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**Diasporic Communication Engagement with Government and Non-Government**

**Bodies: An Autoethnographic Study of an Overseas Filipino Worker**

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### Diasporic Communication Engagement with Government and Non-Government

#### Bodies: An Autoethnographic Study of an Overseas Filipino Worker

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18 September 2024

**Acceptance Page:**

This paper prepared by **Fritzie Kaye C. Plamenco** with the title: “**Diasporic Communication Engagement with Government and Non-Government Bodies: An Autoethnographic Study of an Overseas Filipino Worker**”

is hereby accepted by the Faculty of Information and Communication Studies, U.P. Open University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Program.

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## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH



Fritzie Kaye C. Plamenco is from Pulilan, Bulacan, Philippines. She is a licensed Nutritionist-Dietitian who graduated from the University of the Philippines Diliman with a degree in Community Nutrition. She did a career shift to Digital Project Management and moved to Singapore for employment in 2011.

She has since gained valuable work experience in various multinational companies such as Good Health Naturally UK, Havas, Ogilvy & Mather, McCann WorldGroup, General Motors International, and INSEAD. Her responsibilities were further expanded to cover Brand Marketing Communications, Customer Experience and Product Ownership.

Fritzie enrolled in the Master of Development Communication program at University of the Philippines Open University to solidify her credentials in the field, aiming to make a greater difference in the world by using communication as a driver for social change.

In 2023, she was hired by Hilti Group and relocated from Singapore to Paris, France for a Product Owner role in its Global Social Media Team.

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## DEDICATION

To Jesus, my Lord and Savior, in whom I live and move and have my being.

To my parents: my late Papa, who I will never cease to miss everyday and has imparted in me strength amidst any kind of adversity; and my Mama who is the woman I forever strive to become and a true epitome of resilience, grace, and beauty.

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To all OFWs all over the world, may this research contribute to the betterment of the diaspora in one way or another.

## **ABSTRACT**

This qualitative autoethnographic study explores the communication dynamics between Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) and government and non-government bodies through a personal lens. Drawing on the author's own experiences as a long-time OFW and integrating self-reflective narrative with qualitative data, the study examines the nature of communication engagement that this diaspora have with the government of the Philippines and that of the country where they are deployed for work, as well as with non-government bodies.

The research highlights the complexities and challenges faced by OFWs as they navigate through their daily communicative interactions, whether for personal or professional reasons. By weaving anecdotes from personal memory that allow self-reflection and then researching the self in relation to others, the study provides an in-depth understanding of the multifaceted nature of these engagements.

The findings emphasize the need for improvements in communicating with the OFW diaspora through various platforms with a more responsive service delivery.

This autoethnographic approach offers unique insights into the lived experiences of OFWs and provides practical recommendations for policymakers and service providers aiming to refine communication strategies and enhance support for this significant demographic.

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## Chapter I

### RATIONALE

#### Diaspora Communication Engagement

Diaspora engagement is defined as “the way external stakeholders such as governments and other relevant organisations interact with members of its diaspora, in addition to how the diaspora community itself cooperates with its people and institutions as internal stakeholders” (Fianko, 2021).

According to Fianko, government missions in other countries, together with other stakeholders, need to practice new approaches in engaging with the members of their diaspora, “in addition to dealing with humanitarian, political and socio-economic concerns” (Fianko, 2021).

Fianko (2021) further highlights that digital communication is the key to bridge the communication gap in effective diaspora engagement. Technology is a major part of the fiber of diasporic communication engagement.

For instance, the COVID-19 pandemic became a way to “digitize” the world, and this resulted in traditional mass media communication channels such as television and radio being complemented by modern omni channel platforms. It changed the way people communicate.

In the diasporic context, it proved that communication engagements within and outside of the diaspora is flexible given different circumstances and the technology that is made available to its members.

## Who are the OFWs?

Marasigan & Townsunder (2022) defines OFWs as “Filipinos who, within the past 12 months, have been engaged in an activity for which they are enumerated in a country where they are not a resident”.

Another way to define OFWs is by distinguishing them from other categories of individuals living abroad. OFWs differ from the following groups:

1. Permanent Migrants: These are Filipinos whose stay in another country does not depend upon having a job (“Routledge Handbook Of The Contemporary Philippines”, 2018). This group includes:
  - Permanent Residents: Persons with long-term residency but are not citizens of the country
  - Naturalized Citizens: Individuals who have acquired citizenship in a foreign country through legal processes.
  - Dual Citizens: Those holding two citizenships at the same time
  
2. Irregular Migrants: These are Filipinos who lack the proper documentation or valid permits necessary for their stay. This includes:
  - Undocumented Migrants: People who are not legally authorized to live or work in the host country
  - Overstayers: Individuals who stay in a foreign country beyond the expiration of their residence, employment or student visa or permit.

Understanding these distinctions helps clarify the specific circumstances and legal statuses of OFWs compared to other groups of expatriates (Marasigan & Townsunder, 2022).

OFWs are covered within a third category known as "temporary migrants." This group includes Filipinos whose stay abroad depends on securing employment in the foreign land and who are, in general, expected to return to their home country when their employment contracts end (Marasigan & Townsunder, 2022).

Unlike permanent migrants, whose residence abroad is not directly related to employment, temporary migrants' legal status and residence in the country are directly linked to their work arrangements and employment contracts (Marasigan & Townsunder, 2022).

The importance of this research lies in the fact that Filipinos are present in almost all countries, living and working as migrants. Greener pastures in the form of better employment opportunities, higher wages, and more exemplary social and political outlooks offered by the more developed countries entice the skilled and talented Filipinos to leave the homeland (Massey et al., 1993; Kalaw, 2015).

Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW) are hailed as heroes in the Philippines, not only because of the self-sacrifice for the sake of family, but also because of the contribution to economic development through the personal remittances that are sent to loved-ones back home (Papas, 2023). The nation has harnessed and benefitted well from this diaspora power related to remittances and how financial investments are channelled to the homeland.

OFW remittances no doubt help to raise the standard of living of their families and through this, affects the economy by making the Philippine peso stronger. They have a positive effect in lowering the cost of imported goods so that the rest of the Filipinos can purchase them for less (Philippine Daily Inquirer, 2019). In 2022, the total remittances reached 197 billion pesos (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2023).

Among the 10 million Filipinos who live abroad, around 1.96 million are registered OFWs or Filipino migrant workers (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2022). Among the total Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) recorded in 2022, 1.94 million are known as Overseas Contract Workers (OCWs), which are those with current employment contracts.

Figure 1. Total Remittances of Overseas Filipino Workers in cash and in kind (in million pesos):



Besides these numbers, there have been initial reports that the 2023 numbers were likely to be the “all-time high” for the OFW diaspora and that the Department of

Migrant Workers (DMW) has foreseen that there are more Filipino workers to be deployed in 2024. There are also partial records presenting 2,525,140 OFWs around the world (Great Ways Manpower, 2023).

In terms of geographical locations, 2022 numbers indicate that OFWs are spread across the continents: Asia (80.8%), Europe (9.0%), North and South America (6.3%), Australia (2.9%), and Africa (1.0%) (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2023).

Approximately 23.0% work in Saudi Arabia, followed by 13.7% in the United Arab Emirates. Other Asian countries with significant numbers of OFWs included 7.7% in Kuwait, 6.1% in Hong Kong, 5.8% in Qatar, and 5.0% in Singapore (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2023).

Out of the total number, the majority of OFWs are women, which were a total of 1.13 million (57.8%) in 2022, compared to 828 thousand (42.2%) of the male population (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2023).

### **OFW Affairs Management**

From 1982, the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) has been the government agency looking after the benefits of the overseas employment program of the Philippines. It was assigned to monitor and supervise all activities related to the recruitment and manning agencies in the country (Wikipedia, 2023).

In December 2021, the Senate of the Philippines voted to pass a bill that created the Department of Migrant Workers (DMW), which superseded the POEA. Under Republic Act No. 11641, this new department was created to consolidate all the

agencies that serve to address the needs, issues, and complaints of OFWs. DMW is aimed at becoming the “dedicated service arm” that will make all recruitment, repatriation, and reintegration processes easier for OFWs (Philippine Daily Inquirer, 2021).

Apart from the dissolution of the POEA, the DMW is now merged with other offices that used to be under different departments (Philippine Daily Inquirer, 2021):

- Office of the Undersecretary for Migrant Workers’ Affairs formerly under the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA)
- Office of the Social Welfare Attaché formerly under the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD)
- Philippine Overseas Labor Office (POLO) has been renamed Migrant Workers Office (MWO) and attached to the DMW (Philippine Embassy Singapore, 2023)
- International Labor Affairs Bureau
- National Maritime Polytechnic
- National Reintegration Center for OFWs

In addition, the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) formerly under the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) is now an attached agency to DMW (Philippine Daily Inquirer, 2021).

The DMW aims to impose stricter measures towards the protection of the rights and welfare of OFWs, particularly domestic workers, according to the late Secretary Susan Ople. The department’s guiding compass includes the objectives that are set in

the United Nations (UN) Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration used for negotiations of bilateral labor pacts with other countries, as well as the following initiatives (GOVPH, 2022):

- Conducting regular performance reviews and assessment of licensed recruitment agencies;
- Providing employment contracts specific to the country of deployment, based on existing labor laws, policies related to migration, and bilateral labor agreements;
- Implementing “strict guidelines to ensure that only qualified and fully trained domestic workers are deployed abroad”.
- Mandating a viewing session of a video that aims to bring awareness about one’s rights and welfare as an OFW before the actual signing of job contracts;
- Maintaining a blacklist of corrupt manning agencies as well as a “white list” of those that uphold “fair and ethical standards and principles”;
- Updating POLO (MWO) verification guidelines as needed to better address gaps and protect OFWs at all times.

In summary, the DMW aims to “prioritize welfare cases, conduct a review of registered employers to ensure worker safety, and create robust reintegration programs for OFWs coming home, among other programs” (Philstar, 2022).

## **OFW Processes**

The POEA has long had some guidelines and processes to follow on ‘becoming an OFW’, which have been adapted by the DMW. These include the following steps (POEA Online, 2022):

1. Pre-Employment Orientation Seminar (PEOS)
2. Finding a recruitment agency
3. Processing of required documents for job application, such as Transcript of Records, Medical Certificate, etc.
4. Interviews and Screening Exams
5. Medical Tests and Assessments
6. Employment Contract Signing
7. Payment of Fees
8. Pre-Deployment Orientation Seminar (PDOS)
9. Submission of requirements to DMW and other government agencies for validation of employment
10. Issuance of Overseas Employment Certificate (OEC)
11. Validation of Airline Ticket for Terminal Fee and Tax Exemption and Flight

However, the steps above may or may not be adhered to by the OFWs, depending on the type of work or occupations. It has been recorded that four out of every ten OFWs or about 44.4 percent are in elementary occupations that “involve simple, routine tasks that often require hand-held tools and significant physical effort, such as cleaning, restocking supplies, basic maintenance, assisting in kitchens,

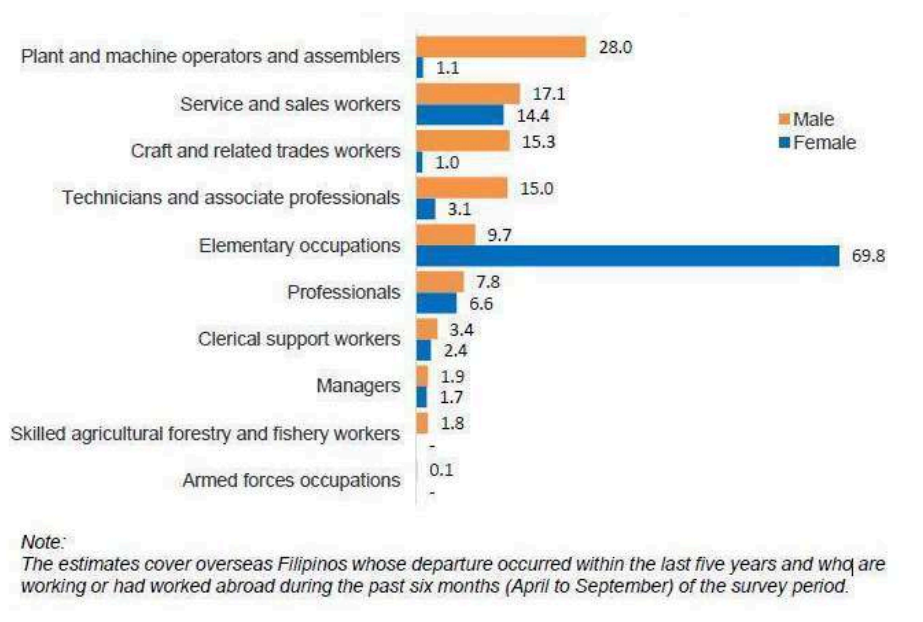
delivering messages or goods, collecting garbage, sweeping streets, basic farming, fishing and hunting tasks, product-sorting, hand-assembling components, packing, operating vehicles, etc.” (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2023).

Service and sales workers were the second largest group of OFWs with 15.5 percent, while plant machine operators and assemblers were the third largest group accounting for 12.4 percent (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2023).

For female workers, the largest shares were in the following occupations: plant and machine operators and assemblers, service and sales workers, craft and related trades workers, technicians and associate professionals, and elementary occupations (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2023).

The figure below provides a good account of the distribution of OFWs globally:

Figure 2. Percent Distribution of Overseas Filipinos by Major Occupation Group and Gender: 2022



Source: Philippine Statistics Authority, 2023

## **Well-Informed ‘Heroes’**

According to a survey by the OCTA Research group's Tugon ng Masa for the fourth quarter of 2022, 36% of interviewees said they were dissatisfied with the performance and work of the Department of Migrant Workers. Only 10% said they were satisfied with it (Philstar, 2022).

Quick informal interviews done for this study asking around 30 Filipino professionals in my network who are employed in Singapore if they know that POEA no longer exists and that it has been replaced by DMW resulted in all of them not being aware of it. Despite the fact that this information was all over the internet and on the website of the Philippine Embassy, many people have not been able to hear the news.

## **Through My Own Lens**

The journey of an Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW) is a story that combines physical separation from home and the constant need to face a web of government services and support, or sometimes lack thereof. This makes OFW communication and engagement a unique and intricate aspect of the diasporic experience (Ofreneo & Samonte, 2005). This study aims to use autoethnography as a research methodology that will provide a lens to examine the communication engagements that are woven into the fabric of OFW life.

I have been an OFW since 2011. I left the Philippines with a solid plan—to work in Singapore as a Digital Marketing professional for not more than five years and come back home once I have saved enough to buy my own house and start a business.

Twelve years later, I was still working in the same country. That was until five months ago, when an opportunity opened for me to move to Europe through a job offer from a multi-national company based in Paris, France.

Facing the need to re-learn all the OFW-related processes related to the new job and residence, I have once again come to terms with an intimate perspective on the challenges and triumphs encountered when engaging with the government institutions in the homeland and my host country.

## Chapter II

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### **Diasporas and Technology**

**Network Theory** focuses on the social networks and connections that individuals and groups maintain. In diasporic communication, network theory explores how communication channels within migrant communities and transnational networks facilitate information exchange, support systems, and advocacy efforts, including interactions with government and non-government entities (Stohl, 2018).

Fianko (2021) tells us that since the pandemic started, diasporas have utilized technology to become powerful actors in supporting communities both in their countries of origin and residence. They used digital platforms to create information and advocacy campaigns to stop the spread of the virus and collect funds to distribute goods, personal protective equipment, and sanitary equipment.

Fianko further explains that technology has also allowed diasporas to communicate efficiently, reinforce existing networks, and engage with other stakeholders involved in the response to the pandemic such as international organisations, governments, and experts.

#### **Rise of Digital Media**

We can understand how communication can be defined as a special process of producing meanings and that culture is the system in which that special process takes place (Buarquob, 2019).

Communication uses media to create shared meanings in societies. As we face the ever-progressing digital era and technological advancements, we can expect communication exchange, information dissemination, media presentations and learning processes to also keep changing.

As George Siemens said, “technology is altering our brains” and many of the cognitive information processes previously covered by various theories of learning can now be augmented by the use of technology (Siemens, 2004).

The digital era is rapidly changing how we communicate, present, process, and absorb knowledge. Technology is also creating changes in the lifestyles of people around the world, which puts more emphasis on the diversity of cultures and multiple ideologies. This makes it even more significant to study and understand how these aspects and factors can influence communities and societies in order to create effective diaspora engagements.

## **Receptiveness to Information**

**Transnationalism Theory** is the framework that explains the interconnectedness between migrants' home and host countries. It examines how migrants maintain ties, networks, and engagements across borders. In the context of communication, this theory emphasizes the continuous communication flows between diasporic communities and their home countries, exploring how technology and globalization influence these connections (Lee & Francis, 2009).

According to Fianko (2021), technology provides an invaluable tool to galvanize diasporic engagement efforts to tap into the unlimited potential of digital space and collaboration.

George Siemens' article 'A Learning Theory for the Digital Age' (2004) takes us through the different learning paradigms. He describes that the first of these three paradigms were the old schools of thought prior to the advancement of technology. He then describes how technology changed the way people learn and how knowledge is disseminated and absorbed.

As OFWs relocate to other countries, the constructivist principles (learning is experiential and knowledge is acquired by active attempts to create meaning) may come into play as they begin to thrive in the new land. Siemens mentioned that learners create knowledge in the process of making sense of their experiences and that in reality, learning is complicated and chaotic (Siemens, 2004).

Siemens also tells us that even if the learning process is an environment of shifting core elements that are not controlled by the individual, connectivism or the integration of the principles of chaos, networks, complexities, and self-organization still always begins with the individual (Siemens, 2004).

As Filipino migrant workers immerse themselves into a new country and make themselves familiar with its surroundings, this notion could not be truer. There is a need to learn and unlearn many things in order to fit in and be comfortable in a foreign land.

It was my first time to live outside the Philippines when I first came to Singapore in 2010. Before I left the country, I gathered stories of 'kababayans' and read experiences of past and present foreign residents online. I understood that becoming

equipped with knowledge about the country by searching on the web and being aware of the latest news and current events are helpful steps in properly integrating to my new environment.

Laura la Zazzera (2011) explains Peter Berger and Thomas Luckman's theory of how the common base of communication or **shared knowledge** results from the interpretation of concrete events or physical realities.

I was able to experience these interpretations first-hand as I slowly learned to navigate life abroad. While other people's own experiences or stories read in forums may also be real and valid, not all of them were exactly the same or true for myself.

Other people's stories are good to know as guides, but as I faced my own daily activities and met my own set of acquaintances and new friends, I was able to develop my own realities, opinions and way of doing things and facing situations.

The concept of 'shared knowledge' is also pointed out in the discussions about social constructivism in this same article by la Zazzea. The idea that shared knowledge is socially constructed and that it is a major influencing factor in defining and constructing realities in the minds of individuals could also be true for Filipino migrant workers.

This, in turn, forms the ideas, actions and knowledge that influence the society as a whole. The **Communication Accommodation theory** supports this by exploring how individuals adjust their communication behaviors to accommodate or align with those of others. In diasporic contexts, it investigates how migrants adapt their communication patterns, language, and gestures to interact with individuals from

diverse cultural backgrounds, including interactions with government and non-government bodies (Dragojevic, et.al, 2015).

As I gained my own set of experiences and met new people in the new country, I also became equipped to contribute to the shared knowledge. I searched for patterns of interactions between individuals and adapted new habits and coping mechanisms from these.

According to Herbert Blumer, who came up with the term 'symbolic interactionism', people interact with things based on meanings and those meanings ascribed to things sprout up from our interactions with others (Blumer,1969). People then interpret the meaning of things as they face different circumstances.

This can be linked back to George Siemens' take on the constructivist principle, which explains how personal knowledge is made up of a network developed from interactions with others. Then this knowledge goes into organizations and institutions and fed back into the network and continues to allow the individual to keep learning (Blumer, 1969).

Further, the **Social Identity Theory (SIT)** developed by Tajfel and Turner (1979), examines how individuals' sense of self is shaped by their group memberships and social categorizations. In diasporic communication, social identity theory explores how belonging to a specific cultural or ethnic group influences communication patterns, attitudes, and perceptions of interactions with governmental and other institutions (Harwood, 2020).

Through the connections and networks formed, this knowledge development cycle (personal to network to organization) enables learners to remain current and relevant in their field of communication and to keep contributing to the shared knowledge pool.

## **Communication and Empowerment**

Ofreneo and Samonte (2005) suggest that empowerment of Filipino migrant workers means equipping themselves with the right knowledge and correct tools that will help them protect themselves and take care of their individual and collective needs. They listed the indicators of empowerment as follows:

1. Critical awareness to understand situations and problems;
2. Awareness of their rights as migrant workers;
3. Awareness of remedies to problems available through law or through services available in society;
4. Ability to exercise their rights and to articulate violations of those rights; and
5. Capability to exercise control over one's situation, to change one's situation, to restore dignity, to decide independently, to work collectively with others, to conceptualize, plan, and undertake alternative actions, to understand one's identity and to be able to access resources.

While many resources may be available containing helpful information for the perusal, it is significant to know how OFWs make themselves aware of the services offered by the Philippine government, job opportunities that are available, or events

organized that may be posted online or promoted face-to-face at the Philippine Embassy.

Communication is, no doubt, the key driver in providing empowerment to the OFWs to give themselves the critical awareness and abilities they need to understand their environments and take full control of their situations.

This research embarks on an in-depth personal exploration to highlight the multifaceted process of diasporic communication engagement as an OFW. Through my own lens, it seeks to provide a richer understanding of the lived experiences of Filipino migrant workers in Singapore and Paris and how interactions with government and non-government bodies affect their well-being, identity, and overall life journey.

## Chapter III

### RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

#### What is Autoethnography?

According to Bryman (2008), the purpose of qualitative research is to examine any social phenomenon by empowering the researcher to be immersed fully in the participants' natural environment in order to get a thorough understanding of it.

Autoethnography is the main approach used in this study to enrich the understanding of the dynamics of diasporic communication among OFWs. It is a qualitative research method that combines **autobiography** and **ethnography** and allows researchers to reflect on their own experiences in light of wider cultural, social, and political circumstances (Ellis, 2000).

In their work, Ellis and Bochner (2004) explain that autoethnography differs from the traditional ethnographic viewpoints by integrating the personal and emotional facets of the researcher, taking into account the fact that the researcher's subjective experience is linked to the communication phenomena being studied.

#### Starting with Personal Experience

Autoethnography starts from the lens of the researcher and draws from their lived experiences, including examination of their personal narratives, emotions, and reflections. These are then linked to cultural, social, and theoretical frameworks. This approach allows the research to be deeply contemplative and inward-looking (Bochner & Ellis, 2016).

## Going Inwards to Outwards

Dull (2021) explains that proponents and scholars generally agree on how autoethnography empowers researchers deeply entrenched within the subjects of the study to scrutinize and interpret those experiences within the broader scope of understanding (Adams, 2017; Ellis, 2009; Ellis et al., 2011; Farrell et al., 2015; Hughes et al., 2012; Hughes & Pennington, 2017).

Autoethnography is intended to link the personal to the wider society. Every personal account is not viewed in isolation but regarded as immersed in social configurations, cultural nuances, and historical events. This makes this method a compelling instrument for making sense of how bigger social phenomena become evident in individual lives (Ellis & Bochner, 2000).

Ellis and Bochner (2000) presents autoethnography as a rich and versatile research method that stresses the **interaction between the personal and the cultural**. By giving consideration to the significance of **subjectivity, reflexivity, and emotions**, it provides a more profound and structured understanding of how social phenomena, such as diasporic communication engagement, are lived and cultivated by individuals.

## Emphasizing on Storytelling

Ellis and Bochner (2000) highlight that autoethnography is often in narrative format and storytelling is central to the research. These stories serve as data; but beyond that, they help make sense of the complexities of social

phenomena, emphasize the emotional and relational factors, and give a more approachable and engaging manner of presenting research findings.

Autoethnography's approach of storytelling and linking of the personal with the wider cultural and social phenomena makes it a compelling tool for exploring the intricacies of human experience in a sociocultural sphere.

### **Highlighting Emotional and Reflexive Encounters**

In her own research work, Dull (2021) links this method to the necessity for "self-reflexivity." This demands the autoethnographer to be thoroughly submerged into the experience under examination. This immersion necessitates not only reflecting on personal actions and thoughts but also on interactions within the involved community (Farrell, 2015).

One of the distinctive features of autoethnography is the **reflexivity** of the researcher, where a critical examination of their role, emotions, and biases in the research process is implemented. It gives way to acknowledging subjectivity and vulnerability and to confronting the traditional concept of the "objective" researcher (Ellis & Bochner, 2000).

Bochner and Ellis (1996) also consider that personal narratives allow one person's account of experiences to inspire critical reflection for another. Therefore, this makes the central goal of autoethnography the recreation of the researcher's experience in a self-reflexive way, allowing a connection to the

reader that paves the way to thinking and reflecting about his or her own experiences.

Mendez (2014) defines autoethnography as educational research, which is characterized by what Bochner and Ellis (2006) describes as helping people make sense of what to do, how to live, and what their struggles mean.

Through the interpretations that are created, they are able to construct meaning in their lives, as well as allow others to reflect on similar experiences and ultimately be able to do something that benefits both themselves and others (Ellis, 2004).

### **Confronting Subjectivity**

Mendez (2014) explains that a major criticism of autoethnography brought forward by Walford (2004) is that there is a tendency for stories of the past to not be the past itself, focusing on the concern of how much of these narratives presented as autoethnographies represent real events or conversations versus how much they are just inventions of the storytellers.

Ellis and Bochner (2000) provides a response to this criticism by explaining that the subjectivity of the researcher is “assumed and accepted as the value of autoethnography” (Mendez, 2014).

Despite the questions on the ability of autoethnography to present an objective account of the truth, with its subjective interpretations arising from personal narratives that contradict the positivist view of research, the main

criteria that Megford (2006) presented for use in evaluating autoethnographic accounts is having an 'ethic of accountability'. This is defined as the primary ethical standard by which autoethnographers should evaluate themselves as they craft their narratives (Mendez, 2014).

The ethic of accountability, according to Megford (2006), constitutes the willingness to boldly tackle any issues that the audience might raise in disagreement of the researcher's way of representing shared experiences, as well as any questions on the autoethnographer's decision to narrate these experiences in the first place.

### **Evaluating Autoethnography**

Five criteria were proposed by Richardson (2000) to help evaluate autoethnography as both a science and an art. These principles include the significance of the research in contributing to the field or advancing knowledge; the quality of the narrative's presentation (e.g. creativity, expressiveness, and overall artistic value); the ability of the research to inspire self-reflexivity; the emotional, intellectual or practical impact that the narrative brings on the reader; and how much the stories express an authentic depiction of the phenomenon under study" (Mendez, 2014).

Ellis (2000) expands this criteria by stating that a good autoethnographic narrative should be able to capture the readers' capacity to feel and think at the same time as giving rise to questions surrounding the author's position and

experience, the reader's experiences and learnings related to the event/s described (Mendez, 2014).

Recognizing the fact that the research method of autoethnography has had its share of criticisms, with many asserting doubts about its validity, Dull (2021) worked on finding a way to codify her process, resulting in the application of two frameworks to enrich the use of autoethnography. She merged the Hughes, Pennington, and Makris' (2012) Framework with that of Milner's (2007) to "provide the right balance of structure and flexibility".

### **Knowing Ethical Autoethnography**

Due to the deeply personal nature of the study, autoethnography calls for conscientious ethical reflection, especially with regards to the privacy of others who may be part of the researcher's storytelling narratives. Ethical autoethnography necessitates informed consent, sensibility, as well as sensitivity in narrating personal experiences, especially those that involve stories of other people (Ellis and Bochner, 2000).

This study recognizes that qualitative researchers are accountable for holding ethical considerations when "shaping research design, methodology, and analysis, as well as documenting consent and confidentiality agreements" (Duran et al., 2006).

It also accepts that beyond these responsibilities, it is essential for all qualitative researchers in academic settings, including autoethnographers, to

evaluate the need for and the boundaries of institutional review board (IRB) approval (Duran et al., 2006).

The research and findings in this autoethnographic study will be presented in a manner that adheres to site access agreements, respects participant consent, and ensures compliance with ethical principles (Hughes et. al., 2012).

Additionally, according to Hughes, Pennington, and Makris' (2012), autoethnography has evolved into a method that empowers participants "to respond to how they have been portrayed in the text" (Ellis et al., 2010, para. 31). This study will ensure conformity to acceptable ethical standards and proposal in the following areas of responsibility:

- The securing of informed consent, wherever appropriate
- Confidentiality
- Preservation of anonymity through use of pseudonyms, wherever possible

## **Understanding Social Phenomena**

Autoethnography offers a non-traditional outlook on social phenomena by putting together the individual's personal experiences with conversations on larger societal systems.

**Shedding Light on Lived Experiences:** Through highlighting the researcher's subjective experience, autoethnography brings to focus how

social systems, norms, and cultural practices are lived, interpreted, clarified or compromised in everyday life (Bochner & Ellis, 2016)

**Bringing Together Personal and Social Interactions:** It enables researchers to bridge the individual narratives with larger societal issues. This linking helps the audience to understand the social within the personal, making it a rich tool for sociocultural analysis (Bochner & Ellis, 2016).

**Offering a Personified Viewpoint:** Autoethnography understands social life within the context of the body, emotions, and subjectivity. It admits that lived experiences are true fountains of knowledge that help to confront purely abstract or detached interpretations of social phenomena (Ellis & Bochner, 2000).

**Disputing Long-Established Power Influences in Research:** Having the researcher's personal story as a central element, autoethnography confronts the conventional line between the "researcher" and the "researched." It normalizes the collection of knowledge, giving everyone an equal opportunity to present their personal narratives, including the marginalized or otherwise underrepresented voices (Ellis & Bochner, 2000).

## **Research Questions**

This study aims to contribute knowledge on communication by addressing the following experiential research questions:

- 1) *What is the nature of communication engagement between Overseas Filipino Workers and government, as well as non-government bodies?*
- 2) *On what platforms do these communication engagements happen?*

Overall, the above question can be instrumental in offering insights into the communication dynamics and experiences of the OFW diasporic group, facilitating a deeper understanding of the intersection between communication and migrant experiences.

## Chapter IV

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For the purpose of this research, I have taken the framework created by Dull (2021) and adapted it to include the appropriate resources and actions, guiding questions, and products of each research phase. The resulting framework has four phases, which include Discovery, Outlining, Data Gathering, and Analyzing & Interpreting.

Hughes, Pennington, and Makris' (2012) Framework presents rubrics to align autoethnography to the American Educational Research Association's (AERA) standards for reporting empirical social science research. It identifies four structural or process-related focus areas (Duran, et al., 2006):

- **Focus Area 1:** How autoethnography formulates social scientific problems (Hughes et al., 2012b)
- **Focus Area 2:** How autoethnography facilitates critical, careful, and thoughtful discussion of methodological choices and claims (Hughes et al., 2012b)
- **Focus Area 3:** How autoethnography offers multiple levels of critical analysis, including Self-Critique, Naming Privilege and Penalty, and Selecting Classification Schemes and Units of Analysis while being critically self-reflexive about the selection criteria (Hughes et al., 2012b)
- **Focus Area 4:** How autoethnography provides opportunities for credible analysis and interpretation of evidence from narratives and connects them to researching the self Via Triangulation, Member-Checks, and Related Ethical Issues (Hughes et al., 2012b).

Dull's framework also incorporates that of Milner's (2007), which is segmented into these four parts:

- **Part 1:** Researching the self
- **Part 2:** Researching the self in relation to others
- **Part 3:** Engaged Reflection and Representation
- **Part 4:** Shifting from Self to System

Milner's Framework is elaborated by the definition of self-reflection by Florio-Ruane (2001) and Brunner (1994). These two professors both explain that reading of others triggers self-reflection that leads to self-discovery. Bochner (2013), on the other hand, characterizes autoethnography not just as a methodology but more so as a way of life.

Chang (2008) describes autoethnography as sharing commonalities with other forms of self-narrative in its storytelling aspect, yet surpassing mere self-narration by delving into self-discovery that is based on understanding of others—which she categorizes as either 'others of similarity' or 'others of difference'.

**'Others of similarity'** portrays individuals within one's unique community and reflects aspects of oneself in other people in a more universal sense. There are common principles and expectations upheld and shared by the members of the same community. Even if people don't strictly adhere to every detail, knowing these values and standards helps in appreciating others who share similarities within the community. Hence, understanding others can facilitate the process of understanding oneself (Chang, 2008).

**‘Others of difference’** refers to members of other communities. Recognizing the similarities between oneself and others is only a partial understanding of them. What proves advantageous in this scenario is diving deeper into studying others by using comparisons and contrasts, which leads to uncovering their differences (Chang, 2008).

The framework will be able to highlight my personal experiences, challenges, and coping strategies in navigating the complexities of life as an OFW and connect them to wider social meanings and understandings, which will in turn contribute to a better understanding of the type of communication engagement OFWs have with government bodies.

*Table 1. Research Framework Summary*

<b>PHASES</b>	<b>RESOURCES &amp; ACTION</b>	<b>GUIDING QUESTIONS</b>	<b>PRODUCT/RESULT OF THIS PHASE</b>
<b>Phase 1: Discovery</b>	Information on the OFW landscape in Singapore and France	How do I see myself in light of the OFW diaspora in Singapore and France (where I have both lived and worked)?  Where and how do I fit in as an OFW myself?	Diaspora outlook overview
<b>Phase 2: Outlining</b>	Developing a plan or canvas that captures my data in the form of fragmented information bits	What data will I collect?	Personal Chronicle Canvas
<b>Phase 3: Data Gathering</b>	Collect Data using canvas developed in Phase 2 and the data gathering methods presented by Chang (2008)	How will I present the data in a digestible format?	My Personal OFW Chronicle Canvas

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal Memory Data/Chronicling the Past</li> <li>• Self-Inventory</li> <li>• Self-Observational Data</li> <li>• Available Community Data</li> </ul>		
<b>Phase 4: Analyzing and Interpreting</b>	<p>Data Analysis and Interpretation based on recommended analytical processes by Chang (2008)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Looking for recurring topics and exceptional circumstances</li> <li>• Fracturing &amp; Connecting</li> <li>• Analyzing between self &amp; others (Milner's Framework)</li> </ul> <p>Further reflecting on the Milner's Framework (2007)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Researching the self</li> <li>• Researching the self in relation to others</li> <li>• Engaged reflection and representation</li> <li>• Shifting from self to the system</li> </ul>	<p>What does the data show?</p> <p>As a long-time OFW, what types of communication engagement have I had with the Philippine government and non-government bodies throughout my OFW years?</p> <p>How has technology and information processing evolved and developed since the time I first moved out of the Philippines?</p> <p>What processes will I use to analyze the data set?</p>	<p>Analytic memos, coded data</p>

Chang (2008) situates autoethnography within the framework of traditional qualitative social science methodologies. Three distinct sets of data collection

strategies are described, each resulting in varied data types: personal memories, self-observation, and external data (Gannon, 2017).

For this study, I will adapt the data gathering and analysis methods presented by Chang (2008), supplemented by the activities proposed by Milner's Framework (2007).

## **Data Gathering Procedures**

The data may come in the form of fragmented information bits in my field notes, narrative texts, pre-existing documents, still or video images, and many varieties of artifacts. Some data are drawn from my past, whereas others are collected at the time of study. Some are personally produced by me and others come from external sources (Gannon, 2017; Chang, 2008).

### **Personal Memory Data/Chronicling the Past**

As a data generation exercise suggested by Chang (2008), I will chronologically list my experience and perceptions related to these types of communication engagement. I will describe these events and how they contributed to my cultural self-discovery, narrate the circumstances surrounding these events, and explain why they are significant in my life.

Reconstructing details later poses a significant challenge and also raises questions about the reliability of the outcome. However, despite its fragility, personal memory draws upon a rich reservoir of self-information. What is recalled from memory can be transcribed into textual data. Chang takes us through some "writing exercises of chronicling, inventorying, and visualizing self"

to “unravel memory, write down fragments of the past, and build a database for cultural analysis and interpretation” (Chang, 2008).

Based on Chang’s recommendation, I will create a thematically more focused timeline accounting for my OFW journey, zooming in on my border-crossing experiences, and facing unfamiliar characteristics that have challenged and caused me to adjust my “standards” of thinking, perceiving, evaluating, and behaving” (Goodenough, 1981, p. 62) and bring moments of realization and enlightenment, which often happen when being in other countries (Lingenfelder, 1996).

### **Self-Inventory**

Within this activity of chronicling the past, Chang (2008) also suggests “inventorying self”, which involves collecting, evaluating and organizing data from my storehouse of memory. She recommends five thematic categories as a starter: proverbs, virtues and values, rituals, mentors, and artifacts.

The categories can broaden to encompass the cognitive, emotional, social, and material dimensions of the culture I have assimilated through interactions with others. After compiling an inventory list for each category, the idea is to choose a specific item and elaborate on it, providing detailed information. These inventory lists and written narratives derived from past experiences contribute to my personal memory data.

## **Self-Observational Data**

Self-observational data involve documenting real-time behaviors, thoughts, and emotions within their natural contexts. One method of self-discovery involves observing daily or weekly routines over a specific duration. This can include examining actions in both solitary and social situations, noting your conversations, emotions, thoughts, the people you interact with or avoid, the places you visit frequently, and the material possessions that hold significance in current life (Chang, 2008).

In this study, I will include accounts of my personal stories, feelings, and interactions with various government bodies, including immigration authorities, labor departments, consulates, and embassies from the time I have started my journey as a migrant worker. Through this self-reflection and self-narration, I will be able to give an insider's perspective as well as analyze the cultural, social, and political dimensions of my communication engagement with these government bodies.

## **Available Community Information and Data**

In addition to the above, I will also provide historical data, such as photographs or video images, social media posts, reports, and other documents or textual artifacts that are pertinent to my OFW experience, as well as interviews with some of my Filipino colleagues and friends in Paris with varying length of experiences as migrant workers.

## **Data Analysis and Interpretation**

In analyzing and interpreting autoethnographic data, Chang (2008) reminds that autoethnographic data analysis and interpretation involve shifting your attention back and forth between self and others, the personal and the social context” (Chang, 2008).

According to Wolcott (1994), data analysis involves identifying key elements and systematically describing how they relate to each other or in short, “how things work”. Analysis encourages one to stay close to data and actively engage with them.

Creswell (1998) differentiates between data analysis and interpretation in that the latter focuses on cultural meanings beyond the data and involves making sense of the data, addressing “processual questions of meanings and context”.

Understanding and interpreting cultural data is vital in autoethnography. This approach converts personal autobiographical data into a culturally significant and coherent narrative.

Rather than just recounting events from my life, the idea is to try to illustrate how these fragments of memories can be linked to give meaning to my cultural beliefs and relationship with other members of the diaspora.

### **Looking for Recurring Topics and Exceptional Occurrences**

Chang (2008) presents an additional straightforward analysis strategy, which involves recognizing recurring topics, themes, or patterns by either thoroughly reviewing the entire dataset or examining fragmented data sections.

These topics refer to specific subjects pertaining to people, places, ideas, or activities.

Topics serve as categorical labels used to fragment and organize data. If a topic recurs frequently within the data, it likely holds significance in my life. Therefore, identifying repetitions helps bring out the fundamental aspects of my life.

## **Fracturing and Connecting**

Fracturing is applying process coding and data in my analytical approach. According to Fetterman (2020), these are important methods rooted in ethnography focusing on context, on both individual and societal issues/events, and emphasizing on holistic analysis.

Maxwell (2005) defines fracturing as the part of the data analysis called “categorizing” that refers to two main activities—“coding” and “organizing” data. The process of coding involves breaking down the data into “fractures,” reorganizing them into categories for easier comparison among similar elements, and fostering the creation of theoretical concepts.

Additionally, organizing the data into more comprehensive themes and addressing broader issues is also part of this activity. Coding involves labeling specific sections of the data with topical identifiers. These labeled data segments are then sorted and grouped based on their topical codes. Subsequently, these groups are combined to form broader categories. In

addition to repetition and recurrence, identifying exceptional occurrences in life can also yield incredibly valuable insights on self.

## **Analyzing Relationship Between Self and Others**

In this part of the analysis, I go back to my reflections on Milner's Framework (2007) in my research framework section:

- Researching the self
- Researching the self in relation to others
- Engaged reflection and representation
- Shifting from self to the system

## **Framework Phases**

### **Phase 1: Discovery**

In this phase, I have the aim of understanding more about the OFW landscape and get a different perspective of the diaspora communication engagement in order to be able to see where and how I fit in. The expected product or result of this phase is a diaspora outlook overview, which I can go back to as I reflect on belonging to or being part of the community.

For this section, I am prompted by the guiding question: *How does the OFW diaspora look like in Singapore and France, where I have both lived and worked as an OFW?*, which in turn aims to later make sense of *'Where and how do I fit in?'*

Table 2. Research Framework – Phase 1: Discovery

PHASE 1	RESOURCES & ACTION	GUIDING QUESTION	PRODUCT/RESULT OF THIS PHASE
<b>Phase 1: Discovery</b>	Information on the OFW landscape in Singapore and France	How do I see myself in light of the OFW diaspora in Singapore and France (where I have both lived and worked)?  Where and how do I fit in as an OFW myself?	Diaspora outlook overview

From the literature, it has been established that 80.8% of the 1.96M OFWs are spread across Asia and 9.0% are in Europe (9.0%).

### **OFW Population in Singapore**

Out of the above percentages, 5% of OFWs are in Singapore (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2023). Approximately 200,000 Filipinos reside and work in Singapore, playing a vital role in the economic development of both nations. Around “60% of these individuals are categorized as professionals and skilled workers, with the remaining portion employed as household service workers” (Philippine Embassy Singapore, 2022).

### **OFW Population in France**

As of recent estimates in 2020, around 50,000 Filipinos reside in France, a large share of which have arrived illegally. The Filipino community in France is diverse, with a significant portion working as domestic workers (Hodal, 2022). Additionally, there are professional Filipinos in various sectors including the arts,

hospitality, banking, IT, academia, literature and government posts (Pulitzer Center, 2014). OFWs in France, like in many other countries, face challenges such as cultural adjustments, language barriers, and the need to navigate legal requirements for work and residency. However, the strong Filipino community in France often provides support networks, helping newcomers acclimate to their new environment.

The above diaspora outlook overview will be the basis of some of my discussions in Chapter V, where I present some reflections into the nature of my own communication engagements with government and non-government bodies as a part of both Singapore and France OFW diasporas.

## Phase II: Outlining

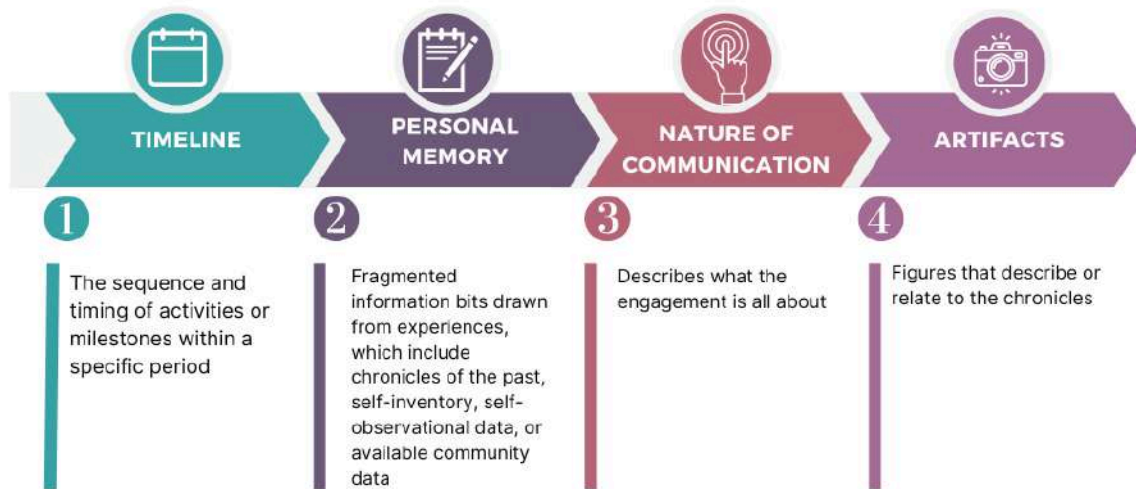
This phase involves preparing to capture the necessary data for analysis in a digestible format.

*Table 3. Research Framework – Phase 2: Outlining*

PHASE 2	RESOURCES & ACTION	GUIDING QUESTION	PRODUCT/RESULT OF THIS PHASE
<b>Outlining</b>	Developing a plan or canvas that captures my data in the form of fragmented information bits	What data will I collect?	Chronicle Canvas

To achieve this, I have developed a structure called the **Personal Memory Chronicle Canvas** to help me answer the guiding question: *What data will I collect?*

Figure 3. Personal Memory Chronicle Canvas



### Phase III: Data Gathering

In this section, I am guided by the question ‘How will I present the data in a digestible format?’. This data comes from my personal memory, which is a mix of self-inventory, self-observation and some available community data (Chang, 2008).

Table 4. Research Framework – Phase 3: Data Gathering

PHASE 3	RESOURCES & ACTION	GUIDING QUESTION	PRODUCT/RESULT OF THIS PHASE
<b>Data Gathering</b>	<p>Collect Data using canvas developed in Phase 2 and the data gathering methods presented by Chang (2008)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal Memory Data/Chronicling the Past</li> <li>• Self-Inventory</li> <li>• Self-Observational Data</li> <li>• Available Community Data</li> </ul>	How will I present the data in a digestible format?	My personal OFW Chronicle Canvas

Using the Chronicle Canvas (Figure 5 above), I have taken account of my OFW milestones and consolidated them below. This covers a chronological account of my experiences from 2008 (when I first thought of the idea to search for a job in Singapore) to 2011 (when I first moved to the said country), to today (when I have relocated to France). Each line item has a short narration of the circumstances and indications of any touchpoints with the Philippine government.

On this canvas, I have added a fifth column called 'CAT' (short for category), which assigns a code to each line item, to be used in the Data Analysis phase of the research.

Figure 4. Data Fracturing Codes

**CAT (Code Numbers and Topical Identifiers)**

- 1 - Employment Search Activities
- 2 – Employment Activation
- 3 - Travels
- 4 - Administrative Procedures
- 5 - Life Events
- 6 – Personal and Professional Improvements

**Color Code**

Yellow
Green
Orange
Red
Gold
Sky Blue

More on these codes will be explained in the next phase.

Table 5. My Personal OFW Chronicle Canvas

Timeline	Personal Memory	Nature of Engagement (What is the engagement about?)	Artifacts	CAT
2008 Nov	I initiated my job search in Singapore online.  While it is illegal to look for work in the country as a tourist, they offered an Employment Pass Eligibility Certificate (EPEC) for	Online Search for Alternative Work	N/A	1

	graduates from selected universities to get around this rule. I applied for the EPEC online but was rejected.			
2010 Jul	I reapplied for the EPEC and was asked to provide additional information. Eventually, I received approval.	Online Search for Alternative Work	Figure 5: My Singapore Employment Eligibility Certificate	1
2010 Dec	I flew to Singapore to search for jobs in person. The EPEC was valid for six months and could be used only once. Upon arrival, I applied for a long-term visit pass, valid for a year, allowing me to apply for jobs legally within that period.	Personal Presentation to Potential Employers	Figure 6: My Singapore Long-Term Visit Pass	1
2011 Jan	I integrated with a Filipino Community through a Christian church in Singapore	Social Connection with community of the same faith	N/A	5
2011 Feb	Two months after arriving, I found my first job and received my official employment pass to replace my long-term visit pass.	Obtaining Legal Employment	Figure 7: My First Singapore Employment Pass	2
2011 Apr	Unfortunately, the first job did not last long as it was not the right fit. My employment pass was cancelled abruptly, after only two months.  Since I could no longer use my EPEC, I needed to find a new job within a month – I had lost my long-term visit visa and now had the short-term visa that was only valid for 30 days.	Online Search for Alternative Work	N/A	1
2011 May	I had to do an 'exit' trip to nearby Batam, Indonesia so that I could return to Singapore and be granted another 30 days of stay.	Exiting due to visa expiry	Figure 11: My First 'Exit' Trip	3
2011 Jun	I ended up returning to the Philippines and continued my job search from there.	Online Search for Alternative Work	N/A	1
2011 Aug	I finally secured a new job and was relocated back to Singapore by my new employer, a full-service creative digital agency.	Obtaining Legal Employment	Figure 8: My Singapore Employment Record	2

2012 Feb	I was laid-off due to restructuring in the company. I immediately found employment in another company with the same line of business and same work scope and job title.	Transitioning to a new job	N/A	2
2012 Aug	I had my first opportunity to go home to the Philippines for vacation after my trial period at work has been completed.	Obtaining OFW travel requirements	N/A	3
2012 Sep	I renewed my passport for the first time at the Philippine Embassy in Singapore	Managing important documents	Figure 15: Passport Renewal Application via Email	5
2012 Oct	I registered for the Overseas Absentee Voting (OAV)	Exercising voting rights	Figure 20: Overseas Absentee Voting (OAV) Registration	4
2012 Dec	I went home to the Philippines attend the wedding of two friends who both lived and worked in Singapore	Obtaining OFW travel requirements	N/A	3
2013 May	I voted overseas for the first time during the Philippine Presidential Elections.	Exercising voting rights		4
2013 Dec	I resigned from my job and left Singapore for the United States to take the US Dietitians Licensure Examination	Advancing personal or professional development	N/A	6
2013 Aug	I requested for Verification Statement from the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) via email	Advancing personal or professional development	N/A	6
2013 Nov	I took the CDR Registration Exam for Dietitians in Burbank, California	Advancing personal or professional development	N/A	6
2013 Dec	Missing the passing mark by a few points, I returned to Singapore and then went home to Manila to celebrate Christmas with family	Obtaining regular travel requirements	N/A	3
2014 Jan-Feb	While in the Philippines, I received a new job offer from	Online Search for Alternative Work	N/A	1

	<p>Singapore, and the employment pass was promptly approved.</p> <p>However, due to an unexpected change in team structure, the offer was revoked, and the work pass was cancelled.</p> <p>I decided to remain in the Philippines for a break and continued my job search from there.</p>			
2014 Mar	I flew back to Singapore for face-to-face job interviews	Personal Presentation to Potential Employers	N/A	1
2014 Apr	I received a job offer and, while waiting for my employment pass approval, I took a three-week trip to Bali & Yogyakarta, Indonesia, as my short-term stay in Singapore had expired.	Exiting due to visa expiry	N/A	4
2014 May	My new employment pass was approved. I returned to Singapore.	Obtaining Legal Employment	Figure 13: Singapore Arrival Immigration	2
2014 Jun	I started my new job in a multinational automotive company.	Transitioning to a new job	N/A	2
	I flew to Dubai for my training.	Temporary job-related overseas assignment	N/A	3
2014 Jul	I was sent to the US and Germany for further training and a few meetings.	Temporary job-related overseas assignment	N/A	3
2014 Oct	<p>Four months into the new role, I went to the Embassy to update my contract details and get new Overseas Employment Certificates (OEC) for my trip home.</p> <p>The Philippine Embassy has finally launched the POEA Online Processing System for Balik-Manggagawa. I was advised that I could sign up to get my OEC online.N/A</p>	Obtaining OFW travel requirements	Figure 43: Online Services Page on the DMW Website	3
2014 Dec – 2015 Jan	I went back home for Christmas	Obtaining OFW travel requirements	Figure 12: Sample of Overseas	3

			Employment Certificate (OEC)	
2015 Feb	I went back home to celebrate my birthday with family	Obtaining OFW travel requirements	Figure 12: Sample of Overseas Employment Certificate (OEC)	3
	I was sent to India for a business trip.	Temporary job-related overseas assignment	Figure 14: Snaps from my Overseas Business or Leisure Trips	3
2015 May	I was sent to Indonesia for a business trip	Temporary job-related overseas assignment	N/A	3
	I went back home to spend time with family	Obtaining OFW travel requirements	Figure 12: Sample of Overseas Employment Certificate (OEC)	3
2015 Jun	I was sent to India for a business trip	Temporary job-related overseas assignment	Figure 14: Snaps from my Overseas Business or Leisure Trips	3
2015 Jul	I was sent to the United States for a business trip	Temporary job-related overseas assignment	Figure 14: Snaps from my Overseas Business or Leisure Trips	3
2015 Aug	I went back home to spend time with family	Obtaining OFW travel requirements	Figure 12: Sample of Overseas Employment Certificate (OEC)	3
2015 Dec- 2016 Jan	I went back home for Christmas	Obtaining OFW travel requirements	Figure 12: Sample of Overseas Employment Certificate (OEC)	3
2016 Feb	I went to Japan for holiday	Travelling for leisure	N/A	3
2016 Mar	I went back home to spend time with family	Obtaining OFW travel requirements	Figure 12: Sample of Overseas Employment Certificate (OEC)	3
2016 Apr	I was sent to India for a business trip.	Temporary job-related overseas assignment	Figure 14: Snaps from my Overseas Business or Leisure Trips	3

2016 May	I went back home to spend time with family	Obtaining OFW travel requirements	Figure 12: Sample of Overseas Employment Certificate (OEC)	3
	I was sent to Australia for a business trip.	Temporary job-related overseas assignment	Figure 14: Snaps from my Overseas Business or Leisure Trips	3
2016 Sep	I went back home to spend time with family	Obtaining OFW travel requirements	Figure 12: Sample of Overseas Employment Certificate (OEC)	3
	I was sent to India for a business trip	Temporary job-related overseas assignment	Figure 14: Snaps from my Overseas Business or Leisure Trips	3
2016 Oct	I visited France, Belgium, UK, Finland for vacation	Temporary job-related overseas assignment	N/A	3
2016 Nov	I went back home to spend time with family	Obtaining OFW travel requirements	Figure 12: Sample of Overseas Employment Certificate (OEC)	3
2016 Dec – 2017 Jan	My parents, brother, and nephew flew to Singapore for Christmas	Welcoming visiting family; Obtaining regular travel requirements	Figure 33: Images of my Family's Visits to Singapore	3
2017 Feb	I went back home	Obtaining OFW travel requirements	Figure 12: Sample of Overseas Employment Certificate (OEC)	3
2017 Mar	I was sent to South Korea for business trip	Temporary job-related overseas assignment	Figure 14: Snaps from my Overseas Business or Leisure Trips	3
2017 May	I was sent to Australia and New Zealand for business trip	Temporary job-related overseas assignment	Figure 14: Snaps from my Overseas Business or Leisure Trips	3
2017 Jul	I started meeting a new Filipino community via another Christian church in Singapore	Social Connection with community of the same faith	N/A	5

	My mother flew to Singapore to spend a month with me	Welcoming visiting family;  Obtaining regular travel requirements	Figure 33: Images of my Family's Visits to Singapore	3
2017 Aug	I was sent to Thailand for a business trip	Temporary job-related overseas assignment	Figure 14: Snaps from my Overseas Business or Leisure Trips	3
2017 Sep	I went back home to spend time with family	Obtaining OFW travel requirements	Figure 12: Sample of Overseas Employment Certificate (OEC)	3
2017 Nov	I was sent to the Philippines for a business trip.	Temporary job-related overseas assignment	Figure 12: Sample of Overseas Employment Certificate (OEC)te	3
2017 Dec – 2018 Jan	I went back home for Christmas	Obtaining OFW travel requirements	Figure 12: Sample of Overseas Employment Certificate (OEC)	3
2018 Feb	I was laid off from my company and I went back home to rest and search for a new job online while in the Philippines	Online Search for Alternative Work	N/A	1
2018 Mar	I had online interviews while I was home	Online Search for Alternative Work	N/A	1
2018 Apr	I flew back to Singapore for my face-to-face interview with a company interested in my profile	Personal Presentation to Potential Employers	N/A	1
2018 May	I started my new role in a European business school.	Transitioning to a new job	N/A	2
2018 Jun	I purchased my first real estate investment in the Philippines	Asset acquisition or investment	N/A	6
2018 Aug	I started my French lessons at Alliance Française Singapore	Advancing personal or professional development	Figure 37: Passing Two French Language Qualification Exams	6

2018 Oct	I was sent to France on a business trip and I also travelled to Italy and The Netherlands	Temporary job-related overseas assignment	Figure 14: Snaps from my Overseas Business or Leisure Trips	3
2018 Nov	I went home to celebrate my mother's birthday	Obtaining OFW travel requirements	Figure 12: Sample of Overseas Employment Certificate (OEC)	3
2018 Dec	I underwent sinus surgery	Managing personal or family affairs	N/A	5
2018 Dec – 2019 Jan	I went back home for Christmas	Obtaining OFW travel requirements	Figure 12: Sample of Overseas Employment Certificate (OEC)	3
2019 Feb	I went back home to spend time with family	Obtaining OFW travel requirements	Figure 12: Sample of Overseas Employment Certificate (OEC)	3
2019 Mar	I went to Japan on holiday	Travelling for leisure	N/A	3
	PRC registration done by my parents on my behalf	Maintaining Philippine licenses or credentials	N/A	4
2019 Apr	I went back home to spend time with family	Obtaining OFW travel requirements	Figure 12: Sample of Overseas Employment Certificate (OEC)	3
2019 Aug	I went back home to spend time with family	Obtaining OFW travel requirements	Figure 12: Sample of Overseas Employment Certificate (OEC)	3
2019 Oct	I was sent to France for business trip and visited family in the UK after	Temporary job-related overseas assignment	Figure 14. Snaps from my Overseas Business or Leisure Trips	3
2019 Nov	I took the DELF (Diplôme d'études en langue française) / Official A2 level french language exam and passed it	Advancing personal or professional development	Figure 37: Passing Two French Language Qualification Exams	6
2019 Dec – 2020 Jan	I went back home for Christmas	Obtaining OFW travel requirements	Figure 12: Sample of Overseas Employment Certificate (OEC)	3

2020 Feb	I travelled to Indonesia for holiday	Travelling for leisure	Figure 14. Snaps from my Overseas Business or Leisure Trips	3
	I went back home to the Philippines for a personal trip	Obtaining OFW travel requirements	Figure 12: Sample of Overseas Employment Certificate (OEC)	3
2020 Mar	<p>I travelled to France for a personal trip and was unable to fly back to Singapore due to the Covid lockdown. I decided to fly back to Manila</p> <p>Messages and calls to the Philippine Embassy in France were not picked up or responded to.</p> <p>My parents had to request from a relative in the Congress for logistical support in bringing me home from NAIA upon arrival.</p>	<p>Travelling for leisure</p> <p>Pandemic-related coping measures, compliance, and adjustments</p>	<p>N/A</p> <p>Figure 27. Immigration Helpline</p>	6
2020 Apr - June	I was quarantined at home in the Philippines and stayed there until flights resumed and the Singapore borders opened	Coping with pandemic-related measures	Figure 28: Barangay Quarantine Tracking, March 2020	5
2020 Jul	I was able to fly back to Singapore but was first quarantined in a hotel for 14 days upon arrival	Coping with pandemic-related measures	N/A	5
2020 Aug	I searched for a new apartment in Singapore during the Covid lockdown	Coping with pandemic-related measures	N/A	5
2020 Nov	I took the DELF (Diplôme d'études en langue française) / Official B1 level french language exam and passed it	Advancing personal or professional development	Figure 37: Passing Two French Language Qualification Exams	6
2020 Dec	I celebrated Christmas in Singapore with fellow OFWs when the lockdown eased	Coping with pandemic-related measures	N/A	5
2021 Jan	I registered for the Virtual PAG-IBIG Account to track my payments	Maintaining Philippine accounts	Figure 47: Virtual PAG-IBIG Website	4

	I registered for the SSS Online Account	Maintaining Philippine accounts	Figure 48. Social Security System Website	4
2021 Apr	I registered for the UP Open University Master of Development Communication program	Advancing personal or professional development	N/A	6
2021 May	My Virtual PAG-IBIG Account was activated	Maintaining Philippine accounts	N/A	4
2021 Jul	I renewed my passport at the Philippine Embassy in Singapore	Managing important documents	Figure 16. Passport Renewal Email Notification of Schedule	4
	I received my first and second Covid vaccination c/o the Singapore government	Coping with pandemic-related measures	Figure 29: My Covid-19 Vaccination Record and Test Results	5
2021 Aug	I travelled back to France upon the opening of the European borders and went to Greece	Travelling for leisure	Figure 14: Snaps from my Overseas Business or Leisure Trips	3
2021 Sep	I was accepted and I enrolled into the UPOU MDC Program	Advancing personal or professional development	N/A	6
	I went back to Singapore and was quarantined in a hotel for 14 days upon arrival	Coping with pandemic-related measures	N/A	5
2021 Oct	I collected my new passport at the Philippine Embassy	Managing important documents	Figure 17: Passport Collection Slip	4
2021 Nov	The Balik-Manggagawa Website was revamped	Obtaining OFW travel requirements	Figure 44: DMW Online Services Portal	3
	A new portal called OFW Assistance Information System (OASIS) was set up for OFWs coming home during the pandemic	Obtaining OFW travel requirements	Figure 58: OFW Assistance Information System (OASIS) Registration	3

2021 Dec	I went back home for Christmas.	Obtaining OFW travel requirements	Figure 12: Sample of Overseas Employment Certificate (OEC)	3
	I was quarantined for 5 days in a hotel in Manila	Pandemic-related coping measures, restriction compliance, and life adjustments	Figure 31: Quarantine Certificate from the Department of Health	6
	I went to Subic on vacation with my family	Pandemic-related coping measures, restriction compliance, and life adjustments	Figure 30: Local Travel Passes	6
2022 Jan	I flew back to Singapore and went under a seven-day home quarantine that was extended as I was diagnosed with Covid	Obtaining OFW travel requirements	Figure 12: Sample of Overseas Employment Certificate (OEC)	3
	<p>I had to go back home for a family emergency. My father was taken to the ICU. He passed away while I was in quarantine.</p> <p>The hotel quarantine was taken care of by OWWA. It was shortened due to a new directive by the government and I was able to get out just before the funeral.</p>	Managing personal or family affairs	Figure 31: Quarantine Certificate from the Department of Health	5
2022 Apr	I registered for the Halalan 2022 Overseas Absentee Voting	Exercising voting rights	Figure 20: Overseas Absentee Voting (OAV) Registration	4
	I received my third Covid Vaccination c/o the Singapore Government	Pandemic-related coping measures, restriction compliance, and life adjustments	Figure 29: My Covid-19 Vaccination Record and Test Results	6
2022 May	I voted during the Presidential Elections	I went to the Philippine Embassy to vote	Figure 20: Overseas Absentee Voting (OAV) Registration	5
	I travelled to Vietnam for vacation	Travelling for leisure	Figure 14: Snaps from my Overseas Business or Leisure Trips	4
2022 June	I was sent to France for business trip	Temporary job-related overseas assignment	N/A	3

2022 July	My mother, brother, nephew, and aunt visited Singapore for a month	Welcoming visiting family  Obtaining regular travel requirements	Figure 33: Images of my Family's Visits to Singapore	3
	I underwent sinus surgery	Managing personal or family affairs	N/A	5
2022 Aug	I renewed my PRC License online	Maintaining Philippine licenses or credentials	Figure 21: PRC Card Renewal Application Form	4
2022 Sep - Oct	I went home to the Philippines for vacation.  I signed up for a new app called One Health Pass(OHP).	Obtaining OFW travel requirements	Figure 59: One Health Pass (OHP) Mobile App	3
2022 Oct	I went to Indonesia for vacation	Travelling for leisure	Figure 14: Snaps from my Overseas Business or Leisure Trips	3
2022 Dec	I was interviewed for an employment opportunity with a multinational company based in France	Personal Presentation to Potential Employers	N/A	1
	I organized my PhilHeath Account. I went to Philhealth and was told I am required to pay a hefty amount despite not needing to use the services as an OFW. I requested a readjustment of the payment tier.	Maintaining Philippine accounts	Figure 54: Philippine Health Insurance (PhilHealth) Website	4
2022 Dec – 2023 Jan	I went home to the Philippines for Christmas	Obtaining OFW travel requirements	Figure 12: Sample of Overseas Employment Certificate (OEC)	3
2023 Feb	I was sent to France for a business trip.	Temporary job-related overseas assignment	Figure 14: Snaps from my Overseas Business or Leisure Trips	3

	I signed my job offer and contract for the new company based in France.	Transitioning to a new job	N/A	2
	I tendered my resignation from my current company and started serving my three-month notice period.	Transitioning to a new job	N/A	2
2023 Mar	I commenced the procedures for the move to France. The new company paid for the relocation agency and shipment of my belongings.	Relocating to a new country	N/A	2
2023 Apr	My mother flew to Singapore to help me pack my belongings. We went back to the Philippines together.  I signed up for a new app called eTravel, which was required for everyone flying into the Philippines. It later became part of the eGOV PH app.	Welcoming visiting family  Obtaining regular travel requirements	Figure 33: Images of my Family's Visits to Singapore  Figure 12: Sample of Overseas Employment Certificate (OEC)  Figure 61: eGOV PH Mobile App	3
2023 May	I relocated to France and searched for an apartment	Relocating to a new country	N/A	2
2023 Jun	I found a new apartment.	Relocating to a new country	N/A	2
	I started with my new job and met my Filipino colleagues. We participated in the celebration of "Taste of the World" in our company, where we featured Filipino food.	Transitioning to a new job	N/A	2
	I celebrated the Fête de la Musique (Festival of Music) with the Filipino Community – celebrated annually on the 21 <sup>st</sup> of June in France-  The Philippine Embassy of France spearheads Fête de la	Social activity involving other members of the OFW diaspora	Figure 34: Images of Fête de la Musique in France	5

	Musique with French-Filipino organizations			
	<p>My application for a French residence permit was paused due to issues with the legibility of my PSA Birth Certificate. The French government asked for an “Extract of Birth Certification with Filiation”.</p> <p>I visited the Philippine Embassy in France to request for the said document, but was told that they do not release such. I was advised to contact the registrar of my birthplace.</p> <p>I resubmitted my application using a scanned copy of my original birth certificate without PSA stamp.</p>	Managing important documents	Figure 24: My MWO-Verified France Residence/Work Permit	4
	I registered as an Overseas Absentee Voter in France. I filled out a form at the Philippine Embassy to change my address from Singapore to France	Exercising voting rights	Figure 20: Overseas Absentee Voting (OAV) Registration	4
2023 Jul	<p>A DMW Outreach Program was held at the Pistang Pinoy celebration in Paris. The MWO (POLO) based in Madrid set up a booth where OFWs can get their contracts verified and their OWWA memberships renewed.</p> <p>I went to the outreach and had my contract verified by MWO. I was instructed to go to the DMW (POEA) office when I come home to the Philippines to have my employment details updated on the Balik-Manggagawa website in order to acquire an OEC prior to leaving the country</p>	Furnishing documents required for employment	Figure 26: Sample of a Verified Employment Contract	6
	I was sent to Liechtenstein and Austria for a business trip	Temporary job-related overseas assignment	N/A	3

2023 Aug	I received my French residence permit. I forwarded a copy to the MWO in Madrid. It was stamped and the digital copy was forwarded to me and added as an attachment to the verified contract.	Managing foreign residency-related requirements	Figure 25: My MWO-Verified France Residence/Work Permit	4
	I applied for the conversion of my Philippine driver's license to French.  I downloaded a certificate of No Apprehension from the Land Transportation Office (LTO) website, as well as my online examination certificates.	Managing foreign residency-related requirements	Figure 22: Philippine Driver's License Translated to French	4
2023 Sep	I was sent to Liechtenstein and Austria for a business trip. I also travelled to Switzerland.	Temporary job-related overseas assignment	Figure 14: Snaps from my Overseas Business or Leisure Trips	3
2023 Oct	I was sent to the UK and Italy for work trainings	Temporary job-related overseas assignment	Figure 14: Snaps from my Overseas Business or Leisure Trips	3
	A Filipino friend in Singapore reached out to me in October 2023 to ask for help regarding an OFW loved-one who passed away in France	Supporting other OFWs	N/A	5
2023 Nov	I went to Italy for a weekend trip	Travelling for leisure	Figure 14: Snaps from my Overseas Business or Leisure Trips	3
2023 Dec	I participated in the Christmas bazaar organized by the Filipino community in France. The event was supported by the Philippine Embassy of France	Social activity involving other members of the OFW diaspora	N/A	5
	I was sent to Liechtenstein and Austria for a business trip	Temporary job-related overseas assignment	Figure 14: Snaps from my Overseas Business or Leisure Trips	3
2024 April	I went home to the Philippines for vacation. I registered on the	Obtaining OFW travel requirements	Figure 12: Sample of Overseas	3

	eTravel app (now Part of the eGOV PH app).		Employment Certificate (OEC)  Figure 61: eGOV PH Mobile App	
	<p>For the conversion of my driver's license, I was requested by the French government to provide a certificate of passing the practical driving test.</p> <p>When I first received my Philippine driver's license many years back, I was only required to take an online examination.</p> <p>I went to LTO to see if it was possible to do a practical driving test even if one already has a license. I was informed that this was not possible.</p>	Managing foreign residency-related requirements	Figure 22: Philippine Driver's License Translated to French	4
	I requested the update to my Employment details. I tried to book an appointment via the Balik-Manggagawa website but this feature did not work. I opted to go to the DMW office at SM City Pampanga as a walk-in visitor.	Furnishing documents required for employment	Figure 43: Online Services Page on the DMW Website	5
May 2024	I submitted alternative documents to the French National Securities Agency for my driving license conversion and they were approved	Managing foreign residency-related requirements	Figure 22: Philippine Driver's License Translated to French	4
	I travelled to Denmark for vacation	Travelling for leisure	Figure 14: Snaps from my Overseas Business or Leisure Trips	3
	I travelled to Spain for vacation, where I met relatives who work as OFWs in the food sector	Travelling for leisure	Figure 14: Snaps from my Overseas Business or Leisure Trips	3
July-August 2024	The 2024 Olympics happened in France. I watched some games on-site and tuned in to the Philippine Embassy Social Media pages for updates on schedules of the Philippine athlete's games	Participating in global events	Figure 36: Paris 2024 Olympics	5

## Phase IV: Analyzing and Interpreting

In this phase, I present my analysis of the data I have gathered in the previous section, guided by the Phase 4 segment of the framework below. Filling out the Chronicle Canvas by unearthing personal memory is a fulfilment of the first item on Milner’s Framework (2007), which is researching the self. This canvas allows for greater ease of moving forward to the rest of Milner’s steps, which include analyzing between self and others, engaged reflection and shifting from self to the system. The system refers to the nature of communication engagement that will be uncovered in the data analysis.

Table 6. Research Framework – Phase 4

PHASE 4	RESOURCES & ACTION	GUIDING QUESTION	PRODUCT/RESULT OF THIS PHASE
<b>Analyzing and Interpreting</b>	<p>Data Analysis and Interpretation based on recommended analytical processes by Chang (2008)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Looking for recurring topics and exceptional circumstances</li> <li>• Fracturing &amp; Connecting</li> <li>• Analyzing between self &amp; others (Milner’s Framework)</li> </ul> <p>Further reflecting on the Milner’s Framework (2007)</p>	<p>What does the data show?</p> <p>As a long-time OFW, what types of communication engagement have I had with the Philippine government throughout the years?</p> <p>How has technology and information processing evolved and developed since the time I first moved out of the Philippines?</p> <p>What processes will I use to analyze the data set?</p>	<p>Analytic memos, coded data</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Researching the self</li> <li>● Researching the self in relation to others</li> <li>● Engaged reflection and representation</li> <li>● Shifting from self to the system</li> </ul>		
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Guided by the questions ‘*What does the data show?*’ and ‘*What processes will I use to analyze the data set?*’, I employed the method of fracturing to identify recurring topics and exceptional circumstances on my data. I have utilized these categories to enable identification of recurring topics and exceptional circumstances based on Chang’s (2008) recommended processes. Each line item in the canvas aims to provide a simpler overview of the instances in which communication with the Philippine government was needed and in what form.

### **Data Fracturing and Connecting**

This section describes the way “coding” and “organizing” data has been implemented in Table 5, wherein they have been broken down into "fractures" and reorganized into categories for easier comparison and analysis. This way, I have found it much easier to identify repetitions and exceptional occurrences in my personal memory narratives.

The fractures consist of comprehensive themes, represented by the nature of engagement that are identified for each memory. As an extra step, color codes were added for easier identification.

### **CAT (Code Numbers and Topical Identifiers)**

- 1 - Employment Search Activities
- 2 – Employment Activation
- 3 - Travels
- 4 - Administrative Procedures
- 5 - Life Events
- 6 – Personal and Professional Improvements

### **Color Code**

Yellow
Green
Orange
Red
Gold
Sky Blue

### **Topical Identifiers**

These labeled data segments are sorted and grouped based on their topical and color codes. They are then combined to form broader categories, which are represented by the topical identifiers: Employment Search Activities, Employment Activation, Travels, Administrative Procedures, Life Events, and Personal or Professional Improvements.

Under each of these identifiers, I have categorized the nature of every OFW communication engagement I have had with government and non-government bodies in my country of deployment. I also identified whether each of those interactions were done in-person, online, or both.

The table below presents the result of the data fracturing and connecting exercise:

*Table 7. Overview of the Nature of my OFW Communication Engagements*

NATURE OF GOVERNMENT & NON-GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION ENGAGEMENTS	TYPE OF CONTACT
<b>1- Employment Search Activities</b>	
Online Search for Alternative Work	Online
Personal Presentation to Potential Employers	In-Person
<b>2- Employment Activation</b>	
Obtaining Legal Employment	In-Person
Transitioning to a New Job	In-Person
Furnishing Documents Required for Employment	Online/In-Person
Relocating to a New Country	In-Person
<b>3- Travels</b>	
Exiting due to Visa Expiry	Online/In-Person
Obtaining OFW Travel Requirements	Online/In-Person
Welcoming Visiting Family	In-Person
Obtaining Regular Travel Requirements	Online/In-Person
Temporary Job-related Overseas Assignment	In-Person
Travelling for Leisure	In-Person
<b>4 - Administrative Procedures</b>	
Managing Important Documents	Online/In-Person
Exercising Voting Rights	In-Person
Maintaining Philippine Licenses or Credentials	Online/In-Person
Maintaining Philippine Accounts & Remittances	Online/In-Person
Managing Foreign Residency-Related Requirements	Online/In-Person
<b>5- Life Events</b>	
Coping with Pandemic-Related Measures	In-Person
Managing Personal or Family Affairs	In-Person
Social Connection with Community of the Same Faith	In-Person
Social Activity Involving Other Members of the OFW Diaspora	In-Person
Supporting Other OFWs	Online
Participating in Global Events	In-Person
<b>6- Personal and Professional Improvements</b>	
Advancing Personal or Professional Development	Online/In-Person
Asset Acquisition or Investment	Online/In-Person

## **Chapter V**

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **Nature of Communication Engagement**

Each of the topical identifiers represent the nature of government and non-government communication engagements that I have had since my OFW journey began. This section provides more details into these communication exchanges.

#### **Employment Search Activities**


This section chronicles my job search abroad, consisting of activities such as applying online, participating in online or face-to-face interviews, receiving job offers, cancellations of job offers, and the rescinding of work contracts.

#### **Online Search for Alternative Work**

Although the Philippine government provides a list of licensed recruitment agencies for both land-based and sea-based employment on the Department of Migrant Workers website (DMW, n.d.), I have never made any job application through the recruitment agencies in the DMW list. During my search for employment, which was primarily done online, I directly reached out to companies through their hiring websites or applied through the professional networking platform LinkedIn.


At that time, I was also able to take advantage of the Employment Pass Eligibility Certificate (EPEC) that the Singapore government offered for graduates of selected universities. This certificate allows the holder to apply for jobs legally in the country for a whole six months, could only be used once, and had to be converted to a long-term visit pass.

Figure 5. My Employment Pass Eligibility Certificate (EPEC)

  
GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE  
EMPLOYMENT PASS ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATE

FRITZIE KAYE CALAUAD PLAMENCO

PHILIPPINES



**PERSONAL PARTICULARS**

1. Name: FRITZIE KAYE CALAUAD PLAMENCO  
2. Gender: FEMALE 3. Nationality: FILIPINO  
4. Passport Number: XX2225104  
5. Date of Birth:

**QUALIFICATIONS**

Academic/Professional Qualifications: BACHELOR'S DEGREE  
Year of Graduation:  
Faculty of Study: DIETETICS  
Name and Place of University: UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES, DILIMAN, PHILIPPINES

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
Reference No: EPEC-2010-2 Date: 06/08/2010


This is to certify that FRITZIE KAYE CALAUAD PLAMENCO, (XX2225104) is eligible for an Employment Pass subject to qualifying notes overleaf.

This certificate does not exempt the holder from applying for an entry visa. It may be produced when applying for the visa or any immigration pass. The holder may, after arrival in Singapore, apply to the Visitor Service Centre, Immigration & Checkpoints Authority for a longer term Social Visit Pass, valid for up to 12 months to enable holder to seek employment. The Visitor Service Centre, Immigration & Checkpoints Authority is located at:

4th Storey, ICA Building  
10 Kallang Road, Singapore 208718

This certificate is valid for 2 years from the date shown above.  
(NB: Please attach a copy of this certificate when applying for an Employment Pass)

  
Signature

  
Issuing Authority

MOM (MFC) 240209

## Personal Presentation to Potential Employers

In December 2010, I flew to Singapore after my EPEC application was approved to search for jobs in person. The EPEC was valid for six months and had to first be converted to a Long Term visit pass, which provided me with my Foreign Identification Number (FIN) - equivalent to the social security number.

This certificate could only be used once and it allowed me to stay and apply for jobs legally in Singapore within a year. Once a job is secured, this was replaced with an Employment Pass.

*Figure 6. My Singapore Long Term Visit Pass*



## Employment Activation

This category details the instances of my relocation to the destination country to commence employment.

## Obtaining Legal Employment

Two months after my first arrival in Singapore to present myself to potential employers in person, I found my first job and received my first official Employment Pass.

*Figure 7. My first Singapore Employment Pass*

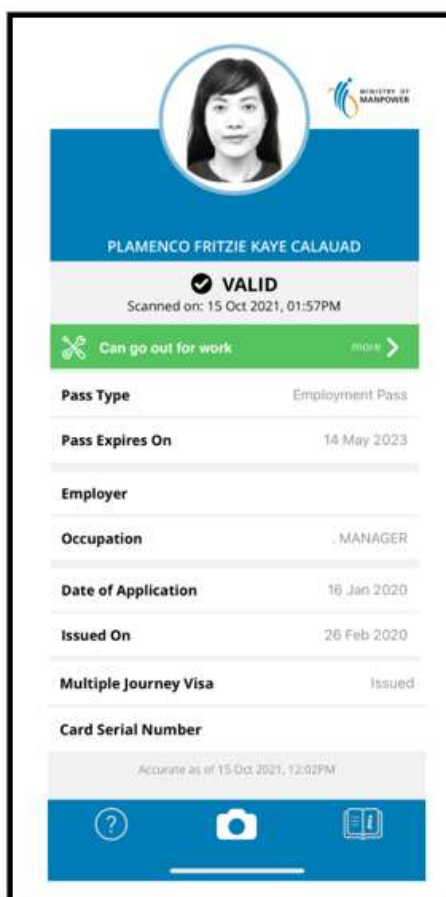


## Transitioning to a New Job

Throughout my thirteen years as an OFW in Singapore, I worked in over five different companies. Each time I had to switch to a new employer, a new employment pass was issued, but with the same identification number all throughout. This means that all my records and activities, such as tax records, bank details and personal bills in Singapore were tied to it.

During each transition to a new job, I was also required to contact the POLO at the Philippine Embassy to verify my contract, update my employment details, as well as renew my OWWA membership.

Figure 8. My Singapore Employment record



## Furnishing Documents Required for Employment

The main documents that are needed to be furnished by an OFW at the start of their jobs commonly include pre-deployment documents that need to be provided to the POEA (now DMW), the contracts that have be verified by the POLO (now MWO) and the OWWA membership payment. I needed to pay for

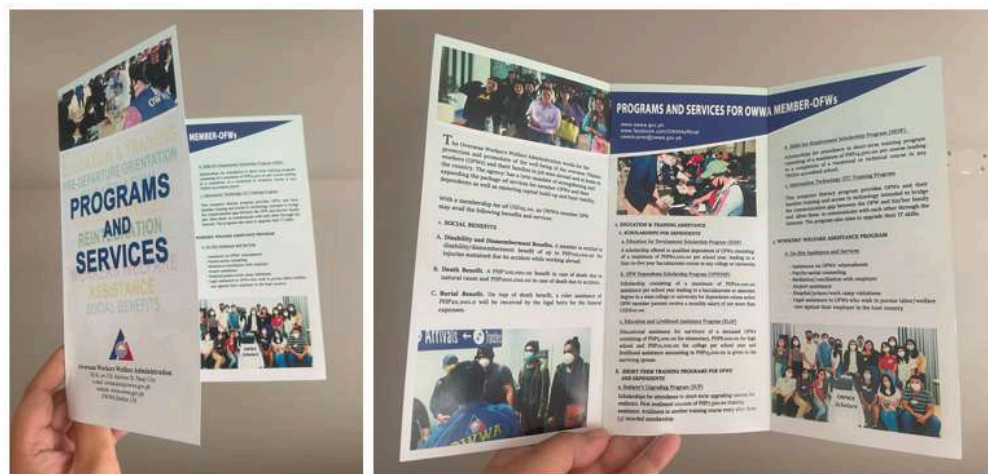
the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) membership to access the full range of benefits available to OFWs.

The OWWA membership is valid for two years. However, I only managed to renew it each time I had to switch employment, when my work details had to be updated in the system.

Figure 9. OWWA Membership Payment Receipt



Figure 10. OWWA Programs and Services Leaflet



I have always skipped the pre-deployment phases, as I always managed to start work as soon as I signed my job offer and received approval of my employment passes. However, for many OFWs, it is a must to follow the said steps and thus, there is bound to be more contact with the government prior to starting employment.

Among all the OFWs with work contracts (or what is referred to as Overseas Contract Workers or OCWs), most of the occupations mentioned in Figure 2 and the diaspora outlook overview (Phase 1) are able to comply with the pre-deployment guidelines and processes set by the DMW in a straightforward manner prior to leaving the Philippines.

The reason behind this is that they are mostly employed through manning agencies, which are mandated by the government to strictly adhere to the guidelines. Thus, most OFWs in this group are not able to leave the country to start their new jobs right away without having gone through all the relevant procedures. However, for the occupation group to which I belong, which are Professionals and Managers comprising 14.4% and 3.6% of the OFW population respectively (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2023), the situation is not entirely the same.

Based on personal observation among many colleagues and friends in both Singapore and Paris, OFWs from the said occupation group tend to be hired directly by companies and thus, there is the likelihood of being out of touch with the Philippine government processes for steps surrounding work contracts

and pre-employment procedures until a certain specific need for a touchpoint arises.

Some are able to leave the Philippines as tourists and receive their contracts directly upon arrival to the country in which they have been hired to work, without having to go through the mandated screenings, interviews, and seminars. The same is true for those that opt to cut ties with their manning agencies and find employers by their own means, as well as those who switch to other jobs either in the same country or in another nation.

Moreover, it is the same situation for those that have arrived in the country illegally or that are staying without the proper documentation or residence permits and eventually found employment, which has been established in the diaspora outlook overview (Phase 1). For this reason, communication with the Philippine government within these groups often deviates from standard guidelines, particularly regarding pre-deployment processes and employment documentation.

When I initially departed for Singapore following the approval of my Employment Pass Eligibility Certificate (EPEC), I was unaware of the existence of these processes and consequently bypassed them unknowingly. I have since learned that, although these procedures were established and intended for all departing Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs), they were predominantly targeted at those employed through manning agencies.

## **Relocating to a new country**

In December 2022, I was interviewed by a multinational company based in France. After passing the online interviews, I received the job offer two months later. In March 2023, I commenced the procedures for the move to France. Among all my belongings that I have accumulated during my stay in Singapore, some were shipped to the Philippines and some to Paris. The new company covered all the relocation costs.

Upon arrival in France, I searched for a new apartment and started processing all the necessary residency-related documents, as well as the procedures related to updating my records in the DMW portal.

## **Travels**

This section describes the occasions when I returned to the Philippines for vacation, business travel, or to restart the employment search following the withdrawal of work contracts. This category specifies instances when I traveled to countries other than my place of employment as an OFW, whether for business or vacation.

### **Exiting Due to Visa Expiry**

Stringent immigration questioning was not limited to departing Filipinos at Philippine airports. During those instances when it took some time for my employment passes to be approved, I had to leave Singapore temporarily because the tourist visa is valid for only 30 days.

Many Filipinos seeking employment who fail to secure a job within this period undertake what is known as an ‘exit’. This involves traveling by bus or ferry to nearby countries—such as Batam or Bintan in Indonesia, or Johor Bahru in Malaysia—for a day or two before returning to Singapore.

Figure 11. My first ‘exit trip’ in May 2011



The aim is to get their passports stamped with another set of 30 days when they return to Singapore so that they can continue with their job search. For this reason, border security in these surrounding countries have also tightened up, especially for individuals who do not hold employment or dependent passes. The chances of getting held by the immigration officials for questioning also became very high.

Even with these practices being known and common, the Philippine Consulate in Singapore does not really have full control over these Filipinos seeking to get employed. While some of them don't find a job and end up going home or transferring to another country, many of them do manage to successfully find employment.

### **Obtaining OFW Travel Requirements**

The first time I needed to contact the Philippine Embassy after securing my first job and obtaining my work pass was when I was preparing for my initial return trip to the Philippines since relocating to Singapore. I found out that I needed to obtain an Overseas Employment Certificate (OEC) and to have my employment contract verified. I recall feeling confused and frustrated about the process during that period.

In 2011, the website of the Philippine Embassy did not have clear step-by-step information and there were online forums that provided a variety of information that differed from one another. During that time, the Facebook group for the embassy did not provide as ample information compared to the community-led PinoySG group. On my end, I opted to ask a friend who had just done the same procedure.

Once my contract was verified and my employment records were successfully entered into the system, I was issued a printed Overseas Employment Certificate (OEC). This document is essential for presentation to immigration authorities on my return flight to Singapore, as it facilitates travel

and airport tax exemptions and provides the added advantage of avoiding additional scrutiny by officials.

I recall being asked at the Philippine Embassy about the frequency of my planned trips back to the Philippines within the year. I was advised to obtain multiple OECs to avoid the need for repeated visits to the Embassy. At that time, each OEC was priced at S\$5.00. In 2014, with the launch of the Balik-Manggagawa Portal, the OEC became digitalized and could now be generated online without any cost.

OEC requests, in my first years in Singapore, were manually done at the Philippine Embassy but eventually became processed through the Balik-Manggagawa portal.

Figure 12. Sample of Overseas Employment Certificate (OEC)

Republic of the Philippines  
Department of Labor and Employment  
Philippine Overseas Employment Administration  
Overseas Worker Welfare Administration

**Overseas Employment Certificate**  
Number: 202111001

Date Printed:	11-28-2021 10:58	Balik-Manggagawa
OFW Name:	FRITZIE KAYE CALAUAD FLAMENCO	
Passport Number:		
Birth Date:		
Gender:	Female	
Position:	MANAGER	
Salary:	SINGAPORE DOLLAR/Month	
Contract Duration:	10	
Agency:	NA	
Principal:		
Jobsite:	SINGAPORE	
Date Paid:	Not Applicable	
Valid for Exit up to:	1/27/2022	
OR/Confirmation No:		
Fees Paid:		
POEA Processing Fee:	Exempted	
Total:	Exempted	

THIS OEC SERVES AS THE OFW'S TRAVEL EXIT CLEARANCE AND VALID FOR SINGLE EXIT ONLY. ANY ERASURES, TAMPERING AND ALTERATIONS SHALL RENDER THIS DOCUMENT INVALID

During my first few flights to Singapore when I have not been officially issued the employment pass yet, I remember how much I dreaded facing the immigration authorities at the Philippine Airport during my outgoing flights. It is common knowledge that it is illegal for tourists to search for employment in Singapore, but many Filipinos are also known to keep trying their luck.

*Figure 13. Singapore Arrival Immigration*



Because I belonged to the same age group profile of those who did this, I also experienced being held and questioned by immigration officials. As I had my proper documents each time, I was not held for too long. But I remember how stressful it was being in a room full of several people being questioned sternly by the authorities while being fearful about getting offloaded from the flight, which was the case for many.

More recently in the aftermath of the pandemic, a new application called eTravel was implemented, which required any Filipinos or foreigners entering the Philippines to provide their travel information, as well as fill out a health declaration form. eTravel was later incorporated into the newly-launched eGOV PH mobile app.

### **Obtaining Regular Travel Requirements**

Multiple times during my stay in Singapore, my family came over to visit. For these trips, they had to get their passports, pay for the travel taxes and airport fees, and sign up for many travel requirements that were implemented post-pandemic. I provided as much support as possible in consolidating all these documents, as well as sending them letters of invitation containing my address and contact details, in case they would be held at the Philippine immigration prior to their flight.

### **Temporary Job-related Overseas Assignment**

In the last 13 years of being an OFW, I have been frequently sent on business trips to other countries other than where I was working.

During these travels, I sometimes needed to furnish documents for visa application in cases where I had to be assigned to countries where Filipinos need a visa. For these, I usually go through the normal visa processing agencies assigned by the countries of destination or make the submissions at the consulate of the said country.

During visa application procedures related to these trips, I have always independently put together all the requirements and never found the need to contact the Philippine government for any related documentation or processes.

From my fellow OFWs who are also given travel opportunities, I found out that the only time they reach out to the government during overseas travels is when they lose their passports or other important documents.

*Figure 14. Snaps from my various overseas business trips*



## **Travelling for Leisure**

As an OFW, I have had opportunities to also do personal travels for leisure. During some of these trips, I also needed to prepare documents for visa applications that were submitted either through visa processing agencies or directly through the respective consulates.

## Administrative Procedures

This category focuses on activities involving governance processes, standard operating procedures, or protocols related to employment, residence in the host country, or maintaining Filipino citizenship.

### Managing Important Documents

I have visited the Philippine Embassy to avail of their passport renewal, as well as authentication and notarial services for my Diploma and Transcript of Records. During my twelve years as an OFW in Singapore, I renewed my passport twice.

The first renewal was managed via email. I submitted the application form and required documents electronically and awaited a response from the Philippine Embassy to schedule an appointment to complete the process.

*Figure 15. Passport Renewal Application via Email*

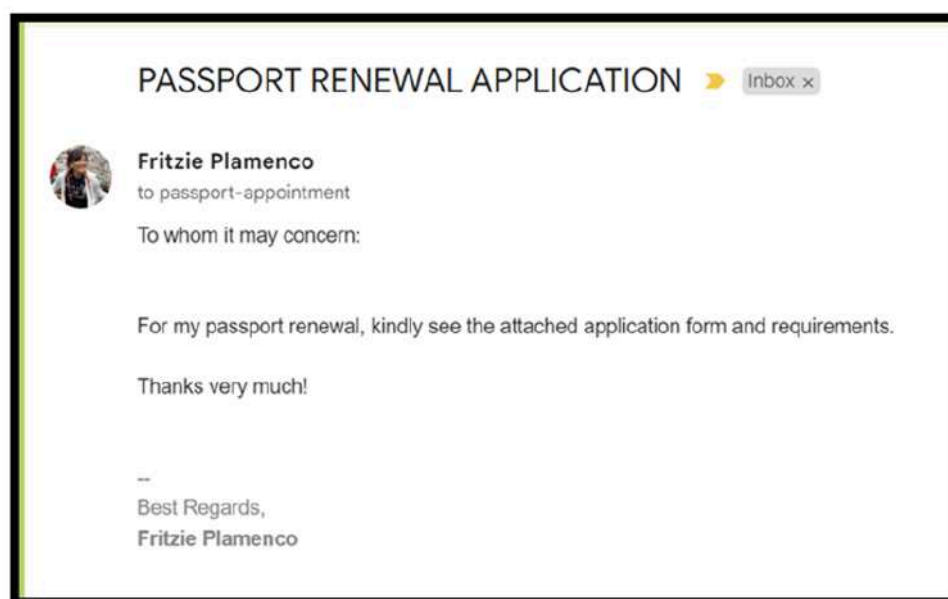
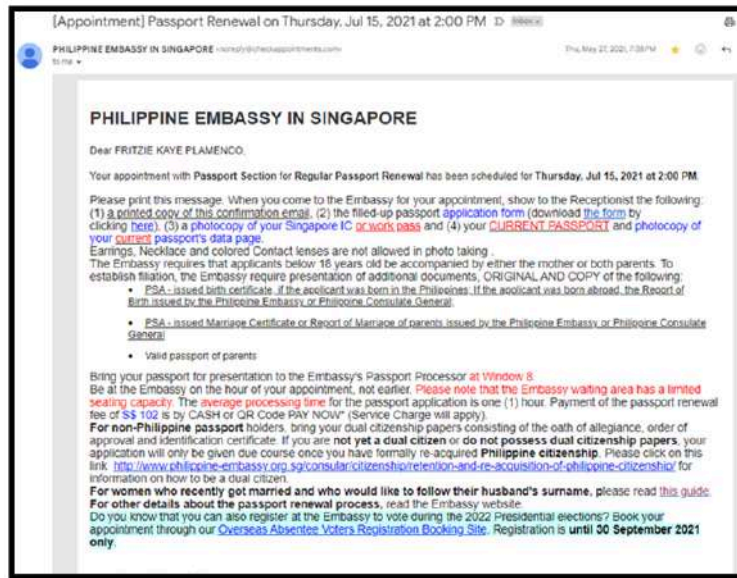
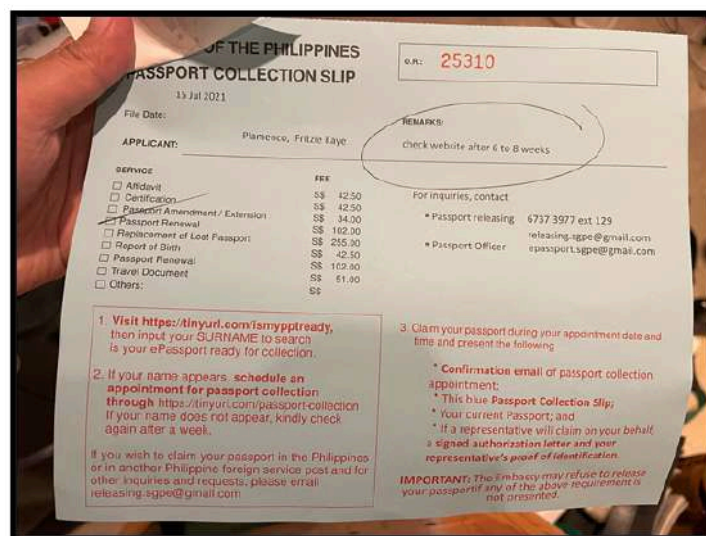


Figure 16. Passport Renewal Email Notification of Schedule



The second renewal process was somewhat improved, as it was then possible to apply through an online portal. This allowed for the direct upload of the application form and supporting documents, along with scheduling an appointment. Despite this advancement, there was still a need to wait for email confirmation of the appointment schedule.

Figure 17. Passport Collection Slip



Aside from passport renewals, I also reached out to the Philippine Embassy in both Singapore and France for matters surrounding legal documents. In Singapore, there was an instance when I requested for some of my documents, such as birth certificate and transcript of records to be certified.

This is a process where they provide either stamped copies signed by the Consul or what used to be called “red-ribboned” versions that signifies the authenticity of the documents. I also requested for official English translations of my Tagalog documents.

*Figure 18. Philippine Embassy Document Certification Service*

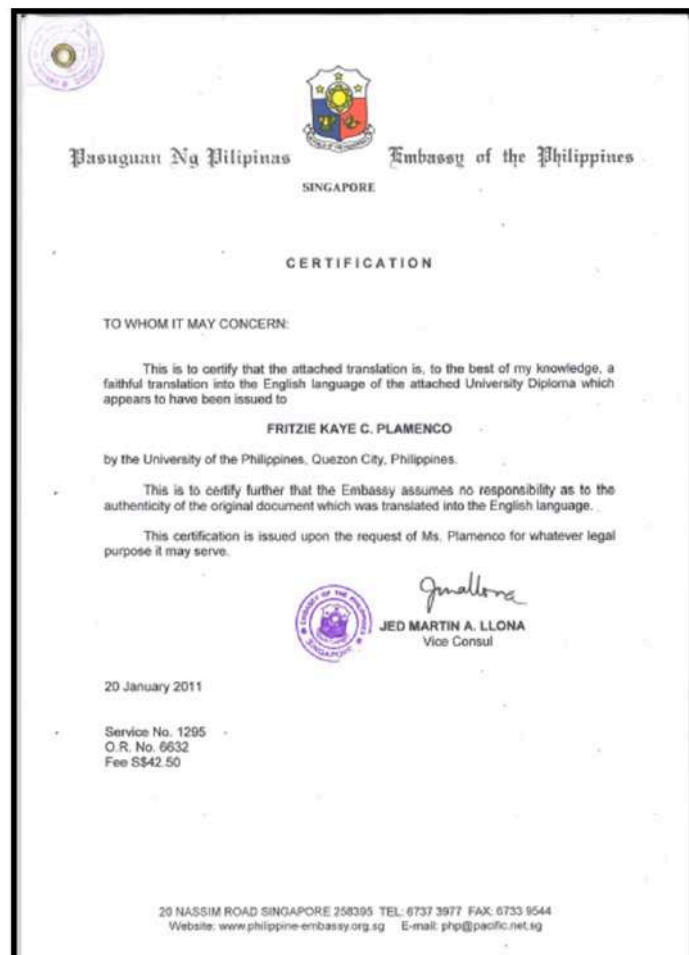
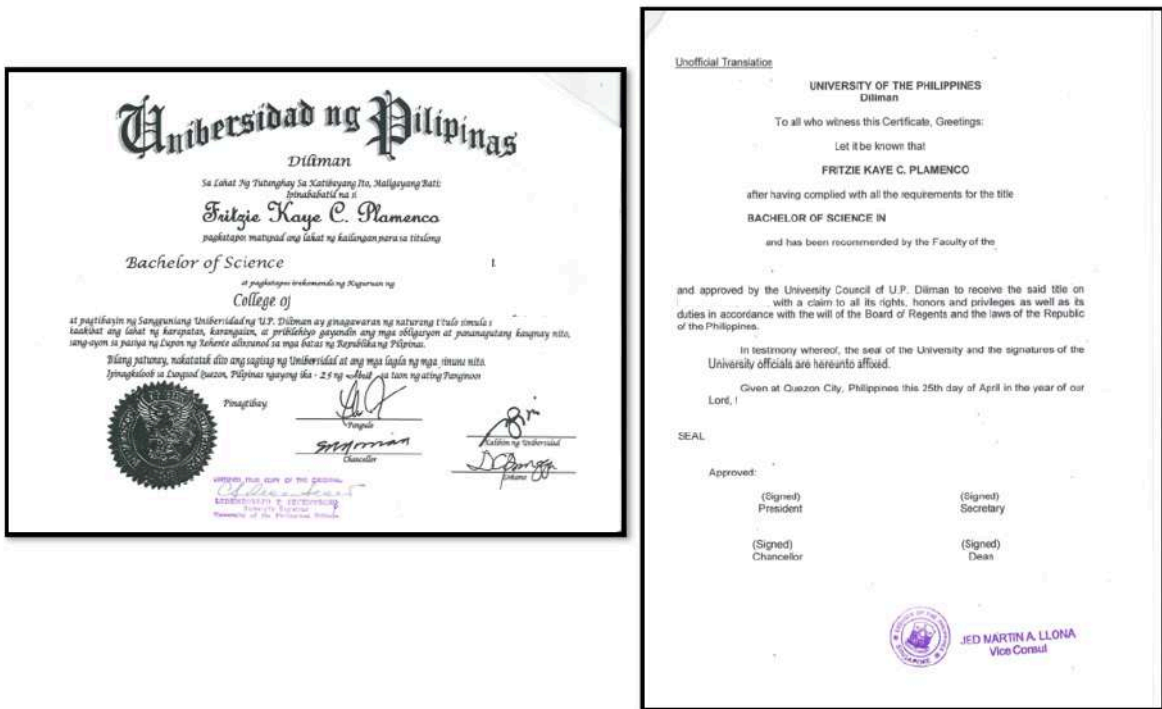


Figure 19. Diploma Translation by The Philippine Embassy Singapore



### Exercising Voting Rights

I have voted in two presidential elections as an Overseas Absentee Voter throughout my stay in Singapore.

Upon my move to France, one of the first things I processed when I visited the Philippine Embassy was to update my personal details and address so that I would be able to vote in upcoming elections.

Figure 20. Overseas Absentee Voting Registration




### **Maintaining Philippine Licenses or Credentials**

Despite practicing a job that is different from my profession in the Philippines, I have opted to continue refreshing my knowledge and renewing my Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) license for the said specialization.

For my PRC license renewals, it has always been possible to download the form online and to send the signed form to a family member who I can authorize to do the process on my behalf.


Figure 21. PRC Card Renewal Application Form

TIME RECEIVED: \_\_\_\_\_  
TIME RELEASED: \_\_\_\_\_



**Professional Regulation Commission**

**APPLICATION FOR PROFESSIONAL IDENTIFICATION CARD (PIC)**



NOT FOR SALE

APPOINTMENT DATE: September 28, 2022 (9:00 PM TO 12:00 PM) - PRC San Fernando  
 REFERENCE NO: REXRKHZEVD01 | OR: E2822-09-ED427327 | Amount: PHP 482.00  
 NAME: PLAMENCO, FRITZDE KAYE CALAJAD

CITIZENSHIP: \_\_\_\_\_ FILING: \_\_\_\_\_ BIRTHDATE: \_\_\_\_\_

PERMANENT MAILING ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
 TEL. NO. / CP NO.: \_\_\_\_\_ SCHOOL GRADUATED: UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES CALAPAN DATE GRADUATED: \_\_\_\_\_  
 REGISTRATION DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ EXPIRATION DATE: \_\_\_\_\_  
 PROFESSION: SUBDIVISIONS SPECIALIST LICENSE NO.: \_\_\_\_\_

**DECLARATION AND ATTESTATION**

I am aware and I give my consent to the collection of the data required by this application form and the taking of my photograph, and if applicable, the taking of my fingerprints.

I further attest that all particulars and supporting documents provided by me are correct and complete. I am aware that any false statement or fraudulent document will lead to the rejection of my application or to the cancellation of my PIC already issued, and may also render me liable under applicable administrative and criminal laws.

\_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE OF LICENSEE

**UNDERTAKING**

(To be filled up by professionals, except for Real Estate Practitioners, who failed to comply with the required CPD Credit Units for the renewal of Professional Identification Card)

For this compliance period, I am submitting \_\_\_ CPD units of the total required \_\_\_ CPD Credit units. I hereby undertake to submit the balance of \_\_\_ CPD credit units in addition to the \_\_\_ required CPD units (or a total of \_\_\_ units) for the next renewal of my PIC. I understand that in the event I fail to comply, my PIC will not be renewed.

\_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE OF LICENSEE

**NOTE:**

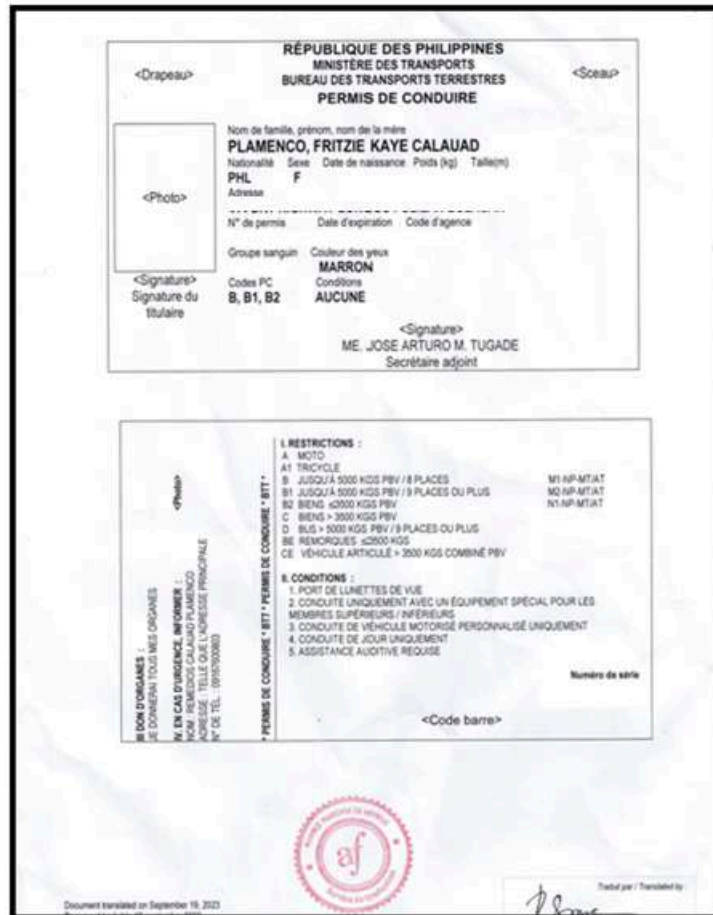
- 1) ALL REAL ESTATE PRACTITIONERS CANNOT AVAIL THE UNDERTAKING AND HAVE TO PROVIDE PROOF OF COMPLIANCE WITH CPD PRIOR TO RENEWAL OF PIC PURSUANT TO SECTION 17, ARTICLE III OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9646 OR THE REAL ESTATE SERVICE ACT OF THE PHILIPPINES AND BOARD RESOLUTION NO. 49, S. 2015.
- 2) REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PROFESSIONAL APPLYING FOR ISSUANCE OF PROFESSIONAL IDENTIFICATION CARD (PIC) MUST SUBMIT:
  - a) THE PRESCRIBED AUTHORIZATION LETTER AND PHOTOCOPY OF PROFESSIONAL IDENTIFICATION CARD (PIC) OF THE REPRESENTATIVE AND EXPIRED PIC OF THE PROFESSIONAL; OR
  - b) SPECIAL POWER OF ATTORNEY (SPA) AND PHOTOCOPY OF ANY VALID GOVERNMENT ISSUED IDENTIFICATION CARD (ID) OF THE REPRESENTATIVE AND THE PROFESSIONAL
- 3) STRICTLY FOLLOW THE APPOINTMENT DATE ON RENEWAL OF PROFESSIONAL IDENTIFICATION CARD (PIC).

Aside from my PRC license, I also kept my Philippine driver's license updated. During some of my trips back to the Philippines, I visited both PRC and LTO offices whenever it was time for the renewals to make the payments or facilitate the requests in person.

When I moved to France, I learned that within the first year after receiving my residence permit, I am eligible as a Philippine driver's license holder to request for an exchange to a French driving permit. When I made this request, I

had to contact the Land Transportation Office (LTO) both online and in person for the necessary documents.

Figure 22. Philippine Driver's License Translated to French



The driver's license exchange was requested through a French government website, where all required documents had to be uploaded. The main blocker that I and another Filipino colleague encountered was having to request for some certifications from the LTO. While some documents could be requested and paid via the LTO website, some requests had to be facilitated in person at the physical office. An added complexity is the need to translate those documents to French.

## **Maintaining Philippine Accounts and Remittances**

Even while working, living and paying my taxes abroad, I have still been maintaining all my Philippine accounts such as my Social Security System (SSS) contributions, as well as my PAG-IBIG (Home Mutual Fund) and PhilHealth (Philippine Health Insurance) memberships.

It is not the same case, however, for all OFWs I have met. While some still do keep their PRC licenses, especially those that practice their professions abroad, a number of OFWs have decided to discontinue managing their SSS, PAG-IBIG or PhilHealth memberships as they are not deemed useful or necessary.

Many of the OFWs I have known or met are not fully aware of the benefits and importance of continuing their contributions to these government programs. They might not know how to go about making payments while abroad, or they might not be informed about the benefits they could receive from these contributions.

Some of them may not perceive immediate benefits from paying them. For example, the benefits of SSS pensions or Pag-IBIG housing loans might seem too distant or irrelevant to their current situation, especially if they do not plan to return to the Philippines soon.

Furthermore, the process of paying these contributions from abroad can be cumbersome and inconvenient. The need to navigate different payment systems, manage exchange rates, and ensure timely payments can deter OFWs from maintaining their contributions.

Figure 23. PAG-IBIG Fund Payment Remittance Form

CUSTOMER COPY

**Metro Remittance**  
(Singapore), Pte. Ltd.  
A Subsidiary of Metrobank Philippines  
304 Orchard Road, #09-30 Lucky Plaza Singapore 238862 Tel: (65) 6734-8888 / 6734-2748 Fax: (65) 6734-7388  
Company Reg No.: 200405248M

**OFFICIAL RECEIPT**  
No. SGASG2100656126  
Date: 01/06/2021

BENEFICIARY				REMITTER			
Account No.: (PAG-IBIG FUND)				Remitter's PIN:			
Name: FLAMENCO, FRITZIE KAYE CALAJAD				ID Presented: FIN - G101			
Address: PULJILAN BULACAN MALLOS BULACAN 3000 PHILIPPINES				Name: FLAMENCO, FRITZIE KAYE CALAJAD			
Contact No: 91620787				Contact No:			
Payment Mode: BILLS PAYMENT (JAN-DEC 2021)				Address:			
Message to Bene: PAGIBIG-				I hereby certify that all information contained herein is true and correct			
				Remitter's Signature			
METROBANK BRANCH				AMOUNT OF REMITTANCE		PHP 2,400.00	
DENOMINATION				Remittance		Fees/Charges	
						Total	
SGD	1,000 X =	SGD	2 X =	SGD	66.30	4.00	SGD 70.30
	500 X =		1 X =	Rate: (36.20000)			
	100 X =		.50 X =				
	50 X =		.20 X =				
	20 X =		.10 X =				
	10 X =		.05 X =				
	5 X =		.01 X =				
Authorized Signature (For Bank Use Only)				RBM110878 #556126 Time: 14:41:44 NOT VALID UNLESS SIGNED BY AN AUTHORIZED OFFICER			

All of these contributions involve either having to send payments through remittance centers or by providing a special power of attorney for a family member in the Philippines who could do the processing on my behalf.

In some cases, OFWs in Singapore and France might have access to better or more relevant insurance and savings plans. They may prefer to invest in these local options, which might offer more comprehensive coverage or better returns on investment compared to Philippine government programs.

And most of all, one big reason that I see is that not all OFWs have stable, long-term employment contracts. Some might work in informal sectors or have irregular job statuses, making it difficult to commit to regular contributions to SSS, Pag-IBIG, and PhilHealth.

## Managing Foreign Residency-Related Requirements

Upon arriving in France, when my residence permit was under process, the French government returned the Philippine Statistic Authority (PSA)-authenticated copy of my birth certificate because it was not legible enough. I was advised to request for what is known as an “extract of birth certificate with filiation”, from the Philippine Embassy in Paris.

However, upon visiting the Embassy, I was told that they do not furnish such a document and that I need to contact the Registrar’s office from my birthplace to request for another copy of my birth certificate. As the PSA-authenticated version did not work, I tried to submit a scanned copy of the original version instead, which was accepted by the French authorities.

*Figure 24. My Verified France Residence/Work Permit*



I once again needed my new employment contract verified. Since there is MWO in the country and the nearest one is in Madrid, Spain, I had to wait for a consular outreach event in Paris in order to be able to do this. Outreach programs are also held in France for services such as contract verification and OWWA membership registrations. These mobile consular missions provide an opportunity for Filipinos to access essential services without having to travel long distances. Upon my move to France, I benefited from such outreach to get my contract verified.

*Figure 25. DMW Outreach Program in Paris, July 2023*



After my contract was verified, I was advised that I was still required to visit the DMW office when I fly back home so that the details could be updated on my Balik-Manggagawa (Balik-Manggagawa) account.

Without such a step, I will not be able to request for an OEC, which is necessary to show at the check-in and immigration counters upon my return to my jobsite.

Figure 26. Sample of Verified Employment Contract

CONTRAT DE TRAVAIL A DUREE INDETERMINEE	PERMANENT EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT
<b>ENTRE LES SOUSSIGNEES :</b>	<b>BETWEEN THE UNDERSIGNED:</b>
La société	
Société par actions simplifiée à associé unique au capital de _____, enregistrée au Registre du Commerce et des Sociétés de Versailles sous le numéro _____, dont le siège social est situé au _____, 92100 Boulogne Billancourt, Cedex.	A single shareholder French simplified limited company with _____ share capital, registered in the Versailles Trade and Companies Register under number _____, having its registered office at _____, 92100 Boulogne Billancourt, Cedex.
Représentée par Madame _____ en sa qualité de Présidente de la Société, dûment habilité(e) à l'effet des présentes.	Represented by Mrs. _____ acting as the Company's President, duly authorised for the purposes hereunder.
Ci-après dénommée la « Société »	Hereinafter referred to as the "Company".
D'une part,	
<b>ET :</b>	<b>AND:</b>
Madame Fritzie Kaye Plameco	Mrs Fritzie Kaye Plameco
Né(e) _____ Philippines.	Born _____, Philippines.
Demeurant _____ Montroal Spring Singapore 753501.	Residing at _____ Montroal Spring Singapore 753501.
Ci-après dénommé(e) le / la « Salarié(e) »	Hereinafter referred to as the "Employee".
D'autre part,	
Ensemble les « Parties ».	Together the "Parties".
<b>IL A ETE CONVENU ET ARRETE CE QUI SUIT :</b>	<b>NOW THEREFORE, THE PARTIES HAVE AGREED AS FOLLOWS:</b>
<b>ARTICLE 1 – ENGAGEMENT</b>	<b>ARTICLE 1 - EMPLOYMENT COMMITMENT</b>
Le/la Salarié(e) est engagé(e) par la Société à compter du <b>01.06.2023</b> sous contrat à durée indéterminée (ci-après dénommée le « Contrat ») en qualité de _____ statut cadre, position 3.1., coefficient <b>170</b> , sous réserve de la détention d'une autorisation de travail pouvant être requise pour l'exécution du présent Contrat.	The Company shall employ the Employee from <b>01.06.2023</b> under a permanent employment contract (hereinafter the "Contract") as executive status, position 3.1., coefficient <b>170</b> , subject to the Employee holding any work permit that might be required for the execution of the Contract.

## **Life Events**

This section categorizes significant occurrences into the following nature of engagement: Coping with Pandemic-related Measures, Managing Personal or Family Affairs, Social Connections with Communities of Same Faith, Social Activities with other Members of the OFW Diaspora, Supporting Other OFWS, and Participating in Global Events.

### **Coping with Pandemic-related Measures**

At the onset of Covid, I had the experience of being stranded in France during a personal trip when the Singapore borders started closing. My flights were abruptly cancelled and the lockdown prohibited me from moving around.

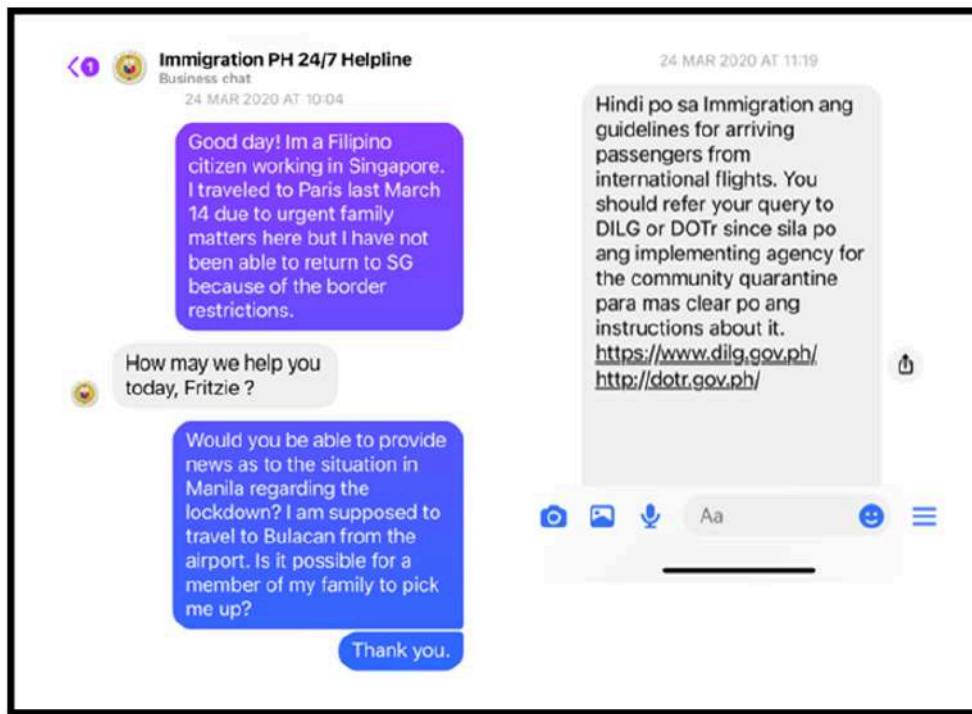
As the only option left was to fly back home to Manila, I made several attempts to contact the Philippine Embassy in Paris via emails and phone calls. However, no one responded.

I also tried to message the Immigration Helpline but I was advised that the appropriate agency that could help me with my query was the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG). Aside from sending the link to the DILG website, no other helpful information was provided.

Through my own efforts, I was eventually able to book a flight to the Philippines. My parents were able to reach out to a relative in the Congress to

request for logistical support in driving me home from NAIA amidst the lockdowns that have also swept around Manila.

Figure 27. Immigration Helpline

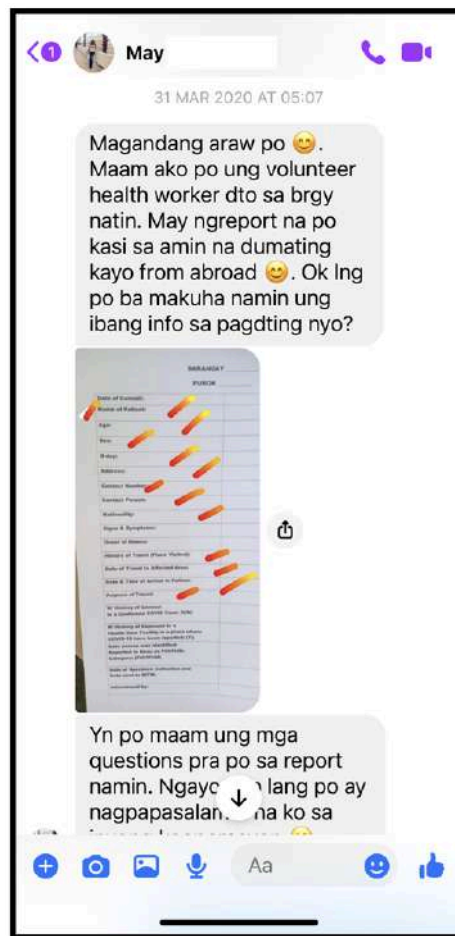


As I did my home quarantine, wherein I was not allowed to leave my room or mingle with the rest of my family, a volunteer from the Barangay reached out to me to request for my information and to track my quarantine days.

Four months later, when I finally was able to return to Singapore, the Barangay provided me with all the documentation needed for clearance. Upon my arrival in Singapore, from the hotel quarantine to all pandemic-related

requirements such as vaccination and tracing app registration, it was the Singapore government that I was in touch with all throughout. I was vaccinated three times in the country.

Figure 28. Barangay Quarantine Tracking, March 2020



For a significant period after the lockdowns slowly eased out, Singapore required all its residents to download the TraceTogether app, which enabled the government to track the movements of the community and in case of outbreak, pinpoint possible ‘virus spreaders’, their location, and contact trails. In every

establishment, everyone needed to check-in upon entrance using a QR code in the app.

Figure 29. My Covid-19 Vaccination Record and Test Results



I had no contact with the Philippine government until my trips back home a year later. I was quarantined at hotels in Manila during the two instances I returned to the Philippines since I came back to Singapore. The first time was in December 2021. Everything was taken care of by the OWWA - buses were designated to take OFWs to the hotel where we were assigned and meals were provided during all quarantine days as well. It has been reported that the government allocated significant resources to support OFWs, including over P29

billion for accommodations, transportation, and food as a 'Covid aid' (Medenilla, 2022).

Upon my release from quarantine, I discovered that there was more movement allowed between locations. My next touchpoint with the government was having to apply online for travel passes for me and my family to help us move around.

Figure 30. Local Travel Passes



During this last quarantine, I was added to a Facebook group of all the OFWs staying in the same hotel. OWWA created this group for easier information dissemination. I learned that some people travelled home to the Philippines for the same reason that they have also lost family members due to Covid.

For some of these OFWs, it had taken too long for employer approvals before they could get their plane tickets. In addition to the time they spent in quarantine, it also took so much time to get back to their respective provinces that their families were mandated by their local government to proceed with the funeral without waiting for them.

It was during this time that I contacted my uncle in Congress to help expedite the release of our batch. We found out that there was a pending decision to shorten quarantine measures for incoming OFWs arriving after us and my uncle and his other colleagues in Congress were instrumental in helping to extend this new ruling to our group.

Figure 31. Quarantine Certificate from the Department of Health



## Managing Personal or Family Affairs

At the tail-end of the pandemic, my father was rushed to the ICU in January 2022 due to a non-Covid medical issue. I was again quarantined and despite my requests to be released early after showing my vaccination status and negative Covid tests, it was not permitted due to the spikes in the cases the weeks prior. It was supposed to be a ten to 14-day quarantine. Upon my arrival, however, there was an announcement that the quarantine will likely be shortened and our batch was released five days later. Unfortunately, my father passed away and my family had to wait until I was released for the funeral.

*Figure 32. My father passing away at the tail-end of the Covid-19 pandemic*



In terms of family-related events, there were several occasions during my years of residence in Singapore when family members came to visit and in which we had to go through the experience of managing passport renewal requests, as well as having to pay the outgoing travel taxes and terminal fees at the Philippine airport.

*Figure 33. Images of My Family's Visits to Singapore*



During my stay in Singapore, I had to undergo a few medical operations and procedures, which were both covered by my company health insurance. Although I have been maintaining my Philhealth account in the Philippines, this did not contribute at all to the payment for these surgeries. When the employer is able to provide the health insurance, this works well for an OFW. As I understand from fellow Filipinos I have met in both Singapore and France, all

companies and associations that are in the private sector are required to provide supplementary health cover to their employees. However, for domestic workers that are employed privately, there is usually no law that guarantees their specific health insurance coverage.

### **Supporting Other OFWs**

A Filipino friend in Singapore reached out to me in October 2023 to ask for help regarding an OFW loved-one who passed away in France. She had lived and worked in France for a long time and did have any other relatives in the country.

The family needed someone who spoke French to talk to the funeral home to clarify details regarding the repatriation of the remains back to the Philippines. They had tried to contact the Philippine Embassy but there was no response since it was a weekend. I was able to help them get the necessary information, but it should have been a matter that the Embassy could help with.

### **Social Connection with Community of the Same Faith**

In 2011, I integrated with my first Filipino community in Singapore through a Christian church. In the said community, there were many OFWs working in a variety of fields but a majority of them were employed as domestic helpers. In 2017, as I started joining another church, I met another Filipino community in which the majority were professionals. These connections helped me get a

better understanding and first-hand view of the OFW diaspora in that country and the similarities and differences in their experiences.

### **Social Activity Involving OFW Diaspora**

In both Singapore and France, there are Filipino events that help foster a sense of community and cultural pride among Filipinos.

*Figure 34. Images of Fête de la Musique in Paris, France*



One such event in France is the Fête de la Musique (Festival of Music) that is celebrated every year on June 21st and which I have had the opportunity to

experience since my relocation. The Philippine Embassy supports this event, bringing the Filipino community together for an evening that showcases local talents.

In 2023, I was able to participate in an annual festival in France called “Pista sa Paris” that has been held since 1980 to celebrate Filipino culture. It is led by the Filipino Community with the support of the Philippine Embassy. It features Philippine cuisine, songs, and dances.

Pista sa Paris also presents an opportunity for Filipino-owned businesses such as restaurants, Balikbayan box logistics services, and Pinoy merchandise stores to showcase their products.

Figure 35. Images from Pista sa Paris 2023



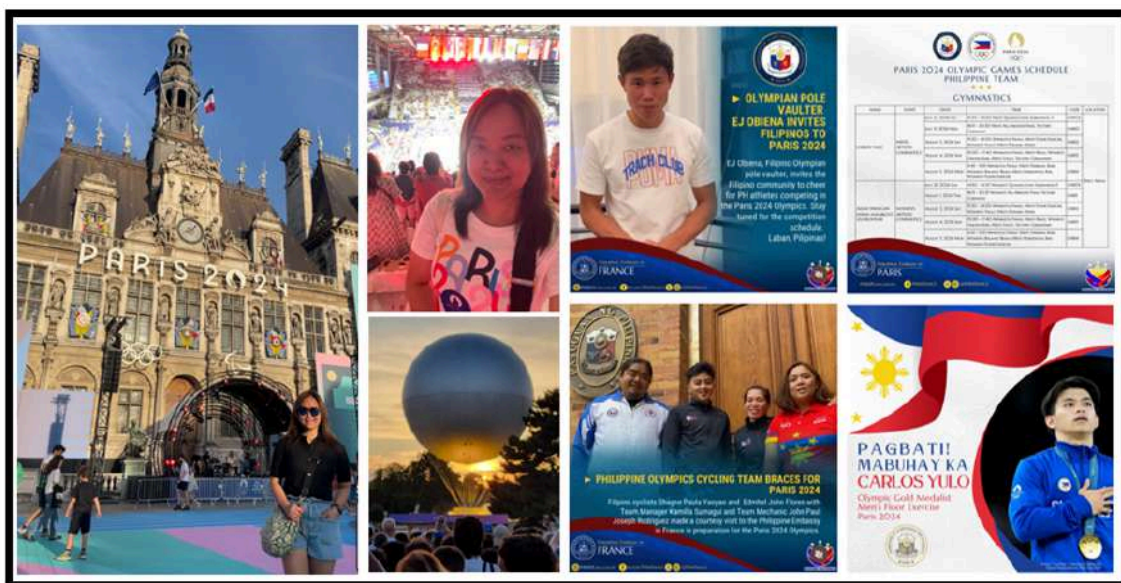
During this event, an outreach is usually integrated, where the MWO Madrid sets up a booth for verification of contracts and informal briefings regarding setting up or managing the Balik-Manggagawa online accounts, as well as payments for OWWA memberships, are facilitated.

### Participating in Global Events

From the end July to August, France hosted the 2024 Summer Olympics. During this period, Filipinos were eager to know details about the athletes representing the country, as well as the schedules of their respective games.

Being in Paris, I had the opportunity to participate in the Olympic games as a live spectator and experience some of the fanfare. Together with my Filipino colleagues, I watched out for the updates from the Philippine Embassy of France, especially on social media.

Figure 36. Paris 2024 Olympics



## **Personal and Professional Improvements**

This section covers activities that contribute to personal development through training or education, such as taking language lessons, obtaining additional certifications, and pursuing a master's degree.

### **Advancing Personal or Professional Development**

In 2013, I opted to take an examination related to my Nutrition and Dietetics profession while in the United States and I had to contact PRC via email to request for a verification statement that I am indeed a license holder. While I missed the passing mark by only a few points, it was a worthwhile experience, in which I was immersed firsthand into the challenges of reaching out to PRC and consolidating required documents. A more efficient way would have been to have a way to request for such documents online via the PRC website, which is now a feature that has finally become available. More on this is in the Technological Advancements section.

It was also during my time as an OFW in Singapore that I was accepted into the UPOU Master of Development Communication program in 2021. During my application, I had to reach out to my current and past managers to request for their written recommendation as part of my Master program application. On the side, while working, I was also enrolled in Alliance Francaise de Singapour

for my French lessons and had passed two levels of French language qualification examinations in 2020 and 2021 respectively.

*Figure 37. Passing Two French Language Qualification Examinations*



### **Asset Acquisition or Investment**

In 2018, I had the opportunity to invest in my first real estate acquisition. It was a significant and thrilling yet daunting moment. For this, I had to fill out many forms and provide some records that were needed to verify my identity and capacity to fulfill the conditions of the sale.

As part of the requirements, I had to sign a temporary special power-of-attorney document for one of my family members to help me with the process. In addition, I opened a new bank account solely for the purpose of transactions related to this acquisition.

# Digital Platforms for Communication Engagement

## Technological Advancements

A question in the analysis phase of this study is: *'How has technology and information processing evolved and developed since the time I first moved out of the Philippines?'* Technology provides an invaluable tool to galvanize diasporic engagement efforts to tap into the unlimited potential of digital space and collaboration (Fianko, 2021).

Going back to the network theory in diasporic context that is explained in the Review of Literature section, this explores how digital communication channels within migrant communities and transnational networks facilitate information exchange, support systems, and advocacy efforts, including interactions with government and non-government entities (Stohl, 2018).

This section will provide insights on the digital communication tools used by OFWs to connect with the Philippine government.

### 1) Websites

#### Philippine Embassy

The Embassy both in Singapore and France maintains an active online presence through their websites.

Looking at the design, it seems that there is a template used for all Philippine Embassy websites globally as they all look similar in terms of layout. However, the content and features seem to be more advanced in the Singapore

version, where there are links to the different consular services on the landing page. For the France website, in particular, the link **parispe.dfa.gov.ph** is not ideal nor straightforward or easy to remember compared to Singapore's **philippine-embassy.org.sg**.

In addition, **parispe.dfa.gov.ph** goes straight to the Bids and Awards Committee page, which would not make sense to OFWs. When the homepage is clicked, what is more prominent on the frontpage are news and announcements instead of the consular services.

*Figure 38. Website of The Philippine Embassy of France - Landing Page*

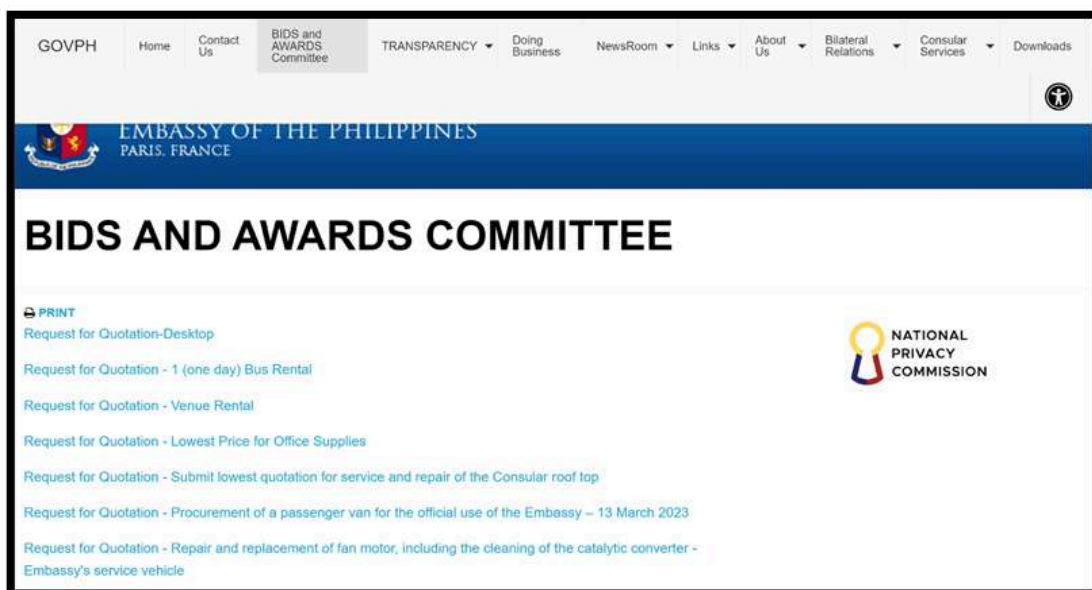


Figure 39. Website of The Philippine Embassy of France - Homepage

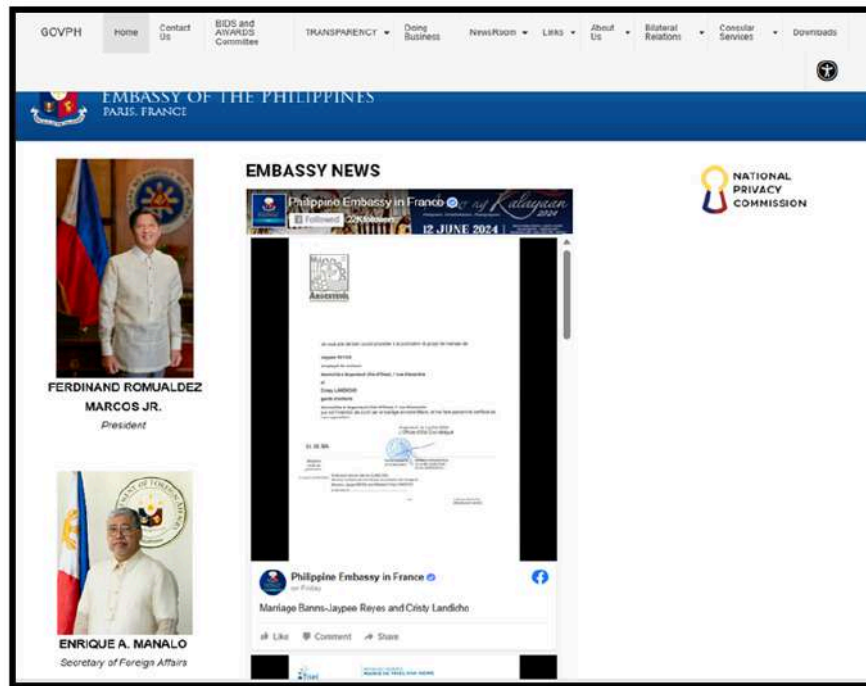
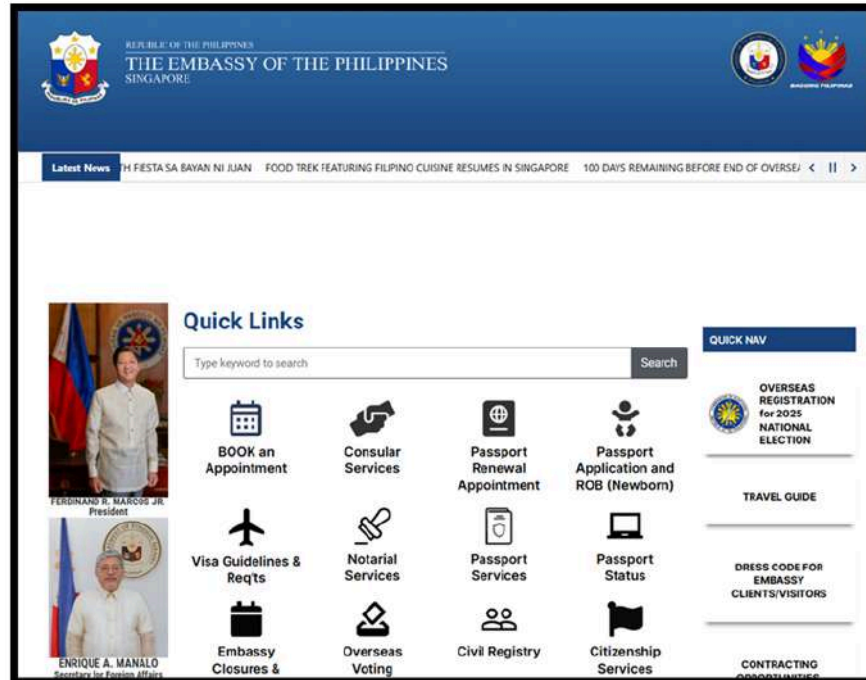
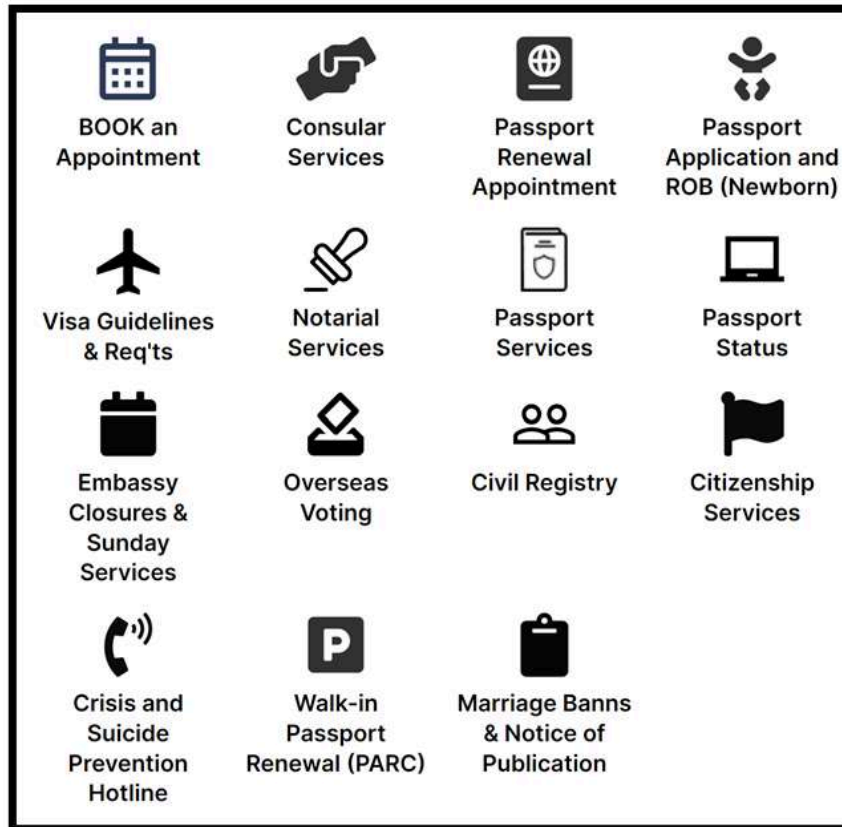


Figure 40. Website of The Philippine Embassy of Singapore





The Singapore format is more preferred as OFWs are able to clearly see what services are available and the steps they need to undertake in order to avail of those services.

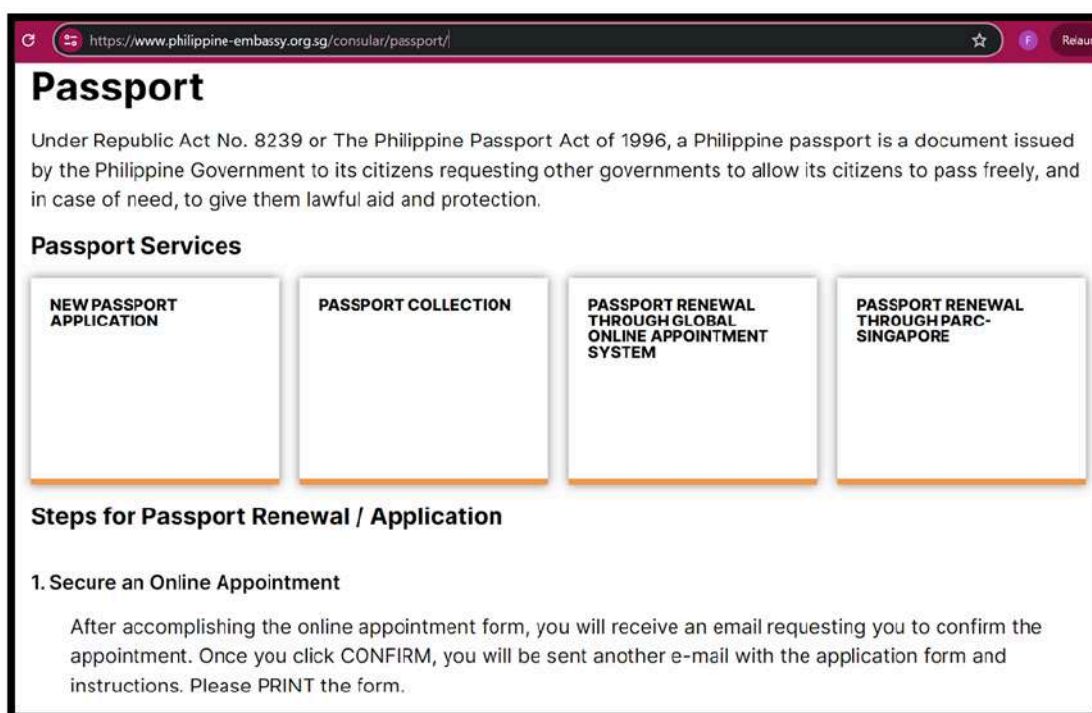
When I arrived in Singapore, there was a webpage existing for the Embassy but it was not as advanced as what it is today. The only information available back then was the contact details, including the address and phone numbers to call depending on your needs.

Having dedicated sections for Passport Services, Passport Status and Overseas Voting resonates well, especially since these were frequent

touchpoints of my engagement with the Embassy. I renewed my passport twice during my time in Singapore and voted twice as well.

From requesting for passport renewal purely via email to having a dedicated section on the website with clear instructions specifically for this service and having the capability to book an appointment online for passport renewal/application, this is a major leap in terms of handling of administrative processes. However, since passports are printed in the Philippines, it takes about six weeks to process a passport renewal request.

Figure 41. Passport Services Section on the Philippine Embassy Singapore Website



In terms of the look and feel, both websites are not the most aesthetically pleasing. The design may be functional, but the user interface is not as modern and friendly as hoped. It is also not mobile responsive –meaning the user experience is not as smooth when the website is accessed on a mobile phone.

## Department of Migrant Workers (DMW)

The DMW website has the tendency to become overwhelming due to too much information on the homepage. However, it has several useful features for OFWs.

The first is the list of Licensed Recruitment Agencies, as well as Approved Job Orders, which are technically the employment opportunities offered by manning agencies.

Another important feature is a page that shows all the online services that are available for OFWs, including information on the Pre-Employment Orientation Seminars, e-Registration for Filipino applicants who are interested in working overseas, OFW records, Balik-Manggagawa section for OEC requests, Direct-Hire Processing, Online Helpdesk, and a link to the Online Recruitment Authority Application (ORAA) that handles online application related to recruitment agencies.

Figure 42. Website of the Department of Migrant Workers

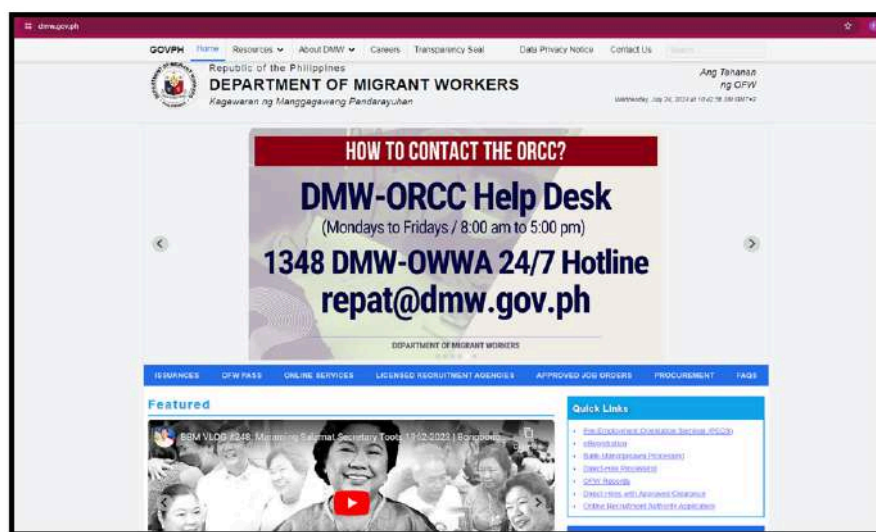
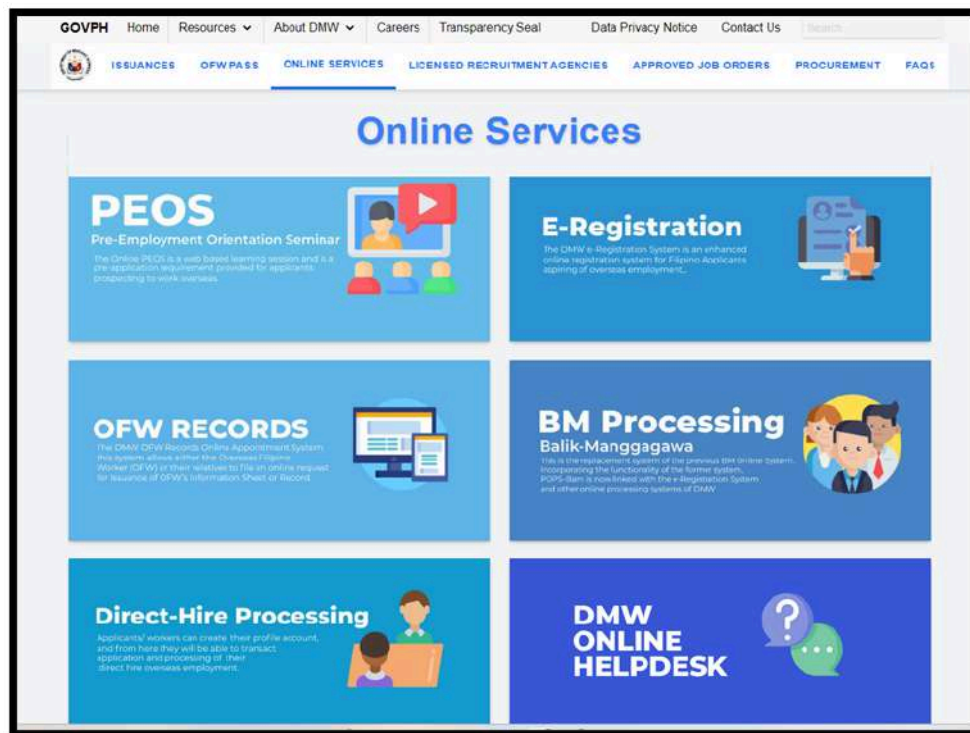


Figure 43. Online Services Page on the DMW Website

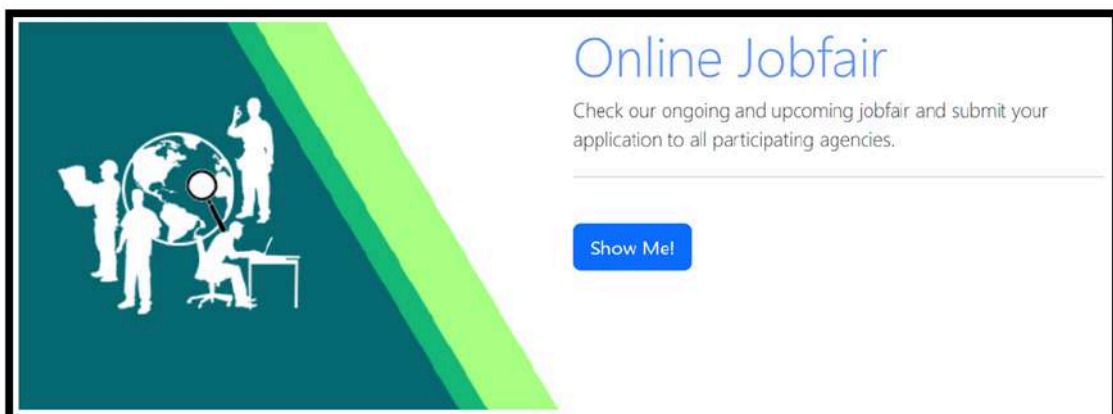
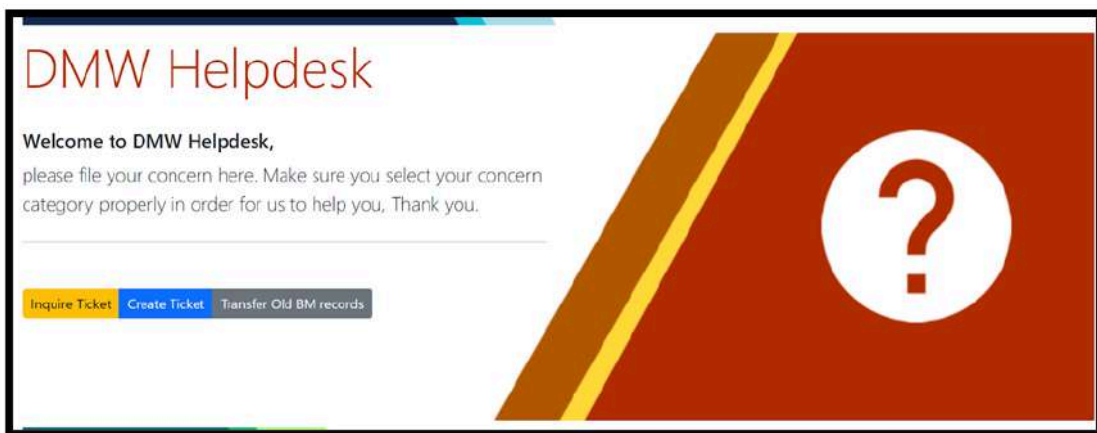
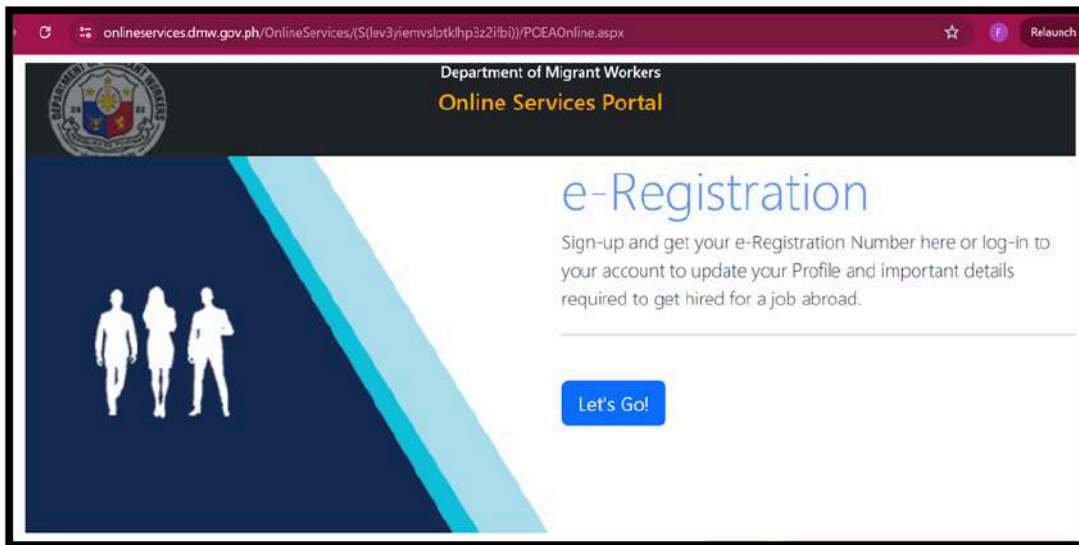


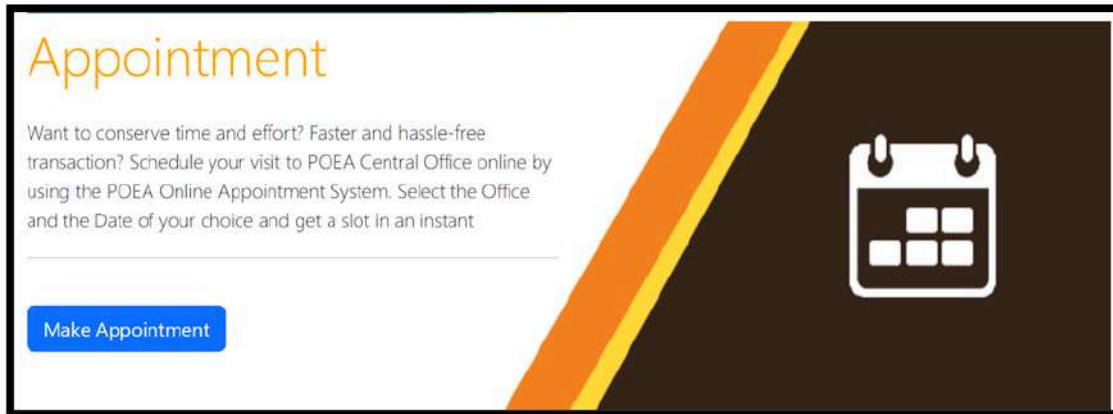
### DMW Online Services Portal

Within the DMW website is a link to the Online Services Portal that offers four services, including e-registration to the Balik-Manggagawa Portal, access to a DMW Helpdesk, link to Online Job Fair, and ability to make online appointments.

While it seems useful, I find this portal redundant for the reason that the services it offers are also the same ones in the main DMW website.

Figure 44. DMW Online Services Portal





For a more streamlined service, it may be a good idea to merge all these features in the DMW website so that OFWs do not have to remember so many links.

Apart from the efficiency of the online systems, there is also a concern surrounding data privacy and safety. Recently, there has been an incident of hacking that has affected the DMW online systems (Abarca, 2024). This brings much concern and worries.

The e-Registration page that leads to the Balik-Manggagawa Portal, where OFWs can request for the OECs, is a section where many personal details are available, including employment and salary information. It also prompts OFWs to upload a copy of the detail page of their passports. In addition, much of an OFW's private information is displayed on the OEC itself, including their employment and salary information. Since this form is usually printed out or shown to Airline Check-in and Immigration Counters prior to departure, this posts greats of information leaks.

Besides concerns on safety, I have personally experienced some challenges with the Online Services Portal's accessibility, faced some issues with navigation, and encountered some occasional technical problems.

For instance, the Online Job Fair link constantly does not work. I have also tried the Online Appointment and found some aspects of it that are problematic. One issue is that it prompts users to select from a list of Processing Centers, which OFWs may not be familiar with (Figure 13.1). Another is that the scheduling calendar did not seem to work seamlessly, which ultimately made me decide to go to the DMW office as a walk-in visitor without any appointment.

Figure 45 My OFW Record on the DMW website

8/11/24, 2:34 PM My Contract History

Department of Migrant Workers  
OFW Records

**Worker Details**

Name: FRITZIE KAYE CALAUAD PLAMENCO  
Birth Date:  
Gender: Female

**Latest Record**

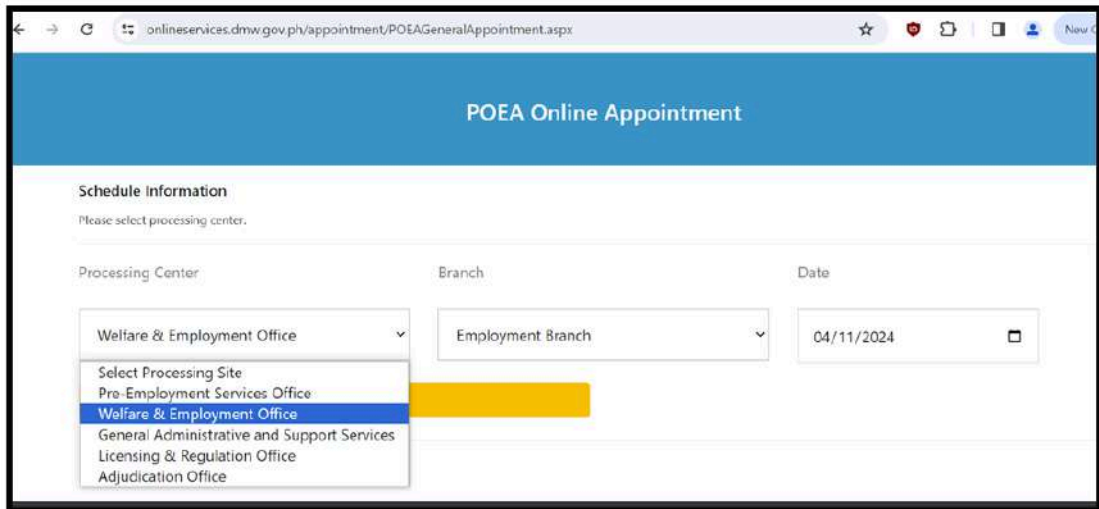
RFP/OEC Number:  
Type: BM Contract  
Agency: NA  
Principal: MARKETING SERVICES SAS  
Position:  
Jobsite: FRANCE  
Salary: EURO Month  
Duration:  
Process Date:  
Deployment Date:

**Contract History**

Date Created	RFP	Status	Agency	Position	Type	Deployment Date
4/11/2024 11:36:55 AM	2024040E	Completed	NA	OWNER PRODUCT	BM Contract	
4/25/2023 11:11:22 AM	20230403	Completed	NA	DIGITAL MANAGER	BM Contract	5/20/2023 8:02:36 AM
3/31/2023 8:25:26 AM	20230303	Completed	NA	DIGITAL MANAGER	BM Contract	4/9/2023 2:43:34 PM
1/25/2023 3:25:19 PM	202301	5 Completed	NA	DIGITAL MANAGER	BM Contract	1/31/2023 5:42:22 PM
12/27/2022 7:58:55 PM	202212	5 Completed	NA	DIGITAL MANAGER	BM Contract	1/9/2023 6:01:02 PM
9/27/2022 9:48:14 AM	2022090	Completed	NA	DIGITAL MANAGER	BM Contract	10/8/2022 9:34:14 AM
1/25/2022 1:34:28	202201.....	Completed	NA	DIGITAL	BM	2/28/2022 6:17:44

[https://onlineservices.dmw.gov.ph/OnlineServices/\(5\)trbytrfkgjgajymayr3d302j\)MainMyContractHistory.aspx](https://onlineservices.dmw.gov.ph/OnlineServices/(5)trbytrfkgjgajymayr3d302j)MainMyContractHistory.aspx) 1/3

Figure 46. Online Appointment on the DMW Service Portal

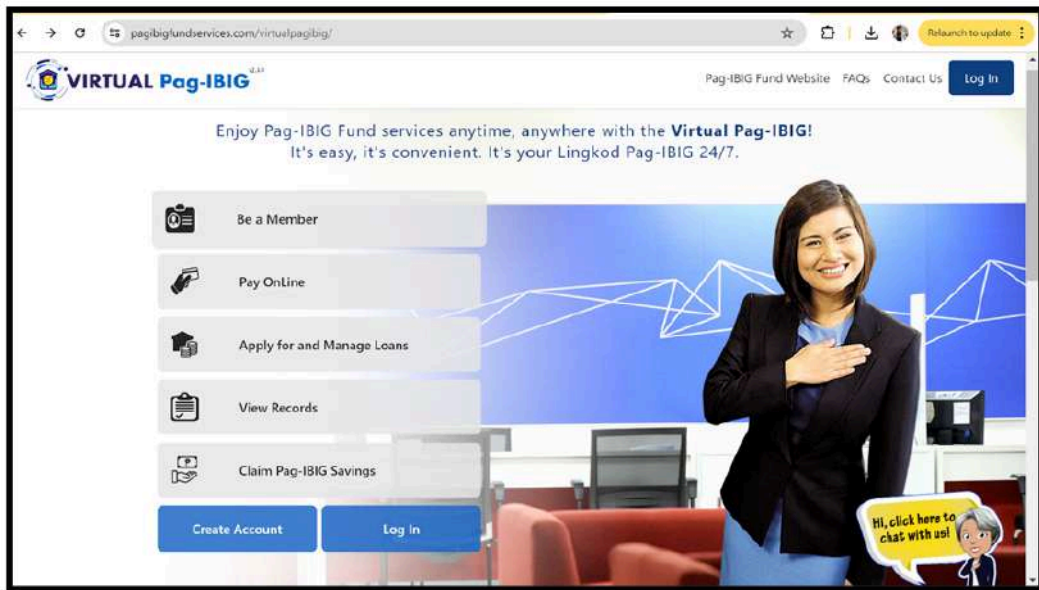


In some online forums like Reddit, I have gathered OFW reactions that have been describing this portal as being in a poor state, having bad user experience and navigation, not safe, and not being available 24/7 as it is sometimes inaccessible during weekends.

### **Virtual PAG-IBIG (Home Mutual Fund)**

Launched during the pandemic, the Virtual PAG-IBIG website has elevated the management of the home mutual fund account. Despite the initial challenge in signing up, I find the design and interface for this website user-friendly. Virtual PAG-IBIG provides access to account management, loan managements and payment transactions online. Having the ability to view records, apply for loans and make payments online is especially beneficial for OFWs in countries like France with limited access to PAG-IBIG branches.

Figure 47. Virtual PAG-IBIG Website

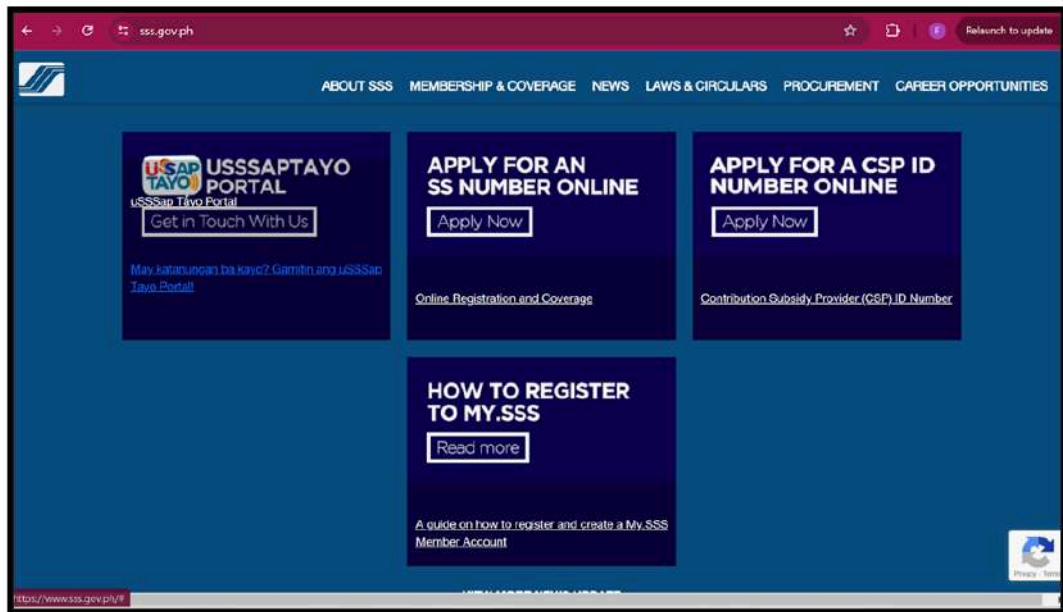


## Social Security System (SSS)

It was also during the pandemic that I signed up for the SSS online. While it is helpful for managing my contributions and benefits, I have mixed feelings about its user experience and functionality, especially with registration and login.

While it is a good step forward to have the SSS contribution details easily accessible online, there are still limited payment options for OFWs and it is challenging to pay contributions due to the unavailability of certain banks or credit card payment options.

Figure 48. Social Security System Website

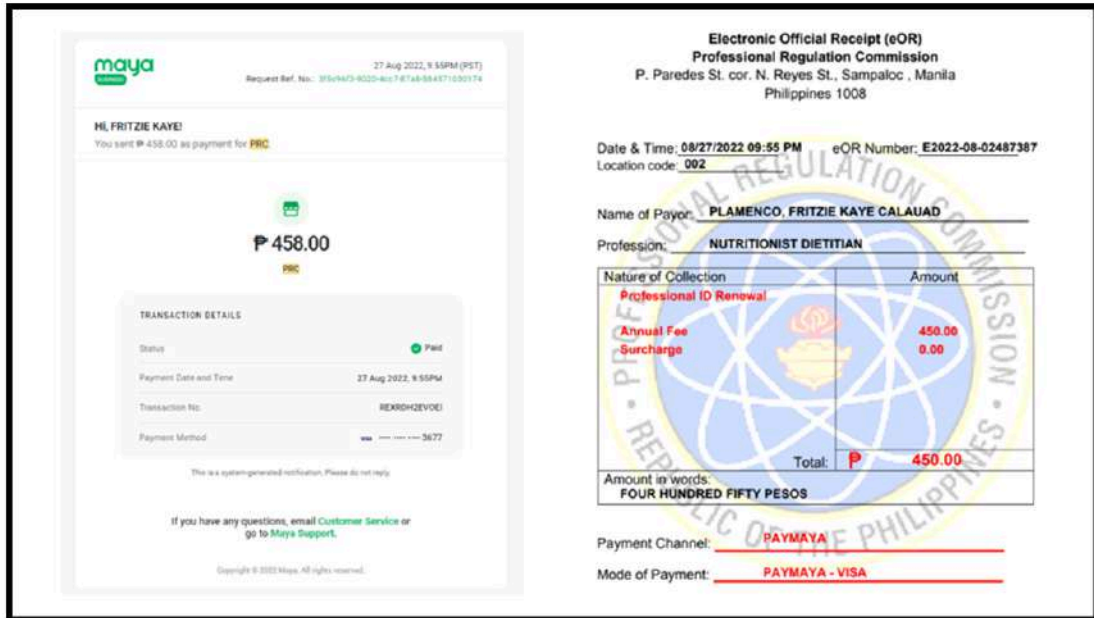


## Professional Regulation Commission (PRC)

Another website that I have been frequently visiting as an OFW is the PRC website. In the beginning of my OFW journey, renewal of the PRC license had been a very manual process that involved having to do face-to-face transactions at the physical office from start to finish.

At present, renewals are more streamlined and can be initiated online through the website, including payments. The license card will be processed thereafter and one still needs to visit the office to finalize the procedure and pick up the license. There is also an option for professionals opting to submit the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) to have their ID card delivered via express courier service.

Figure 49. PRC Online Payment Facility



Another new feature that has been launched recently is the online verification service that now gives the possibility of making requests to verify the license and rating online. This was a process I had to do via email in the past. An added efficiency is that payments for this service are now also facilitated online.

For upcoming professionals, the examination application, initial registration, and oath-taking enlistment may also be done via the website. Exam schedules and room assignments are also posted in the portal.

Figure 50. Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) Website

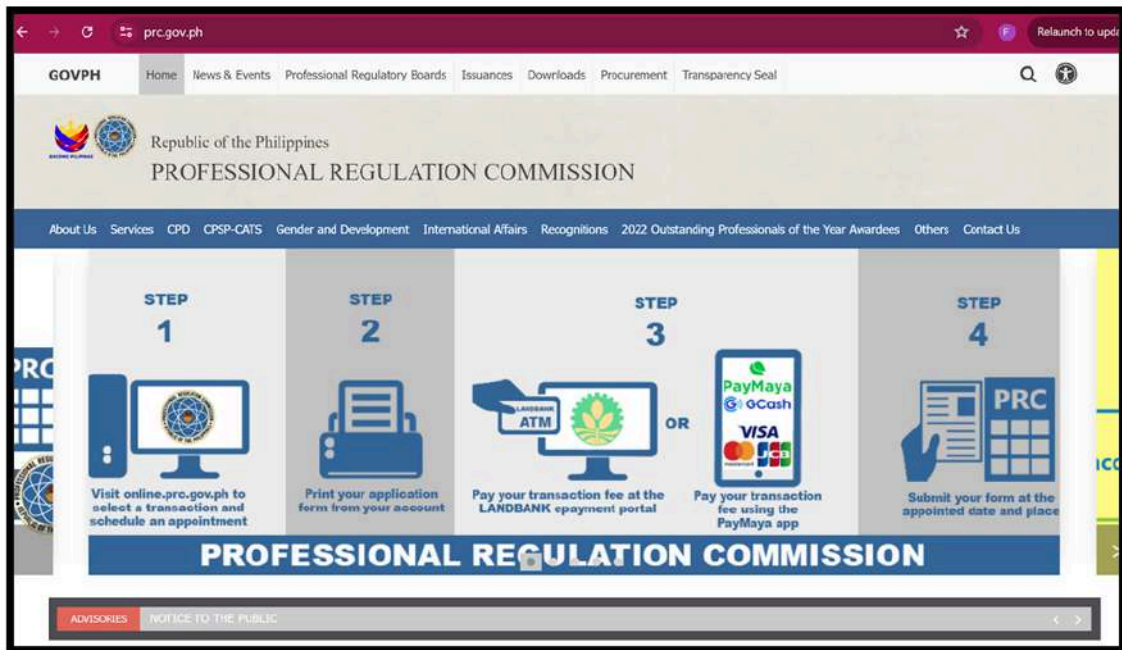
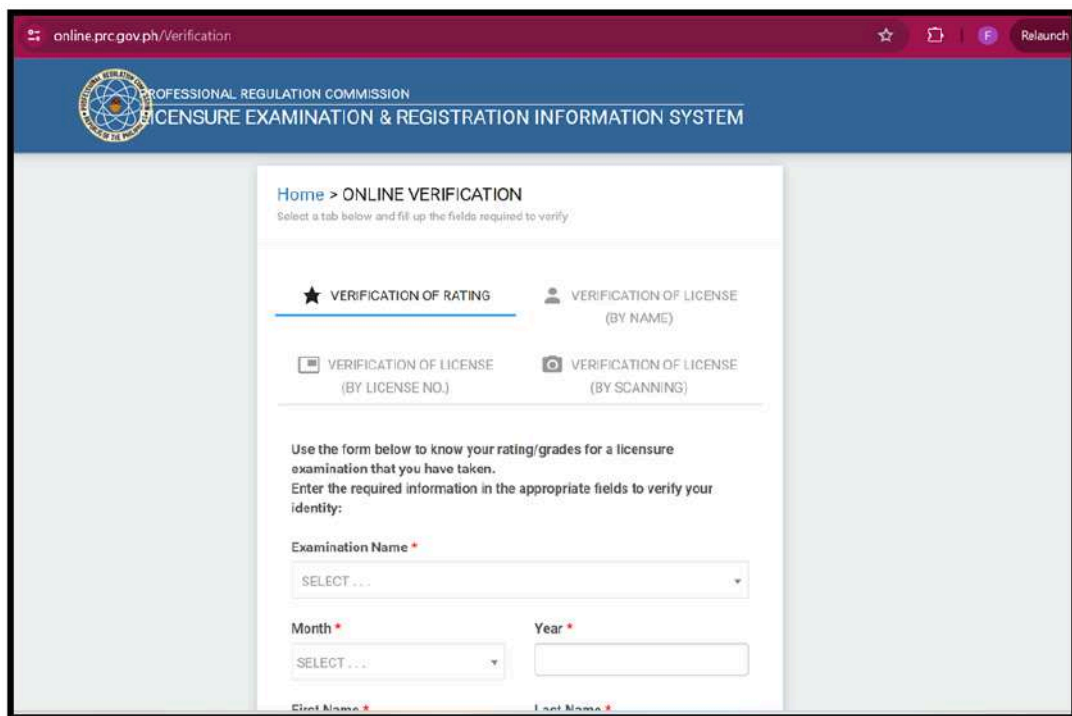


Figure 51. PRC Online Verification Services



## Land Transportation Office (LTO)

LTO is another government agency that I have had frequent touchpoints with throughout my OFW journey. I have always maintained my driver's license up-to-date. When I moved to France, I requested an exchange for a French driving permit, which required many documents, some of which I was easily able to retrieve through the LTO portal.

While the main LTO website is purely for information dissemination purposes and appears to contain too much information, the agency has made strides in improving its online services through the Land Transportation Management System (LTMS) portal.

Figure 52. Land Transportation Office (LTO) Website

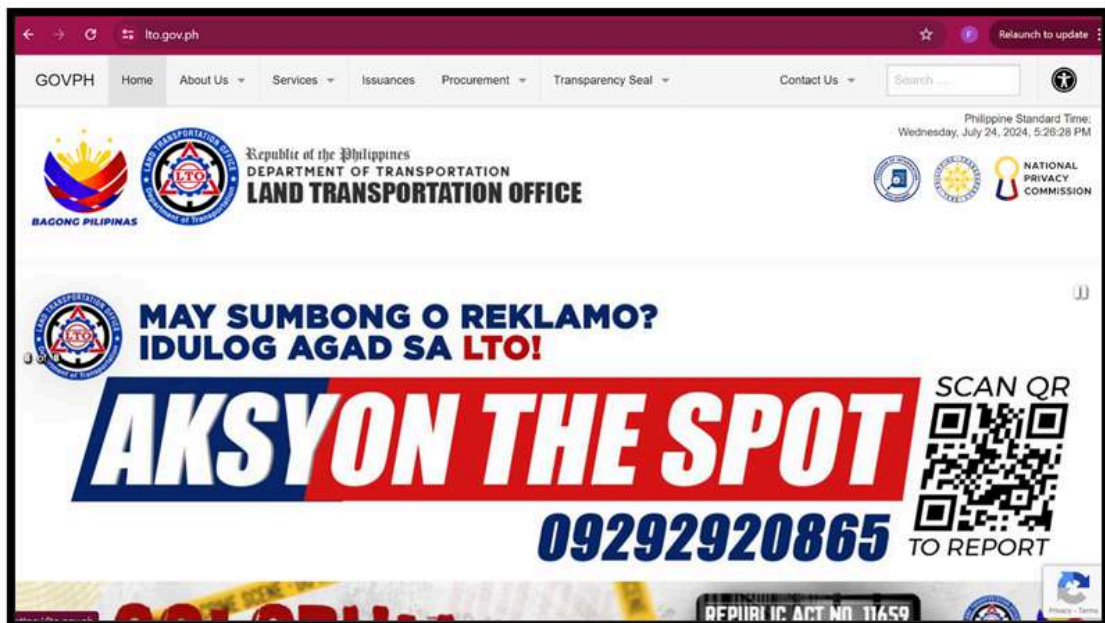
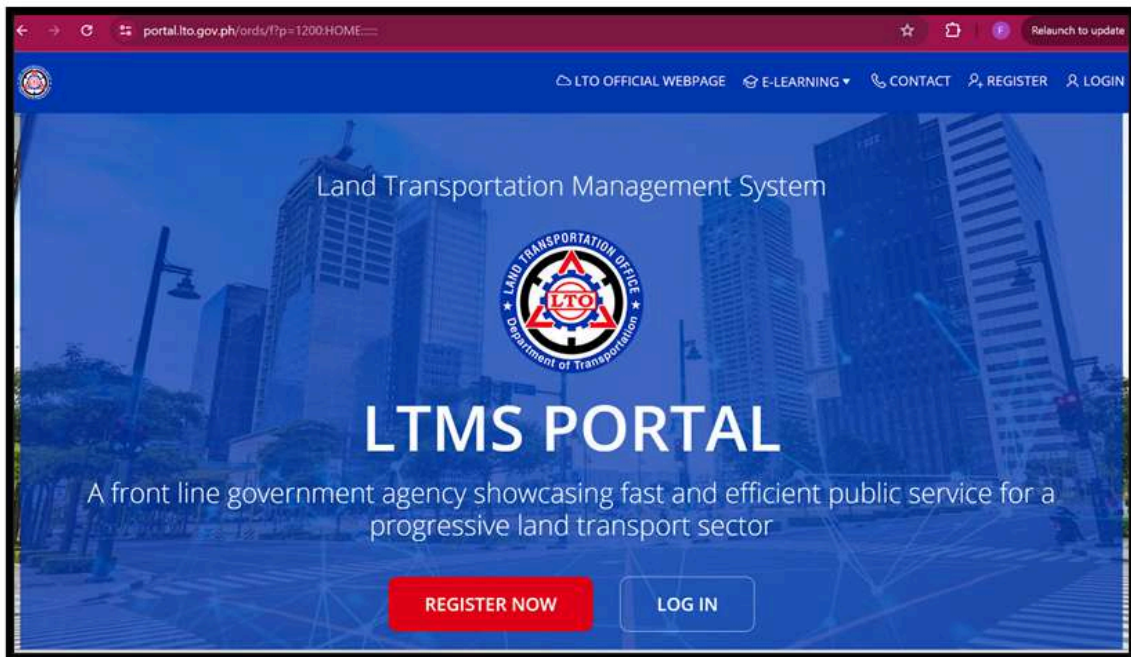


Figure 53. Land Transportation Management System



The LTMS is more personalized and by far the most advanced system I have used that is government-related. Aside from the capability to display a digital version of one's latest driver's license, it also allows initiation of licensing or renewal requests, keeps a record of vehicles tied to the person's name or any violations made, facilitates requests for certificates with online payment (e.g. Certificate of No Apprehension), and has a section that consolidates all documents requested from the agency.

At the same time, an eLearning link is available, where one can directly take the CDE Online Validation Exam for driver's license renewal applications and that contains tutorials and resources about driving, licensing, registration, and transportation- related laws.

## Philippine Health Insurance (PhilHealth)

The PhilHealth member portal provides a convenient way for OFWs to check contributions and membership details. While there are some technical issues that can be encountered when creating an account or logging and the user interface could be improved further in terms of intuitiveness, I find that having a website is an advancement in itself.

On the website, the section on services features a complete list of PhilHealth-accredited Health Care Institutions and a capability to inquire the accuracy of membership details. While it is possible for employers to remit their premium contributions online, this is not a feature that OFWs could use. I still have to go to the physical payment centers or request a family member to do so on my behalf.

Figure 54. Philippine Health Insurance (PhilHealth) website



## Social Media Channels

Aside from maintaining websites, each of the government agencies above also exist on social platforms, primarily Facebook, Instagram and/or X (formerly Twitter). Both Philippine Embassies in Singapore and France post actively on social platforms, specifically news, updates and announcements.

However, I have observed that despite the many followers for both –over 23,000 for France and 422,000 for Singapore as of writing– the engagements on their individual posts in terms of likes, comments, and shares, especially on Facebook, are not as notable.

Figure 55. Philippine Embassy France and Singapore Facebook pages

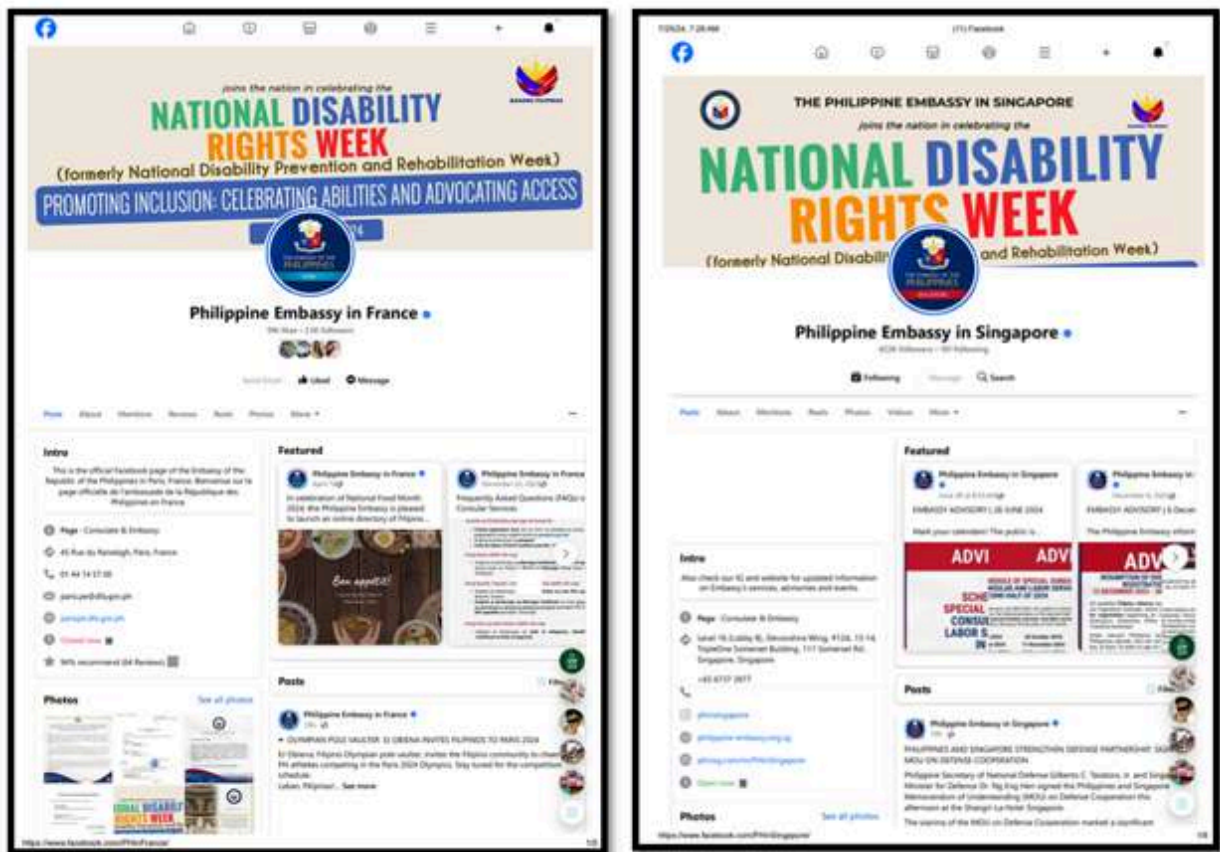
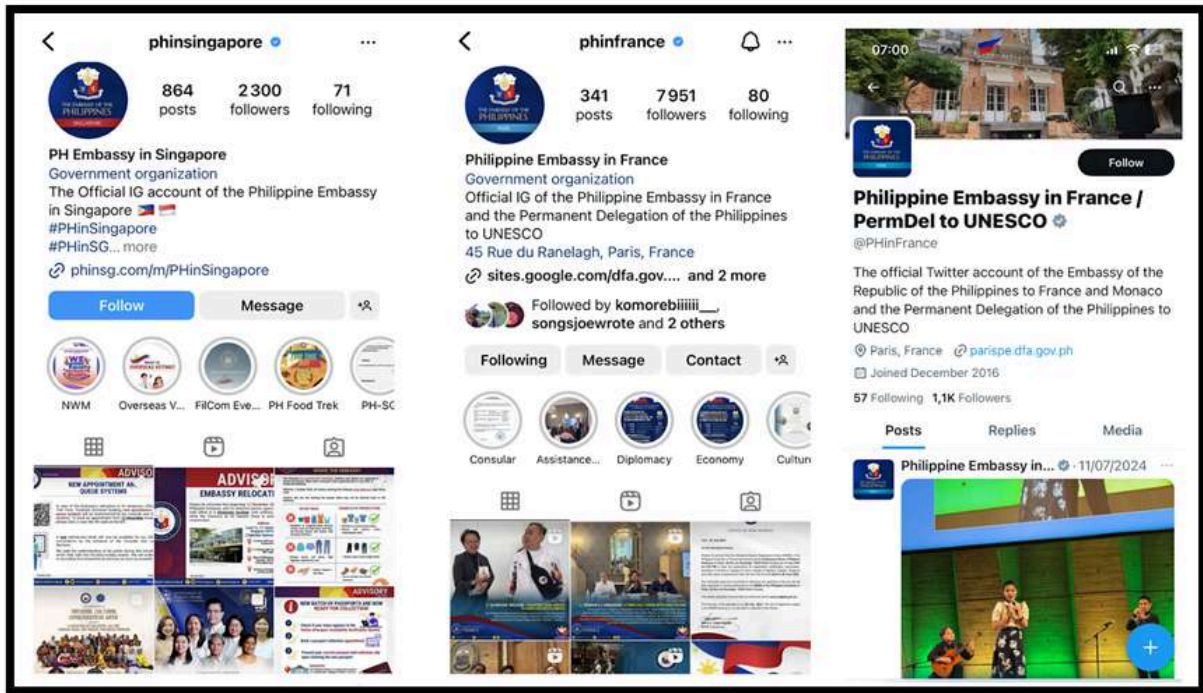


Figure 56. Philippine Embassy Singapore and France Instagram and X (Twitter) pages



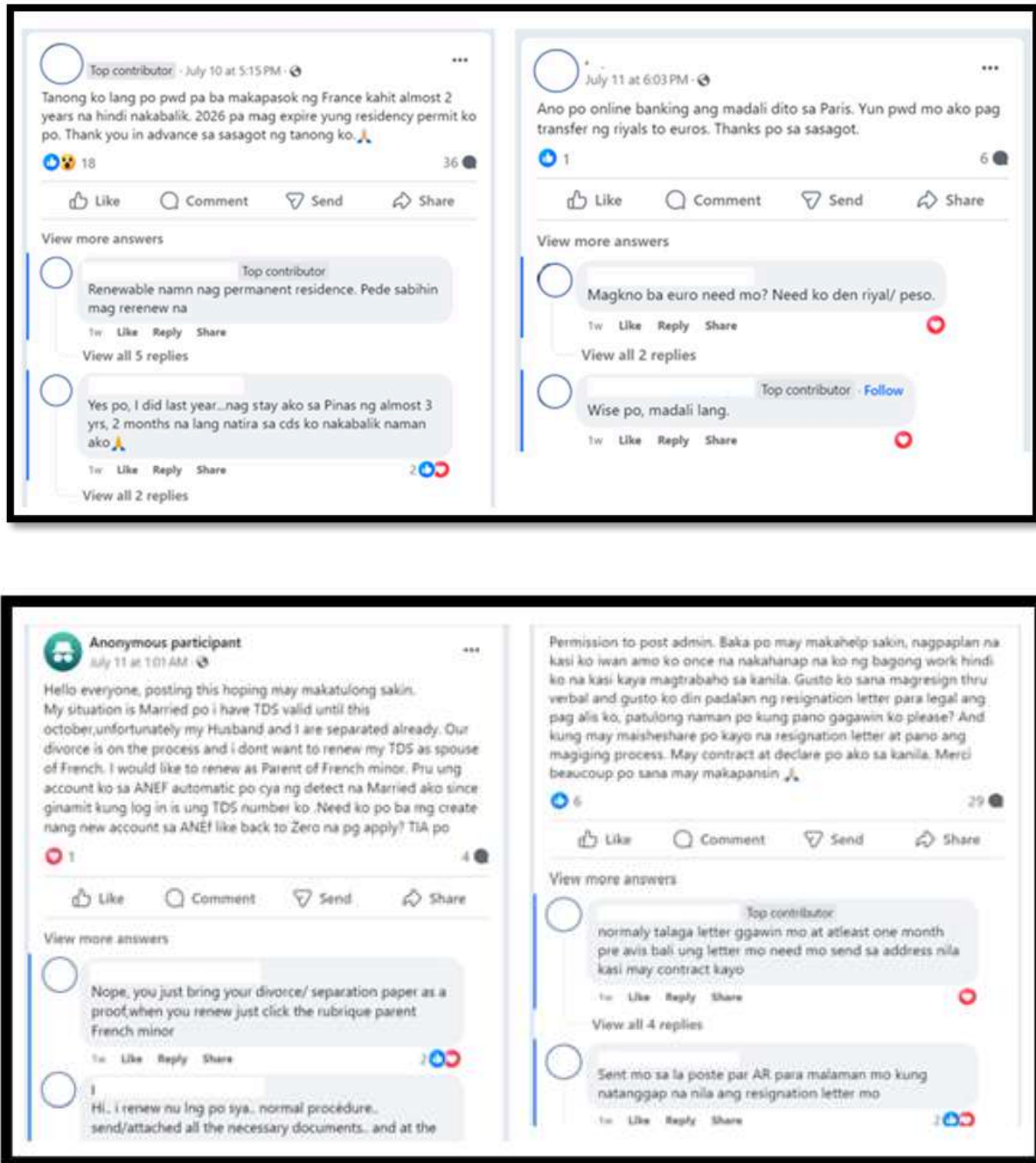
## Community-led Social Media Pages

Based on likes, shares, and comments, there is greater engagement in community-initiated social media pages or posts than those that are posted in the Embassy pages. Based on my observation, OFWs seem to opt to direct their questions or comments on these pages where there are more active inputs from other members of the diaspora.

On these pages, conversations happen and they become forums to seek support, encouragement, advice and camaraderie among Filipinos living in the foreign country. Topics include employment, administrative subjects, home searches, items to sell or buy, or just feel-good talking points that are relatable

to many in the community. People either post anonymously or with their full names revealed.

Figure 57. Sample posts in Filipino Community-led Facebook pages in France



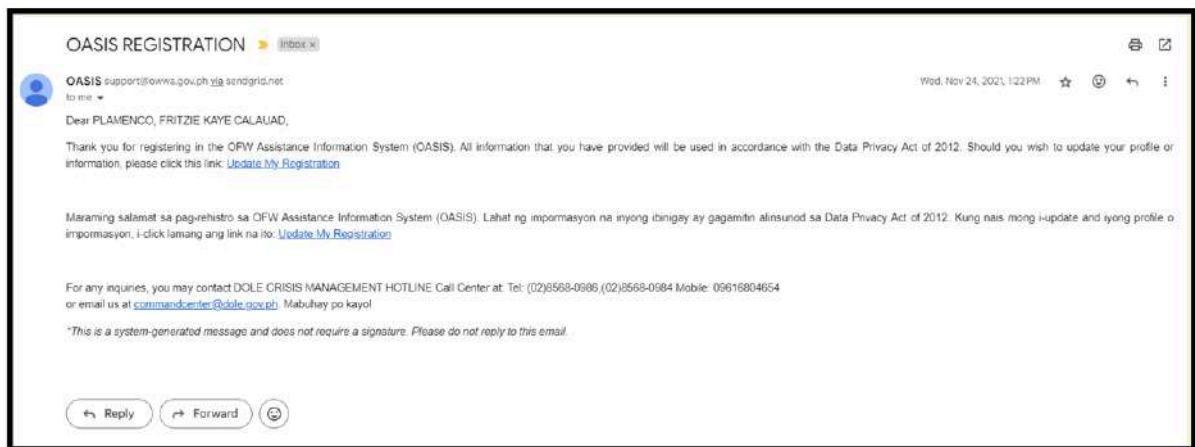
Source: PinoyParis Facebook Community

## Mobile Apps

Recently, many mobile apps have been released by the government in support of OFWs.

During the pandemic, a portal called OFW Assistance Information System (OASIS) was created to help Filipinos returning home to ease their way back to the country by having all their vaccination records and health declaration in one place.

Figure 58. OFW Assistance Information System (OASIS) Registration



OASIS was quickly replaced by the One Health Pass or OHP, which was used to input vaccination records and flight details for OFWs to show upon arrival at NAIA, was the first one to be rolled out towards the end of the pandemic.

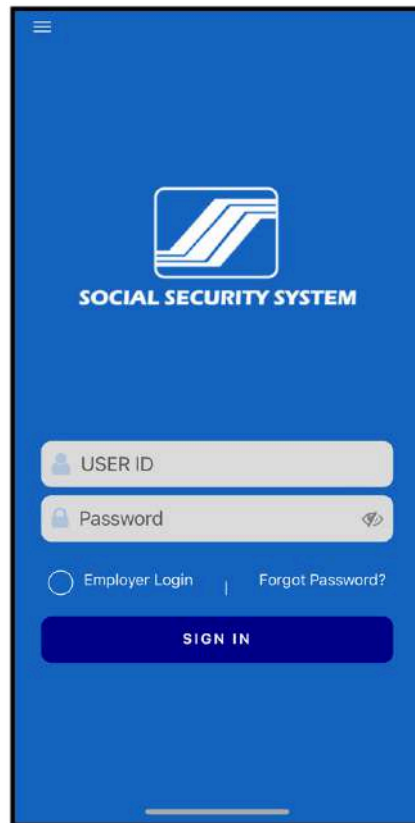
Figure 59. One Health Pass (OHP) Mobile App



The pandemic triggered the development of the online platforms for PAG-IBIG and SSS. The mobile app for SSS was made available during the same period, while the PAG-IBIG app is also currently in progress.

To minimize physical interactions and reduce the risk of virus transmission, these apps were developed to tackle the urgent need for safe, efficient, and accessible channels not just for OFWs but for Filipinos in general to manage essential services remotely. This initiative was also meant to ensure continuity in public service delivery and management of citizen's accounts, paving the way for a more connected government-citizen relationship despite the crisis.

Figure 60. SSS Mobile App

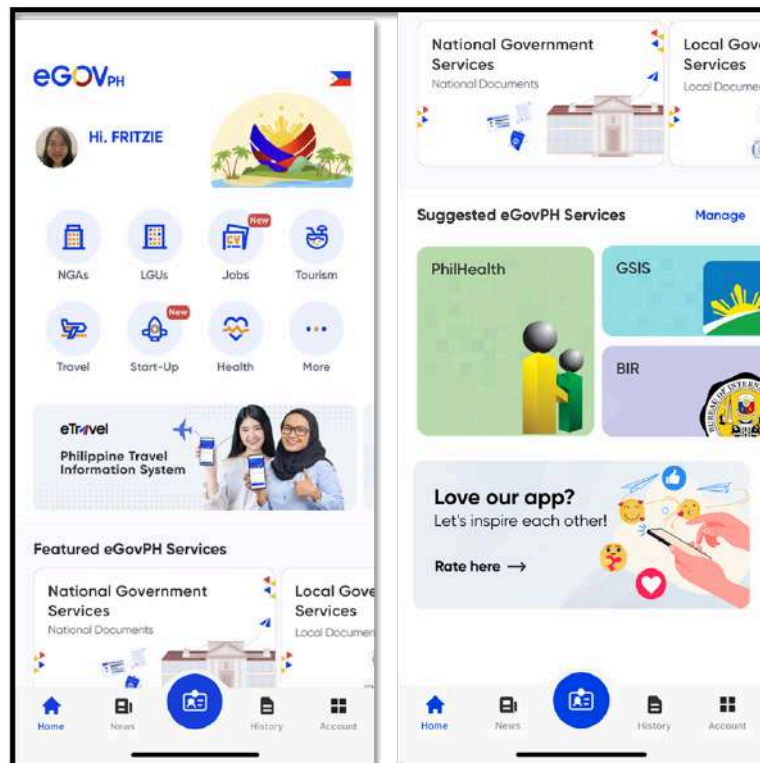


Eventually, One Health Pass was replaced by the eTravel app, which has now become a requirement for all incoming Filipino travellers. This is integrated within the eGov PH, the most comprehensive government app by far that gives centralized access to many government services and transactions, including SSS, PhilHealth, Pag-IBIG, etc.

Referred to as a “super app”, it also links directly to the DMW Online Services Portal, as well as to the OWWA app. It may also be used for applying for a passport, driver’s license, jobs, and SIM registration.

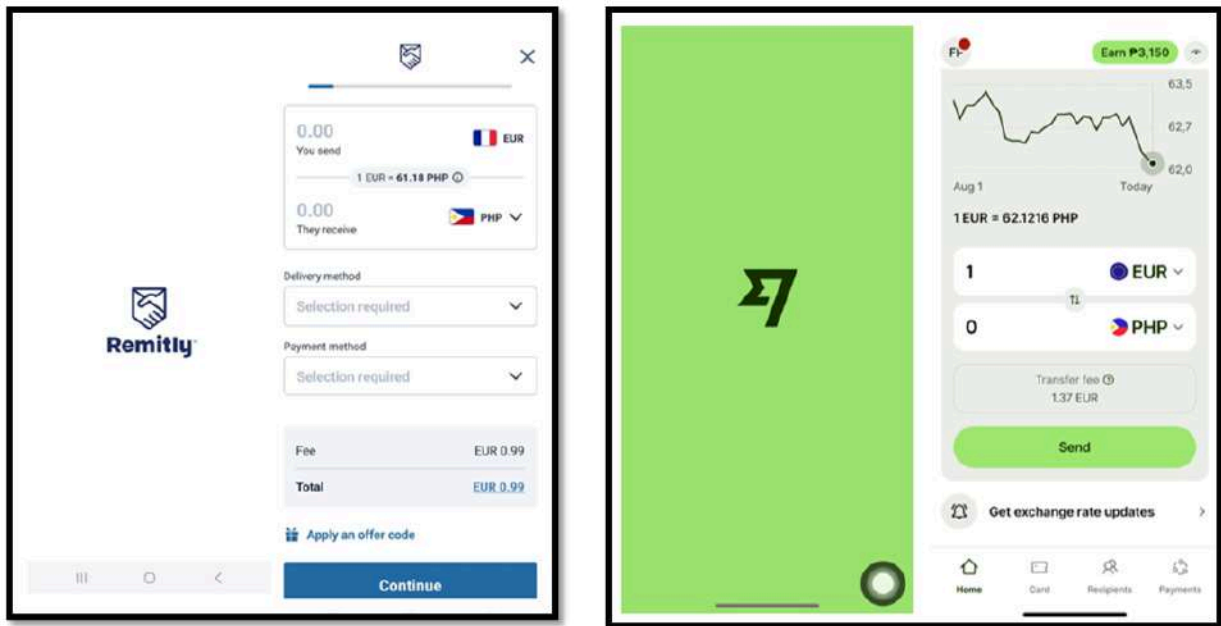
The eGov PH app seems to be an ongoing project as it still needs to finalize integrations with the rest of the government apps, but this is a noteworthy progress that is beneficial not just for OFWs but for Filipinos as a whole.

Figure 61. eGOV PH mobile app



The creation of such apps add to the efficiency of services and are helpful for OFWs, especially in countries where the mobile technology is robust. The use of remittance applications is especially important. In Singapore, Filipinos send their remittances either by going to payment centers in-person or directly via the bank's mobile app. In France, use of apps such as Wise or Remitly are more common due to the challenge of finding trustworthy payment centers.

Figure 62. Samples of Remittance Mobile Apps



This study offers insights into the barriers, facilitators, and best practices of communication in a transnational context.

## OFW Diaspora Communication Engagement

My communication engagement within the OFW diaspora highlights the role of "bridging" social capital with technology. These bridging ties have allowed me to have better access to services, information, and advocacy channels.

One of the most arduous periods in my OFW experience had been during the Covid-19 pandemic. Going through this challenging chapter as an OFW can be described as a distinctive experience that displays the resilience and sacrifices of those

who leave their homeland to find employment abroad in pursuit of a better life for their families.

The communication engagements during this time provided the extra challenges of coping with community measures within the country of deployment and travel restrictions globally. Fianko (2021) describes how diasporas have utilized technology to become powerful actors in supporting communities both in their countries of origin and residence during the period of the pandemic.

Technology has alleviated the difficulties posed by being far from home during the pandemic by allowing efficient communication with my social capital, reinforcing the existing networks, and engaging with the NGOs, government entities, and other stakeholders involved in the response to the epidemic.

The digital era has, by itself, rapidly changed how we communicate, present, process, and absorb knowledge. However, the global health crisis gave rise to more opportunities to improve the communication channels and provide a more robust support system that mitigates the danger of further isolation and stress.

From the related literature, the mention of network theory in the context of communication channels within transnational networks, such as the OFW diaspora, plays a significant factor in facilitating information exchange, support systems, and advocacy efforts, including interactions with government and non-government entities (Stohl, 2018). This helps make sense of how the information efficiently goes around within the OFW network in a specific country, depending on the nature and platforms of

the communication channels used (e.g. social media, direct messaging, community engagements).

Based on the results of this research, the importance of two factors related to communication engagement can be highlighted: social capital and technology.

### **Social Capital**

My account on the various nature of communication engagement provides a clear snapshot of my own social capital within the categories of Employment Search Activities, Employment Activation, Travels, Administrative Procedures, Life Events, and Personal and Professional Improvements.

From my own lens, I can describe social capital as the resources in the form of relationships and organizational networks that have been and are still currently available to me as part of my OFW journey. Just as expected from individuals who migrate from their country of origin to another, I have often found myself relying on my networks for emotional, financial, and logistical support.

My strongest ties within these networks are my close family members or friends that provide direct support either in-person or virtually, while weak ties are the more distant connections or acquaintances that offer access to new opportunities and information, such as the Filipino communities I have been associated with or have met during diaspora-related events.

I have nurtured these social capital through welcoming visiting family members and friends, finding a new network of personal and professional acquaintances, connecting with Filipino communities of the same faith, joining activities involving other members of the diaspora, supporting other OFWs, taking part in global events such as the Paris 2024 Olympics as a live spectator, etc.

## **Technology**

Technology, on the other hand, speaks of the digital platforms that have been made available to assist me in adapting to foreign environments, cope with challenges, tackle everyday life, and connect with my Filipino roots.

Siemens (2004) described how technology is turning on a different switch in our brains and in the creation of shared meanings in society, as well as in encouraging changes in lifestyles and levels of receptiveness to information.

The research findings present the advancements in technology from the moment I first became an OFW in Singapore to the time I relocated to Paris for my new role. It provides us a glimpse of how much has changed and the many administrative procedures that have been improved and made more efficient by these technological progresses.

The study also gives us an overview of the digital platforms that have made these communication engagements possible and how the world has gone

beyond emails to simple informational web pages to more comprehensive websites, social media channels, and mobile applications.

## **Experiential Learning**

The literature reviewed points us to the **notion of Shared Knowledge** (la Zazzera, 2011), which explains that the base of learning is experiential and dependent on the interpretation of concrete events or physical realities.

Going through employment search activities (*e.g. online job hunting, presenting one's self to potential employers*), employment activation undertakings (*e.g. obtaining legal employment, transitioning to a new job, furnishing documents required for the job*) and managing all the administrative procedures has provided me with such experiential learning, in addition to being immersed in the daily life of an OFW itself. It has allowed me to get accustomed to the processes and practices related to finding a job and getting residence permits abroad, which may differ from place to place.

From the results of this study, **Transnationalism Theory**, which emphasizes the continuous communication flows between diasporic communities and their home countries (Lee & Francis, 2009), is strongly evident in the way that my own nature of communication engagements include showcases of how technology and globalization influence my ways of maintaining ties to the Philippines (*e.g. maintaining my Philippine accounts; sending remittances; keeping close family ties; managing documents related to my Filipino citizenship*).

Maintaining social networks and connections both in-person and online proves that in diasporic communication, network theory is proven to be effective on how these communication channels facilitate information exchange, support systems, and advocacy efforts, including interactions with government and non-government entities (Stohl, 2018).

The **Social Identity Theory (SIT)** by Tajfel and Turner (1979), which elaborates how the sense of self can be shaped by people's group memberships and social categorizations, holds true. We can find how OFWs have an affinity towards other Filipinos as evident in the existence of community-led social media groups, where they ask questions and express opinions that they know everyone in the group are able to relate to.

The experiential learnings presented in the results also support the Communication Accommodation Theory, which explains how the OFWs adjust their communication behaviors to make way for the modifications related to their employment abroad, including their lifestyles, gestures, and communication patterns to interact with the relevant government and non-government bodies (Dragojevic, et.al, 2015).

Despite the strong sense of affinity and belonging within the Filipino group, it is apparent in the way OFWs communicate in social media platforms and online forums that there is considerable effort made to accommodate the diversity in culture and ways of communicating introduced by their current environment.

The experiential learnings and sense of community presented in the results of this research allow the knowledge development cycle (la Zazzera, 2011) to keep going by helping OFWs to contribute to the diaspora's shared knowledge pool through their own experiences and communication engagements.

## Chapter VI

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary

##### Research Framework Developed

This study used autoethnography as the main approach to enrich the understanding of the dynamics of OFW diaspora communication engagements, an original framework was developed for this study based on Dull's (2021) structure. It consists of four phases:

**Phase I:** Discovery

**Phase II:** Outlining

**Phase III:** Data Gathering

**Phase IV:** Analyzing & Interpreting

Each of the phases presented appropriate resources and actions, guiding questions, and products or expected output that are specifically suited for a study focused on OFWs.

- In the **Discovery Phase**, I obtained a better understanding of the OFW diaspora in Singapore and France, which helped me reflect on myself in

relation to the OFW Community as a whole. This provided me with a greater sense of belonging and affinity to this diaspora and understanding how my experiences intertwine with the other Filipino migrant workers around me.

- In the **Outlining Phase**, the Personal Chronicle Canvas was developed to capture the data in the form of fragmented information bits that come from personal memory covering my own OFW journey. This helps provide a good view of OFW communication engagements from the first-person vantage point. The canvas consists of the following elements: Timeline, Personal Memory, Nature of Engagement, and Artifacts. It allows consolidation of all the OFW milestones and experiences in a chronological order.
- In the **Data Gathering Phase**, I have presented how the canvas was put into use with my own chronicles and personal memory data.
- Finally in the **Analyzing and Interpreting Phase**, I have created a Data Fracturing System that allowed me to look for recurring topics and exceptional circumstances among my data, fracture and connect them, and make interpretations based on assessment of self and others.

Through this methodology, the answers to the research questions are tackled by being able to categorize the various activities into clusters and identify the nature of communication engagement that I have had with government and non-government bodies that fall under each of the said groupings. At the same time, this process also helps to easily distinguish the platforms in which those interactions exist.

The Framework and the data analysis tools created for this study, such as the Personal Memory Chronicle Canvas (*Figure 3*) and the Data Fracturing Codes (*Figure 4*) that enabled the categorization of personal memory are new methods to develop new communication models that are specifically available to the OFW diaspora.

These could be used to address the dynamics of an OFW communication engagement and refine the existing communication theories by applying them in the unique context of OFWs. For example, the Network Theory, Social Identity Theory and Communication Accommodation Theory might further be tested or expanded based on the findings.

The study can also explore how digital communication tools are used by OFWs to interact with agencies. This contributes to knowledge about the impact of technology on communication, especially in a globalized, transnational context, and leads to the development of strategies that improve their social support networks, enhancing their ability to stay connected more efficiently with both their host country and homeland.

Some of the nature of engagement presented in the study show which specific areas of communication are often needed or used by OFWs, what the process looked like in the past versus in the recent years, and how these communication processes can be further improved.

This knowledge can inform best practices and communication strategies are explored in similar settings and adapted to different contexts, such as varying levels of access to technology, different legal or political environments, and the specific needs of different groups of OFWs based on their occupations. It also adds to the understanding of how communication strategies can be tailored to specific audiences.

The results also provide insights for government and non-government policies regarding the ideal ways to communicate with OFWs, leading to more effective dissemination of information, better support services, and more responsive communication strategies, such as the usage of specific technologies and feedback processes. It has the potential to pave the way to innovations in communication tools that are better suited to the needs of OFWs, such as apps designed for low-bandwidth environments or platforms that integrate multiple forms of communication.

In addition, this study is also beneficial for incoming OFWs. Knowledge about the multidimensional nature of communication engagement with government and non-government bodies will equip new members of the community with essential knowledge. This will give them a better edge in navigating different forms of interaction within the diaspora, and prepare them for proper integration and success in the new environment.

## **Research Questions Addressed**

The framework addressed the following research questions:

- 1) What is the nature of communication engagement between Overseas Filipino Workers and government, as well as non-government bodies?***

The results of the study reveal the following nature of communication engagement with government and non-government bodies drawing from my own experiences:

- Online Search for Alternative Work
- Personal Presentation to Potential Employers
- Obtaining Legal Employment
- Transitioning to a New Job
- Furnishing Documents Required for Employment
- Relocating to a New Country
- Exiting due to Visa Expiry
- Obtaining OFW Travel Requirements
- Welcoming Visiting Family
- Obtaining Regular Travel Requirements
- Temporary Job-related Overseas Assignment
- Travelling for Leisure
- Managing Important Documents
- Exercising Voting Rights
- Maintaining Philippine Licenses or Credentials
- Maintaining Philippine Accounts and Remittances
- Managing Foreign Residency-Related Requirements
- Coping with Pandemic-Related Measures
- Managing Personal or Family Affairs
- Social Connection with Community of the Same Faith

- Social Activity Involving Other Members of the OFW Diaspora
- Supporting Other OFWs
- Participating in Global Events
- Advancing Personal or Professional Development
- Asset Acquisition or Investment

2) ***On what platforms do these communication engagements happen?***

Reflecting on my own experiences and those of my peers, OFWs communicate with the government and non-government bodies through a variety of channels, either **in-person, via telephone, through messaging or with the use of digital channels** such as email, websites, mobile applications, or social media.

Digital communication can provide a convenient way for OFWs to access information and services. However, these can also face challenges related to response times and accessibility. In addition, issues such as technological barriers and complex bureaucratic processes still often complicate these interactions. Thus, it is significant to study and understand how these aspects and factors can influence and create effective OFW diaspora communication engagements.

Overall, this research contributes to the advancement of knowledge by providing first-hand insights on how to tap the unlimited potentials and

opportunities provided by technology to improve digital space and collaboration with the aim of improving OFW communication engagements.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, this research finds that the nature of communication engagement between Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) and the government and non-government bodies, is multifaceted.

Being an OFW is often seen primarily in terms of economic benefits, in terms of remittances and better financial stability for the families left in the homeland. The results of this study, however, presents that the experience of belonging to the OFW diaspora is multidimensional and it extends beyond economic gains.

The moment Filipinos leave home to work abroad, various aspects of communication engagement come into play. These involve navigating cultural adaptation, balancing Filipino identity with the new environments, while building and maintaining their social capitals both in the foreign land and homeland, which is crucial emotional and community support. OFWs face significant personal and emotional challenges, including homesickness and shifting family dynamics, while at the same time also welcoming resilience and personal growth.

Additionally, OFWs acquire new skills and education at their workplaces but may also seek to advance their personal or professional competencies. This way, they are able to contribute to both the economies of the country where they work and their

communities back home. These contributions are not only through remittances but through important aspects such as entrepreneurship, knowledge transfer, or family investments. Therefore, this shows how the OFW experience embraces cultural, social, emotional, and legal dimensions that go far beyond economic advancements.

## **Recommendations**

This study highlights the critical role of effective communication in addressing the unique challenges faced by the diaspora. By examining the nature of these interactions and the platforms in which they happen, the research emphasizes the importance of fostering more inclusive, accessible, and sensitive communication engagement practices with OFWs.

Improving these communication strategies not only strengthens the support systems for OFWs but also allows them to become the well-informed heroes that are empowered to advocate for their rights and well-being, ultimately contributing to their successful integration in their country of deployment and the sustained well-being of their families and communities back in the homeland.

### **More Proactive Support from Government Organizations**

In Singapore, the Philippine Embassy offers a comprehensive range of services, including passport renewal, visa processing, and assistance to nationals. The process for passport renewal, for instance, has been streamlined to include online booking for appointments, though there are still complaints among my

peers about the long wait times and the need for email confirmations which can be slow. Some OFWs feel that while the services are thorough, the system can be more user-friendly and less time-consuming. To address concerns promptly and effectively, OFWs call for more proactive support.

In France, the Philippine Embassy also provides necessary consular services, but similar concerns about efficiency and responsiveness are noted among the active users of some Filipino online forums and Facebook groups. From my own observation, the embassy staff are generally friendly and helpful, but the procedures can be cumbersome and require more transparency and quicker turnaround times.

Aside from more proactive support, OFWs in France have also mentioned the need for more frequent mobile consular services to reach those living far from Paris, where the embassy is located.

While the consulates in both France and Singapore are appreciated for their efforts in assisting OFWs, there is a consensus among the ones in my circle that improvements in processing times, communication, and outreach would greatly enhance their effectiveness, particularly in those requests requiring immediate and personalized assistance. Weekend consular services must also be taken into consideration, especially in France.

There is also emphasis on the continuous improvement in OWWA's service delivery to better meet the evolving needs of OFWs. For instance, OWWA does not provide a proper identification card for OFWs after payment of

the membership. The only document issued is an official receipt that is stamped with the words 'OWWA MEMBERSHIP' and 'VALID FOR 24 MONTHS' and there are no more follow-ups until the next time the need arises.

### **Diverse Set of Communication Platforms Available**

This study reveals that the communication engagement between Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) and government is characterized by a reliance on a wider array of platforms. While digital platforms offer convenience and accessibility, their effectiveness is often hindered by usability issues and limited access for some OFWs.

The findings suggest a need for targeted improvements in communication channels to enhance the overall effectiveness of interactions between OFWs and government agencies. Addressing these areas will help create a more responsive and supportive communication framework for OFWs.

These include the addition of certain features to government websites that allow faster and more efficient processing of administrative documents, enabling of online requests or appointments or applications for renewals of government or employment-related documents.

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