because they violated the rules of the country where they work.

3. From the map on the next page, identify at least five countries aside from the Philippines where most Filipinos work.



- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____
- e. _____

4. Below is a short article about OFWs. Read it carefully and answer the questions that follow.

Government looking after illegal OFWs in Malaysia*

The Philippine Embassy in Malaysia is looking after the interests of illegal workers there, according to Philippine ambassador to Malaysia, Jose Brillantes.

In a telephone interview over *Usapang OFW* on DZRH, Brillantes said that the Philippine government is cooperating with the Malaysian government's campaign against the entry of undocumented workers. The Malaysian immigration authorities are monitoring the activities of recruitment agencies to lessen the increasing number of illegal foreign workers.

Administrator Reynaldo Regalado of the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) said the POEA is also monitoring recruitment agencies for overseas employment. For returning Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs), he said, the POEA, together with the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA), has developed a program to help them become part of Philippine society again. This includes helping them find employment and providing capital to help OFWs launch their small businesses.

Some 60 to 100 OFWs are deported weekly to the Philippines which, Brillantes said, is normal.

**Source: Manila Bulletin, March 4, 2000.*

- a. What is the article about?

- b. About how many Filipinos are deported weekly?

- c. How does our government help our OFWs based on the article you have just read?

5. Compute the following:

- a. If an OFW receives a monthly salary of \$1,250.00 a month, how much is its equivalent in Philippine pesos if the exchange rate is \$1.00 to ₱ 45.00?

- b. Pedro receives a monthly salary of \$750.00 as a family driver in Saudi Arabia. How much is his family receiving in terms of Philippine pesos if all of Pedro's salary is remitted to his family every month, given the peso-dollar exchange rate of ₱ 45.00 to \$1.00?

Well, how was it? Do you think you fared well? Compare your answers with those in the *Answer Key* on pages 35–37 to find out.

If all your answers are correct, very good! This shows that you already know much about the topics in this module. You may still study the module to review what you already know. Who knows, you might learn a few more new things as well.

If you got a low score, don't feel bad. This means that this module is for you. It will help you to understand important concepts that you can apply in your daily life. If you study this module carefully, you will learn the answers to all the items in the test and a lot more! Are you ready?

You may go now to the next page to begin Lesson 1.

What and Where Are OFWs?

What are OFWs? Where do they work? What determines whether or not they will be successful abroad? We will discuss these questions in this lesson.



Let's Study and Analyze

Read carefully the situation below.

Mang Berto is one of the victims of El Niño. He is 40 years old, married with four children. Like most fathers, Mang Berto wants to provide a better life for his family.

But the land he is farming, their only source of livelihood, was destroyed by El Niño. All his crops dried up. Because of this, he cannot afford to send his children to school this coming year.



Every day, Mang Berto hopes that the El Niño will end. But his hopes grow dimmer each day as the drought continues to destroy his crops.

Because of many hardships, Mang Berto cannot provide for the needs of his family. He gets frustrated to the point that sometimes he loses his temper. He also cannot sleep at night. He is always thinking of their miserable life. He is about to lose hope and his faith in God.



Let's Review

Answer the following questions. Write your answers in the blanks.

1. Does Mang Berto have to lose hope and faith in God? Explain your answer.

2. Suppose you were Mang Berto, what would you do to overcome your problem?

Now, compare your answers with mine below. Let's see if our answers are similar.

Like Mang Berto, there are other victims of El Niño. But to them, this is just temporary. They believe in the saying that "if there is sacrifice, there is happiness." The El Niño will end, and there will be bountiful harvests again.

Yes, it's true that some of them lost their means of livelihood, but the El Niño isn't the end of the world. They thought of other means to earn a living. Some of them became tricycle drivers. Others went into the buy-and-sell business, while others became fishermen. There were also some who became insurance agents.

These people did not lose hope. They did not lose their faith in God. On the contrary, they considered the hardships brought about by El Niño a challenge. Instead of losing hope and becoming desperate, their faith in God and in themselves became stronger.

Those who had the initiative went to other countries as OFWs. Even if they knew that working in other countries meant experiencing a lot of hardships, they still decided to go abroad. They believed that was their only hope in providing a better life for their families.

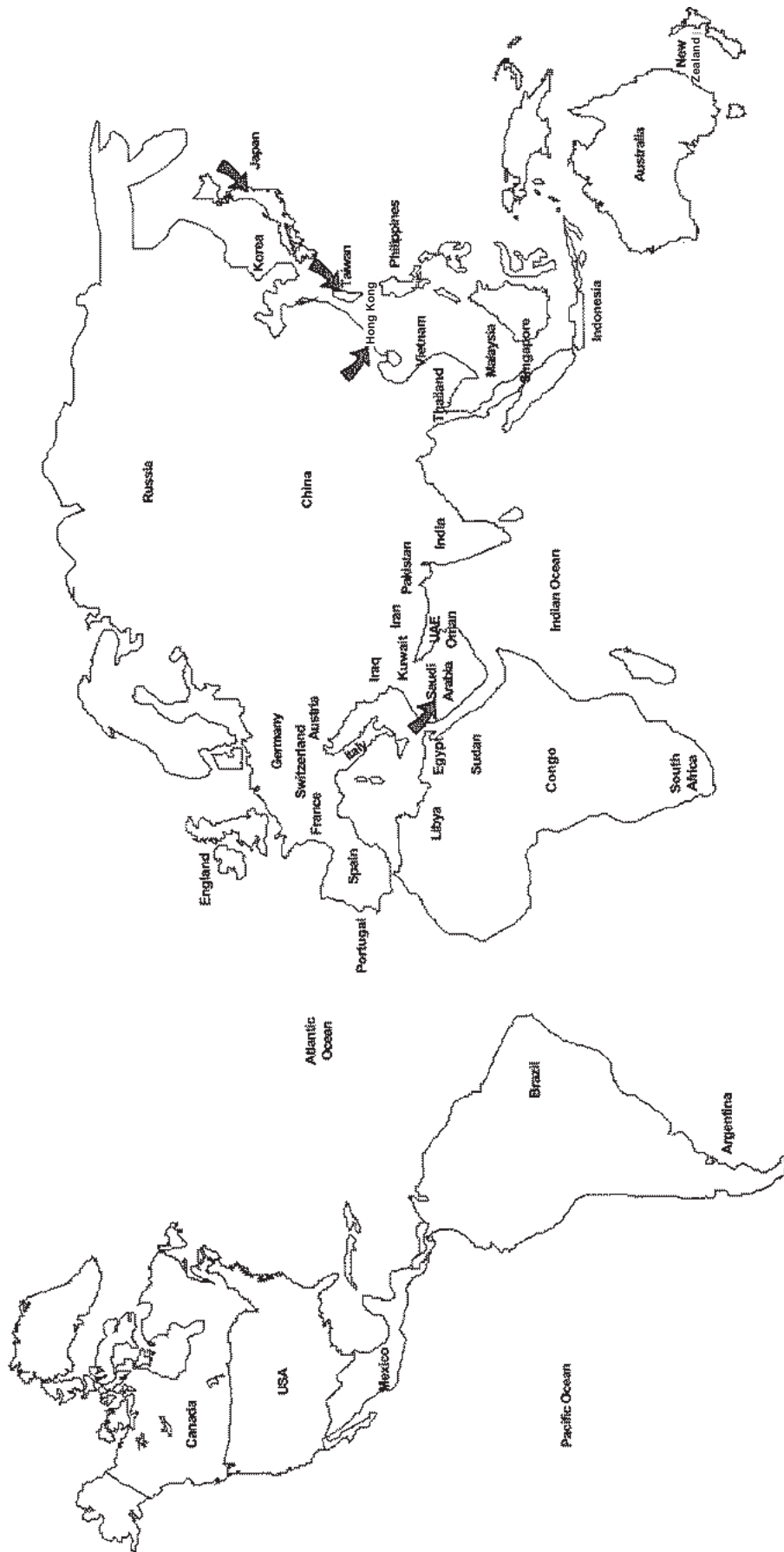


Let's Learn

Our OFWs: Where Are They and What Are Their Conditions?

You're probably more interested now to know more about OFWs. Are you familiar with the countries where they are working? Do you know why OFWs are known as our new heroes? To find out, continue reading.

Look at the map on the next page and study it carefully. Look at where the various arrows are pointing to. These are the countries where our OFWs work. Can you name these countries?



The countries to which the arrows are pointing are the following:

1. Hong Kong—the country where many Filipinas work as domestic helpers
2. Japan—this is the country where many Filipinos work as entertainers
3. Saudi Arabia—the country where many Filipinos work as skilled workers
4. Taiwan—the country where many Filipinos work as skilled workers and factory workers

Aside from what is listed above, in what other countries can we find OFWs?

There are many other countries where our OFWs work including Libya, Egypt, Sudan, Thailand and Singapore. Many of our OFWs are also working in Germany, England, France, Austria, Switzerland, Italy, Spain, Portugal and other countries in Europe.



Let's Try This

In addition to the countries mentioned earlier, do you know of other countries where there are OFWs? Write the names of these countries below.

Other countries where there are OFWs:

Compare your answers with those in the *Answer Key* on page 37.



Let's Read

Read the article below about OFWs.

Our OFWs

There are several government agencies mandated to look after the welfare of our OFWs. The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) is one of these agencies. The DOLE conducts seminars for OFWs before they leave the country to work abroad. One of the objectives of the seminars is to provide OFWs with positive information about the Philippines, especially about our arts and culture. This is because our OFWs, when already outside our country, may be asked to describe the Philippines and its people, arts and culture. With the information they learned from the seminars, they will have something good to say about our country. Another objective of the seminars is to inform OFWs about the culture, religion, values, traditions, and the laws and regulations of the countries where they will work as OFWs. In addition, they are also taught how to save their hard-earned money. Also required to attend these seminars are the wives and husbands of OFWs. This is to make sure they know how to value the money their spouses will send them. They are also informed of their spouses' contributions to the economic development of our country.

Another agency tasked with looking after the welfare of the OFWs is the OWWA. This agency also looks after the concerns of our OFWs, especially in cases when some of our unfortunate OFWs are being

deported or imprisoned. This agency also helps OFWs who were deceived by unscrupulous employment agencies. In some cases where women OFWs were abused, the agency also helps. Finally, OWWA helps OFWs who are not paid the amount indicated in their contracts.



A problem common to most OFWs is their tendency to overspend what they earn. There are some who spend all their savings in buying houses instead of engaging in any income-generating activity. In the long run, they have to work as OFWs again.

To reduce the incidence of this problem, concerned government agencies such as the DOLE and OWWA provide seminars to OFWs and their spouses on how to invest and spend their money wisely. The families of OFWs are taught also how to engage in small-scale businesses. This way, they are guided on how to make their lives more productive.

Based on research, the OFWs are the biggest dollar earners of our country. In a year, their total dollar remittances can amount to as much as \$7 billion. This money is used by our country to import goods, food and machines badly needed for development. Because of this, the OFWs have been declared as our country's newest heroes.



Let's Review

Answer the following questions. Write your answers in the blanks.

1. What is the article about?

2. What government agencies were mentioned in the article? How do they help the OFWs?

3. What information do OFWs need in order to prepare themselves before working abroad?

4. What are some of the problems experienced by OFWs?

Compare your answers with those in the *Answer Key* on pages 37–38. If all your answers are correct, congratulations! If some of them are wrong, read again the parts of the lesson which you didn't understand very well.



Let's Learn



Mang Berto Changes His Mind

Mang Bestre advised his friend, Mang Berto, not to lose hope and instead, to have more faith in God. And so, one day, Mang Berto decided that he would take his chance and try to look for work in other countries.

He read newspapers and tried to find employment agencies advertising for work in other countries. He found an ad in the *Manila Bulletin* for 100 carpenters. He immediately decided that this was the chance he and his family were waiting for. For him, this was the only way he could uplift his family from the hardships that El Niño had brought into their lives.

Mang Berto went to the office of E. B. Barsaga's International Employment Agency, the company that posted the ad. He applied as a carpenter for Saudi Arabia. He submitted all the required application forms, certificates and other documents needed for processing his application.

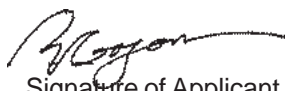
Study carefully the form below. It is a community tax certificate, one of the forms that Berto submitted.

BIR FORM (NOVEMBER, 1995)				
COMMUNITY TAX CERTIFICATE		INDIVIDUAL		NO. 5725924D
YEAR 1998	PLACE OF ISSUE Koronadal, South Cotabato	DATE ISSUED July 5, 1998	TAXPAYER'S COPY	
NAME (SURNAME) Cogon	(FIRST) Roberto	(MIDDLE) Baste	TIN (if any)	
ADDRESS Koronadal, South Cotabato			SEX /4/ MALE / / FEMALE	
CITIZENSHIP Filipino	ICP NO. (if an alien)	PLACE OF BIRTH South Cotabato	DATE OF BIRTH December 14, 1959	
CIVIL STATUS / / SINGLE / / SEPARATED /4/ MARRIED / / DIVORCED			HEIGHT 5'5" WEIGHT 140 lbs.	
PROFESSION/OCCUPATION/BUSINESS				
A. BASIC COMMUNITY TAX (P5.00) Voluntary or Exempted (P1.00)				P5.00
B. ADDITIONAL COMMUNITY TAX (tax not exceeding P5,000.00)				
1. GROSS RECEIPTS OR EARNINGS DERIVED FROM BUSINESS DURING THE PRECEDING YEAR (P1.00 FOR EVERY P1,000.00)				
2. SALARIES, GROSS RECEIPTS OR EARNINGS DERIVED FROM EXERCISE OF PROFESSION OR PURSUIT OF ANY OCCUPATION (P1,000.00)				
3. INCOME FROM REAL PROPERTY (P1.00 for every P1,000.00)				P105.00
TOTAL				P110.00
INTEREST				
TOTAL AMOUNT PAID				P110.00
 RIGHT THUMB PRINT		 TAXPAYER'S SIGNATURE		MUNICIPAL TREASURER

Do you have a community tax certificate? If you are 18 years old and above, then you should have a community tax certificate.

Study carefully how Mang Berto filled out the information needed in the community tax certificate. Can you also do this?

There is another form which Mang Berto had to fill out. This is the personal data sheet, which is shown below. Study it carefully.

Personal Data Sheet			
Name: Cogon, Roberto B.		Sex: M	Civil Status: M
Citizenship: Filipino		Religion: Roman Catholic	
Present Address: Koronadal, South Cotabato			
Provincial Address: Koronadal, South Cotabato			
Date of Birth: December 14, 1959		Place of Birth: Koronadal, South Cotabato	
Educational Attainment			
	Name of School	Degree/Units	Date Graduated
Elementary	Koronadal Elementary School	Graduate	1964
Secondary	Koronadal High School	2 nd year	1970
Vocational	Koronadal Trade School	Certificate holder	1974
Other Qualifications/Special Skills: Carpentry (wood and cement)			
Service Record (Employment):			
Inclusive Dates	Office	Position	Remarks
(None)			
Parents:	Pedro Cogon	Maria Baste	
	Father	Mother	
Wife's name: Charito Lloren			
Dependents			
Name		Date of Birth	
Richard L. Cogon		January 2, 1992	
Jeffrey L. Cogon		September 5, 1985	
Trina L. Cogon		April 12, 1982	
Abraham L. Cogon		December 7, 1980	
Date Accomplished: September 23, 1997			
 Signature of Applicant			

Do you think you can fill out a similar form?

Two months passed before Mang Berto was informed by the agency that he got the job. He was so happy.

Mang Berto was lucky, although he needed ₱20,000.00 to pay for the placement fee. And in case he could leave for Saudi Arabia, he needed to have some ₱13,000.00 for his family. This was the amount they would need while waiting for the first remittance from Mang Berto. He would also need an additional amount of ₱8,000.00 which he would use while processing his papers and for paying his medical examinations. In addition, he would also need some ₱12,000.00 as pocket money.



Let's Review

1. How much is the total amount needed by Mang Berto?

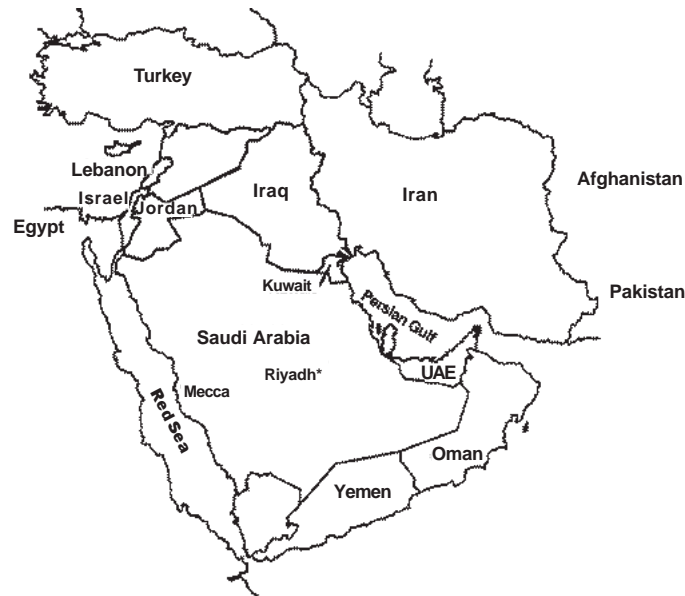
2. How much more would he need if he would be able to raise ₱ 50,000 by mortgaging his farm?

Compare your answers with those in the *Answer Key* on page 38.



Let's Study and Analyze

This is the map of the Middle East where you can find Saudi Arabia.



Saudi Arabia is ruled by a king. It is a big country. It is rich in oil, which every country needs to keep their machines, ships, airplanes and other equipment working. Islam is the religion of the people of Saudi Arabia. Drinking liquor, eating pork, taking drugs, and many other vices are prohibited in this country.

Iraq and Kuwait can be found north of Saudi Arabia. Yemen can be found south, the Red Sea, west and the Persian Gulf, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Oman, east.

Mecca, the holy place for the Muslims, is found in Saudi Arabia. Every year, many Muslims go to Mecca on a pilgrimage.

Try to locate Saudi Arabia on the map. What is its capital? Try also to locate on the map the countries surrounding Saudi Arabia such as Yemen, Kuwait, Iraq, Oman and the UAE.

Did you find Saudi Arabia on the map? Do you know that its capital is Riyadh? Did you find Riyadh on the map?

Good work! Let's continue studying the experience of Mang Berto as an OFW.



Let's Read

Mang Berto Is in Saudi Arabia!

Mang Berto arrived in Saudi Arabia. He worked as a carpenter for a construction company. His salary was US \$1,000.00 a month.

There were other Filipino workers who worked for the same company. These included Pedro, a driver, Mario, an electrician, Jose, a mechanic, and Perla, a domestic helper.

Pedro was earning a monthly salary of US \$1,000.00. Mario earned US \$1,200.00 a month and Jose earned US \$1,150.00 a month. Perla, the domestic helper, earned US \$600.00 a month.



Let's Solve This Problem

1. What are the peso equivalents of the salaries of the OFWs mentioned earlier if the exchange rate is US \$1.00 to ₱ 45.00?

2. What is the average salary of the five OFWs?

3. If Mang Berto and the other four OFWs have an average salary of US \$500.00 every month, how much will their combined salary be in one month? What is its equivalent in Philippine pesos if the exchange rate is US \$1.00 to ₱ 45.00?

Compare your answers with those found in the *Answer Key* on pages 39–40.

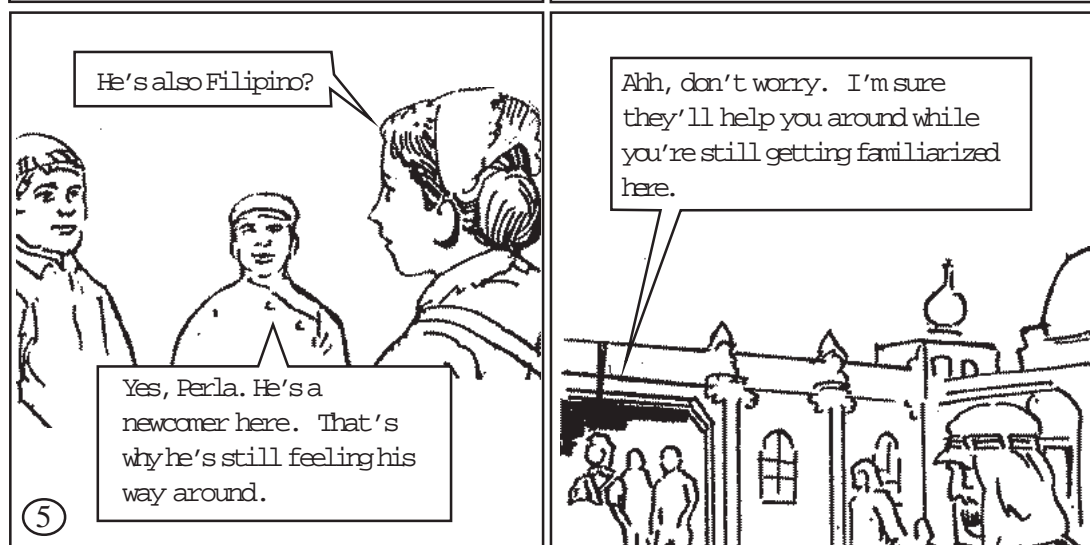
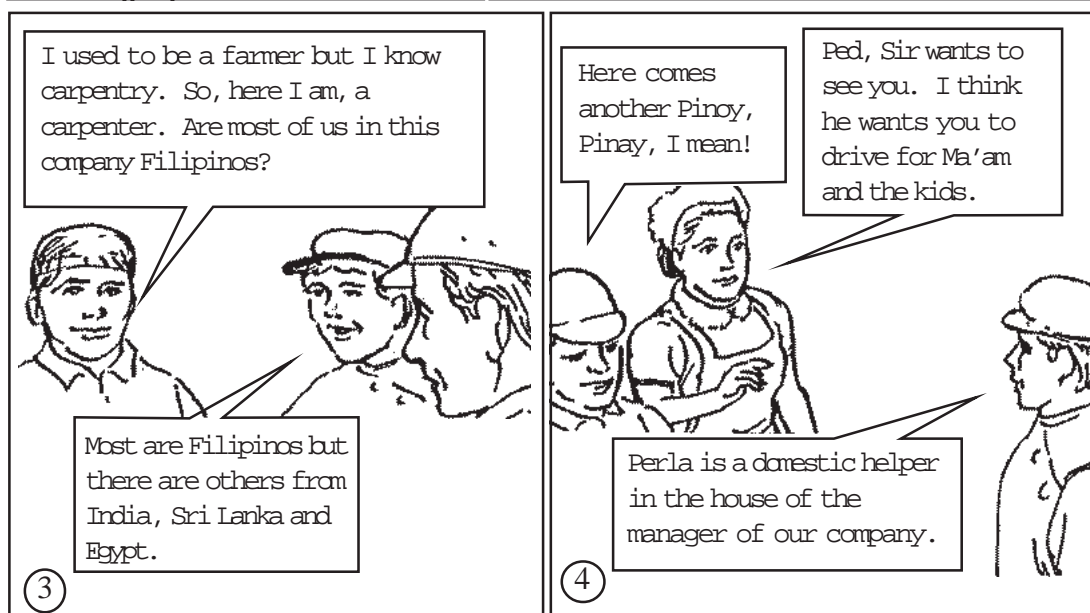
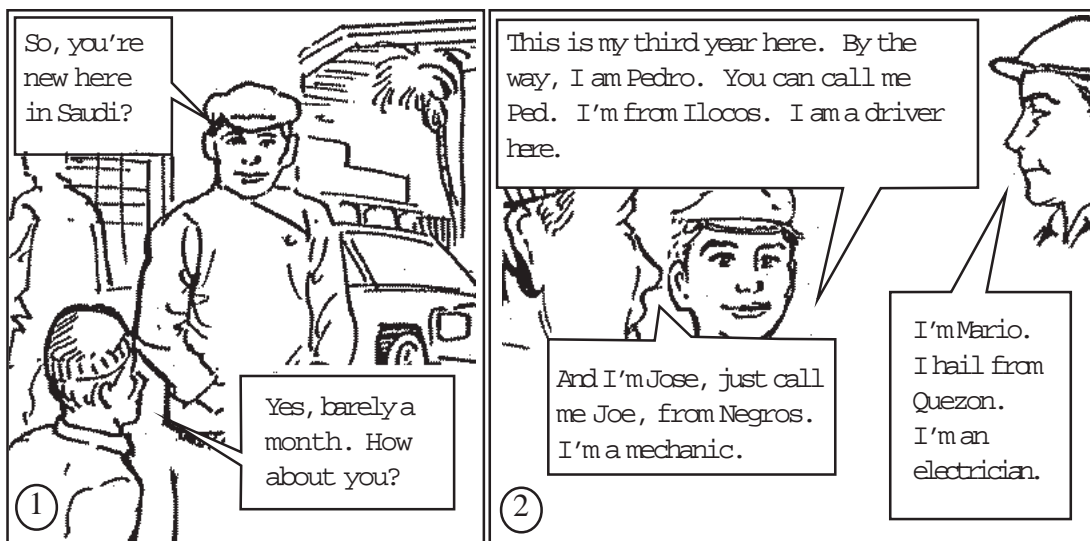


Let's Listen to This

Listen to the audio cassette tape titled *Mang Berto: A Successful OFW*, and follow the script by reading the comic strips. If you do not have access to an audio cassette player, just read the comic strips on the next pages.

Characters:

Berto	40 years old, carpenter
Mitring	38 years old, wife of Berto
Bing	19 years old, son of Berting
Trina	17 years old, daughter of Berto
Pedro	36 years old, driver (OFW)
Mario	30 years old, electrician (OFW)
Perla	29 years old, domestic helper (OFW)
Jose	35 years old, mechanic (OFW)



Meanwhile, in Mang Berto's house in the Philippines.

Mother, what is that you're reading?

A letter, Trina. From your father.

7

What's the news from Father?

Mother, could you please read it louder, so we could all hear what he's saying?

8

Oh, yes, Mother.

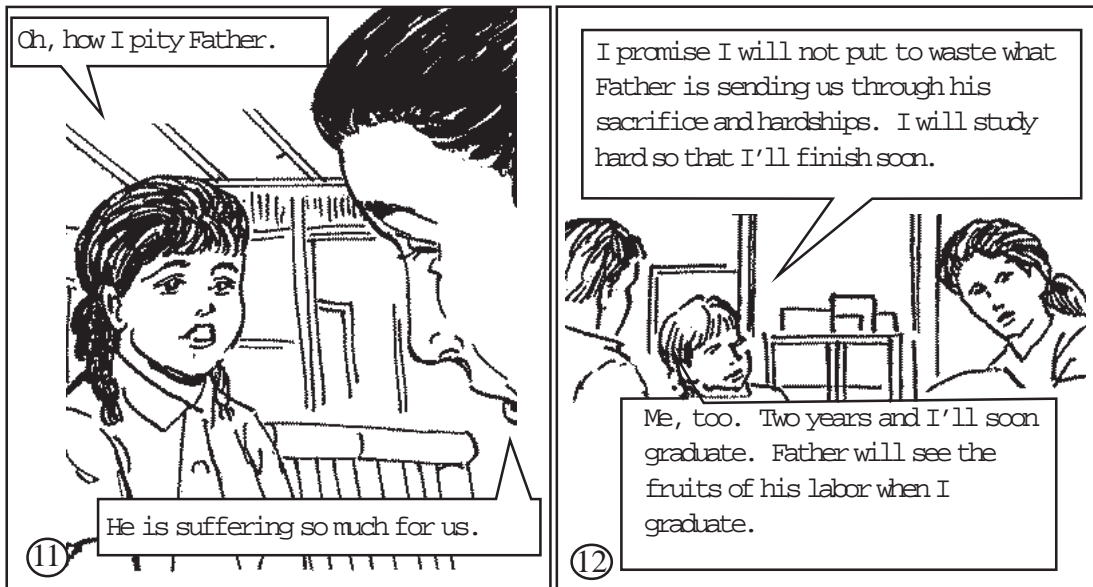
All right. Sit down, all of you and listen. "Almost half a year has passed, but my loneliness and yearning for all of you is still so much. I miss the time when we were together most especially during dinnertime when we would talk and tell stories every night before retiring to bed. It's so lonely being out here in a foreign land . . ."

9

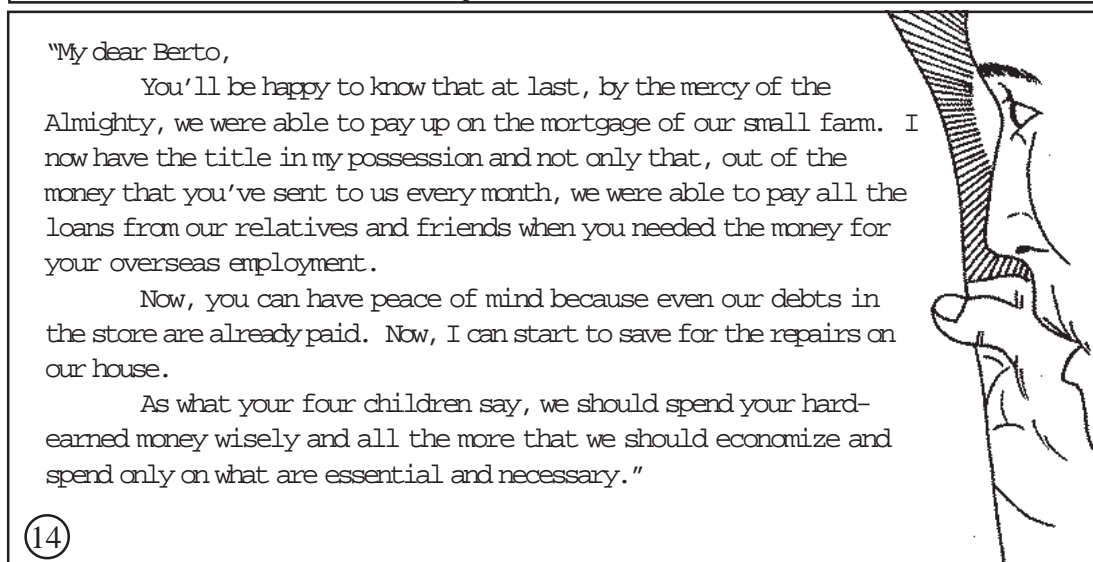
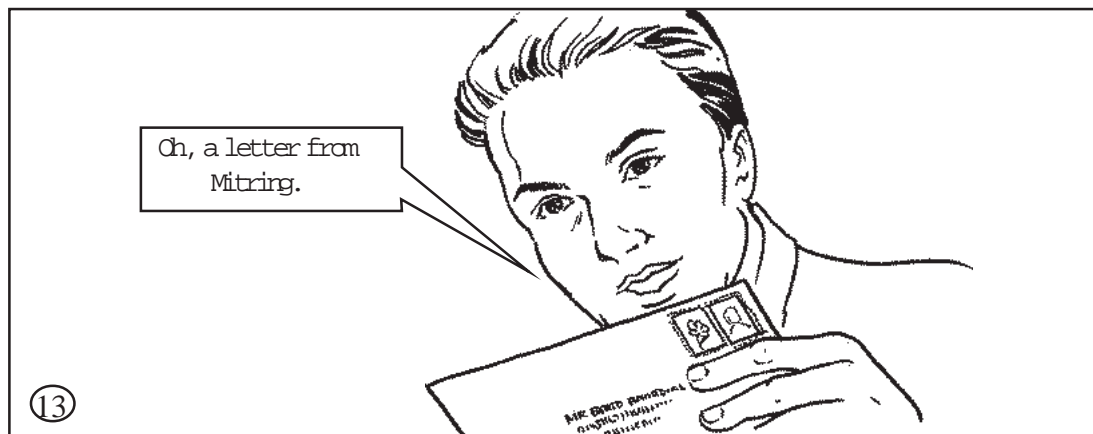
"More so if that country has a different culture and traditions from the one you've grown accustomed to! There are nights that I just couldn't sleep because of my intense longing to be with all of you. Sometimes, I feel like backing out of my two-year contract and just go back home to you. But when I come to think that I have to stay and fulfill my desire to earn sufficiently for your needs, I would force myself to suppress this strong desire and loneliness for all of you. Hopefully, I'll be able to renew my contract for four to six years more so we can live comfortably after that. Just write to me more often. That is the most effective remedy that would quench my loneliness . . . I love you all dearly.

Berto"

10



Back in Saudi . . .

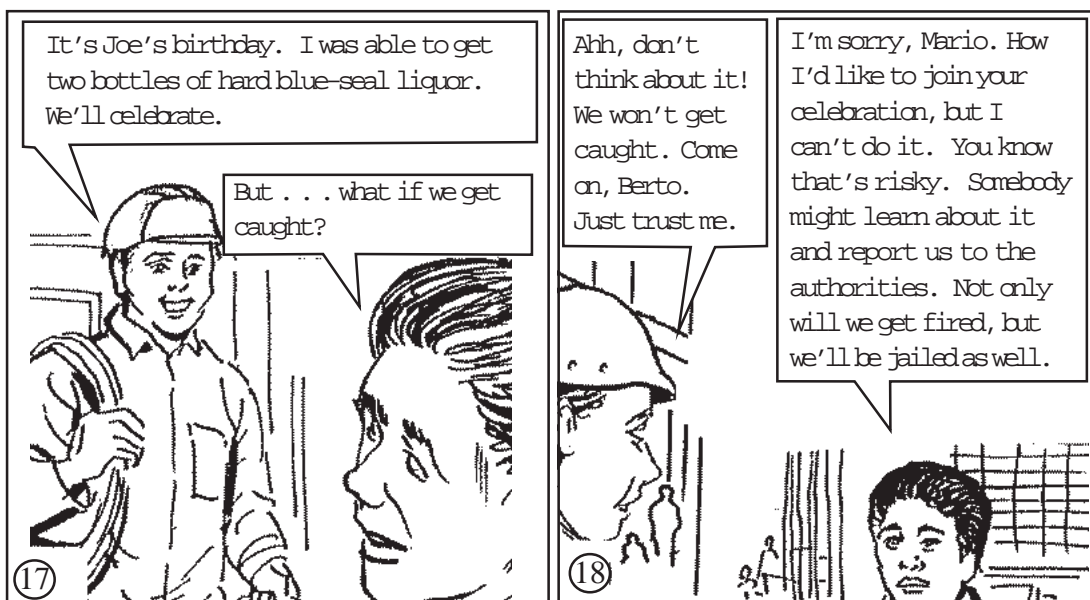


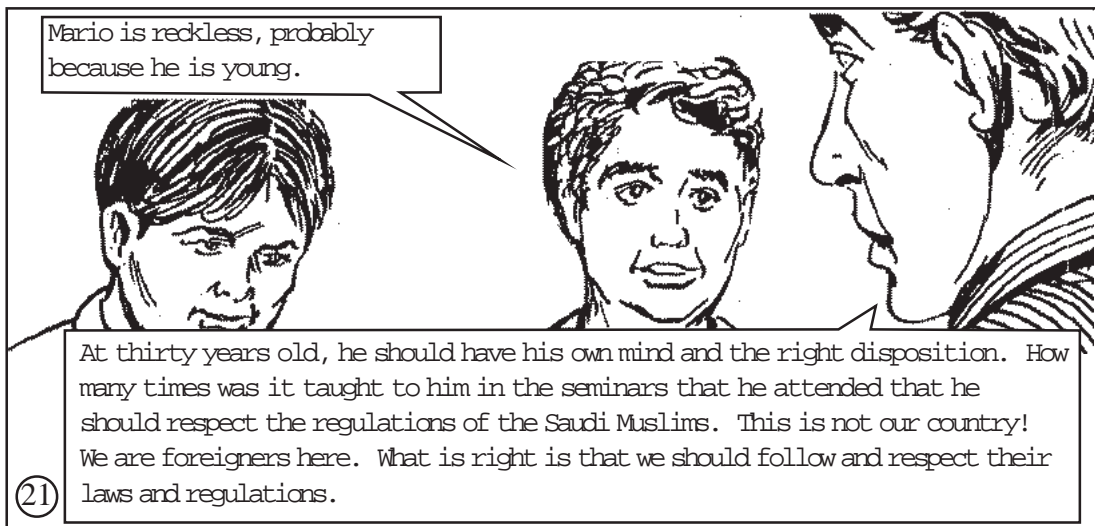
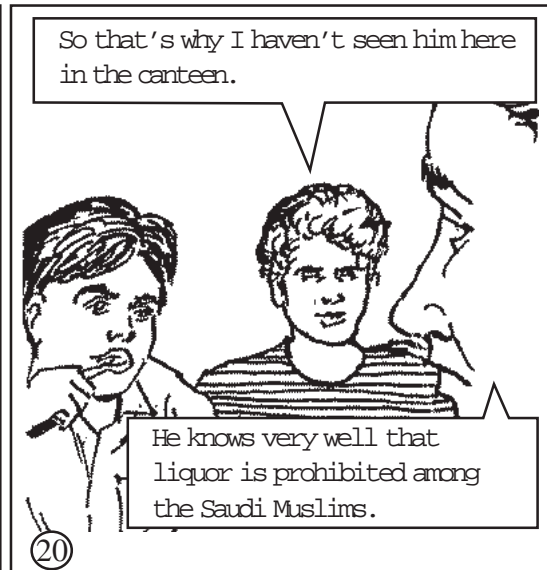
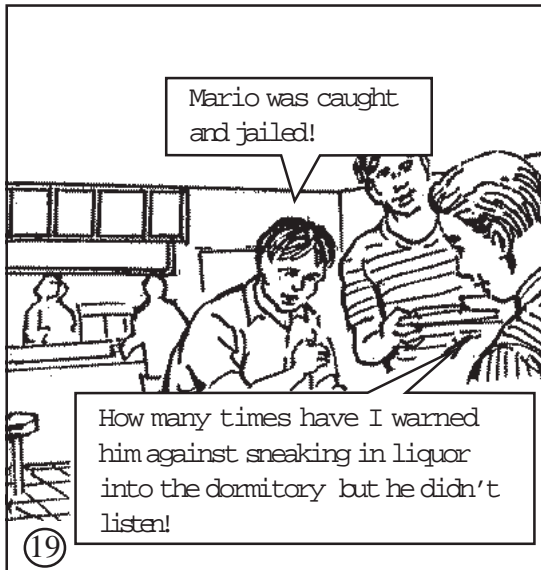
"Christmas will not be as merry as when you were here with us to celebrate it but I will not be complaining, because I know that we both have to make a little sacrifice for the sake of our children, to be able to give them a bright future. Take good care of yourself and don't forget to pray to the Almighty. Always remember that I love you dearly.

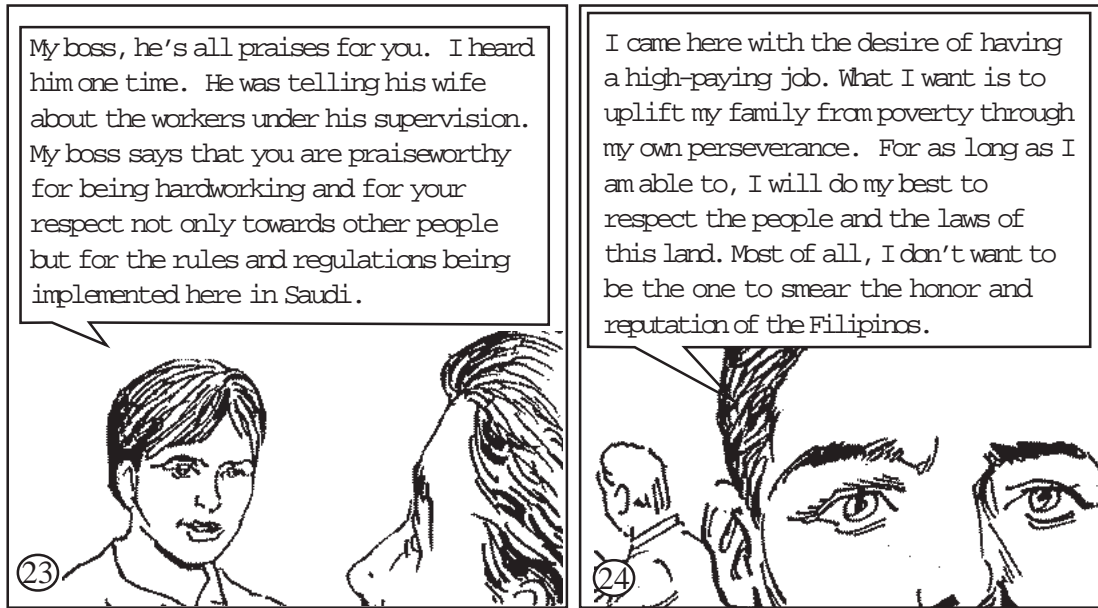


Mitring"

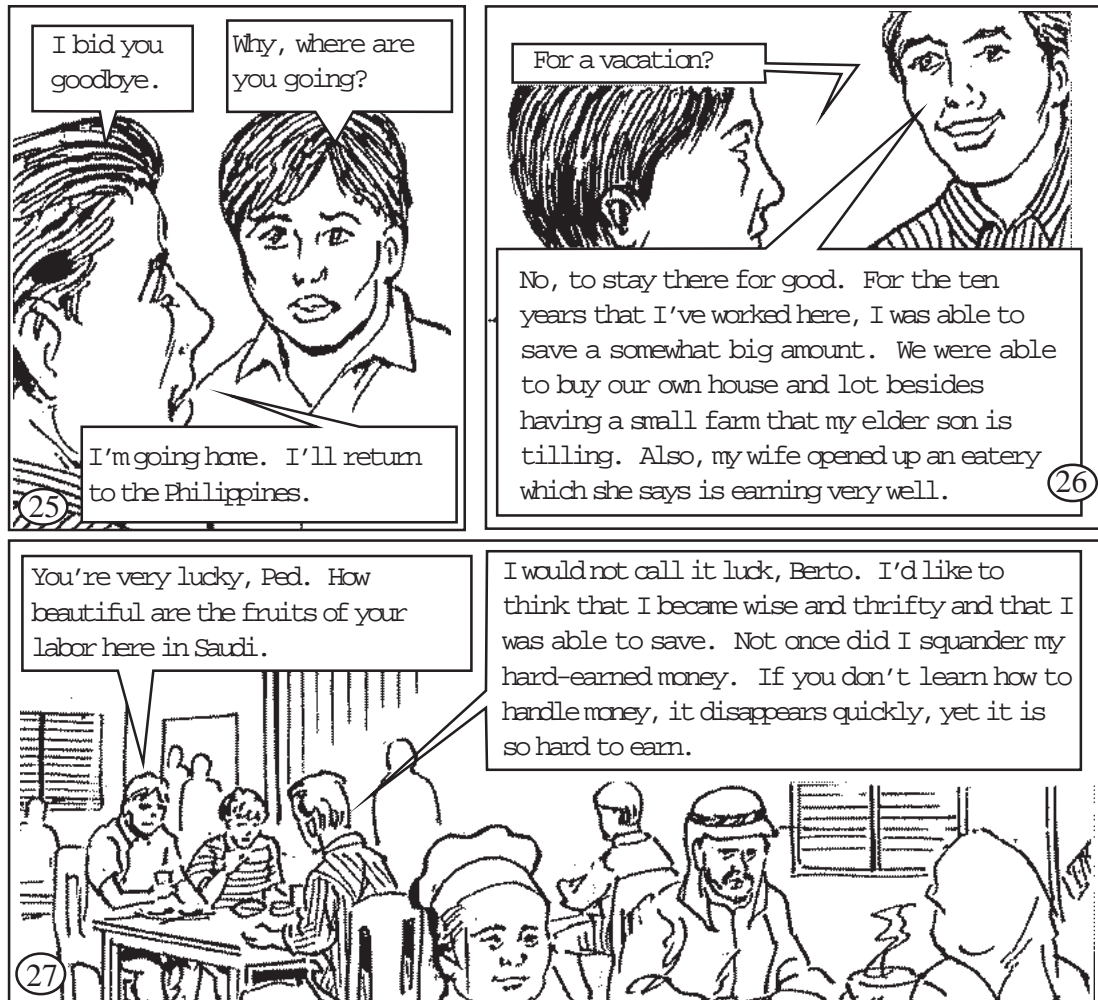
In the construction site . . .







After seven years ...



You're right. I am happy for you. I've stayed seven years here. Most likely, I'll finish my eighth year of service here, which will be next year. I don't want to renew my contract anymore. After that, I will return to the Philippines. Anyway, my two elder children are already finished with their studies. The third is about to graduate from college this coming March. The youngest has only three more

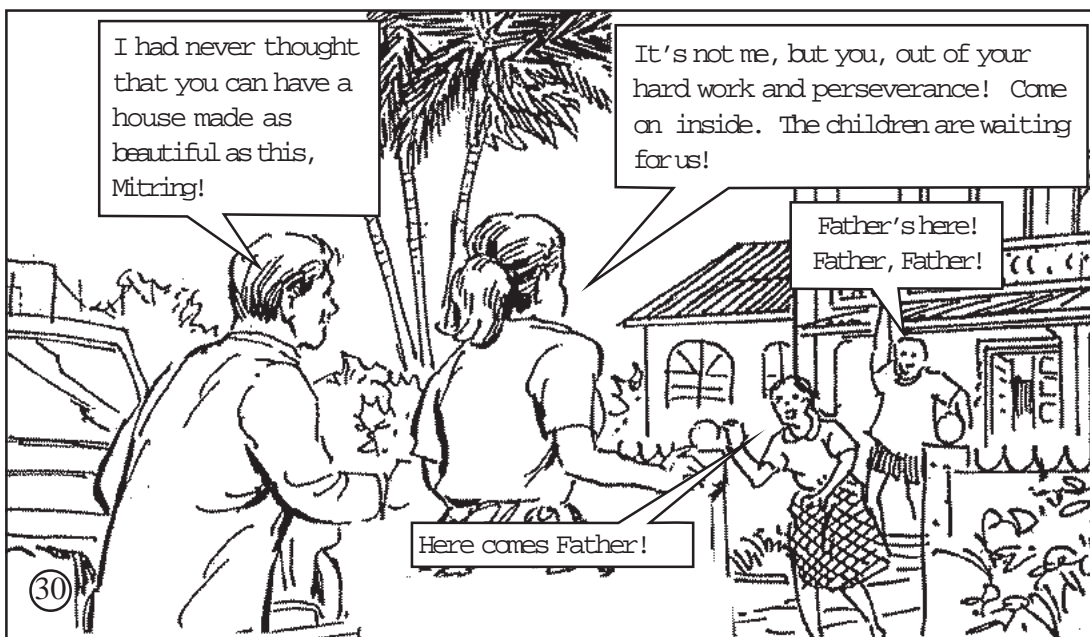


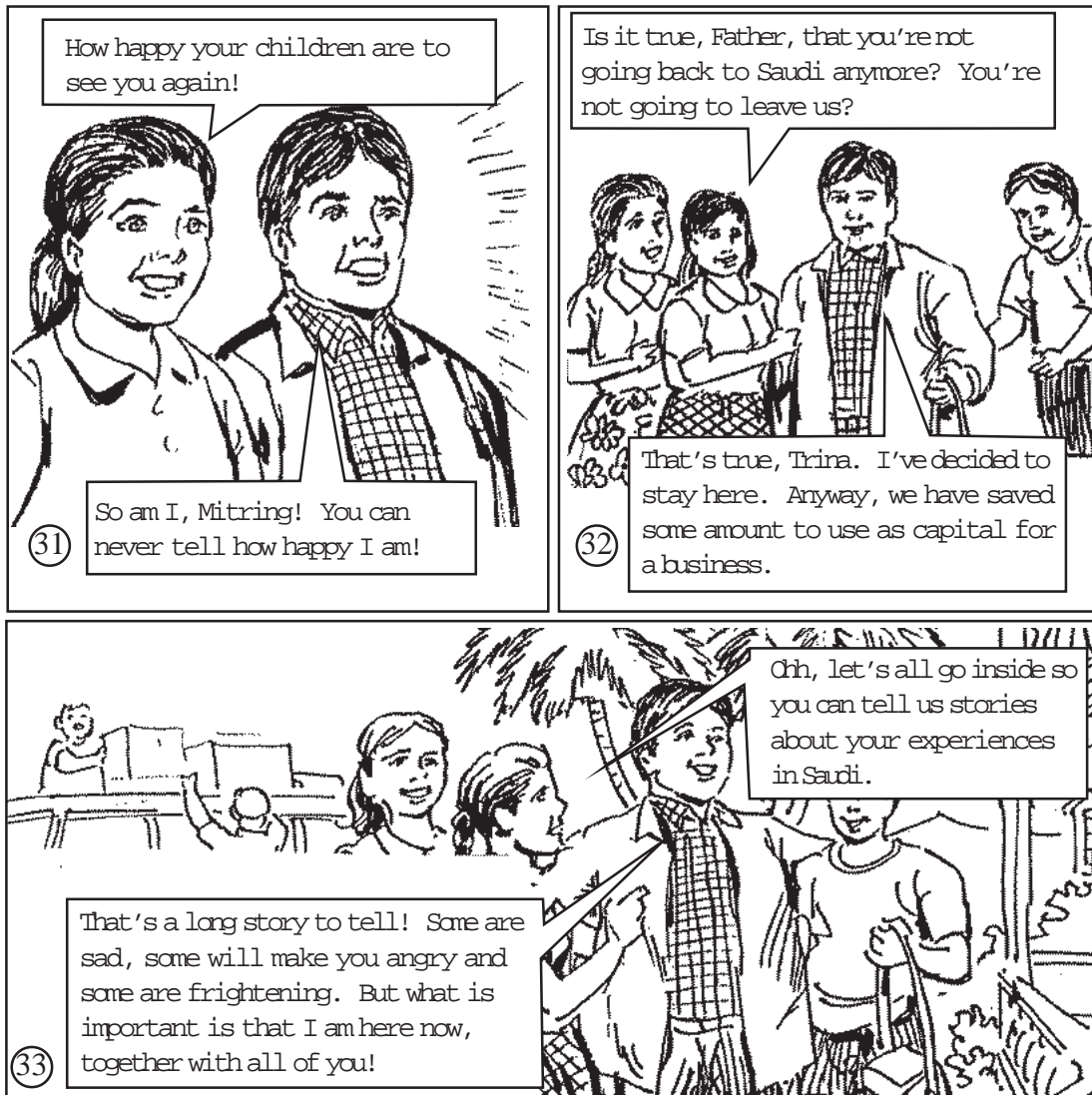
years to finish college. A big part of my life with my family has passed without my being with them. I would want, if possible, to catch up on those lost years before I see them get married.

After one year . . .



Yes, Berto. I had it made out of concrete and two-storeys high. Each of our children has a room and there's a master's bedroom for us.





Let's Think About This

Now that you have finished listening to the tape and/or reading the story, answer the following questions briefly.

1. Who among the OFWs were successful?

2. What made them successful?

3. What about Mario?

4. If you were an OFW, would you have done what Mario did? Why?

Here are my answers:

1. Pedro, the driver, and Mang Berto, the carpenter, were successful OFWs.
2. The following are some of the reasons why these two OFWs became successful.
 - ◆ Both were hardworking.
 - ◆ Both followed the rules and regulations of the country where they were working.
 - ◆ Both did not indulge in vices such as gambling, drinking prohibited liquor, etc., which are totally banned in Saudi.
 - ◆ Both had families who spent wisely the money sent them.
 - ◆ Both of their families wisely invested the money they earned by engaging in small-scale businesses.
 - ◆ Both had faith in the Almighty God.
3. Mario is an example of an OFW who was not so lucky. Mario was arrested and jailed because he did not abide by the rule prohibiting the drinking of liquor. He knew very well that this was not allowed when he attended the pre-departure seminars they were required to attend.
4. If I were an OFW, I would not do what Mario did. I would be like Pedro and Mang Berto who were responsible workers, law abiding and God-loving.

Now, are your answers similar to mine? I'm sure they are!



Let's See What You Have Learned

Interview five OFWs in your neighborhood. If there are no OFWs, interview a person who knows something about working in other countries. In your interview, try to find the answers to the following questions. Write your answers on a sheet of paper.

1. How many of the OFWs in your neighborhood were successful? How many were not so lucky?
2. Has something good happened to their families?
3. What were the reasons why some of them became successful and the others did not?
4. What rules should an OFW follow to become successful?

If you have done your assignment, show this to your Instructional Manager or Facilitator and ask his/her opinion or feedback on your study. If no Facilitator is available, show this to a friend or family member or to a co-learner. You can also show this to a teacher or to the Barangay Captain. Get their opinions or reactions on your work.

You can also compare your answers with the sample answers in the *Answer Key* on pages 40–41.



Let's Remember

In this lesson, you learned about the countries where most OFWs work. You also learned how to locate these countries on the map. Some of these countries are Saudi Arabia, Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Kuwait, Singapore, and the UAE.

In addition, you learned that our OFWs are considered the new heroes because of their dollar remittances to our country. These dollars are being used by our government to import goods, food, machines and equipment to keep our economy going. You also learned that some of our OFWs become successful and some do not. It takes hard work, patience, perseverance, being law abiding and having a strong faith in God to become a successful OFW.

Bring Us Back to the Philippines!

You have learned in Lesson 1 about the success of Mang Berto as an OFW. Now, in Lesson 2, you will learn about some OFWs who did not become successful. This lesson will discuss some of the problems faced by OFWs and how these problems are addressed by our government and the governments of the countries where they are employed. After reading this lesson, you should be able to analyze the issues affecting OFWs and how these issues relate to our community, our country and the global community as a whole. You can also give suggestions on how to resolve issues affecting OFWs. It is also expected that you will put into action at least one of your suggestions.



Let's Study and Analyze

Analyze the picture below.



1. In your opinion, what do you think will happen to the OFWs in the picture? Why are they shouting “Bring us back to the Philippines!”?
2. How does this type of situation affect our country and the countries where the OFWs are working?
3. What can we and our government do in situations like this?

Have you carefully thought of your answers to the questions above?

As you read the rest of the module, think about how you can better answer them.



Let's Read

Many OFWs become successful with their work in other countries. One of them is Mang Berto. There are others though, who are not so lucky. Some of these OFWs became victims of illegal recruiters and were even put in jail because they lacked proper documentation. Others may have unknowingly violated the laws and regulations of the countries where they were working and so, they were jailed. Others may have tried sneaking in illegal drugs, liquor and pornographic magazines. Still others may have been caught gambling, quarreling or were found guilty of criminal acts. Some even became victims of police brutality after being betrayed by their employers or being picked up by policemen with the consent of their employers.

These situations create apprehension among Filipinos, our government and the countries where these incidents happen. You can probably still remember what happened to Flor Contemplacion and Sarah Balabagan. There were diplomatic crises between our country and Singapore and Saudi Arabia because of these incidents. Many countries expressed their concern about the possible outcomes of these incidents. They also intervened and helped solve these crises.

Aside from Flor Contemplacion and Sarah Balabagan, do you know of other OFWs who experienced similar problems in the countries they were working in?

Why do such problems, crises or troubles arise? There are many reasons for these. Our country is also to blame because many OFWs are able to leave without proper documentation.

They become victims of illegal recruiters who thrive because of some corrupt government officials who gave these illegal recruiters the permit to operate. There are some instances though, when the country they work in is to blame. For example, there are some employers who take advantage of OFWs by not paying their agreed salary based on their contracts. Most often, these employers are clever and influential so that even if our OFWs would file complaints against them, their complaints will not be entertained. In the case of women OFWs, many of them are raped, abused and sexually harassed by their employers. More often than not, our women OFWs cannot do anything. They just stay silent, except for Sarah Balabagan who had the courage to fight. She defended herself and killed her employer who abused her.



Can we do something to help solve the problems of these OFWs? We can do a lot. For example, we can inform the public about the following:

- ◆ names of illegal recruiters;
- ◆ guidelines on how to survive as an OFW;
- ◆ how to stay out of trouble while in a foreign country;
- ◆ what to do in case of harassment from employers, where to seek help and how to file complaints; and
- ◆ government agencies such as embassies or consulates where an OFW can seek help while in a foreign country.

What other ways can you think of that can help our countrymen who are planning to work in other countries as OFWs? Think about it then write your answers in the space below.

You may like to discuss your ideas with your Instructional Manager or Facilitator or your friends, family members or co-workers.

Problems of OFWs That Can Affect Diplomatic Relations



Although most of our OFWs can be considered as heroes because of their contributions to our country's economy, there are still some who can be considered scalawags. They destroy the reputation of Filipinos worldwide. They are to blame for the low regard for Filipinos in other countries, including for those who just want to earn for their families. Even the Filipinos here in our country are affected by the bad behavior of these OFWs. Because of this, Filipinos who go abroad are often treated as common criminals. But worse still, their behavior can cause harm to the diplomatic relations between our country and the countries they are working in.

Another problem of our country and other countries as well is illegal entry. Because some OFWs do not have proper documentation, they are always hiding from the authorities, thus, they are called "TNT." "TNT" in Filipino means "tago nang tago." In English, it means "always hiding." More often than not, these Filipinos are victims of illegal recruiters. Aside from these, there are also some individuals who pose as agents of employment agencies. They recruit Filipino workers to work abroad. They charge very high placement fees and some of our unsuspecting countrymen who desire to work as OFWs fall victim to their trickery.

Here are some of the problems that OFWs may encounter if they do not have proper documentation or if they become victims of illegal recruiters.

- ◆ They cannot be given the help they would need as provided for in the laws of the countries where they are working in.
- ◆ They may be abused by their employers.
- ◆ They may be paid less than their agreed salaries.
- ◆ They may be asked to work beyond regular working hours without being paid for overtime work.
- ◆ They may not be provided any free food as stipulated in their contracts.



Let's Try This

After reading the newspaper, listening to the radio or watching television, what other problems of OFWs have you learned of?

Write them in the space below.

Compare your list of problems with the ones described in this lesson.

Read the following news article about OFWs published by the Philippine Overseas Employment Agency (POEA) in 1996.

There are about 900,000 OFWs working abroad for the months of April to September 1996. This figure is 13.2% higher or 105,000 more compared to the 795,000 OFWs for the months of April to September 1995. About 92 % or 831,000 have legal contracts; the rest are illegal aliens.

These OFWs came from the different regions of the country such as the National Capital Region (17%), the Southern Tagalog (17%), Central Luzon (16.7%) and the Ilocos Region (12%). On the other hand, many OFWs from these regions were reported to have no legal contracts: the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao, the Southern Tagalog Region and Western Mindanao.

Of the 900,000 OFWs, 504,000 or 56% are males and 396,000 or 44% are females.

The article also mentioned some of the problems faced by OFWs that our government was requested to address. These are:

- ◆ 446 Filipinos who illegally entered Malaysia were deported to the Philippines;
- ◆ 14 Filipino illegal workers in the Middle East who will be hanged or beheaded;
- ◆ increasing number of OFWs coming home to the Philippines dead;

- ◆ some Filipinos in Japan who were apprehended by the authorities because of illegal drugs;
- ◆ some illegal OFWs who committed suicide; and
- ◆ increasing number of Filipinas working abroad who were raped and abused.

How do you think can these problems be reduced, if not eliminated? Write your answer in the space below.

Now, here are my answers. See how they compare with your answers. Are they similar? If they are, very good!

There are many ways by which these problems can be reduced, if not eliminated. Here are some of them:

- ◆ Our government should launch an honest-to-goodness information campaign against illegal recruiters so as to minimize, if not eliminate them.
- ◆ Our government should strictly enforce the laws against illegal recruiters.
- ◆ There should be proper coordination between the Philippine government and the immigration authorities of foreign countries to ban the entry of OFWs without proper documentation.
- ◆ Our government should strengthen the presence of Philippine consulates and embassies in countries where most OFWs work. These consulates and embassies should provide the necessary legal assistance and other support that OFWs may need in times of crises.
- ◆ The government should try its best to improve the economic condition of the country such that there will be better job opportunities for most Filipino workers here. Thus, fewer Filipinos will need to work in other countries.

Has it ever crossed your mind that the more OFWs there are, the more problems they will bring? Give your comment on this.

Here are my comments. Do we have similar comments? Check them out!

The economic crisis that our country is suffering from will increase the number of Filipinos who will seek employment in other countries. Some may be able to find jobs through accredited employment agencies, but some may be deceived by illegal recruiters. This is especially true in the provinces, where most Filipinos who want to work overseas easily become victims of illegal recruiters. Still others may try their luck even if they know they don't have proper documentation.

If our government will not take the necessary steps to prevent the entry of illegal workers abroad, the problems concerning OFWs will increase. And these problems may then become a threat to the diplomatic relations of our country with other countries to the extent that they may pose a problem to the global community.



Let's Think About This

It is expected that the problems regarding OFWs will increase as the OFWs themselves increase in number. But we can all do our share in solving these problems.



Let's See What You Have Learned

1. Make a list of what **you** can do to help our OFWs. Write your answers in the space below.

2. Show what you have done to your Instructional Manager, a friend or family member and ask for his/her opinion or reaction. Ask for his/her help if your work needs improvement.
3. Seek the help of your Barangay Captain or the members of your Barangay Council in doing your assignment. Then take the initiative to carry out what you have in your list.



Let's Remember

In this lesson, you have learned about some of the problems being faced by our OFWs and how these can affect the diplomatic relations between our country and the countries where they work. Some of these problems are:

- ◆ not being paid the salaries and other benefits stated in their contracts;
- ◆ being abused by their employers;
- ◆ not being paid for overtime work or services rendered beyond regular working hours; and
- ◆ violations by OFWs of the country's laws, rules and regulations.

You have also learned that you can do something to help our country solve some of the problems regarding OFWs. The following are some of the things you can do.

- ◆ Warn your family, friends and neighbors about illegal recruiters.
- ◆ Discuss with anyone you know who wants to be an OFW the distinct culture of the country that he/she will work in.
- ◆ Tell your relatives and friends who are planning to work abroad about how consulates and embassies can help them when they are in trouble.



Let's Sum Up

You have now reached the end of the module. Before you take the post-test to check on how much you have learned, let us briefly sum up the key points of the module. In Lesson 1, you have learned about the countries where most OFWs work. You have also learned how to locate these countries on the map. Some of these countries are Saudi Arabia, Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Kuwait, Singapore, and the UAE.

You have also learned that the OFWs are considered new heroes because of their huge dollar remittances to our country. These dollars are then used by our government to import goods, food, machines and equipment to keep our economy going. You also learned that some OFWs become successful and some do not. It takes hard work, patience, perseverance, being law abiding and having a strong faith in God to become a successful OFW.

In Lesson 2, you have learned about some of the problems being faced by our OFWs and how these can affect the diplomatic relations between our country and the countries where these OFWs work. These problems include violations of work contracts by employers, and illegal entry of OFWs to overseas countries. Finally, you have learned about ways on how you can help our country solve problems regarding OFWs. You can share the information you have gained from the module with your friends, neighbors and relatives who are planning to work abroad.



What Have You Learned?

Answer the following briefly.

1. In what ways can the government help our OFWs? Give at least three examples. (3 points)

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

2. If you are to become an OFW, what should you do so as not to become a problem to our government? Give at least three examples. (3 points)
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
3. Give at least three countries aside from the Philippines where most Filipinos work. (3 points)
 - a. _____ b. _____ c. _____
4. Give at least three benefits enjoyed by the families of OFWs. (3 points)
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
5. Below is a portion from an article about OFWs. Read the article carefully and answer the questions that follow.

Gov't urged to act on return of Pinoys from Japan*

Senator Francisco Tatad yesterday called on the government to immediately act on the possible return of 40,000 OFWs any time this month from Japan after that country announced it will impose stricter immigration laws.

Most of those who will be returning are Filipino female entertainers who face deportation from Japan.

Tatad, chair of the Senate committee on foreign relations, urged the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) and the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) to put together a joint action plan to help the affected Filipino workers.

According to the DOLE and the DFA, the OFWs who will return to the Philippines are workers who do not have the proper travel documents.

Based on records obtained by the DOLE, more than 20,000 OFWs, particularly those who work as entertainers in Japan, would lose their jobs.

DOLE and DFA admitted that some 12,000 OFWs would not be able to come home immediately saying they do not have enough money for their airfare. These OFWs are described as “indigent” and would need official assistance from the government. This could cost the Philippines some ₱124 million pesos.

**Source: Sunday Star Magazine, February 10, 2000.*

- a. Who are the OFWs referred to in the article? (1 point)

- b. What problem are they faced with? (1 point)

- c. How does this situation affect the Philippine government? (1 point)

6. Compute the following:

- a. If an OFW receives a monthly salary of \$1,450.00 a month, how much is its equivalent in Philippine pesos if the exchange rate is \$1.00 to ₱45.00? (1 point)

- b. Antonio receives a monthly salary of \$1,150.00 as a mechanic in Saudi Arabia. How much is his family receiving in terms of Philippine pesos if all of Antonio's salary is remitted to his family every month, given the peso-dollar exchange rate of ₱ 45.00 to \$ 1.00? (1 point)

Compare your answers with those in the *Answer Key* on pages 41–43.

If you got:

- 0 – 7 You need to read the module again.
8 – 11 Review portions of the module you failed to understand very well.
12 – 14 Good! Review only the portions where you got wrong answers.
15 – 17 Very good! You have learned a lot from this module. You can now read another module.



Answer Key

A. Let's See What You Already Know (*pages 2–5*)

1. Here are some of the reasons why some Filipinos go to other countries to work as OFWs.
 - a. There are very few job opportunities for them here in our country.
 - b. They can get higher wages abroad than here in the Philippines. For example, a carpenter here in our country will receive about ₱ 350.00 a day compared to the rate of about ₱1,500.00 a day when in Saudi Arabia. This is because the value of their salary in US dollars become higher when converted to Philippine pesos.
 - c. Some Filipinos who have small parcels of land to cultivate were affected by the long drought due to El Niño. Thus, their sources of livelihood were affected.
 - d. Most Filipinos aspire for a better life. Their only hope to achieve this is by working as OFWs.
 - e. Most of the countries where our OFWs work have higher demand for skilled labor. Our country is rich in human resources, that is, we have an excess of skilled manpower. Thus, our country needs to export skilled manpower.
 - f. Many of our countrymen have talents in singing and dancing. Thus, they go to Japan as entertainers where they earn a lot more than if they are to work here in our country.

(You may have other answers. Please check them out with your Instructional Manager or Facilitator.)

2.
 - a. (8) This could be a problem for the families of OFWs. Their tendency to overspend means that they are not using the money wisely. They need to save or invest in some income-generating activities in anticipation of the time when their family members may no longer work as OFWs. If this happens, they will end back where they were before their family members became OFWs. They would be in a miserable state of life again.
 - b. (4) This is a benefit as children of most OFWs are able to go to school and finish their degrees. With the money sent them, they can pay for their tuition and other school fees.
 - c. (4) This is a benefit. In fact, all OFWs should be encouraged to engage in small-scale businesses as a sustained income source in the event that they will stay permanently in our country.

- d. (8) This is a problem. In fact, some of our OFWs have become victims of illegal recruiters. These OFWs do not have proper documentation, thus they easily become prey to abusive employers.
- e. (8) This is also a problem. Before they leave the country, all OFWs are required to attend a pre-departure seminar. In this seminar, they are briefed on the laws, regulations, customs and traditions of the country where they will go. They are given information on what are prohibited in these countries. But still there are some OFWs who violate the laws of the countries where they work. Incidents like this put our country to shame and in some instances, may even provoke diplomatic friction between our country and the countries where these OFWs work.

3. Countries on the map where many OFWs work include:

Saudi Arabia	Taiwan	Jordan
Japan	Singapore	Malaysia
Hong Kong	UAE	

Filipinos also work in many other countries. Those listed above, however, are the countries where there are large numbers of OFWs.

4. a. The article is about illegal OFWs in Malaysia. The Philippine Embassy in Malaysia is looking after the welfare of these OFWs. By cooperating with the Malaysian immigration authorities, the number of undocumented Filipino workers entering Malaysia will be reduced. Thus, problems regarding these OFWs will also decrease.
- b. There are about 60–100 Filipino workers being deported weekly from Malaysia.
- c. Our government, in cooperation with the Malaysian immigration office, is monitoring the illegal entry of OFWs in Malaysia. This is to prevent these OFWs from working without proper documentation and becoming victims of abusive employers. The Philippine government is also developing a reintegration program to reemploy these OFWs. In addition, the government is providing capital to help OFWs start their own small businesses.

5. a. \$1,250.00 = ₱ 56,250.00

process: multiplication

$$\begin{array}{r}
 1,250.00 \\
 \times 45 \\
 \hline
 62,500.00 \\
 50,000.00 \\
 \hline
 56,250.00 = \text{₱ } 56,250.00
 \end{array}$$

b. \$750.00 = ₱ 33,750.00

process: multiplication

$$\begin{array}{r}
 750.00 \\
 \times 45 \\
 \hline
 375000 \\
 300000 \\
 \hline
 33750.00
 \end{array} = \text{₱}33,750.00$$

B. Lesson 1

Let's Try This (page 9)

These are some other countries where there are OFWs.

- | | |
|------------|-------------|
| 1. Greece | 5. Lebanon |
| 2. Nigeria | 6. Malaysia |
| 3. Israel | 7. Saipan |
| 4. Jordan | 8. Yemen |

You may have also identified some other countries not in the list.

Let's Review (page 11)

- The article is about OFWs who were considered new heroes because of the amount of dollars they are remitting to our country. These dollars are used to import goods, food and machines needed by the country.
- Here are the government agencies mentioned in the article: DOLE and OWWA.

The DOLE (Department of Labor and Employment) established the OWWA (Overseas Workers Welfare Administration) as its attached agency to provide welfare assistance to registered overseas workers and their dependents and to ensure the viability of funds.

The DOLE coordinates with the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) in matters concerning OFWs.

The OWWA provides the following services to OFWs.

- ◆ It protects and promotes the welfare of OFWs and their dependents.
- ◆ It facilitates the implementation of the provisions of the Labor Code concerning the responsibility of the government for the upliftment of OFWs.
- ◆ It provides social, legal, cultural and entertainment programs for the OFWs.
- ◆ It provides skills development services.
- ◆ It undertakes studies and researches for the enhancement of the OFWs' social, economic and cultural well-being.

3. The OFWs in their pre-departure seminars are given information about the positive aspects of our country, people, culture and arts. They are also informed of the culture, religion, values, traditions and laws and regulations of the countries where they will work. They are also taught how to save their hard-earned money. They are also informed of their contributions to the economic development of our country.
4. Some of the problems encountered by OFWs are:
 - ◆ having the tendency to overspend;
 - ◆ being abused by their employers;
 - ◆ not being paid the salary stated in their contracts;
 - ◆ possible deportment and imprisonment; and
 - ◆ experiencing loneliness and hardships because of separation from their families.

(You may also have identified other problems encountered by OFWs.)

Let's Review (page 14)

1. Amount needed by Mang Berto:

₱ 20,000.00—placement fee
 13,000.00—needed by his family
 8,000.00—processing and medical examinations
 12,000.00—pocket money

To get the total amount, we use addition.

Add:

$$\begin{array}{r}
 20,000.00 \\
 13,000.00 \\
 8,000.00 \\
 + 12,000.00 \\
 \hline
 53,000.00
 \end{array}$$

₱ 53,000.00—this is the amount Mang Berto will need.

2. If Mang Berto is able to raise ₱ 50,000.00 from the mortgage of his farm, then he will need only ₱ 3,000.00.

To arrive at the answer, we subtract ₱ 50,000.00 from ₱ 53,000.00.

$$\begin{array}{r}
 ₱ 53,000.00 \\
 - 50,000.00 \\
 \hline
 \textbf{₱ 3,000.00}
 \end{array}$$

— this is the amount Mang Berto will need after getting ₱ 50,000.00 from the mortgage of his farm.

Let's Solve This Problem (page 15)

1. Here are the peso equivalents of the salaries of the OFWs in the story if the exchange rate is ₱ 45.00 to US \$1.00.

a. Perla's salary = US \$600.00

To convert this to pesos, we multiply US \$600.00 by ₱ 45.00, the exchange rate of one dollar to Philippine pesos.

We multiply:

$$\begin{array}{r} 600.00 \\ \times 45 \\ \hline 30000 \\ + 24000 \\ \hline 27000.00 = \text{₱ } 27,000.00 \end{array}$$

The answer is ₱ 27,000.00.

We follow the same procedure for the salaries of Pedro (\$1,000.00), Jose (\$1,150.00), Mario (\$1,200.00) and Berto (\$1,000).

Here are the answers:

Pedro's salary	=	₱ 45,000.00
Jose's salary	=	₱ 51,750.00
Mario's salary	=	₱ 54,000.00
Berto's salary	=	₱ 45,000.00

2. To get the average salary, we add all the salaries of the five OFWs in pesos, then we divide the total by five.

Following the procedure, we add:

$$\begin{array}{r} \text{₱ } 27,000.00 \text{ — Perla's salary} \\ 45,000.00 \text{ — Pedro's salary} \\ 51,750.00 \text{ — Jose's salary} \\ 54,000.00 \text{ — Mario's salary} \\ + 45,000.00 \text{ — Berto's salary} \\ \hline \text{₱ } 222,750.00 \text{ — Total salary of the OFWs} \end{array}$$

Divide the total by five.

$\text{₱ } 222,750 \div 5 = \text{₱ } 44,550.00$ —this is the average salary of the five OFWs.

We can also find the average salary by adding their salaries in dollars, then dividing the total by five and converting the amount into pesos by multiplying it with the exchange rate of ₱ 45.00 to US \$1.00.

Let's try this:

Add:

US \$600.00	—	Perla's salary
1,000.00	—	Pedro's salary
1,150.00	—	Jose's salary
1,200.00	—	Mario's salary
+ 1,000.00	—	Berto's salary
<hr/>		
US \$4,950.00	—	Total salary in dollars

We divide the total by five.

$$\text{US } \$4,950.00 \div 5 = \text{US } \$990.00$$

Then we multiply the quotient (the answer to the division) by ₱ 45.00, the equivalent of US \$1.00 and we get:

$$\begin{array}{r} \$ \quad 990.00 \\ \times 45 \\ \hline 495000 \\ + 396000 \\ \hline \text{₱}44550.00 \end{array} = \text{₱}44,550.00$$

The answer using this procedure is the same as in the first procedure.

3. The combined salary of the five OFWs in one month if they all receive US \$500.00 a month is \$2,500.00.

We arrived at this answer by multiplying US \$500.00 by 5.

$$\begin{array}{r} \text{US } \$ \quad 500.00 \\ \times \quad \quad \quad 5 \\ \hline \text{US } \$2,500.00 \end{array}$$

Convert this to pesos by multiplying by ₱ 45.00.

$$\begin{array}{r} \text{US } \$ \quad 2,500.00 \\ \times 45 \\ \hline 1250000 \\ + 1000000 \\ \hline \text{₱}112,500.00 \end{array} = \text{₱}112,500.00$$

This is the combined salary of five OFWs receiving US \$500.00 a month converted to pesos at the exchange rate of ₱ 45.00 to US \$1.00.

Let's See What You Have Learned (page 24)

(This is a sample answer.)

I interviewed our Barangay Captain and this is what I have learned.

1. In our barangay, there are five OFW families. Of these, four families became successful.
2. The following are observable improvements in their lives as a result of the money being sent to them.
 - ◆ Their houses were improved.
 - ◆ All their children are going to school; some of them are already graduating this school year.
 - ◆ Their wives have put up their own *sari-sari* stores.
 - ◆ Their fathers, who are OFWs, regularly visit them every two years.

The other family is not so lucky because this is what happened:

 - ◆ One of the children got hooked on drugs.
 - ◆ The wife did not use wisely the money sent to them. She even became a victim of greedy money lenders.
 - ◆ And worst, the husband does not visit them regularly, giving the impression that he may have another family in the country where he works.
3. Based on observation, the following are some factors that may contribute to the success of an OFW family:
 - ◆ strong family ties and strong faith in God;
 - ◆ wise use of the money being sent to families;
 - ◆ frequent exchange of letters between members of families; and
 - ◆ investing some of the money sent in income-generating ventures.
4. OFWs should always abide by the laws and regulations of the countries where they are working. They should also have strong faith in God and love for their families. They also have to work hard, be honest and be patient in dealing with their employers and co-workers.

(The answers above are just examples. Your answers may not necessarily be similar. You can ask your Instructional Manager, friend, former teacher or family members for their reactions.)

C. What Have You Learned? (pages 32–34)

1. The following are some of the ways by which our government is helping our OFWs.

With the establishment of the OWWA, the government has the following programs for the benefits of OFWs and their families.

- ◆ Expanded livelihood development programs
- ◆ Loan packages
- ◆ Legal assistance
- ◆ Getting OFWs back into the Philippines

- ◆ Airport assistance
- ◆ Insurance for OFWs
- ◆ Medicare assistance
- ◆ Disability assistance
- ◆ Continuous efforts of our government in improving its relations with countries where we have OFWs to safeguard their rights.
- ◆ Intensification of the government's drive against illegal recruiters.
- ◆ Housing assistance to OFW families through the government's expanded housing program.

(You may have some other answers. You can also ask your Instructional Manager or Facilitator to check your answers.)

2. These are some of the things that I should do to become a successful OFW and not add to the problems of our government.
 - ◆ I will abide by the laws and regulations of the country where I will work.
 - ◆ I will not engage in any illegal activity such as smuggling illegal drugs and smut magazines and drinking liquor.
 - ◆ I will try to save some of the money I will earn in the event that I will no longer work as an OFW.
 - ◆ I will be an honest worker.
 - ◆ I will only secure employment from government-certified or accredited recruiters.
 - ◆ I will remember what I will learn from the pre-departure seminars that I have to attend prior to working as an OFW.
 - ◆ I will advise my family to spend wisely the money I will be sending to them.
 - ◆ I will write to my family often.

(You may have other answers. You can also ask your Instructional Manager or Facilitator to check your answers.)

3. The following are the countries where most OFWs work. Check if the countries you have identified are in this list.

Hong Kong	Kuwait	Switzerland
Nigeria	Japan	Egypt
Italy	Saipan	Saudi Arabia
Sudan	Spain	Yemen
Libya	Bahrain	Portugal
Lebanon	Taiwan	Thailand
Greece	Singapore	Korea
Germany	Qatar	England
Malaysia	Austria	Jordan
Guam		

4. The benefits enjoyed by the families of OFWs include the following:
- ◆ Their children are able to go to school.
 - ◆ They may be able to buy their own house and lot.
 - ◆ They can engage in income-generating projects after saving enough money for capital.
 - ◆ The government is providing a package of benefits and programs for OFWs which they can avail of.

(There may be other answers. You can check with your Instructional Manager or Facilitator.)

5. a. The OFWs referred to in the article are the Filipino entertainers in Japan.
- b. They will be sent back to the Philippines because they do not have proper documentation.
- c. The government would have to shoulder the additional expense of bringing home these Filipinos who have no money for airfare. Also, the unemployment rate of the country would increase.
6. a. Equivalent of \$1,450.00 in pesos with a ₱ 45.00 to a dollar exchange rate is:

$$\begin{array}{r}
 \text{US \$ } 1\,450.00 \\
 \times \quad 45 \\
 \hline
 7\,250.00 \\
 + 5\,800.00 \\
 \hline
 65\,250.00
 \end{array}
 = \text{₱ } 65,250.00$$

The answer is ₱ 65,250.00.

- b. Antonio's salary = \$1,150.00

Equivalent in pesos at ₱ 45.00 per US \$1.00 is:

$$\begin{array}{r}
 \text{US \$ } 1\,150.00 \\
 \times \quad 45 \\
 \hline
 5\,750.00 \\
 + 4\,600.00 \\
 \hline
 51\,750.00
 \end{array}
 = \text{₱ } 51,750.00$$

The answer is ₱ 51,750.00.



Glossary

Deport To force a person to leave a country, especially because he/she has no legal right to be there or because he/she has broken the law.

Diplomatic Relations Arrangement between two countries by which each has representatives in the other country.

Friction Disagreement or unfriendliness caused by people having different opinions.

Indigent Very poor.

Perseverance Continued effort and determination.

Prey Victim; someone or something who receives bad treatment or is harmed by somebody or something else.

Remittance Sum of money (or payment) sent to someone.

Scalawag A person who has behaved badly but is still liked; a deceitful or unreliable person.



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Manila Bulletin. March 4, 2000.

Sunday Star Magazine. February 10, 2000.