



## RECRUITMENT OF FILIPINO NURSES TO THE NORDIC REGION

The critical shortage of nursing worldwide leads to the pathway of recruiting Internationally Educated Nurses (IENs) from low-and-middle income countries to high income countries. Recruitment agencies connect employers from the destination countries and the potential employees from the source countries. The right competencies and background are needed to materialize the ethical recruitment of international health personnel. Recruitment agencies ensure ethical, systematic and lawful sourcing of manpower to fill-up the gap of health personnel shortage in the country of destination.

The World Health Organization (WHO 2013) estimates that there will be a shortage of 12.9 million healthcare workers in 2035. For the attainment of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3 on health and well-being, the world needs almost 9 million nurses and midwives by the year 2030 (WHO 2013). Globally, there is a remarkable shortage of nursing (Li et al. 2014) and 50% of the total healthcare workers shortage comprise of nurses and midwives (WHO 2018).

The changing demographics in the non-English speaking countries in the European region encourage the recruitment of healthcare professionals from the Philippines (Vartiainen et al. 2016). Recruitment of Nurses from developing countries to industrialized nations has become a practice for decades (Delucas 2014) and poses a global effect on the healthcare system (Li et al. 2014).

Recruitment and consultancy agencies in the Philippines have started to venture and expand their marketing strategies in the Northern Europe due to the high demands of local employers especially in the primary health systems in nursing homes and care home institutions. These employers are mainly private institutions delivering elderly care services to Nordic citizens who need 24-hour care services. While these will bring potential opportunities to internationally educated nurses, it is important that the recruitment process should be done with diligence and proper preparation in order not to result to the deskilling of recruited nurses to the host countries.

### FINAN's positions and recommendations

Being the only interregional non-profit Filipino nursing professional organization in the Nordic Region, FiNAN,

- **calls for bilateral labour agreement between the Philippines and the Nordic countries.** The bilateral labour agreement between the Nordic Region and the Philippine government will help increase the protection of rights among recruited internationally educated nurses (IENs). This will also ensure that laws and policies between the source and host countries be followed and ease transition of the recruited nurses.
- **encourages agreement and mobility in higher education.** Polytechnic universities and universities offering nursing degree programme in the Nordic region can contemplate on creating agreements with the Philippine universities for the possibility of double degree programmes that will give option for future Filipino nursing students to take the pathway of working as a Registered Nurse in the Nordic countries. The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) should also study in incorporating the principles behind the European Union Directive 55 and Bologna Process.
- **urges ethical recruitment.** The recruitment and consultancy agencies in the Philippines should give accurate information on the right process on how to become registered nurses in the Nordic Region. FiNAN continues to monitor the international mobility of Filipino Nurses to the Nordic Region. Moreover, the non-profit organization continues to provide any assistance to the recruited Filipino nurses such as active availability in answering online inquiries and collaborate with local authorities who might be helpful in the integration programme of these nurses.

The Filipino Nurses Association in the Nordic Region (FiNAN) maintains its stand in denouncing unethical and unlawful recruitment of Filipino Nurses to the Nordic Region who might exploit the vulnerability of these nurses including unequal salary, remuneration and benefits as with the local nurses. The institution also encourages agencies to create integration programmes that are evidence-based practice and that will also help them bring family members for reunification. The language training programme must also be emphasized as an important tool in the proper integration of nurses who wish to work in the Nordic countries.

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