

**CEBU GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
Capstone Project Approval**

**HANDBOOK FOR OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS (OFWs)
IN THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA**

By

Felita M. Salvacion

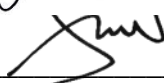
A Capstone Project

Submitted to the Faculty of Cebu Graduate School of Theology


In Partial Fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts in Religious Education major in Christian Education

Approved:

Chairman:  _____

Member:  _____

Member:  _____

Academic Dean:  _____

Mandaue City, Cebu, Philippines

December 2023

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Handbook for Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) in the Republic of Korea



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About the Author



Felita M. Salvacion, a Filipina and a Mindanaoan by origin, arrived in Korea way back in April of 2003. At the age of 27, she became a classroom foreign English teacher in various areas of Puksam, Chilgok and Gumi City, Kyungsangbukdo. She experienced her first fall, spring and first winter which were completely different from the tropical weather in Mindanao. Her husband Kwon, Youngchul and herself raised three daughters Kwon Yoobin, 19, Kwon

Yoona, 16 and Kwon Yoomi, 11 years old.

She became a naturalized Korean in winter of 2005 following the birth of her eldest daughter. Right after that she applied for dual citizenship in the Philippine Embassy, Seoul, South Korea.

She is responsible for the compilation and organization of this guidebook, squeezing down realizations and concerns about her fellow Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) in Korea who chose the path of living unlawful and undocumented.

Furthermore, she successfully paid off her Chevrolet brand new car bearing 7.8% interest rate for 10 months-January until October 2023 single handedly. Living in Korea as a single income earner and the breadwinner of 5 made her aggressively intense to stay frugal. Her twenty years in Korea made her realize the inevitability among OFWs of falling through Korean consumerism which everyone is economically part of. Filipinos are brought up with a different economic system inevitably way farther savvy over navigating debts, bank interest rates and credit cards. Which is why, there's a dire need for us here involved to counterattack this Korean consumerism ultimately in a practical Korean manner. Bear in mind, this handbook serves as a capstone project in completion of her Master of Religious Education in Cebu Graduate School of Theology, Philippines.

Heading Off a Cliff: Beware of Debts

Note: The names below are withheld to protect our OFWs' identity. Bear in mind all situations written below have taken place in real life.

Late January 2023, Tony arrived in Korea together with budding Employment Permit System (EPS) contractual OFWs. In fact, ten of them reached Korea on that snowy day at zero-degree temperature. They were clad in long sleeves and jeans. It was the first freezing cold weather ever felt. According to Tony, what he had in mind was how the Apple iPhone 15 Pro Max looked like. He was curious about what Koreans are carrying in their hands. He was wondering what kind of mobile phones they were having. Sure enough, weeks after his arrival, he got caught up with various "utang". One of them which he recently signed up for, was iPhone 15 Pro Max for a four-year lock-in installment plan directly deductible to his salary. He is set to pay almost four times the cost compared to regular phones on top of such predatory interest. Now, he has started having difficulty paying off his debt in the Philippines and in Korea. He has to spend his weekends planting garlic and onions as his side hustle aside from his job in the paint factory. He has been hospitalized too often suffering from back pain, non-stop coughing and cold. He is still in his early 20's.

Here's Gwen, not her real name, a migrant Filipina married to a Korean national who just turned 30 this month, has started selling off her clothes and jewelry at a very low price. She has been suffering from lung cancer since 2020. Prior to that, she used to have an online selling business and rented a place in the capital Seoul. Her business partner and herself were selling Korean-made clothing during night time until the wee hours. They lacked sleep and they failed to eat real healthy food, they worked until they passed out. Now that her illness is getting worse, chemotherapy has been stopping her from taking after her grade school daughter to her husband's care and she shut down the business leaving her substantial debts in the Philippines and in Korea. She is now setting up a go-fund-me Facebook page to pay off her hospitalization and debts.

Don't Give Your Income Away

Tony and Gwen are just a few examples of how the rest of us succumbed to unhealthy lifestyle patterns — working long hours, lack of sleep, never-ending debts. It does make sense that a lot of us Filipinos are rushing to instant gratification without figuring out our degree of affordability.

According to <https://www.thebalancemoney.com/reasons-to-pay-off-debt-960047>, "Debt is a serious threat to your financial security because it keeps us from making the most of our money. What you spend on debt payments could be stashed away for a rainy day. Unfortunately, this leads many people deeper into debt.

They can't afford to buy things because of the debt they have, so they use more debt to make purchases until they reach the end of their borrowing rope. Debt can lead to extra stress as you worry about how you're going to cover all the debt payments and other living expenses.

A little stress every once in a while, isn't harmful, but constant stress can lead to serious health issues including migraines and even heart attack. The more people you owe, the more bills you have to keep up with and pay. As long as you have outstanding debt, you don't get to make the decisions about your money; your lenders do.

They decide how much you pay them and when you pay them. In some cases, they can increase your interest rate and minimum payment and give you less than two months to adjust your budget to fit them.

As OFWs, our number one wealth building tool is our monthly income, says Dave Ramsey. Practically, we'll be fine financially if we save and invest our income.

Getting loans and debts is one way of giving our income to the lenders. If you sign up for any loans you are giving up your economic freedom and all hell break loose.

Korea Is Sending Philippine Babies Back Home

Here's the story of Dayanne, not her real name. She arrived in Korea 2008 through an invitation from her sister who got married with a Korean national. According to her visa, she had to stay in Korea for three months. Things did not go smoothly between her and her sister, so she left and stayed with her Filipino boyfriend. She did not fulfill her visa requirement and continuously lived as an illegal stayer.

She worked in various private English tutorial academies overworked but underpaid, there were times she missed to receive her monthly wage and was made to hide whenever the authorities conducted unannounced inventory raid operations. Her greatest nightmare came true, she got pregnant and found a private clinic and gave birth to a baby boy. She was charged with an astronomical amount of hospital bills.

But her misery did not end there. According to Korean law, a foreigner who has given birth illegally must immediately send the infant back to her country of origin. She must return to the country to register her child's birth. Undocumented migrants are particularly vulnerable as their residency status prevents them from registering their children.

According to Korean legislation, if the parents of a child born in Korea are of foreign nationality, their child is ineligible to be registered in Korea. This is stated in "the registration regulation in the case registrant is a foreigner" under Article 314 of the Family Relationship Registration Regulation.

Dyanne, knowing her migrant status, contacted a Filipina married to a Korean national whose money-making scheme is hand-carrying infants back to the Philippines and paid her W400,000 or P16,821.91. Such was the payment for the Pinay's roundtrip flight from Korea-Philippines and back. Her family members waited in anticipation in the airport and received the baby from there. Dayanne decided to stay and work in Korea illegally, both of them, her boyfriend and herself. This cycle of events kept repeating, a few years from that on, she gave birth for the second time. She did what she used to do, send the infant back while both her boyfriend and herself stayed in Korea illegally. She missed a lot of birthdays and Christmases, kindergarten and school events, she knew for a fact that she's no longer free to travel back and

much more merely hug her children. She spent most of her time on Facebook posting “I love yous”, and “I miss yous.”

Whereas, among naturalized women in Korea receive a payment of 2 million won (\$1,510.00) after giving birth. The government made the decision to provide children under the age of one 700,000 won (\$528.00) and those under the age of two 350,000 won (\$264.00) a month in 2023. If one has multiple children, a government education university scholarship will be likewise given.

English Teacher Monthly Basic Salary in Korea

Rough estimate of English foreign teachers in South Korea as of 2023 wage rate. Note below calculation has been factually received by the author from January 2023 until March 2024 having proper documents status.

Per month basic salary ----W2,800,000 + meal allowance W200,000 = W3,000,000 (\$2,218.85) (PHP126,437.82)

Less deductions:

- | | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| • Income tax | 56,000 (\$41.30) | (PHP 2,353.00) |
| • Local | 5,680 (\$4.19) | (PHP 238.77) |
| • National pension | 126,000 (\$92.92) | (PHP 5,295.14) |
| • Health Insurance | 99,260 (\$73.20) | (PHP 4,171.38) |
| • Medical Insurance | 12,710 (\$9.37) | (PHP 533.96) |
| • Labor Insurance | 25,200 (18.58) | (PHP 1,058.80) |
| • Total Deductions | W325,650 (\$240.86) | (PHP13,725.65) |
-
- Total Take Home Pay a month **W2,674,350 (\$1,978.00) or (PHP 112,713.36 Philippine Pesos)**

Here’s the minimum wage for Employment Permit System Visa Holder

Per the Employment Permit System, on its publication dated September 23, 2020 (<https://www.eps.go.kr/eo/langMain.eo?langCD=ph>):

Note: One enjoys wages indicated below if only he/she has the proper visa employment status.

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------|------------|
| • Rate per hour | KRW 9,160 | PHP 393 |
| • Overtime/Night Differential | KRW 13,740 | PHP 589 |
| • Rate per day (8 hours) | KRW 73,280 | PHP 3,142 |
| • Rate per month (209 hours) | KRW 1,914,440 | PHP 82,070 |
| • Rate per month (226 hours) | KRW 2,070,160 | PHP 88,750 |

The Ugly Realities Which Undocumented OFWs Face in South Korea

1. If one chooses to stay hiding and duly identified as illegal and undocumented, there's no such thing as pardon. One would be penalized, forcefully deported, completely banned for reentering the country.
2. They can never access or receive severance pay.
3. They are constantly moving, hiding from the authorities. Aggressive and constant raid operations were conducted in the bus terminals, workstations, train stops, churches, anywhere.
4. If they can still land jobs, they would be paid inhumanely.
5. They must work even if they are sick.
6. The employers can just simply pocket the benefits which they supposed to get.
7. The brokers who are responsible for their visa will have their share of penalty.
8. They'll pay an enormous amount of hospitalization bills.
9. They must endure life threatening conditions without any protection from the Labor office.
10. They are not eligible for citizenship or even permanent residency unless they are married to a South Korean citizen or have invested more than \$500,000 in the local economy.

Privileges Of Being Lawful OFWs

As migrant workers with lawful working permits, below are your rights and privileges. Check if you are already aware of them.

1. As a documented worker, one has the right to take vacations. He/she has the right to ask for release from his present job deployment. The Labor office finds a job position fit for him.
2. As a laborer, one has the privilege of sponsoring his family to visit in South Korea. Refer to the Korea Immigration Service.
3. The Ministry of Justice just announced beginning September 2023, registered foreigners can now conduct financial transactions with their mobile phones without having to visit a bank in person. It has launched a 24/7 online service on HiKorea (www.hikorea.go.kr), a civil service portal for foreigners, for reporting lost cards to prevent the misuse of residence cards.
4. Here's security time deposits which are free of bank charges with 3% to 8% more or less interest rate. One can ask freely to change the schedule for direct debit anytime and then, if one requests termination of the policy, he can do so without any bank charges.
5. Here's the love gift vouchers cash card with 10% discount which is downloadable in one's mobile phone, anyone can use that card or in the form of coupons to purchase within the locality and can be replenished every month.
6. Migrant women bearing Korean citizenship receive a payment of 2 million won (\$1,510) after giving birth. The Korean government made the decision to provide children under the age of one 700,000 won (\$528) and those under the age of two 350,000 won (\$264) a month within this year.
7. The cost to attend a public institution from Elementary through High School is free including school lunches. Mix Culture children and parents can avail free Korean language classes. Teachers are also doing house to house private teaching visitations free of all charges. Refer 2018 Welfare Services Guidelines.pdf (mohw.go.kr)

8. Health care system is too accessible to everyone who lives in Korea legally. Refer Ministry of health and welfare (mohw.go.kr)
9. Dental scaling is offered almost free of charge. Ministry of health and welfare (mohw.go.kr)
10. Here's for the bayanihan system, one can avail free vegetables and fruits from our OFW farmers who are pretty willing to share their harvest. But this can only be done if one makes himself be noticed, so with sharing of used clothing during winter, fall and spring.
11. Marked down prices for 30%, 50% are offered on display during nighttime in the malls and grocery stores.
12. Most of all, if one stays legally, he would have peace of mind, knowing that Korean authorities are not running after him.

Further Information About Work, Student, Entertainment Visa, Tenure and Renewal

Below are indicated in [Ministry of Employment and Labor > About Moel > Contact and location homepage](#)

1. **Foreign workers (E-9 visa holders)** who enter Korea through the Employment Permit System are offered various services, including grievance counseling, Korean language education and education about laws on everyday life, to support their stay in Korea. Every local employment and labor office has a council for protection of foreign workers' rights and interests where measures to resolve conflicts between foreign workers and their employees and measures to provide better support to foreign workers are discussed.
2. **The Employment Permit System (EPS)** consists of the non-professional employment visa (E-9) for foreign workers engaged in simple skilled jobs and the visiting employment visa. The EPS was introduced to provide workforce stability in industries suffering from severe labor shortages while protecting the Korean labor market.
3. The national minimum wage in South Korea is now 9,160 KRW per hour or 2,010,580won a month. The minimum wage is applicable to all companies and employees regardless of residency status.
4. The employer must register the foreign workers at the Immigration Office and apply for work visas. That is to say, the employer will receive certificates of alien registration regarding the E-9 visas and have the foreign employees enter Korea. Foreign workers shall receive pre-employment training at a designated training institute within 15 days of their arrival into Korea. During this training period, the training institute will have them receive a medical checkup against epidemic diseases defined under law. Employers and foreign workers shall have the essential insurances. The employer shall provide a departure guarantee insurance to secure severance pay and guarantee insurance to prevent delayed payment of wages, while the foreign workers shall ensure they have personal injury insurance and sufficient funds for return airfare.
5. The workweek in South Korea is eight hours per day, 40 hours per week.
6. All hours exceeding the standard 40 hours are paid as overtime and are regulated by employment contracts/collective agreements. In general, overtime is paid at 150.00% of the standard salary rate, increasing to 200.00% for night work (after 10 pm). There is a maximum total number of overtime hours per week of 12 hours. A maximum of 52 hours can be worked in a week including overtime.

7. The South Korean government has unveiled the latest reforms to its current work week system that will extend working hours. The latest labor reforms will also allow businesses to manage employees.

Overtime hours on either a weekly, monthly, quarterly, half-yearly, or yearly basis. Under the new regulations, employees may work a maximum of 140 hours of overtime per quarter, 250 hours in half a year, and 440 hours in a full year. The latest measures will expand the maximum weekly work hours to 69, up from the 52-hour limit as stipulated in the South Korean Labour Standards Act, although these are currently (in March 2023) being challenged and this element of the reform may yet be removed.

8. The new reform has introduced a system that guarantees a rest period of 11 hours between each working day and allows these hours to be used consecutively with annual paid leave entitlements, but would still require an agreement between the employer and the employee.
9. Paid leave in South Korea is outlined in the employment contract as a minimum of 11 days paid leave a year, following the completion of one-year of service, in addition to public holidays. This leave increases to 15 days of paid leave when the employee is in the second and third years of service.
10. All female employees are eligible for maternity benefits consisting of 90 days of paid leave, increasing to 120 days for multiple/complicated births. The maternity leave is generally taken 45 days before the due date and 45 days after. The maternity payment is made by a combination of social security/governmental payments and employer payments.
11. For larger companies in South Korea, the employer should pay the maternity pay at 100.00% of the regular salary rate for the first 60 days. After which, the social security/government will provide support allowance for the remaining 30 days (capped two million KRW per 30 days) and with the employer having the option to provide the sum of money for any difference to the employee's regular salary rate. For small companies, the social security/government supports the employer throughout the 90 days.
12. Parents of children under the age of eight can request a period of full-time or part-time childcare leave of up to one year. A request for leave should be sent to the employer at least 30 days before the start of the leave period, with an allowance paid by the social security/government. With effect from 1st January 2022, should one or both parents take their parental leave during the first year of their child's birth, both parents will be paid 100% of their monthly income, rather than as previously, only one parent received 100% while the other received a reduced payment of 80%.
13. For any work-related injury, employees are entitled to receive three months of paid leave with 70.00% of the employee's regular salary.
14. Employers must adopt a retirement benefit system. The default is the statutory severance pay system, whereby, upon the termination of employment for any reason (including employee resignation), where the employee has been employed for at least one year, the employee is entitled to severance pay of 30 days' average wages (i.e., all wages generally including any bonus paid within the previous 3 months) for each year of continuous service.
15. Any foreigners coming to work in South Korea will need to be registered with the local immigration authorities within the first three months of their stay. The type of work permit and employment visa differs by the role in which the employee will be undertaking. To allow an employee to stay in South Korea for more than 90 days, the appropriate visa needs to be sought:

16. **E-1 Professor Visa** is aimed at foreigners to deliver lectures or do research in their field; it is valid for one year and can be renewed annually.
 17. **E-3 Research** is aimed at foreigners invited by a public or private institution to research natural science or advanced technology; it is valid for one year and can be renewed annually.
 18. **E-4 Technological Guidance** is aimed at foreigners invited by a public or private institution to provide expertise in natural science or high technology; it is valid for one year and can be renewed annually.
 19. **E-5 Special Profession** is aimed at foreigners that are architects, lawyers, physicians, accountants, and other internationally licensed professionals and hold Korean government permission to practice their field of expertise is valid for one year and can be renewed annually.
 20. **E-6 Culture and Art** are aimed at foreigners who participate in musical, artistic, and literary activities; it is valid for one year and can be renewed annually.
 21. **E-7 Specially Designed Activities** are aimed at foreigners invited to participate in activities designed by the Korean Ministry of Justice through a public or private organization. It is valid for one year and can be renewed annually.
 22. **D-5 Long-Term New Coverage** is aimed at reporters working for foreign media (broadcast, newspapers, magazines, etc.). The single-entry visa is valid for three months and can be renewed in one-year intervals.
 23. **Alien Registration Card (ARC)** . Most people who are staying in South Korea for more than six months also need to obtain their Alien Registration Card (ARC).
- Source: [Ministry of Employment and Labor> About Moel> Contact and location](#)

Practical Frugality – the Korean Way

1. **Accept your own ethnicity** — we can never be Korean ourselves, exactly means, we can't have lighter skin type, taller, long pointed nose, thinner figure, name it, we are what we are. We do have our own Filipino ethnic identity and we must embrace what we possess. Simply put, we must all learn to be content.
2. **Practice frugality** — always bear in mind our priority why we are here and that is to make money. Save, save, save, save is the way to go. If the company provides meals, grab that chance and enjoy them as being provided for you. If coffee is provided, have your coffee in a sachet, drinking in coffee shops would just dry your money down. If you are allowed to cook your own food, shop in an open street market, you'll get a real fresh deal of vegetables and fruits and use cash. Eat at home and stay out of food delivery.
3. **Track down your budget** — jot down your income each month. Write down all your expenses and the money you owe. At the end of the month, try to analyze which expenses eat out most of your budget and figure out how you would reduce them. Be vividly clear of the predatorial interest you've been throwing away. For those Korean wives, this makes your husbands proud of you.
4. **Stay away from toys**, — impulse purchases of iPhone 15, branded shoes, clothing and the like make you just regret later. Korean gadgets do not last long, they only have at least 2 years of life span. Buy phones in the same internet provider and have your Wi-Fi, cable connection in the same internet company. We are all five in the family. I only paid monthly ₩170,000 Korean won (\$125.22) including mobile, internet connection, TV cable and

homelot. Remember, I signed up for 5 Samsung phone units brand new for each of us in the family in the KT company.

5. **Download an app where groceries are on sale.** Same is true with refilling your car tank. You may download “OIL NOW”, 오일 나우 to find out which station offers the cheapest fuel charges.
6. **Stay at home** — don’t use your holidays for extravagant trips to Seoul or Busan. Instead allocate a portion of your budget for occasional domestic trips if you can’t help it.
7. **Track your bills.** Have a monthly calendar where you have all written bills are going to be due. Get a budget book or any software or spreadsheet will do.
8. **Use cash instead of that credit card.** You’ll really feel the heaviness of the cash you throw away compared to that card.
9. **Download subway or bus Korean apps.** You will be taking the subway trains 90% of your time if you’re in Seoul. You’ll be taking buses daily anywhere in the country as well and you’ll find them useful as you move around. Taking taxis costs you a lot of your money.
10. **Buy your toiletries in Daiso** “다이소.”-Most of the items are priced low compared to the ones in malls.
11. **Koreans do not expect tips.** You do not need to do it either.
12. **Attend Sunday worship service diligently.** It would arm you with protective gears from earthly urges.

Warning: Never do these in Korea

1. Never let someone use nor borrow your bank debit card nor credit card, it is considered unlawful in Korea.
2. Never let anyone train you driving except your Korean husband right after you got your license. As a couple, you are both car owners. Once you are caught, your license would be canceled. Enroll in a driving school and go through written tests and pass all the necessary driving tests.
3. Never let anyone use your Social Security Identification card for whatever purpose. If caught, you’ll be penalized heavily or risk deportation.
4. Never send all your salary to your loved ones in the Philippines. Set aside a portion of it , open a bank account time deposit. Everyone who has the document can avail from 3% up to 8% bank interest. If you want to change the schedule of the auto debit, there’s no such thing as bank charges. You can cancel it anytime you want without any fees. Say, you have a time deposit of W200,000 for 4 years, you’ll get W9,600,000 plus the interest (W200,000x48 months=W9,600,000). That is \$7,100.33.
5. Never involve yourself in any kind of illegal drugs, even if one is tested for weed in his system, he’ll be heavily incarcerated. Under South Korean law, Koreans and foreigners are prohibited from using any illegal drugs. If caught, one faces incarceration up to five years and a fine of up to 50 million Korean won. There’s heavy stigma over drugs. Even if one took it outside Korea but is tested here, one suffers incarceration automatically.
6. Never involve yourselves in any global bitcoins, stock or cryptocurrencies. There’s nothing there for us OFWs to gain from any of these. All forms of gambling are not allowed, they’re illegal. Simply say no to these.

7. Never take videos or photos without consent of anyone in public places. One can not take videos or photos to babies, dogs and upload those in social media, one surely faces heavy consequences if reported.
8. Cigarette smoking in-non designated smoking areas is considered illegal. If you get caught, you'll be fined.
9. Never follow trends. The last time I checked, trends change every year.

News Articles / Press Releases

News Article: [Justice Ministry Operation Nabs 11,000 Illegal Immigrants](#)

The Korea Times has reported, the Justice ministry operation nabs 11,000 illegal immigrants-dated September 19th, 2023, “A joint force from the central government has apprehended over 11,000 illegal immigrants, with a large number ordered to leave the country. The crackdown found 6,114 undocumented people, with 5,482 of them ordered to leave the country immediately. Another 142 of those caught have been fined and the rest held for questioning. It aimed to tackle two major issues: illegal drug trading and employment brokerage. Illicit drug trading among young adults, including teenagers, has recently become a serious social issue, according to the Justice Ministry.

The authorities have found 15 illegal immigrants who either consumed or distributed illicit drugs. Twelve were found to be working without legal papers at a ship repair shop in Busan's Yeongdo District and five of them tested positive for illicit drug use. In Jinju, South Gyeongsang Province, 12 people were apprehended at a karaoke bar without the necessary legal work permits. Five of them tested positive for illegal drugs. The justice ministry said they will be deported from the country and banned from reentry. The crackdown also nabbed and fined 1,290 illegally hired foreign employees.

Twenty illegally operating job brokers were uncovered, five of whom were arrested. In a separate search for illegal immigrants in areas most heavily populated by foreigners across the country, authorities found 5,476 undocumented immigrants who have been asked to voluntarily leave the country. Justice Minister Han Dong-hoon said following the crackdown the authority will strictly monitor illegal immigrants and those who provide support to illegal activities.”

The Ministry also said that there are 400,000 undocumented and illegal foreign workers in the Republic of Korea (ROK) and a portion of this number are Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW).

The Korean government has intensified its efforts to crack down on those staying or working illegally resulting in around 20,000 illegal migrants leaving the country since last year. Raid operations are conducted anytime of the day, at random places—restaurants, farms, factories while at work, even during worship service.

There are illegal immigrants who left South Korea through the voluntary departure program already. Early this year, raid operations were mainly conducted in fields which were considered causing social harm, such as entertainment services, and in industries closely linked to local people's jobs, such as logistics and delivery.

Undocumented immigrant workers who were caught in the crackdown were given immediate departure orders, others were fined and the rest are under investigation. The ministry said those illegal migrants who left the country through the voluntary departure program were granted fine exemption and suspension of entry restrictions. In addition, fines were imposed on employers caught hiring illegal migrants and illegal employment brokers.

Press Release: [REPUBLIC OF KOREA MINISTRY OF JUSTICE](#)

The Ministry of Justice offers a voluntary departure program for foreign nationals in illegal status. Starting September 11, 2023, illegal foreign residents who voluntarily depart Korea by December 31, 2023 will be granted a fine exemption and suspension of entry restrictions.

Overview - Foreign nationals in illegal status who voluntarily depart Korea by December 31, 2023 will be granted a fine exemption and suspension of entry restrictions.

※ You are ineligible for this program if:

- ① your status became illegal after the effective date of this program (Sep 11, 2023)
- ② you have illegally crossed the border into Korea
- ③ you have used a forged or altered passport
- ④ you are a criminal offender
- ⑤ you have failed to comply with a departure order

- Required Documents - passport, Statement of Voluntary Departure, and boarding pass
- In accordance with the existing Preliminary Declaration of Voluntary Departure System, applicants of this program must declare their voluntary departure by visiting an immigration office or filing an online declaration. After being granted a fine exemption and suspension of entry restrictions, you must leave Korea via ports or airports.
- ☞ Declaration must be submitted at least three days before this program expires. (Holidays are not counted)
- For more information, please contact the Immigration

Contact Center at 1345 or visit HiKorea(<http://www.hikorea.go.kr>) or Korea Immigration Service (<http://www.immigration.go.kr>). Contact information Service hours (weekdays)
 Languages available (☎1345) Immigration Contact Center of the Ministry of Justice
 09:00~22:00 English, Chinese 09:00~18:00 Japanese, Vietnamese, Thai, Indonesian, Russian, Mongolian, Bengali, Urdu, Nepali, Cambodian, Burmese, French, German, Spanish, Tagalog, Arabic, Tamil Ministry of Justice

Press Release: **Third Joint Government Crackdown of Illegal Staying Foreigners**

The Ministry of Justice is in cooperation with the "Illegal Staying Foreigners International" which is currently being implemented to implement the "Third joint government crackdown of illegal staying foreigners."

👉 <https://zrr.kr/BCF3>

- 📺 This joint venture is to strictly counter violations of stay order, to enable the legal foreign manpower systems such as expansion of skilled personnel, seasonal work.
- 📺 Also, illegal foreigners who were intercepted during this joint breakup are a way to take strict measures such as forced demolition and banning entry after imposing criminal charges. On the other hand, criminal fines and entry regulations are exempted for illegal foreigners who voluntarily leave the country using the current special autonomous international system.

▶ Minister of Justice Han Dong-hoon said that "We will do our best to establish a consistent stay, flexible expansion and strictly cutting off illegal stay as a basic policy of our government."

Press release: 'Innovative Expansion Plan (K-point E74)' for 35,000 skilled and functional personnel will be fully implemented from September 25

👉 <https://zrr.kr/u2ll>

▶ The Ministry of Justice will fully implement the 'Innovative Plan for Expansion of 35,000 Skilled and Functional Personnel (K-point E74)', which has comprehensively taken into consideration the opinions of the economic and industrial sectors, which has comprehensively considered national interest and social integration, regional balance development, etc.

The basic direction of this scheme (K-point E74) is that foreign workers with scheduled level Korean speaking skills must meet at least 200 out of 300 points (K-point E74) and if they are recommended by companies that have been working for more than one year based on the application date, they allow conversion to a skilled disability (E-7-4) visa, and for at least two years after receiving a skilled disability (E-7-4) visa

At the National Financial Strategy Summit held on June 28, Minister of Justice Han Dong-hun announced plans to expand foreign skilled and functional personnel sector, and gathered various opinions, including visiting industrial sites and municipalities to inspect the manpower situation, and listening to their love issues.

Minister of Justice Han Dong-hoon said, "In this case, the opinion of companies and municipalities will be prioritized to consider the opinions of foreign workers who will contribute to the national interest during the visa review for the conversion of skilled personnel (E-7-4). In a situation where there is an invisible war in the world for securing talent, the Ministry of Justice announced that it will continue to prepare various policies in time so that foreign science and technology talents and skilled technical personnel can contribute to the development of South Korea.

Skilled Disabled Disabled Personnel (E-7-4) Transfer applications do not need to visit the entry and foreign application (offices etc.) 9. 25. Online electronic complaints will be conducted on the High Korea website www.hikorea.go.kr and a dedicated screening team consisting of 21 employees will quickly conduct the screening.

News article: 4 of 10 Foreign Nationals on Korean Language Visa Turn Into Illegal Immigrants

https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2023/10/281_360788.html?fbclid=IwAR1v34jJ_gZMe5wog4av4xHiSEpCXT6U_X9flAqZnn4swVmTfAawjlDEiVI

Four out of every 10 foreign nationals who entered Korea on a language study visa turned into illegal immigrants, data showed.

Out of the total 64,904 foreign nationals who had entered the country on the D-4 General Trainee Visa as of June, 25,898, or 39.9 percent, switched into undocumented immigrants, according to the justice ministry data released by Rep. Cho Jung-hun of the Transition Korea party.

The D-4 visa is issued mostly to Korean language trainees. The justice ministry categorizes foreign nationals on study visas who fall out of touch with authorities or whose whereabouts become unknown as illegal immigrants.

Of the total foreign entrants on the D-4 visa, 22,760 Vietnamese people remained illegal immigrants, followed by 1,054 Uzbekistan nationals and 820 Mongolians.

Of those who entered Korea on the D-2-1 student visa, which is issued to foreign nationals wishing to study for a two-year college degree, 27.3 percent, or 2,790, had turned into illegal immigrants, the data also showed.

Cho urged a review of the country's foreign student policy, saying the visa screening process for them should be carried out in a more thorough manner. (Yonhap)

Press Release: [Korean Foreigner Registration Certificate Verification Service Officially Launched](#)

Residence Card Verification Service: In case a registered foreigner needs to carry out identification verification with his/her residence card when using a mobile app for banking services, the registered foreigner may submit the Residence Card (including Permanent Resident Card and Overseas Korean Resident Card) information to the financial company, which will then transmit this data to the Ministry of Justice. The Ministry of Justice will conduct a comparison of the card details and the photo with previously stored data, and reply back to the financial company, confirming the card authenticity in real-time.

Because there was no system for verifying Residence Cards until now, registered foreigners had to face a cumbersome burden when dealing with issues such as opening a bank account due to the requirement of in-person visits to the bank. ※ Verification services for residence registration cards, drivers' licenses, and passports are currently provided for only Korean nationals.

With the amendment of the Immigration Act in December 2022, and the establishment of the 'Residence Card Verification Service' system that links the MOJ and financial companies, registered foreigners can now conduct financial transactions with their mobile phones without having to visit a bank in person.

The rollout of this service will initially commence with the banking sector, and after stabilizing the system and gaining a better understanding of the demand from financial companies, its implementation is planned to expand to non-banking financial institutions. ※ The list of financial companies that participate in providing this service will be uploaded on the Korea Immigration Service website (www.immigration.go.kr) and HiKorea (www.hikorea.go.kr).

Meanwhile, following the implementation of the Residence Card Verification Service, MOJ has launched a 24/7 online service on HiKorea (www.hikorea.go.kr), a civil service portal for foreigners, for reporting lost cards to prevent the misuse of residence cards.

News Article: [Sinan County's surprise offer to prevent local school's closure draws attention from parents - The Korea Times](#)

Sinan County in South Jeolla Province has been grabbing the attention of parents after its recent announcement that it will provide jobs offering more than 3 million won (\$2,200) a month in addition to free accommodation to those willing to move to one of its small islands with their children. The county announced the plan on Oct. 16, aiming to save the elementary school located on Hong Island, which is at risk of closing down due to an insufficient number of students. Inviting parents who are raising elementary school-aged children, the county promised to provide jobs offering 3.2 million won a month, free accommodation that will include more than two bedrooms and an annual allowance of 400,000 won per child. "This allowance, which is offered only in Sinan to children under the age of 18, comes from profits of solar power generation here," an official from the county office said. "The amount will increase to 800,000 won next year."

Since the announcement was made, phone calls from parents across the country, including those living in Donghae of Gangwon Province, have flooded in regarding the unique offer, the office said, adding that a broadcaster's YouTube video that delivered the news about this policy has generated more than 1.5 million views. The elementary school on the island, which opened in 1949, is facing possible closure, as the school currently has only three sixth graders who will graduate next year. The county office plans to hold a briefing session soon to offer information regarding school facilities and accommodation to those willing to move to the island. The county office official said 12 families will be invited to the session, which will also include opportunities to talk to local residents about what life is like on the island.

"We will then select four families on a trial basis and offer accommodation with favorable settlement conditions," the official said. The program will give priority to families with more elementary school-age children. If families have equal conditions, the office will give priority to those with younger children. Park Woo-ryang, governor of Sinan County, said that a region can survive only when a local school survives, vowing to do its best to save this small elementary school. "As we confirmed an explosion of interest in the policy to attract students to the elementary school on Hong Island, we will continue to come up with similar policies to save other schools that face similar situations." Hong Island, with a population of 500, is called the "jewel of the southwestern sea," as the entire island is designated as a natural reserve. The island is situated 107 kilometers west of Mokpo, the most densely populated city in South Jeolla Province, and takes 2 hours and 40 minutes by fast ferry.

Information Sources:
Handbook for Overseas Filipino Workers in South Korea

This contains useful information, press releases, news articles, guidelines, and essays about Filipino Overseas Workers (OFW) who are living, working, studying, and starting families in the Republic of Korea (ROK). This aims to provide information about various services and the types of conditions they might fall into if they violate their visa requirements. As for specific information, such as required documents, please refer to the Immigration/Stay Guide at the HiKorea website or refer to the Immigration Contact Center (☎1345).

- [Press Releases - Mobile Financial Transactions Available to Registered Foreigners Starting from September 18, 2023 \(moj.go.kr\)](#)
- [Korea Immigration Service \(moj.go.kr\)](#)
- https://www.moj.go.kr/moj_eng/index.do
- [Ministry of Education \(moe.go.kr\)](#)
- [한국장학재단 \(kosaf.go.kr\)](#)
- [Ministry of health and welfare \(mohw.go.kr\)](#)
- [창업기숙사 온라인 홍보관 \(kosaf.go.kr\)](#)
- [2018 Welfare Services Guidelines.pdf \(mohw.go.kr\)](#)
- [다문화 가족지원 포털 다누리 \(liveinkorea.kr\)](#)
- [Ministry of Employment and Labor> About Moel> Contact and location](#)