



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

H. No. 6643

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AN ACT
ESTABLISHING A COMPREHENSIVE, INTEGRATED AND SUSTAINABLE
REINTEGRATION PROGRAM FOR OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “Bagong Balikbayan Act.”

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – The State recognizes the invaluable contributions of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) to national development and is committed to upholding their fundamental rights, including the right to equal opportunity, decent living, dignity, and participation in decision-making processes affecting their lives and well-being. Further, it is the declared policy of the State to:

- (a) Implement a comprehensive, integrated, and sustainable reintegration program for returning OFWs, addressing economic, social, psychosocial, gender-responsive, and cultural dimensions, regardless of their documentation status;
- (b) Ensure such reintegration programs are customized to the needs and skill of OFWs and mainstreamed throughout the migration cycle and promote:
 - (1) Access to local employment, entrepreneurship, agriculture, fisheries, aquaculture, and other livelihood opportunities;
 - (2) Development of financial literacy programs; and
 - (3) Attainment of economic self-sufficiency, social stability, and psychosocial well-being for returning OFWs and their families.
- (c) Foster conditions where migration is a matter of choice rather than necessity; and
- (d) Collaborate with relevant public and private stakeholders in the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of reintegration programs and assistance.

1 SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms.* – As used in this Act:

- 2
- 3 (a) *Full-cycle Reintegration Program* refers to a full range of interventions, including pre-
- 4 departure preparation, on-site support throughout employment, and reintegration
- 5 assistance upon return;
- 6
- 7 (b) *Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW)* refers to a Filipino who is to be engaged, is engaged,
- 8 or has been engaged in remunerated activity in a country of which the OFW is not an
- 9 immigrant, citizen, or permanent resident or is not awaiting naturalization, recognition,
- 10 or admission, whether land-based or sea-based regardless of status; excluding a Filipino
- 11 engaged under a government-recognized exchange visitor program for cultural and
- 12 educational purposes;
- 13
- 14 (c) *Reintegration* refers to a multi-dimensional process enabling OFWs to re-establish
- 15 economic, social, and psychosocial well-being upon return; and
- 16
- 17 (d) *Undocumented OFW* refers to an OFW not registered with the Philippine government as
- 18 an OFW, or whose documents are incomplete or invalid. An undocumented OFW is also
- 19 known as an “irregular OFW”.
- 20

21 SEC. 4. *Applicability.* – This Act shall apply to all returnee-OFWs, irrespective of their

22 typology and status, including:

23

- 24 (a) Land-based and sea-based OFWs;
- 25 (b) Documented or undocumented OFWs;
- 26 (c) OFWs who have been voluntarily or mandatorily repatriated, regardless of the grounds
- 27 for such repatriation;
- 28 (d) OFWs returning to the country due to retirement or upon the termination of their
- 29 employment contract; and
- 30 (e) OFWs returning to the country due to distressing circumstances in the host country, such
- 31 as war or conflict, economic instability, abuse or exploitation, pandemics, natural
- 32 disasters or diplomatic fallout.
- 33

34 This Act shall also extend to OFWs who require targeted assistance, including senior or solo-

35 parent OFWs. Furthermore, the families of returnee-OFWs shall likewise be covered and benefited

36 by the provisions of this Act, subject to and as may be further detailed within the implementing rules

37 and regulations promulgated hereto.

38

39 SEC. 5. *Access to Employment Opportunities and Qualification Recognition.* –

40

- 41 (a) *Job Fairs.* The Department of Migrant Workers (DMW), together with the Overseas
- 42 Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) shall, in coordination with the Department of
- 43 Labor and Employment (DOLE), Department of Agriculture (DA), Department of Trade
- 44 and Industry (DTI), Department of the Interior and Local Government, Department of
- 45 Education, Department of Health (DOH), Civil Service Commission (CSC), Commission
- 46 on Higher Education (CHED), Public Employment Service Office, and in consultation
- 47 with concerned business chambers and groups in the private sector, private enterprises
- 48 recognized for ensuring security of tenure, humane conditions of work, and a living wage,
- 49 and relevant Local Government Units (LGUs), plan and conduct regular series of job fairs
- 50 in strategic sites and LGUs where there are significant presence of returnee-OFWs.

1 These job fairs shall facilitate employment opportunities in: (1) The private sector; (2)
2 The national or local government, including their agencies, bureaus, offices,
3 instrumentalities, and government-owned and/or -controlled corporations (GOCCs), for
4 civil service qualified OFWs; and (3) Academic and non-academic positions in public
5 schools, and state colleges and universities. Such job fairs shall take into consideration
6 the specific skills, credentials, eligibilities, and experience acquired by OFWs from
7 working overseas.
8

9 (b) Expanded Employment Facilitation. The DMW and other concerned government
10 agencies shall expand the employment facilitation offering for OFWs in the public,
11 private, and development sectors based on progressive eligibility or qualification criteria,
12 in partnership with the relevant national government agencies, the Private Sector
13 Advisory Council, industry or professional associations, and other stakeholders.
14

15 (c) Civil Service Eligibility. The CSC shall formulate guidelines to grant appropriate civil
16 service eligibility to non-civil service qualified OFWs, based on the education, training,
17 and experience they acquired while living or working overseas.
18

19 (d) Skills and Academic Recognition. The Technical Education and Skills Development
20 Authority (TESDA) and the CHED shall provide the necessary rules and regulations to
21 grant pertinent national certification or appropriate degree diploma(s), respectively,
22 recognizing the education, training, and experience OFWs acquired while living or
23 working overseas.
24

25 SEC. 6. *Initiation of Reintegration Process.* – The reintegration process for concerned OFWs
26 shall be initiated by the relevant Migrant Workers Offices (MWOs) six (6) months before the
27 intended return of the OFW to the Philippines. This process shall commence by providing access to
28 four (4) paths for reintegration, namely:
29

- 30 (a) Education, upskilling/reskilling/retooling/micro-credentialing (Kaalaman);
31 (b) Psychosocial and social support services (Kalinga);
32 (c) Entrepreneurship (Negosyo); and
33 (d) Employment (Hanap-buhay).
34

35 SEC. 7. *Returnee-OFWs Management Information System (ROMIS) and Reintegration*
36 *Management System (RMS).* –
37

38 (a) Establishment of ROMIS. The DMW shall establish and maintain the ROMIS, which
39 shall serve as the primary information network and database containing information on
40 the educational attainment, skill levels, and experience of all returning OFWs. The
41 ROMIS shall function as a referral system to the private sector and government
42 institutions to facilitate job matching, possible hiring, and/or skills upgrading.
43

44 (b) Development and Function of RMS. Within the ROMIS framework, the DMW shall
45 finalize the development and operationalization of the RMS. The RMS shall be an online
46 system and platform designed to streamline the reintegration process for returnee-OFWs.
47 It shall provide access to a range of services, including financial literacy programs,
48 livelihood training, and access to funding opportunities.
49

50 (c) System Objectives. Both the ROMIS and the RMS shall facilitate effective connections
51 with government and private sector partners to ensure a smooth transition for returnee-
52 OFWs back into local employment or entrepreneurship. The RMS shall further aim to

1 provide efficient support for the holistic needs of returnee-OFWs and their families,
2 thereby seeking to empower them to reintegrate successfully and continue contributing
3 to national development.
4

5 SEC. 8. *Institutional Framework for Reintegration.* –
6

7 (a) Lead Agency. The DMW shall, in coordination with the OWWA and the National
8 Reintegration Center for OFWs (NRCO), serve as the primary agency responsible for the
9 implementation of the full-cycle reintegration program.
10

11 (b) Role of the NRCO. The NRCO shall function as the central coordination mechanism to:
12 (1) Enhance participation of all stakeholders to achieve transformative, effective, and
13 efficient delivery of services to returnee-OFWs and their families; and (2) Ensure the
14 harmonized and synergized implementation of the full-cycle national reintegration policy
15 and program.
16

17 The NRCO shall design and institutionalize reintegration frameworks, strategies and
18 standards that address the economic, social and psychological aspects of return, and shall
19 lead the coordination of relevant government agencies, local government units, and
20 partners from the private sector and civil society. Together with the OWWA, it shall
21 implement reintegration programs and services in accordance with established plans,
22 policies and guidelines. It shall maintain a centralized reintegration database, undertake
23 policy and program research, and ensure that all reintegration initiatives are coherent,
24 evidence-based, and aligned with national migration and development priorities.
25

26 (c) Role of MWOs and OWWA Overseas Welfare Offices (OWOS). The MWOs together
27 with the OWOS located abroad shall be strengthened to enable them to provide
28 reintegration counseling and support services directly to OFWs onsite, including
29 undocumented workers.
30

31 SEC. 9. *Pre-Return and Reintegration Orientation Seminar (PRROS).* – There shall be a
32 PRROS to be offered by MWOs worldwide, similar in intent to pre-employment, pre-departure, and
33 post-arrival orientation seminars, but concentrating on essential information for a returning OFW
34 seeking to be reintegrated back into the Philippine economy and society.
35

36 SEC. 10. *Business-Oriented Capacity-Building Training.* –
37

38 (a) Provision of Training. The DOLE shall, in coordination with the DTI and the DA, provide
39 Business-Oriented Capacity-Building Training for OFWs who are seeking to set up their
40 businesses.
41

42 (b) Training Focus Areas. The training shall focus on the following key areas: (1) Business
43 conceptualization and the conduct of feasibility studies; (2) Registration and all other
44 administrative matters related to creating one's own business; (3) Safe and sustainable
45 business financing, incorporating the DMW's Financial Awareness Seminar-Small
46 Business Management Training (FAS-SBMT), which promotes financial awareness and
47 provides training for the development and management of small businesses; (4) Business
48 promotion/advertising/marketing; and (5) Service/product delivery.
49

50 (c) Enhancement of FAS-SBMT and Collaboration. The DMW's FAS-SBMT shall have
51 strengthened program coordination and shall expand its offerings. Pursuant thereto, the
52 DMW shall collaborate with concerned national government agencies and stakeholders

1 to provide co-opportunities for entrepreneurship development, incubation, marketing, and
2 mentoring.

- 3
- 4 (d) DA Agricultural Credit Policy Council (ACPC) Support. The DA's ACPC shall offer
5 capacity-building support alongside its credit programs. The DA and its ACPC shall
6 provide services specifically designed for those engaged in the agri-fishery sector. This
7 support shall be made available to returnee-OFWs applying for ACPC's loan programs to
8 assist them in acquiring the necessary skills and improving their business management.
- 9
- 10 (e) Small Business Corporation (SB Corp). The SB Corp, a GOCC operating under the DTI,
11 shall support reintegration efforts by providing capacity-building programs and access to
12 credit facilities.
- 13
- 14 (f) Mentorship Facilitation. The training provided under this Section shall also serve as a
15 means by which returnee-OFWs are assisted in finding and connecting with mentors in
16 the business sector, particularly those established in the industry the returnee-OFW
17 intends to enter.
- 18
- 19 (g) Prioritization. Prioritization for participation in the training and related support under this
20 Section shall be given to those returnee-OFWs with no background in putting together
21 and running/operating their own businesses, particularly those intending to establish a
22 single proprietorship and having no seasoned business partners.
- 23

24 SEC. 11. *Components of Reintegration Services.* – Reintegration services shall include the
25 following components provided at relevant stages of the migration cycle:

26

27 (a) Pre-Departure:

- 28 (1) Mandatory pre-departure orientation seminars covering available reintegration
29 services and support for undocumented OFWs;
30 (2) Financial literacy training focused on management of earnings and future
31 planning; and
32 (3) Family counseling on coping mechanisms for separation and eventual
33 reunification.
- 34

35 (b) On-Site Support:

- 36 (1) Provision of accessible support services through MWOs for OFWs in distress,
37 including undocumented workers;
38 (2) Opportunities for skills development and training designed to enhance
39 employability upon return; and
40 (3) Establishment of mechanisms for addressing exploitation and abuse, ensuring
41 access to legal and psychosocial support.
- 42

43 (c) Upon Return:

- 44 (1) Provision of personalized reintegration counseling and case management to
45 develop tailored reintegration plans;
46 (2) Delivery of economic reintegration assistance, including facilitation of job
47 placement, entrepreneurship training, and access to financing;
48 (3) Facilitation of social reintegration support, covering access to housing,
49 documentation, education, healthcare, and social protection schemes;
50 (4) Provision of psychosocial support services addressing mental health concerns
51 and challenges from migration; and

- (5) Grant of special attention to the needs of vulnerable OFWs, particularly victims of trafficking, persons with disabilities, and those with specific medical or psychosocial needs.

SEC. 12. *Protection for Undocumented OFWs.* – No undocumented OFW shall be denied reintegration services due to their status. Mechanisms shall be established for the regularization of undocumented OFWs' status upon return to facilitate access to services and benefits. Information dissemination campaigns shall inform undocumented OFWs of their rights and available reintegration support. A dedicated hotline and online platform shall be established for confidential assistance to undocumented OFWs.

SEC. 13. *Monitoring and Evaluation.* – The DMW shall develop a monitoring and evaluation framework to assess the reintegration program's effectiveness and conduct regular impact assessments to ensure program responsiveness to OFWs' evolving needs.

SEC. 14. *Dedicated Financing and Loan Programs.* –

- (a) Development and Provision. The DMW and the OWWA shall, in coordination with the Department of Finance (DOF), the DA, particularly its Agribusiness and Marketing Assistance Service (AMAS) and ACPC, Government Financial Institutions (GFIs), and qualified Private Financial Institutions, develop and provide dedicated financing or loan programs.
- (b) Purpose and Terms. These programs shall facilitate the establishment, operation, sustainability, or expansion of enterprises and livelihood projects, including Micro-, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs), owned by returnee-OFWs, under minimal and affordable terms and conditions.
- (c) Eligibility and Support. (1) The dedicated programs under this section shall primarily cater to returnee-OFWs with no existing enterprise or livelihood project. (2) Returnee-OFWs with an existing enterprise that is dismally performing shall also be eligible: *Provided, That* the DMW, OWWA, DOF, DA (through AMAS and ACPC), and GFIs shall provide financial and other support, including technical guidance, necessary to revitalize the undertaking. (3) Returnee-OFWs with existing enterprises deemed robust may be referred to the standing programs of the DTI for appropriate assistance.

SEC. 15. *Program for Qualified OFWs to Teach in the Academe.* – The DMW shall, in coordination with the CHED and TESDA, provide a program to invite qualified and highly-skilled OFWs to teach in colleges/universities recognized by the CHED and/or in training centers accredited by the TESDA.

SEC. 16. *Social Assistance Measures.* – The DMW shall, together with the OWWA, the Department of Social Welfare and Development, and the DA, include returnee-OFWs as beneficiaries in their respective social protection and other programs.

The DMW and OWWA, through their regional offices, shall encourage community engagements for returnee-OFWs and their families.

All reintegration programs and services, including social assistance measures under this Act, shall be guided by the principles mandated under Section 17 of Republic Act (R.A.) No. 11641, otherwise known as the "Department of Migrant Workers Act", ensuring a multi-dimensional

1 reintegration program that effectively addresses the economic, social, psychosocial and cultural
2 aspects of reintegration.

3
4 The implementing rules and regulations of this Act shall contain detailed and specific
5 provisions on social assistance and protection to ensure that more OFWs are included in the various
6 social protection programs offered by the government, the private sector, and non-government
7 organizations (NGOs).

8
9 SEC. 17. *Right to Participate.* – Former OFWs returning to the Philippine economy should,
10 as much as possible, be involved in policy and decision-making processes that affect their rights and
11 benefits under this Act and other existing laws.

12
13 SEC. 18. *Application of Anti-Age Discrimination Law.* –

14
15 (a) Compliance Obligation. In the extension of services to former OFWs and in all matters
16 concerning their local or domestic employment, all government agencies, GOCCs, and
17 all private corporations, partnerships, sole-proprietorships, including NGOs and other
18 kinds of private organizations, shall strictly observe and follow all provisions of R.A.
19 10911, otherwise known as the “Anti-Age Discrimination in Employment Act”.

20
21 (b) Monitoring and Coordination. The DMW and the DOLE shall constantly coordinate to
22 monitor the plight and situation of all former OFWs employed in local/domestic jobs to
23 ensure full compliance with the aforementioned law.

24
25 SEC. 19. *Psychosocial Support and Counseling.* – The DMW shall, together with OWWA
26 and the DOH, facilitate psychosocial support and reintegration counselling for returnee-OFWs and
27 their families.

28
29 SEC. 20. *National Reintegration Network (NRN).* – The NRN shall be established through
30 formal partnership agreements with relevant government and private partner agencies. It shall serve
31 to strengthen and institutionalize collaborative efforts aimed at ensuring the effective delivery of
32 reintegration programs and services. The NRN shall facilitate convenient and seamless access to such
33 services through the creation of both Physical and Online One-Stop-Shops, wherein all relevant
34 programs and services are integrated and made available on a unified platform. All government
35 agencies and instrumentalities offering services to OFWs shall form part of the NRN.

36
37 SEC. 21. *Creation of Positions and Offices.* – The DMW and other concerned agencies may
38 propose additional positions or offices, subject to the review and approval of the Department of
39 Budget and Management in accordance with the civil service and other pertinent laws, rules and
40 regulations.

41
42 SEC. 22. *Non-diminution of Benefits.* – All rights, privileges and benefits previously enjoyed
43 by returnee or reintegrated OFWs before the effectivity of this Act, including those set forth in R.A.
44 8042, otherwise known as the “Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995”, as amended,
45 R.A. 10801 or the “Overseas Workers Welfare Administration Act”, among other relevant laws,
46 executive issuances, including pertinent Supreme Court decisions, shall continue to be recognized
47 and shall not be diminished.

48
49 SEC. 23. *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act
50 shall be charged against the current year’s appropriations of the departments and agencies concerned.
51 Thereafter, such amount shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

1 SEC. 24. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – The DMW shall, together with the OWWA
2 and the NRCO, promulgate the necessary implementing rules and regulations within ninety (90) days
3 from the effectivity of this Act.
4

5 The promulgation shall be made in coordination with the key government agencies mentioned
6 in this Act, and in consultation with concerned GOCCs, especially those giving grants, extending
7 loans, and providing technical assistance to MSMEs, and other relevant stakeholders in the private
8 sector and NGOs.
9

10 SEC. 25. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision or part hereof is held invalid or
11 unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provisions not otherwise affected shall remain valid
12 and subsisting.
13

14 SEC. 26. *Repealing Clause.* – Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order, letter
15 of instruction, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions
16 of this Act is hereby repealed, modified, or amended accordingly.
17

18 SEC. 27. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the
19 *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,