



FILIPINOS IN ALBERTA

MIGRATION, COMMUNITIES, AND CHALLENGES



PHILIPPINE CONSULATE GENERAL
IN CALGARY

DR. GLENDA BONIFACIO



Filipinos in Alberta:
Migration, Communities, and Challenges

By

The Philippine Consulate General Calgary

and

Glenda Tibe Bonifacio

Filipinos in Alberta: Migration, Communities, and Challenges by Philippine Consulate General in Calgary & Dr. Glenda Tibe Bonifacio

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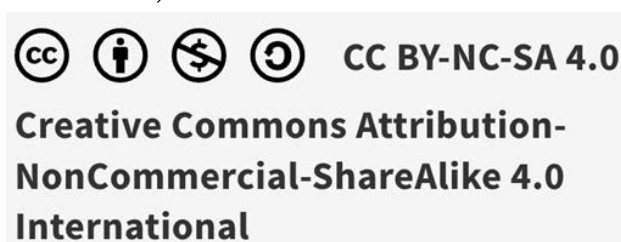


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A-22-2020

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MESSAGE

I am pleased to congratulate the Philippine Consulate General in Calgary, under the leadership of Consul General Zaldy B. Patron, and Dr. Glenda Tibe-Bonifacio for coming up with this e-book entitled “The Filipinos in Alberta: Migration, Communities, and Challenges.”

This book’s release in 2024 comes at an auspicious time when the Philippines and Canada celebrate the 75th Anniversary of the Philippines-Canada Diplomatic Relations.

One of the many bright spots of these enduring and fruitful bilateral relations is the vibrant people-to-people ties between the Philippines and Canada.

Today, Canada is home to about one million Filipinos and Filipino-Canadians that have enriched the cultural diversity of this nation. The Filipinos have also become significant contributors to Canada’s economic and social development.

I, therefore, welcome the publication of this book that highlights the Filipino diaspora in the Province of Alberta.

The more we know about them, the better we appreciate them.



H.E. MARIA ANDRELITA S. AUSTRIA

Ambassador

Embassy of the Republic of the Philippines

Ottawa

FOREWORD

The Province of Alberta, Canada, is home to the second largest Filipino population in Canada.

During my six-year posting at the Philippine Consulate General in Calgary, which began in April 2018, I met a lot of Filipinos and encountered many Filipino community organizations in different parts of Alberta. They all have unique stories to share on why they opted to migrate to this Prairie Province to start a new life filled with hope and aspirations. As members of the visible minority, these Filipinos, both the first and succeeding generations, also have their share of challenges as they integrate themselves into the Canadian society.

This book is the contribution of the Philippine Consulate General in Calgary and Dr. Glenda Tibe Bonifacio in the documentation of stories about the Filipino migration in Alberta. While unable to capture each and every story of the thousands of Filipinos who have come to this part of Canada to live, work, and study, it can give us a snapshot of their narratives and a general picture of the existing Filipino community organizations in the province. Likewise, this book will present some of the issues our community is facing, which, hopefully, can be effectively addressed to further strengthen our community.

We started working on this book in the early part of 2020. The more than two years of the COVID-19 pandemic caused a significant delay in this project. However, our persistence led us to its completion.

I am beyond grateful to Dr. Bonifacio for agreeing to partner with us at the Philippine Consulate General. She took the lead for this project on a *pro bono* basis. I am equally thankful to all the writers and contributors who volunteered their time, skills, and resources to make this book a reality.

Through this book, I hope the readers will gain a better understanding of and a deeper insight into the Filipino diaspora in Alberta. This can be a useful reference in designing programs for the betterment of our Filipino community.



ZALDY B. PATRON

Consul General
Philippine Consulate General
Calgary

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

From the Philippine Consulate General in Calgary:

The idea to come up with this book on the Filipino migration in Alberta, Canada, came from Consul General Zaldy B. Patron. He proposed it to Dr. Glenda Tibe-Bonifacio, who was then teaching as the first Filipino Canadian professor at the University of Lethbridge, to be a collaborative project between the Philippine Consulate General in Calgary and her. The two of them were the main architects of this book.

Enriching this book are the stories of the 79 individuals and 16 community organizations that responded to the Philippine Consulate General's public call for contributions issued on 8 June 2020. Miguel Patron synthesized some of their narrations and offered his reflections while Rey Rosales and Kelsey Delamater gave an account of migration journeys.

Typical in a large Filipino community outside of the Philippines is the presence of various community organizations. Victorio Mario Dimagiba, Jr. and Roxanna Epe described what the Filipino community organizations in Alberta look like.

Several researchers and academicians have written about the different issues and concerns of the various segments of the Filipino community in Alberta and the Filipino Canadians in general. The works of some of them, namely Christa Sato, Mischa Taylor, Carla T. Hilario, F. J. Espina, Lauren Migrino, Christa Sato, David Este, Alan McLuckie, Ilyan Ferrer, Sherrisa Celis, and Rochelle Deloria, are presented in this book.

Some of the stories of the members of the Filipino community found their way into this book through the efforts of Ms. Sherrisa Celis of the Calgary Catholic Immigration Society.

Ellaine Tiamzon assisted in laying out the book while Carlo Licuanan did the graphic design for the cover of this book.

Within the Philippine Consulate General, Ms. Sheila Tarrosa, Cultural Officer (2016-2022), assisted in compiling the submitted written contributions for this book.

The Philippine Consulate General in Calgary and Dr. Glenda Tibe Bonifacio are thankful to everyone who gave life to this book.

To all the hardworking Filipinos in Alberta, who are the inspiration for this book, this is for all of you.

From Glenda Tibe Bonifacio:

This book is based on the narratives of individual Filipinos and Filipino community organizations, and the contribution of scholars on Filipino migration in Alberta. Thank you for making this project possible, and for your patience in seeing it through to completion.

For the stories:

In Airdrie: Jun Martin

In Calgary: Ben Ang, Juliet Aquino, Orlando Argota, Benito Atienza, Lenie Atienza, Prescila Atienza, Ramon Balagat, Renato Barnachea, Celestino Bautista, Esperita Bautista, Avelina Celis, Sherissa Celis, Cora Cordero, Manuel Corrales, Fely Cutaran, Aurora Dacanay, Adelina de la Cruz, Leny de la Cruz, Estrella de los Reyes, Wilfredo de Vera, Joel Dizon, Carmelita Fuentes, Domingo Fuentes, Connie Genilo, Romeo Honorio, Ben Isidro, Ricardo Macabeo, Susan Palanca, Connie Penny, Lucy Reyes, Mary Ann Roque, Evelyn Serbout, Lydia Siapno, Pepe Siapno, Eugene Sicat, Lolit Shiels, Purificacion Romansanta, Carlos Soriano, Maria Suarez, Lydia Tenebro, Rufus Tidalgo, Richard Tumanon, Victoria Valencia, Murmuray Vila, and Emma Duque Villanueva.

In Edmonton: Michelle Lucena Abesamis, Bayani Alcantara, Ida Beltran, Liza Bernardino, Sheila Marie Codinera, Jovelita Gacelos, Giselle Quezon General, Karen Lechonsito-Moore, Marjorie Newman, Ting Pimentel Elger, and Albert Remus Rosana.

In Fort Saskatchewan: Malou Briones Gonzales

In Grande Prairie: Virginia Tang

In Lethbridge: Barry Alvarez, Linda Helwig, and Christopher Mateo

In Stettler: Rodelio Abogado, Sherry de Guzman, Ethel Go Fiss, Lorelyn Haustein, Susan Hernando, Nitz Mano, and Evangeline Ylade; and

Five anonymous contributions.

For Roxanna Epe, for your readiness to take on additional tasks at short notice.

My family for their enduring love and support---Ike, Charmaine, Czarina, Charelle, Czyna, and Charithe, including our dogs Charly and Niro.

Maraming salamat!



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Glenda Tibe Bonifacio

Overview

Filipinos are “at home in the world”.¹ According to the Commission on Filipinos Overseas, Filipinos are “in more than 200 destination countries and territories”.² About 10.2 million overseas Filipinos are comprised of 4.8 million permanent migrants, 4.2 million temporary migrants, and 1.2 million irregular migrants.³ These numbers roughly translate to nearly 10% of the Philippine population of 109 million (est. 2020)⁴ residing overseas.

¹ Filomeno V. Aguilar, Jr., ed., *Filipinos in Global Migration: At Home in the World?* (Philippine Migration Research Network and Philippine Social Science Council, 2002).

² Commission on Filipinos Overseas, “Philippine Migration Data at a Glance”, <https://cfo.gov.ph/statistics-2/> [accessed 25 January 2024].

³ Ibid.

⁴ Philippine Statistics Authority, <https://www.psa.gov.ph/content/2020-census-population-and-housing-2020-cph-population-counts-declared-official-president>. [accessed 25 January 2024].

The Philippines is an archipelago located in the Southeast Asian region fondly called the “Pearl of the Orient Seas” since the 18th century.⁵ It is strategically located “at the crossroads” of the Pacific Ocean and the South China Sea (i.e., “Orient Seas”) which remain an important pathway for trade and commerce⁶ as well as the peace, security, and stability in Asia-Pacific and its global implications. Pearls are abundant in Philippine waters which the Spanish colonizers took to the world market, thus, making the country “one of the most important sources” of this organic gem.⁷ Among ancient cultures in Asia, the pearl symbolizes “the *journey* [italics mine] of the soul or spirit along the path to perfection”.⁸ I am inclined to argue that the genuine “pearl” of the Philippines with over 7,000 islands is the *people*.

Island cultures embed mobility. Travel is part of connecting people between and across the islands for education, commerce, and tourism, among others. The lack of resources on one island fosters the need to travel to another island. Human mobility is local, provincial, regional, national, and even international in search for desired resources and aspirations, or following the pearl symbolism logic, one’s “path to perfection”. For many Filipinos, this path leads to Alberta, Canada.

To appreciate this path of Filipinos, this introduction is divided into eight sections, namely, Filipinos in Canada, Filipinos in Alberta, collecting stories, factors shaping migration decisions, challenges as Filipinos in Alberta, overcoming challenges, achievements of Filipinos in Alberta, and conclusion by way of insights into the future in Alberta.

⁵ George Waldo Browne, *Pearl of the Orient: The Philippine Islands* (Creative Media Partners, LLC, 2023). Originally published in 1900 by D. Estes from the New York Public Library, https://www.google.ca/books/edition/The_Pearl_of_the_Orient/ [accessed 25 January 2024].

⁶ Akhyari Hananto, “This is why the Philippines is known as the ‘Pearl of the Orient Seas’”, SEASIA, February 19, 2023, <https://seasia.co/2023/02/19/this-is-why-the-philippines-is-known-as-the-pearl-of-the-orient-seas> [accessed 25 January 2024].

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Pearls are gems and not stones, according to the International Gem Society. Pearls are organically produced by freshwater and saltwater mollusks. See Fara Braid, Phoebe Shang, GG, and International Gem Society, “Pearl Symbolism”, <https://www.gemsociety.org/article/history-legend-pearls-gems-yore/> [accessed 25 January 2024].

Filipinos in Canada

Canada is home to nearly a million Filipinos. In the 2021 Census of Population, there were 957,355 Canadians with roots in the Philippines, making it the third largest source country of immigrants next to India and China.⁹ Since the 1960s, many Filipinos have migrated to Canada as professionals, skilled workers, and international students although the Canadian Encyclopedia noted early Filipinos in the 1890s.¹⁰ Table 1 presents the number of registered Filipino emigrants in Canada from 1981 to 2021 from the Commission on Filipinos Overseas.

Table 1. Number of Registered Filipino Emigrants in Canada, 1981-2021

Year	Number	Year	Number
1981	5,226	2000	8,245
1982	4,898	2001	9,737
1983	3,946	2002	8,795
1984	2,463	2003	9,521
1985	2,097	2004	10,108
1986	3,206	2005	13,598
1987	5,757	2006	13,230
1988	6,602	2007	14,572
1989	8,040	2008	16,443
1990	8,400	2009	19,967
1991	7,211	2010	27,302

⁹ StatsCAN Plus, “Filipino Canadian Proud with a Strong Sense of Belonging”. Statistics Canada, 2023, <https://www.statcan.gc.ca/o1/en/plus/3883-filipino-canadian-proud-strong-sense-belonging> [accessed 20 January 2024].

¹⁰Eleanor R. Laquian, “Filipino Canadians”. *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, June 3, 2008. Updated by Clayton Ma, last edited July 31, 2023, <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/filipinos> [accessed 20 January 2024].

1992	7,454	2011	26,203
1993	11,627	2012	24,354
1994	14,302	2013	19,041
1995	11,288	2014	22,479
1996	10,050	2015	33,700
1997	8,215	2016	29,039
1998	5,651	2017	27,376
1999	6,712	2018	23,014
		2019	18,190
		2020	4,579
		2021	4,470
Total: 517,108			

Source: Commission on Filipinos Overseas

Based on the statistics compiled by the Commission on Filipinos Overseas, Canada has been the second largest destination for Filipinos since the 1980s next to the United States and Insular areas. In 2021, Statista reported 4,470 Filipino emigrants in Canada compared to 7,122 in the U.S.¹¹ Filipinos also ranked the second largest group of international students in Canada issued with study permits in 2022, with about 24,000.¹²

Two dominant characteristics of Filipinos in Canada are gendered migration and economic productivity. Of the 719,580 Filipinos in Canada who were born in the Philippines in the 2021

¹¹ Statista Research Department, “Countries with the Highest Number of Emigrants from the Philippines in 2021”, *Statista*, September 20, 2023, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1033910/countries-with-the-highest-number-of-filipino-emigrants/> [accessed 25 January 2024].

¹² ApplyBoard, The Philippines was Canada’s Second Largest Source of International Students in 2022”, *ApplyInsights*, June 27, 2022, <https://www.applyboard.com/applyinsights-article/the-philippines-was-canadas-second-largest-source-of-international-students-in-2022> [accessed 25 January 2024].

Census of Population, there were 414,460 women compared to 305,115 men.¹³ Filipino women comprised 62% of the Filipinos in Canada who were between 25 and 44 years old, and 63% who were between 45 to 64 years old in 2001.¹⁴ In 2016, Filipino women consisted 56% of Filipino Canadians.¹⁵ Over 90% of Filipino women participated in the defunct Live-in Caregiver Program which started in 1992.¹⁶ The highly gendered migration of Filipinos in Canada, and other countries in the world depending on the occupational program streams, have fostered a rich scholarship on gender and labour migration in the 21st century. Notwithstanding the different government policies, agreements, and advocacies that aim to protect the welfare of Filipino workers in Canada.

Another dominant feature of Filipinos in Canada is economic productivity. Most first-generation Filipinos migrate with ready skills, completed educational degrees, and varied employment backgrounds but are not recognized as equal to their Canadian counterpart. The facility of the English language also makes Filipinos job-ready and with no need for first-level newcomer support from Canadian agencies. It is not surprising that Filipinos have “the highest labour force participation rate among all Canadians and well above the national average” in the 2021 Census of Population.¹⁷ In 2021, Filipinos achieved 78.6% labour participation compared to the 65.4% national average. Correspondingly, Filipinos in Canada have the lowest unemployment rate of 4.3% compared to the 5.3% national average.¹⁸ Filipinos, therefore, have set the mark as “hardworking” people. Filipino nurses and care workers, for example, are among the essential workers during the COVID-19 pandemic. They have become sought-after workers in different provinces like Alberta.

¹³ Statistic Canada, “Census Profile.2021 Census of Population”. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001. Released November 15, 2023, <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E> [accessed 2 January 2024].

¹⁴ Colin Lindsay, “The Filipino Community in Canada 2001. Analytic Paper. Profiles of Ethnic Communities in Canada”, *Statistics Canada*, July 2007. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 89-621-XIE, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca> [accessed 25 January 2024].

¹⁵ Eleanor R. Laquian, “Filipino Canadians”. *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, 2008, updated by Clayton Ma, last edited July 31, 2023, <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/filipinos> [accessed 25 January 2024].

¹⁶ Desmond Ofori Oklikah, Teresa Abada and Godwin Arku, “Canada (Live-in) Caregiver Program (LCP) and Care Workers’ Lived Experiences: A Systematic Literature Review”, *Journal of International Migration* (2024). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-024-01119-y>

¹⁷ StatsCan Plus, Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

Filipinos in Alberta

Alberta is the richest province in Canada.¹⁹ With a continental climate, Alberta has “more sunshine than any other Canadian province”²⁰ which attracts immigrants from warmer regions in the world including those coming from the Philippines. Filipinos numbered 216,710 in Alberta based on the 2021 Census of Population.²¹ From 2011 to 2016, Alberta became the second province with the highest number of Filipinos with 166,200 or 21% next to Ontario at 311,670 or 40%.²² During this period, Alberta displaced British Columbia with 145,030, or 19% of the total Filipino population. Based on the 2016 Census of Population, the Philippines ranked first as the source of recent immigrants, or 123,830 out of 845,215 total immigrant population in Alberta.²³ From 2016 to 2021, there were 47,600 Filipinos who arrived in Alberta.²⁴ Table 2 presents the distribution of Filipinos in Alberta by place and gender from the 2021 Census of Population.

¹⁹ Marc Fawcett-Atkinson. 2022. Canada’s Wealthiest Province is Also its Hungriest. *Canada’s National Observer*, August 30, <https://www.nationalobserver.com/2022/08/30/news/alberta-canada-hungriest-province> [accessed 25 January 2024]

²⁰See Britannica, Alberta, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Alberta-province> [accessed 27 January 2024]

²¹ StatsCAN, <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&SearchText=alberta&DGUIDlist=2021S0503825,2021A000248&GENDERlist=1,2,3&STATISTIClist=1&HEADERlist=0>. [accessed 27 January 2024]

²² Embassy of the Philippines, Ottawa. Filipinos in Canada: The Filipino Diaspora in Canada, <https://ottawape.dfa.gov.ph/index.php/2016-04-12-08-34-55/filipino-diaspora> [accessed 25 January 2024]

²³ Statistics Canada. 2017. *Focus on Geography Series, 2016 Census*. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-404-X20-16001. Ottawa, Ontario. Data products, 2016 census. www12.statcan.gc.ca [accessed 26 January 2024]

²⁴ Laura Krause. 2022. Largest Proportion of Recent Immigrants in Alberta are from the Philippines, India: StatCan. CTV News Edmonton, October 26, <https://edmonton.citynews.ca/2022/10/26/recent-immigrants-alberta-philippines-india/> [accessed 26 January 2024]

Table 2. Distribution of Filipinos in Alberta by Place and Gender, 2021 Census

Place in Alberta	Total	Male	Female
Airdrie	2,745	1,195	1,550
Banff	600	305	290
Brooks	1,960	1,065	895
Calgary	89,055	40,795	48,260
Camrose	910	445	460
Canmore	555	260	290
Edmonton	80,760	36,980	43,785
Fort McMurray-Cold Lake Region	7,080	3,160	3,920
Fort McMurray	5,815	2,615	3,205
Grande Prairie	4,370	1,875	2,495
High River	1,485	760	725
Hinton	655	320	355
Jasper	275	135	140
Lacombe	625	285	335
Lethbridge	2,400	1,090	1,305
Lloydminster (Alberta part)	1,100	540	560
Medicine Hat	1,165	560	605
Okotoks	835	380	450
Red Deer	8,130	3,762	4,365
Strathmore	430	215	215

Sylvan Lake	325	160	165
Wetaskiwin	960	490	470
Wood Buffalo	5,940	2,670	3,270
Total	216,710	99,540	117,170

Source: Compendium of statistics based on the 2021 Census provided by the Philippine Consulate General
Calgary, 11 January 2024.

Of the two metropolitan cities in Alberta, (i.e., Calgary and Edmonton), Calgary had the biggest percentage increase in Filipino migration from 2011 (52,645) to 2016 (70,660), or 34% compared to Toronto, Vancouver, Winnipeg, Montreal, and Ottawa-Gatineau.²⁵ In 2016, Filipino females numbered 41,200 compared to 33,820 Filipino males in Calgary; 35,145 females compared to 29,125 males in Edmonton.²⁶ Again, the same pattern of highly gendered migration provincially among Filipinos.

Based on the place distribution of Filipinos in Alberta in the 2021 Census, the two metropolitan cities received 78% of the total Filipino population. The remainder was distributed to smaller cities and towns. However, except for Red Deer, the distribution does not correspond with the size of cities or locations. For example, Lethbridge is the fourth largest city in Alberta with a population of 109,628 in 2024²⁷ but it is placed seventh with the greatest number of Filipinos, or 2,400 people (see Table 2).

Filipinos have been considered ‘new’ immigrants since the 1960s, and it’s unsure who was the first Filipino to have settled permanently in Alberta. Those noted by *CBC News* included Aurora Dacanay who arrived as a teacher in Taber in 1965, Clem Tigley who arrived in Calgary as an engineer in 1968, and Amanda Toledo who arrived as a nurse in Edmonton in 1969.²⁸ In the hamlet of Lac La Biche located between Edmonton and Fort McMurray, the first Filipinos who arrived in early 1965 were nurses, and among them was Amelio Enojo who arrived in

²⁵ Embassy of the Philippines, Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ World Population Review, “Cities in Alberta 2024”, <https://worldpopulationreview.com/canadian-provinces/alberta/cities> [accessed 27 January 2024].

²⁸ Danielle Nerman, “They’d Drive Hours in a Storm to Meet Every New Arrival: Stories from Alberta’s First Filipino Immigrants”, *CBC News*, March 6, 2021, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/first-filipino-alberta-pioneers> [accessed 27 January 2024].

December.²⁹ I also met Filipino pioneers in different communities in Southern Alberta in the course of various research projects. Recording names and dates of arrivals of Filipinos in a digital database is the aim of the Philippine Arts Council led by its founding president, Ida Beltran-Lucila.³⁰ This book also attempts to record the stories of the migration of Filipinos in Alberta using a blended approach of personal narratives and case studies.

Collecting Stories

On June 5, 2020, the Philippine Consulate General (PCG) in Calgary, through the leadership of Consul General Zaldy Patron, issued a public call “Make Your Story, Our Community’s Story” (see Appendix). This call was distributed by email, social media, and public fora to “invite Filipino community organizations and long-time Filipino immigrants in Alberta...document the lives, achievements, and challenges of Filipinos in Alberta”. During Phase 1 of data gathering, from August to October 2020, PCG collected 76 contributions composed of 69 individual stories and 7 Filipino community organizations. By the end of 2020, there were a total of 91 submissions. Each of these submissions has completed consent forms in the PCG repository.

The aim of collecting the stories is to give voice to lived experiences of migration and to value the human connectedness of settlement in the western prairies. Migration evokes personal journeys of trials and triumphs, of the often difficult paths of living in hostile physical environments, social constraints, and discrimination. Each story is unique and important in understanding the following questions raised:

²⁹ Tricia Lo, “How Filipino Heritage Thrives in a Small Alberta Town”, *CBC News*, May 12, 2021, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/lac-la-biche-filipino-community-1.6024022> [accessed 27 January 2024].

³⁰ Nerman, *Ibid*.

For Individuals:

1. Why did you migrate to Alberta? When did you arrive in Alberta?
2. How will you describe your migration to Alberta?
3. What challenges have you encountered as a Filipino in Alberta?
4. How did you overcome these challenges?
5. What would you consider as your major professional achievements and community undertakings (if any) in Alberta?

For Community Organizations:

1. What motivated your group to establish a Filipino organization in your community? When was your group established?
2. What is the main objective of your group?
3. What types of activities do you organize and sponsor on a regular basis?
4. Do you consider these activities relevant to the Filipino community? Why?
5. What is the impact of these activities to the larger Canadian community?

The rich collection of narratives on the challenges and accomplishments of Filipinos in Alberta is included in the following sections. What it does is present the tapestry of personal resolve to overcome the challenges of migration in the province. This book is geared towards a public audience and the data collected is simply presented in its raw form, as *stories*.

Section 2 of Part One by Miguel Patron uses selected responses on the reasons for migrating to Canada and weaves through a personal and collective reflection of shared experiences. These responses reflect similar reasons for leaving the Philippines or from a third country in search of a better future. This is further complemented by Section 5 which highlights selected profiles of Filipino stories of migration in Alberta using the same compiled narrative data. Rey Rosales in Section 3 provides a portrait of a Filipino family in Alberta. Kelsey Delamarter uses her mother's story of survival in Section 4.

Part two presents the Filipino community organizations that submitted data about their history, objectives, and activities. Section 6 is an overview of Filipino organizations in Alberta by Victorio Dimagiba, Jr. Section 7 by Roxanna Balbido Epe outlines a summary compilation of the activities and relevance of Filipino community organizations. Each of the eight organizations

that responded reflects the dynamism and care of Filipinos for Filipinos, and many of these activities tend to be open to non-Filipinos, too. Section 8 highlights the project of the Philippine Arts Council.

Part Three shows sample case studies of Filipinos in Alberta based on research projects by Filipino scholars and their colleagues. Christa Sato in Section 9 discusses the internalized narratives of family adversity among Filipino male youth who completed a university education. Section 10 by Mischa Taylor and Carla Hilario examines the mental health of Filipino youth in Alberta. Joe Espina, Lauren Migrino, Christa Sato, David Este, and Alan McLuckie explore the engagement of Filipino men to promote mental health in Section 11. In Section 12, Ilyan Ferrer, Sherissa Celis, and Rochelle Deloria focus on older members of the Filipino/a/x diaspora in Calgary. These studies exemplify the issues and concerns affecting Filipinos in Alberta that we recognize and are obliged to pursue.

Collecting stories came at the time of the COVID-19 pandemic which brought uncharted paths in living in Alberta and affected transnational connections with families in the Philippines and elsewhere. This is another dimension of experiences of migration in Canada where a global pandemic disrupted usual norms, habits, and expectations. But even during this most difficult time of loss of income, physical and social isolation, and anti-Asian hate, among others, many Filipinos in Alberta provided the backbone of essential industries and services in Canadian society. I argue that Filipinos during the pandemic have etched a mark in the Alberta public, indirectly with the Canadian public, of their contributions without which nothing will be the same as they expect them to be.

Factors Shaping Migration Decisions

The paramount reasons why Canada is a popular destination country among Filipinos include economic opportunities, quality of life, political climate, safety and security, multiculturalism, welcoming immigration policy, and the presence of strong Filipino communities.³¹ Moving to Alberta is generally based on factors related to economic, political, educational, and family reunification. Filipinos reside in metropolitan centres, small cities, and hamlets throughout the province and are visible workers in fast food chains, groceries, and hotels.

³¹ Jake Aguilar, “Why Canada is a Popular Destination among Filipino Immigrants?”, March 31, 2023, <https://filipinolawyer.ca/why-canada-is-a-popular-destination-among-filipino-immigrants/> [accessed 27 January 2024].

Family togetherness is important to Filipinos. Mary Ann Roque recalled their arrival in Edmonton in May 1967 when she was six years old. Her father was hired as a teacher. Maria Suarez migrated to Ontario in 1973 but joined her husband in Calgary four years after her husband found a job. Orlando Argota from Calgary arrived in 1986 and was sponsored by his wife. Eugene Sicat migrated directly from Doha, Qatar to reunite with his wife and in-laws in 1992. An anonymous Filipino respondent arrived in Alberta in 1994 to be reunited with the mother and a sibling. Victoria Valencia was also sponsored by her daughter in 1999 after a few visits to take care of her grandchildren. Carmelita Fuentes decided to move to Alberta from Winnipeg in 2005 to join her sisters, brothers, and extended family upon her retirement. Similarly, Ramon Balagat was sponsored by his daughter and arrived in Calgary in September 2009. In 2013, Ethel Go Fiss and Lorelyn Villarosa Haustein arrived in Canada to join their husbands. Their reasons for migration to Alberta demonstrate that family reunification is a primary goal to realize aspirations in life.

Job placements, relocations, and economic opportunities are fundamental to seeking prosperity. Sherry de Guzman arrived in Canada as a temporary foreign worker for a popular coffee and donut shop. Juliet Aquino found work in Alberta's healthcare sector in 2007. Dr. Christopher Mateo moved to Lethbridge in 2010 when his role was changed to General Manager of the Northwest Region of Standard Nutrition Canada. In Stettler, a county of over 5,000 people, Rodelio Abogado arrived in December 2013 with a "good job offer". Romeo Honorio said it all in 1991, "for milk and honey".

Alberta continues to attract Filipinos into its oil and gas industries, manufacturing, agriculture, and more. With a tendency to use chain migration, many Filipinos refer former co-workers in the Philippines, family, and friends to their employers in Alberta. This is the case of Jovelita Gacelos who was hired as a food counter attendant in 2007 with the assistance of her husband's cousin and, according to her, "opened the opportunity for us to come here". There were 16 Filipinos on the same flight with her to Canada from the same hiring agency.

Education offers paths to opportunities. Nitz Mano migrated to "seek more opportunities and enhance [...] education" in 2012. Albert Remus Rosana arrived in Edmonton in 2010 to pursue graduate studies in microbiology and biotechnology (master's degree 2013) and marine microbiology and medicinal chemistry (PhD, 2017). The Philippine Consulate General in Calgary was instrumental in concluding the Collaborative Agreement on the Graduate Scholarship Program Between the Department of Science and Technology – Science and Education Institute

(DOST-SEI) and the University of Alberta (UAlberta) in 2019 which “allow[s] DOST scholars in thesis-based doctoral and master’s programs to study and conduct research at UAlberta”.³²

Migration of Filipinos, like any other immigrant group, is shaped by an interplay of different factors. Assessment of how these factors shape migration destinations is dependent, for example, on resources and priorities. Sometimes the reason for migration is simply the beginning and then Filipinos embark on the challenges of settlement and integration.

Challenges as Filipinos in Alberta

Leaving one’s country of birth is not easy. This entails a journey full of challenges that test the human spirit. Living far from loved ones sets a transnational link of *balikbayan* (literally, returning home) boxes, remittances, Facebook, and other social media platforms to connect with those left behind. Learning to adapt to a culture takes time, and knowing one’s place in it is far more daunting. Filipinos in Alberta face different types of challenges in settlement and integration into Canadian society.

The Filipino stories collected in 2020 reveal two themes of challenges about their migration to Alberta: settlement and integration. Settlement refers to challenges upon arrival to a new country or community. Integration is the “process by which migrants become accepted into society, both as individuals and as groups”.³³ These challenges occur either short-term or long-term depending on individual and community contexts, which appear fluid among Filipinos. Notable challenges include the weather, transportation, lifestyle change, loneliness, lack of Canadian experience for seeking a first job, racism and discrimination, language barrier, foreign education accreditation, limited community support, the impact of immigration policies, and stereotypes. These challenges remain at the crux of their migration to a white-settler society like Canada.

Examples of challenges encountered by Filipinos in Alberta who submitted their stories are discussed below.

Weather. A common experience among Filipinos in Alberta is the cold weather. Rodelio Abogado reflected that “we are used to a warm tropical climate”. A sentiment shared by Manuel Corrales, “everyone from the tropics would find some degree of challenge with the arctic

³² Philippine Consulate General-Calgary, “PCG Calgary Connects DOST and UAlberta; Scholarship Agreement Signed”, April 5, 2019, <https://philcongencalgary.org/press/250> [accessed 27 January 2024].

³³ Migration Data Portal, “Migrant Integration”. Last updated September 24, 2020, <https://www.migrationdataportal.org/themes/migrant-integration> [accessed 27 January 2024].

climate”. Emma Duque Villanueva remembered her first reaction: “shivered uncomfortably from the unwelcome advent of our first winter!” The long months of winter are difficult to bear which, according to Carlos Soriano, is “cold and biting”. Michelle Lucena-Abesamis points out that the “temperature ranges were between -10C and -30C”. Albert Rosana considers the “cold climate” as a major challenge. And, Evangeline Ylade sums it up: “it took me a while to get used to the weather, and the environment where we lived[...]”. Ting Elger counters this by “just wearing the right clothing”.

Transportation. Alberta is heavily reliant on private transportation outside the metropolitan centres of Calgary and Edmonton. Public buses in small cities and towns tend to run at longer intervals and with limited routes. Michelle Lucena-Abesamis first noted that “we had to walk two and a half kilometers in mostly knee-deep snow roads to our workplace each day as there are no bus services [...]”. Prescila Atienza said, “I travel a lot because I was an on-call employee. It was hard to drive through the night and take the snowstorms into consideration as well”. In the Philippines, different types of public utility vehicles ply routes for one’s convenience at a cost. Carmelita Fuentes, “learning the city” when they moved to Calgary was a challenge.

Lifestyle Change. Filipinos belong to a class-based society in the Philippines. Those in the middle and upper echelon of the social hierarchy and with stable incomes can afford domestic help to manage the household. Carlos Soriano admits that his wife Rosemarie had “a major adjustment” in caring for four boys “without extended family or hired help” upon arrival in Alberta. Virginia Tang shares that “I had to learn how to manage a household [...] there were no housemaids and chauffeurs. No family members that did the cooking, etc”. Lucy Reyes alternates work shifts with her husband “to reduce the need for a babysitter”. Similarly, Ida Beltran Lucila remembers that “we worked odd hours to ensure that there will always be a parent with [a young son] at home”.

In different contexts, lifestyle change also meant adjusting to the culture. Ramon Balagat affirms that “our culture as a Filipino is different from Canadians”. Cultural change is a reality for Romeo Honorio and Renato Barnachea in a “fast-paced environment”. Leny de la Cruz remarks that “raising Filipino kids in Canadian society” seems to be the only challenge when “going out with friends and coming home late”. Mary Ann Roque grew up in Alberta and as “an adult, one of the challenges was finding a balance between the very traditional Filipino culture, values, codes of conduct, rigidity and parenting styles [...] to that of the western world and its influences”. For Malou Gonzales, lifestyle change means “we have to learn everything all by ourselves for us to survive (drive, ride the bike)”. Dr. Barry Alvarez considers “cultural immersion to Canadian

society” as one challenge among Filipinos. And, Purificacion Romansanta concludes that “[l]earning and adopting the lifestyle in a western modality, the different foods, other traditions and laws”.

Loneliness. The nuclear family model in Canada is distinct from the extended kinship system in the Philippines. Filipinos are socially connected by familial bonds and associative relations that define a collectivist culture. Migration changes these dynamics and feelings of loneliness and isolation set in. In areas with fewer Filipinos, the social isolation impacts well-being. Marjorie Newman remarks that “it was a struggle moving to a new country without knowing anyone in the province”. Domingo Fuentes remarks, “I wasn’t able to meet more Filipinos here”. Maria Suarez considers “lacking Filipinos in the community” as a challenge. Nitz Mano ranks homesickness as the foremost challenge after being separated for the first time from family in the Philippines. Aurora Dacanay has “[c]reeping pangs of loneliness when alone, pining for family in the Philippines and longing for Filipino foods [...]”. Albert Rosana also points to the “limited community support” in dealing with the challenges of migration. Giselle General claims that “not having a reference point, such as elders or mentors became a challenge” in “navigating all these new experiences by myself”. Virginia Tang admits that “[t]he loneliness brought about by the separation from family and friends in the Philippines was one the challenges” of migration. For Ting Elger, “[i]t took me awhile to cultivate friendships here”. Jun Martin was reunited with his wife and youngest son two years after migrating to Alberta but “the happiness [...] was not complete for my oldest son [...] was not allowed to join us because of his gap in his studies and was over age then”. Many Filipinos, in the words of Linda Helwig, are “wishing to be near family”.

Lack of Canadian Experience. Newcomers to Canada face this barrier in seeking their first employment. This systemic impediment results in different economic challenges for many Filipinos to sustain their basic needs upon arrival to the country. Jocelyn Serbout states, “the third manager who interviewed me was honest enough to tell me that new immigrants like me will likely ‘not get a full-time job’ because of the lack of Canadian experience”. She adds, “how will I get the Canadian experience when no one is hiring me?” Estrella de los Reyes shares her experience that “I have been turned down because of lack of Canadian experience”. Bayani Alcantara “started working in fast foods to get Canadian working experience”. Ting Elger notes, “I must have applied for hundreds of jobs...that my education and experience will be considered without a Canadian work experience”. Wilfredo de Vera reflects that “it was impossible to apply

for an engineering job without Canadian work experience and appropriate professional accreditation”.

Foreign Education Accreditation. Like many immigrants and newcomers to Canada, foreign education is often not recognized. Following Wilfredo De Vera's story, “I graduated high school in 1979 when the Philippine elementary and secondary education cycle was only 10 years.” This means that Wilfredo “falls short of two years compared with the K-12 cycle in Canada”. Susan Hernando also notes that “as Philippines did not have grades 11 and 12 when I went to school, my education was not enough”. Susan Palanca confirms that “one of the challenges that most immigrants encounter like us, is the need to upgrade our education”. Malou Gonzales contends that “we cannot practice our chosen profession here unless we study all over again”. Carlos Soriano “can only get junior work positions as his credentials are not fully recognized in Canada”. The same goes for Benito Atienza whose main challenge “was having to go back to school and study again” when his mechanical engineering degree from the Philippines and work experiences in the Middle East were not recognized. With the same experience in the Middle East, Eugene Sicat's “array of years of experience [...] was overlooked”. Bayani Alcantara was advised to “study furthermore to get ...credentials at par with the Canadian system”. Deciding to upgrade one's qualifications is not easy for those with families and the requirements where to pursue them. Adelina de la Cruz was advised “to upgrade at the University of Alberta” and, according to her, “life was hard then as I attended university during the day, raised two children and worked in the evenings to make ends meet”. Bayani Alcantara says it all about the disconnect between the application to immigrate under the points system and the labour market: utterly “surprised” since “the credentials I brought was part of the process to be a landed immigrant was not acceptable to the system”.

Language Barriers. The Philippines uses English as one of its official languages and is “recognized globally as one of the largest English-speaking nations with majority of its population having at least some degree of fluency”.³⁴ English is one of the two official languages in Canada. Due to the facility of English communications, Filipinos can navigate social systems when they arrive in Canada and are considered ready for the job market. But the language barrier remains a challenge. Emma Duque Villanueva recalls her first roll call of attendance when “no one was responding [...] everyone was quiet with a blank stare and surprised expression”. She

³⁴ Mike Cabigon, “State of English in the Philippines: Should We Be Concerned?”, British Council Philippines, November 2015, <https://www.britishcouncil.ph/teach/state-english-philippines-should-we-be-concerned-2> [accessed 27 January 2024].

said that being “not used to the Canadian nasal sounds and colloquial accents [...] must have uttered their names in a strange manner! I excelled in my English speech course before coming to Canada!” Lydia Tenebro confides that “there was a feeling of estrangement because I understood the language [...] the accent is a bit of a challenge because there are some words that are not pronounced”. Sheila Marie Codinera considers “the biggest challenge was adjusting to a culture where English is the first language” and “struggled communicating [...] as the only Filipino at work and was never in any other country than Canada”. Similarly, Sherry de Guzman notes that “[w]e all know that English is not our first language. It was also my first time to work in [another]country so I struggled in the beginning”. Susan Hernando said, “although I consider myself as educated, English is still a second language to me; my accent is strong”. Interestingly, Lolit Shiels finds the “biggest challenge she had to face was with other fellow Filipinos due to her having a different accent”.

Impact of Immigration Policies. The type of immigration policy that allows entry into Canada impacts the settlement and integration of many Filipinos in Alberta. Landed immigrants with permanent residency upon arrival in Canada would have different benefits and access to services compared to those granted temporary work visas as foreign workers. For temporary foreign workers like Jovelita Gacelos, “it took seven years before [...] finally reunited because of the changes in the immigration policies”. Under the Live-in Caregiver Program, Liza Bernardino “was stuck with the same employer until [...] eligible to apply for the open work permit”. Work permits are issued to a single employer akin to a form of bondage, and securing another work permit is long and arduous. Michelle Lucena-Abesamis considers the “compliance to the constantly changing immigration policies and the time it takes legal status is obtained after the previous permit expires”. She further states that “it was particularly difficult to be counting [...] days until the minimum eligibility requirement is met and then, the system resets to a different eligibility requirement”. Immigration-related policies in Canada shift according to political tides at the provincial and federal levels. The prevailing anxiety among Filipinos with temporary work permits, according to Linda Helwig, is “being sent home”.

Racism and Discrimination. Racism can be subtle or direct including microaggressions that occur in personal, work, and social interactions. Dr. Christopher Mateo comments that “[e]very so often, racial profiling comes-up [...] most non-Filipino people that my wife and I encounter are somewhat surprised when we tell them what we do for a living or what we have accomplished academically”. This means, Dr. Christopher Mateo adds, that “would give you a perspective of other people’s perception of what Filipinos normally do for work, as well as educational

opportunities.” But in “the last 10 years or so of being in Lethbridge, my family and I have only experienced one personal racially challenged incident that involved fast food chain employee in town”. For Karen Lechonsito-Moore, walking home from volunteering in Red Deer she encountered a “driver in a pick -up truck slowed, rolled down his front passenger window, then yelled, “Go back to your f***g country you b***!” She went back to her “workplace in tears”. Other derogatory remarks she hears include “gold digger”, “white husband hunting”, or “stupid foreign worker”.

Stereotypes based on skin colour, origin country, among others, construct attitudes that are generalized across a certain group. For Susan Hernando, “Filipinos are known as fast food workers and caregivers which is not a bad thing but people assume that all of us work in the same industry”. Jocely Serbout notes that “even in the Middle East and Dubai, Filipinos are known to be good and hard workers” and doing so encountered office bullying in Canada because of the speed in which she performed. According to a co-worker, “Evelyn, you make us all look bad”. Ben Isidro observes that “promotion was not very good for coloured people” like Filipinos. Sherissa Celis claims that when she “attend a meeting with the mainstream, I feel like I am a second-class citizen and that my opinion has no value”. This makes her “keep quiet”. For Ricardo Macabeo, there were “some big fights between Filipinos and Indians during our time at City Rail [...] they were envious [...] because at that time Filipinos were always on the top because we speak and understand the English language very well”. For Albert Rosana, racism is a challenge and said that “I was told twice by my students if it is possible to have ‘white’ professor”.

Filipinos also experience discrimination from fellow Filipinos. Pepe Siapno observes that “some others try to make you look bad” with “discouraging words [...] people want to pull you down”. Sherissa Celis notes that “even from Filipinos, there is this discrimination” [...] Crab mentality among Filipinos is very strong” which became prominent when she campaigned for a public office; “Filipinos wouldn’t throw their support to a fellow Filipino”.

These narratives from Filipino respondents in Alberta about their challenges of migration are not exhaustive. They remain present even after many years of settlement in the province and have made them stronger as a person and as a community.

Overcoming Challenges

Negotiating challenges of migration no doubt comes from the indomitable spirit to succeed in Canada. This is unique to each individual and differs in time and form of adjustments. Filipino respondents have shared many ways in which they overcame/overcoming the challenges of their migration to Alberta. According to Mary Ann Roque, “I don’t see this as overcoming the

challenges but as an evolving work in progress, something one gets better at doing as greater understanding comes along”.

This section provides sample stories that cover the following themes in overcoming challenges: personal values, faith, education, and community.

Personal Values. Filipinos are socialized in a culture that values, for example, respect towards elders and authority, a sense of *kapwa* or “connectedness with one another”³⁵, *hiya* (shame) which can mean “embarrassment” or “sacrificial self-control of one’s individual wants for the sake of other people” (virtue).³⁶ These are evident in how Filipinos in Alberta overcome their challenges or face the hurdles of settlement and integration. Filipinos migrate to Canada with a foremost understanding of securing a better life and navigating with an attitude of respect for unfamiliar systems towards employers, co-workers, and others. Fostering harmony and goodwill is important to being part of the workplace and society. And, more importantly, to sacrifice personal comfort to secure the future of their families in Canada. Bayani Alcantara points out that “the primary reason we migrated to Alberta is to give my family a good living and good education for my children. By focusing on this, I accepted all challenges and slowly build our dreams”. Ramon Balagat’s practical mindset avers that, “I had to be brave enough to face these challenges because if I go back to the Philippines my life would be the same”.

Narratives demonstrating the use of personal values and beliefs to overcome the challenges of migration in Alberta are rich in the collected data. Romeo Honorio and Renato Barnachea adhere to patience, persistence, resilience, and an open mind to learn and adapt to the Canadian system. Fely Cutaran states that “moving to a new country always requires adjustment [...] always reminded myself to keep an open mind, learn to always adapt to changes so my life journey here will be easy”. Eugene Sicat reflects that “I overcame the challenges through perseverance, persistence, and determination [...] when it appeared that there was no hope, I remained hopeful, positive, and optimistic. Fortuitously, it paid off eventually”. Giselle General notes that, “I overcame many of these challenges by being proactive, eager to learn and approaching things with curiosity”.

³⁵ Agnes Constante, “How ‘Hiya,’ ‘Kapwa’ and Other Cultural Values Play a Role in Filipino American Mental Health”, *Los Angeles Times*, March 17, 2022, <https://www.latimes.com/lifestyle/story/2022-03-17/how-hiya-kapwa-and-other-cultural-values-play-a-role-in-filipino-american-mental-health> [accessed 27 January 2024].

³⁶ Jeremiah Lasquety-Reyes, “In Defense of Hiya as a Filipino Virtue”, *Asian Philosophy* 26(1) (2016): 66-78. DOI: 10.1080/09552367.2015.1136203.

Personal values help Filipinos overcome the dynamics of “othering”, meaning “not fitting within the norms of social group”³⁷ or the dominant group in the workplace. Sherissa Celis learns, “I managed to [...] rise to the occasion [...] gained confidence”. Evelyn Serbout said, “I overcame the challenges [...] bullying and racism, by educating myself and understanding other’s values, traditions, and work styles”. Leny de la Cruz comments, “I learned to adapt to cultural differences”. Purificacion Romansanta remarks, “being able to work in an environment around other ethnicities helped [...] learn more of their culture, their traditions. [...] build her confidence with the language barrier”. Susan Hernando admits, “I tried my best to get better with my English by reading and observing how things are said in movies/television. I learned to accept that my accent will be part of me”. Lydia Siapno advises, “just try to be patient and try your best to get along with your officemates or the people around you”. Lolit Shiels notes, “[g]rowing up with a bigger family, I was able to be resilient and have a good understanding of different personalities”. Connie Penny forewarns, “in case I get to encounter one, I’ll just be patient and keep my cool”. Similarly, Celestino Baustista said, “mantra is to simply go along with the flow”.

Deskilling and deprofessionalization because of non-recognition of foreign-obtained credentials affect Filipinos upon arrival in Alberta. But they can overcome such constraints by using personal values. Adelina de la Cruz states, “we worked wherever there was work”. Avelina Celis admits, amusingly, that “[e]very time I would feel tired from work, I would always convert what I learned in peso. It made me happy knowing that my hard work really paid off well”. Avelina Celis comments, “it’s just the work itself, but as someone who grew up in a poor family, I am used to hard work. I believed that nothing is easy”. Susan Palanca comments, “It is also very important to be humble and do things the Canadian way”.

Personal values seem prominent in dealing with the challenges in society and the hostile environment. Dr. Christopher Mateo offers advice, “The key to dealing with racists or racial profiling is not to tolerate them, call them out, and face them head-on in a civil manner”. Prescila Atienza remarks, “All my achievements in the Philippines convinced me that I can conquer my new life in Alberta”. Victoria Valencia comments, “I am a very positive person. I always try to look at the positive side of life that’s why I overcome anything right away”. In terms of cross-cultural relations, Ting Elger notes, “tremendously blessed to have both ‘worlds’—exposed to the Canadian way of life through my husband incorporating my inherent Filipino culture and not to completely abandon it”. In terms of the weather, Sherry de Guzman admits, “We cannot do anything but accept the fact. I’m just prepared when the cold season comes. We chose to immigrate here so we need to embrace everything [...] language, weatherweather, and their

³⁷ Kendra Cherry, “How Othering Contributes to Discrimination and Prejudice”, *verywell mind*, May 1, 2023, <https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-othering-5084425> [accessed 28 January 2024].

culture”. For Ricardo Macabeo, “It’s important to have patience. Moving to a different country is not easy [...] I am already here, I just have to make the best of what I have [...] it doesn’t make sense if you just quit when things get hard”.

Faith. Faith is a factor in Filipino resilience. In the Philippines, 78.8% of the household population are Roman Catholics, 6.4% are Muslims, and 2.6% are members of Iglesia ni Cristo, and the rest are from other denominational groups and local faith traditions.³⁸ Murmurray Vila said, “I love to go to church”. Faith is personal and has different interpretations of how it helped Filipinos endure the difficulties of migrating to a new country. Manuel Corrales is convinced that his wife’s “deep and inspiring Catholic faith has slowly brought [realization] the depth and breadth of [their] good fortune [...] fully cognizant of the divine providence at work”. Lorelyn Haustein comments, “through prayers, my family in the Philippines they were my inspirations and have faith in myself to overcome my obstacles”. Michelle Lucena-Abesamis declares, “I did not lose faith that things will work out in the end”. Prescila Atienza realizes “the true meaning of sacrifice” from doing a different type of work and persists. Pepe Siapno declares, “My advice to you is that be good with God and he will give you his blessings”. Indeed, Rodelio Abogado affirms, “with God’s blessings, I passed my exam and got my Qualification Certificate 3 three months after I came here”.

Education. This is an important aspiration among Filipinos. Education is a factor of social mobility and success. In Canada, immigrants from the Philippines have high levels of overqualification because of degrees obtained from the Philippines³⁹ but are not recognized. Pursuing recognition of prior degrees is a challenge that many Filipinos do not have the resources to achieve in Canada. Yet, for many, further education in Canada seems to be the only option to work in a similar profession they had in the Philippines or a new career path. Lydia Tenebro remarks that to “overcome these challenges [...] I decided to upgrade my education, work part-time odd jobs during the day”. Estrella de los Reyes notes, “opted to go back to a trade school [...] that will give me the edge to obtain Canadian learning experiences”. Virginia Tang comments, “to move up professionally, I went back to school and graduated from the University

³⁸ Philippine Statistics Authority, “Religious Affiliation in the Philippines (2020 Census of Population and Housing”, February 22, 2023, <https://psa.gov.ph/content/religious-affiliation-philippines-2020-census-population-and-housing> [28 January 2024].

³⁹ Statistics Canada, “A Portrait of Educational Attainment and Occupational Outcomes among Racialized Populations 2021”, January 18, 2023, <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/as-sa/98-200-X/2021011/98-200-X2021011-eng.cfm> [accessed 28 January 2024].

of Alberta with a Bachelor of Education degree”. Similarly, Emma Duque Villanueva said, “[I] pursued the required Alberta Bachelor’s degree for [...] professional permanent teaching license [...] continuously registered in a number of post-grad courses [...] after my daily hectic school teaching [...]” In addition, Lucy Reyes “applied for graduate studies in nursing at the university on a part timepart-time basis as part of a trial for working students like her, and graduated with a Masters in Nursing in 1991 while working full time”. Dr. Barry Alvarez writes, “[I] attended ESL classes offered by the public library in Coaldale [...] attended Bredin Institute in Calgary for foreign-trained veterinary program”. For Jun Martin, “[I] studied electrical course online [and] I excelled in my performance and promoted to Line Lead”. An anonymous respondent reported that she “overcame these challenges by continuing her education, which in return helped her to be more socially active in the community”.

Community. Filipinos are part of a collectivist culture that puts primacy on one’s place in a social unit. Filipino collectivism is demonstrated by a sense of *kapwa* or “the unity of self and others; it does not recognize the self as separate from others”.⁴⁰ The sense of community in one’s family and seeking community among Filipinos, or with others, are important demonstrations of Filipino collectivism. For Carlos Soriano, this means to “relinquish his part-time work to care for the kids at home. Help from the ex-Meralco Filipino community, the evangelical church communities of the Filipino Christian Fellowship and First Baptist Church of Calgary would come alongside [...] to provide meals, childcare and domestic assistance”. Karen Lechonsito-Moore said, “I was always in touch with my parents, talking to them and being honest with them regarding my experiences. Their thoughts and advice helped me broaden my perspective. Going out of my shell, volunteering with C.A.R.E. and knowing the plight of other people from other countries grounded my emotions and mental reactions”. Adelina de la Cruz acknowledges, “[t]he challenges were made easier with the support of many pioneer Filipinos that we met who were also in similar situations. The Filipino community was very close-knit and we had many close friends”. Similarly, Sheila Marie Codinera remarks, “my husband and I have found friends in the community who have helped us in **do** many ways particularly adjusting to this new culture”. Ting Elger admits, “church and community also opened up some good friendships that are present in my life until today”. Marjorie Newman confides, “I made the decision to be part of a community and to get involved. I was very much involved in public service back home. I volunteered at church first, then I started looking for Filipino associations or organizations”. Dr. Christopher Mateo notes, “Local networking with fellow Filipinos and/or having a group of close Filipino friends really helped during our adjustment period and is

⁴⁰ William B. Gudykunst, *Asian American Ethnicity and Communication* (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2001), 24.

probably the best support group to overcoming these challenges from my experience”. Cora Cordero recognizes, “Given the support of the Canadian government to immigrants and the friends I have, my stay in Canada was smooth sailing”.

Achievements of Filipinos in Alberta

Achievements are personal milestones in life amidst the challenges of living in a new country; starting anew and venturing into uncharted paths have led many Filipinos to celebrate and feel proud of their contributions to personal growth, their profession, business, and the community. In this section, these areas of achievement are prominent in the selected stories collected among the respondents in Alberta.

Personal Growth. Learning is a lifelong exercise that allows individuals to pursue what they consider best for personal fulfillment. Eugene Sicat said, “for my own professional development, I joined Toastmasters in 2004 to polish and maintain competency in leadership and communication [...] for my physical fitness, I joined Wing Chun Kungfu Academy in 2001 [...] I also volunteered with the annual Calgary Expo to practice tactics and techniques in escorting celebrities to preserve life and dignity [...] contributing to the welfare and enjoyment of attendees in Calgary”. Virginia Tang notes, “after retiring from teaching, I took the Immigration Practitioners Program and passed the Full Skills Exam [...] becoming a Regulated Canadian Immigration Consultant”. Joel Dizon comments, “being nominated to represent our first ASEAN Philippine National Bobsled Luge and Skeleton Association [...] responsible for coordinating their activities and training under the Alberta Bobsleigh Association in preparation for the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics”. For Bayani Alcantara, “I am not a person with great emphasis on book smart but rather street smart. I live in a way to acquire knowledge in the street schooling rather than diplomas and medals. Built and established a great restaurant business [...] and one of the founders of Filipino church in north side of Edmonton, Philippine Business Society of Alberta, and Claireview Multicultural Centre”.

In Profession. Perhaps the most widely acknowledged form of accomplishment is the practice of a profession after completing the requirements for recognition in Alberta and subsequent employment in the desired occupation. Lydia Tenebro admits, “My decision to go back to the University while attending to my six children’s age ranges from 3 to 15 years old, and then worked part-time at the same time, was indeed a fulfillment and self-rewarding. I currently worked in the oil and gas industry as a Senior Analyst Oil Accounting since I moved to Calgary in 2008. I am a member of The Public Business Accountant’s Society in Alberta and of the

Philippine Institute of CPA Calgary Chapter [...] in my workplace, I involve myself in a Diversity and Inclusion resource group that is called EDGE---Ethnically Diverse Group of Employees as the treasurer”. Prescila Atienza said, “I took a course at Calgary Family Service Bureau as a caregiver in 2003. I studied at Alberta Vocational College [...] successful completion of the program in service training for home support aid in 1993 and the completion of the lift and transfer course in 1992 [...] took a certificate of achievement for food, sanitation and hygiene [...] 1993, Daycare Centre Staff qualification certification level one orientation [...] became facilitator, and alumni member of the ethno-cultural community centre, assisting and making seniors projected programs and other initiatives. All of these are part of personal objectives and I am proud of them”.

Renato Barnachea passed and was certified as an Electrical Engineering Tech of Alberta Society of Engineering Technologist (ASET). Rodelio Abogado, “to be a Red Seal Certified Auto Body Technician in Alberta is a major professional achievement for me and my wife, when she completed and got certified with her early Childhood Learning Course followed by having her Alberta Approved Family Day Home”. Giselle General said, “proud to say that I completed my Bachelor of Commerce degree from the University of Alberta, and now working as the Volunteer and Communications Coordinator for a local nonprofit that gives free legal advice and education to the community”. Virginia Tang states, “I consider my education degree from the University of Alberta as my major professional achievement [...] enabled me to hold an Alberta Teaching Certificate. Having a Canadian degree opened doors to better employment and educational opportunities”. Susan Hernando considers, “my biggest achievement professionally is to get my CPA, CMA (Chartered Professional Accountant, Certified Management Accountant) designation and get a job in the public sector as Director of Finance”. And, Dr. Barry Alvarez remarks, “able to obtain my veterinary license in Northern America leading me to practice veterinary medicine here in Canada. After working as an associate veterinarian for nine years, I was able to open the first Filipino-owned veterinary clinic in Lethbridge, Coulee Veterinary Clinic”.

Being employed in their occupations opens opportunities for advancement. Leny de la Cruz comments, “I worked for SNC Lavalin Inc. for 25 years [...] started as a receptionist in 1995 [...] and became Executive Secretary of the whole SNC Lavalin Inc Canada”. Murmuray Vila “worked as dietary aid for Calgary General Hospital for 10 years”. Leni Atienza “worked as surgical processor for 20 years at Foothills Medical Center”. Victoria Valencia “has been a professional hairstylist for 10 years”. Celestino Bautista was “a retired employee after 33 years in CP Railway”. Romeo Honorio was the first Filipino-Calgarian Professional Agrologist (2003) and became a Commissioner of Oaths in Alberta. Marjorie Newman is “proud of being a Regulated Canadian Immigration Consultant”.

Teaching is not only a profession but a vocation that cultivates a wholistic approach to instill learning through the years. Aurora Dacanay discloses, “through 42 years of teaching career [...] nominated for Pupil Award, Pan Canadian Energy 2002 [...] In 2008, I represented the Philippine Cultural Center Foundation in consortium with Alberta Education, Edmonton Catholic School Board, Edmonton-Saranay Association and the Calgary Catholic School Board and collaboratively developed the Filipino [...] curriculum for high school as option courses for the province of Alberta”. Albert Rosana is an “award-winning teaching assistant (4 years) at the University of Alberta; lecturer at Grant MacEwan University [...] Vanier Canada Graduate Scholar, an Alexander Graham Bell Scholar, Izaak Walton Killam Laureate, and Alberta Innovates Technology Future Scholar”.

Alberta is known for its oil and gas industry and many Filipinos remain attracted to employ their skills. Orlando Argota said, “being able to work in an oil and gas company for years until I retired is what I consider my major professional achievement”. Manuel Corrales comments, “privileged to serve Alberta’s oil and gas industry in the technology space for the last 17 years. I have had the unique opportunity to render value-adding services to its entire operational value chain in five major companies [...] Possibly the only Filipino-Canadian who has had a 15-year long JD Edwards Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) consulting experience [...]”. In another sector, Wilfredo Vera admits, “working as a professional engineer in an Alberta provincial government office to be my major professional achievement and community undertaking. With this, I am proud to say that I have served Albertans and protected the environment”.

Being a lawyer and a nurse are professions that many Filipinos tend to pursue in the Philippines. To practice as one in Alberta requires rigorous qualifications. Richard Tumanon notes, “employed by the Solicitor General Office of the Province of Alberta as Clerk in the Court of Appeal of Alberta, Judicial District of Calgary [...] during my resignation (to pursue study) they organized the biggest farewell party in the Court House ever afforded to an employee [...] February 12, 1988, I was admitted to the Law Society of Alberta [...] I have the distinction of being the first Filipino lawyer to practice in Southern Alberta (Calgary) and the third Filipino lawyer in the whole province”. Lucy Reyes was “elected as Provincial Councillor (Board Member) to CARNA (College of Registered Nurses of Alberta) and achieved Vogel Award for exemplary performance to CARNA board. In 1996, selected as one of the two registered nurses to represent Alberta nurses to the Health Professional Experts panel by the Ministry of Health during Regionalization and Transformation of Healthcare in Alberta [...] [1997] appointed by the Canadian Nurses Association as part of the Clinical Ethics Health Expert Panel to review the Code of Ethics for Canadian Nurses [...] [2020] Health Quality Council of Alberta (HQCA) recipient for Patient Experience Awards for the project PERFORM (Perform Evaluation and

Rhythm Follow Up Optimization through Remote Monitoring) for Patients Living with a Cardiac Device as the Clinical Lead and overall project manager”.

Pursuing a similar passion in Alberta made Ida Lucila Beltran advocate for the promotion of Filipino arts and artists. She said, “formed our own dance company, Chameleon Dance Edmonton, which was successful for some years---with collaborations with then Citie Ballet, features in different local festivals, and an invitation for the Aberdeen International Youth Festival [...] artistic director for Edmonton Festival Ballet; program and entertainment director of the Edmonton Filipino Fiesta; choreographer for Edmonton Symphony Orchestra show; artistic director for Emma, The Musical; and board member of the Edmonton Arts Council [...] recipient of City of Edmonton Citation Award for Arts and Culture (2019); Golden Balangay Award for Excellence in Arts and Culture (2019); Edmonton Artists Trust Fund (2017); and the Hiyas Award by Karilagan Dance Society (2017). I have had a fulfilling career as an artist in the Philippines and I use my experience and passion to advocate, and raise the profile of the Filipino, and to empower, through arts and culture. And in the process, this has led me to establish the Philippine Arts Council”.

In Business. Filipinos find ways to innovate and create business opportunities to cater to a particular market. Evelyn Serbout remarks, “In 2001, we opened our own bakery [...] Serbout’s Patisserie [...] a small store front [...] and became supplier of cakes for most hotel chains in the city [...] garnered businesses of local restaurants and sports club [...] our bakery chosen to create the dessert for Queen Elizabeth of United Kingdom who came to visit in Calgary for its 100-year anniversary in 2015. My husband concocted a dessert especially for the queen only. It was Chocolate Cream Pate, an individual dessert shaped like the map of Alberta, decorated with edible wild rose, sitting in a chocolate-made fence and around it was a cowboy rope---to represent the spirit of Stampede [...]]. It was a hit!” Evelyn Serbout is also the founder/CEO of The Outreach Program, a registered, non-profit organization.

Eugene Sicat said, “I transitioned into my own IT (Information Technology) consulting company, System Specialists Corporation (SSC). I have provided IT services from database administration, programming, business analysis, project management and program management on a multitude of companies here in Canada, USA, to name a few [...]”. Sherry Guzman adds, “Being in the food industry for two decades, it didn’t come to my mind that I will become an insurance agent. Having an insurance license is really an achievement [...] I also built my own digital business”. Michelle Lucena-Abesamis comments, “became the only Filipino member of the Associated Canadian Travelers-Sherwood Park Chapter, a volunteer organization of mostly business professionals that supports community and youth development projects in the city”.

Maria Suarez notes, “first Filipino to set up clothing boutique [...] introducing Asian culture in Franklin Mall aka Pacific Mall, then moved to Deerfoot Mall”.

Furthermore, Dr. Christopher Mateo states, “my continued support for the prosperity of farmers in southern Alberta, I participated in bidding of the top three hog winners of the Pork Quality Competition during the 2019 Alberta Livestock Expo in Lethbridge [...] all proceeds [...] went to the Ronald McDonald House of Charities of Alberta (RMH). As Sollio Agriculture’s representative and the highest bidder for all three hogs, I was proud to present a \$22,450 check to the RMH on behalf of our company”. Became co-owner and managing partner of Standard Nutrition Canada, Co. for a few years [...] promoted to General Manager, Northwest Region and to Senior Director, Innovation Livestock Production for Canada. Elected to the National Board of Directors and Executive Committee of the Animal Nutrition Association of Canada (ANAC); elected to the Board of Directors of Cooperative Research Farms (CRF), an international research partnership [...]”.

In the Community. Contributing to the community provides immense fulfillment to many Filipinos. These are demonstrated in different ways, for example, from representing Filipino community organizations to developing initiatives that support the welfare of others. Jun Martin comments, “elected as president of Filipino Airdrie Association [...] strived more effort in volunteering and managing all events [...] because of my volunteerism, I am nominated to an award by Eaton Company and have won twice [...] so-called Stover Award all over Canada”. Ben Isidro has served as president of the Golden Generation Seniors Association Club of Calgary since 2010. Ricardo Macabeo was president of the Calgary Senior Society for five years. Celestino Bautista served as president of the Filipino Senior Citizens Association. Benito Atienza has been president of the Filipino Catholic Society. Mary Ann Roque was president of the Philippine Barangay Dance Group. Orlando Argota became president of the Cavite Association of Calgary in 1990. Romeo Honorio was the founding chair of Diaryo Alberta Society in 2018, publisher and editor of Filipino-know Magazine in 1995.

Pepe Siapno said, “I’ve been president for the Philippine men’s club. I organized the Calgary Wild Rose Club [...] president for the Young Once Seniors for more than 18 years [...]. My community work ethic was recognized in Pinoy Times Magazine and Young Once Seniors Yearly Magazine. I’m successful because I have a very supportive wife”. Virginia Tang notes, “I was one of the founding presidents of the Grande Prairie & District Multicultural Association [...] served as president and adviser for the Filipino Association of Grande Prairie for several years. I currently sit on the Immigrant Advisory Table for the City of Grande Prairie”. Richard Tumanon narrates, “In 1983, I assisted in the incorporation of the first Calgary Filipino Seniors Club and

became its first adviser [...]. In early 1985, I initiated the organization of the Calgary Filipino Lions Club [...] In 1994, my wife and I were among the group of eight couples called Friends of Charity. I initiated the idea with them in the organization of the Philippine Cultural Center Foundation and was the first president. It was incorporated on March 28, 1995. I initiated in the purchase of the Philippine Cultural Center on in February 2001. In 2006, I initiated the foundation and incorporation of the Council and Assembly of Filipino Foundations and Associations (CAFFA), the umbrella society of all active Filipino organizations Calgary. I was the president of CAFFA in the initial petition to the government of the Philippines for the establishment of the Philippine Consulate General Office in Calgary. In 1998, I founded the Youth Enhancement and Scholarship Foundation (YES Foundation), an organization granting bursary and scholarship funds to university, high school, and elementary students”.

Leadership is a calling to many in the Filipino community. Sherissa Celis admits, “Working in the nonprofit sector molded me to become a community leader [...]. I am the first Filipino to run for the municipal election in Calgary and the first Filipino female in Calgary to attempt the nomination in the United Conservative Party”. Evelyn de los Reyes shares, “in 2012, a group of friends and myself formed a community non-profit organization to spearhead planning for the annual Philippine Independence Day in Alberta on a larger scale beyond just a flag-raising ceremony”. Lyda Siapno remarks, “my husband and I also volunteer at Calgary Catholic Immigrant Society [...] received an Immigrant Seniors Award in recognition of Outstanding Leadership and Service in the Community”. In a different way, Manuel Corrales has “served the province military branch in 41 Combat Engineer Regiment. I was the recipient of the Chief of Defense medal for my 13 years of service as possibly the longest-serving first-generation Filipino immigrant in the Canadian Reserve Forces”.

Volunteerism shapes Filipino migration experiences and is a source of accomplishment. Malou Gonzales said, “being a Filipino language teacher of the pilot project of the Kabisig Society of Fort Saskatchewan, a children’s liturgy teacher of our Lady of Angels Catholic Church [...] and a substitute Educational Assistant of Elk Island Public Schools are my major professional achievements and community undertakings here in Alberta”. Ting Elger mentions, “able to get my CFRE certification (Certified Fundraising Executive) and [...] help small mission groups in Cainta and Las Pinas [...] Bangkok and here in Edmonton [...] enjoy volunteering to be a Sign Language Interpreter for my church and community [...] privileged and honoured to be an Accredited Tagalog Interpreter for the Canadian Government [...] since 2005”. Susan Hernando remarks, “as a community member, God used me to help start an afternoon church that is composed of about 95% Filipino families [...]”. Lucy Reyes was the founding chair Social Justice Committee of Pastoral Care and RSVP (Stewardship) of Ascension Parish.

These areas of accomplishment do not fully capture the array of accomplishmentssignificant milestones of by Filipinos in Alberta. Many Filipinos are making strides in their own ways and proud of what they have attained so far and inspire others in pursuingto pursue better outcomes of their migration to Canada. According to Connie Genilo, “I teach [...] Filipino values and manners [...] because I want Filipinos to be looked up to”. Confronting the struggles head on and the outcomes of perseverance make the migration journey worthwhile. Avelina Celis points out, “All my children are professionals and successful [...]. I consider raising them well as my greatest achievement”.

A Future in Alberta

Alberta has an “overall tax advantage compared to other provinces, with no sales tax, no payroll tax and no health premium”.⁴¹ This is the so-called “Alberta Advantage” and the provincial government launched its own Alberta Advantage Immigration Program (AAIP) to encourage permanent residency.⁴² In the third quarter of 2023, there was a 38.3% increase in net migrants from international origin, or 39,212.⁴³ In 2022, according to Statistics Canada, Alberta “sets Canadian record for annual net interprovincial population growth”, or 56,245 people moving to the western province.⁴⁴

Alberta has the lowest tuition for international students among the four provinces including British Columbia, Ontario, and Quebec.⁴⁵ Many international Filipino students are attracted to study in Alberta colleges because of their demand for skilled workers with opportunities to get a work permit and pathway to permanent residency. In 2022, there were 4385 study permits issued to Filipino students in the province, or 1 in 5 study permits.⁴⁶ In January 2024, however, the

⁴¹ Government of Alberta, Taxes and Credits, <https://www.alberta.ca/taxes> [accessed 27 January 2024].

⁴² See <https://www.alberta.ca/alberta-advantage-immigration-program> [accessed 28 January 2024].

⁴³ Alberta Economic Dashboard, “Net Migration”, December 19, 2023, <https://economicdashboard.alberta.ca/dashboard/net-migration> [accessed 28 January 2024].

⁴⁴ Scott Strasser, “Alberta Sets Canadian Record for Annual Net Interprovincial Growth: StatCan”, *Calgary Herald*, September 27, 2023, <https://calgaryherald.com/news/local-news/alberta-interprovincial-migration-record> [accessed 28 January 2024].

⁴⁵ SAIT, “International Student Life in Calgary Compared to the Rest of Canada”, *CIC News*, March 16, 2023, <https://www.cicnews.com/2023/03/international-student-life-in-calgary-compared-to-the-rest-of-canada-0333757.html#gs.3ymp93> [accessed 27 January 2024].

⁴⁶ ApplyBoard, Ibid.

federal government announced changes and a cap on international students⁴⁷ that could impact the number of Filipinos under this category.

A future in Alberta for Filipinos looms large. The future of migration for Filipinos in Canada is still a favourable option. While there are stories of Filipinos returning to the Philippines in their retirement or setting up businesses after saving enough in Alberta, migration to the province continues. Even when the times get tough and returning home to the Philippines seems preferable, Marjorie Newman said, “Six months after, I wanted to go home I struggled adapting to a new country and re-establishing my career at my age. I told my daughter about my decision, but to my surprise, she said no. At 11 years of age, my daughter said she wanted to remain and grow up in Canada. I tried to reason with her as a mother, but I saw that in her eyes, she saw the opportunity of life she couldn’t have in the Philippines. I was left with no choice. I wanted to leave and go home, with the comfort and even my old employment still available, but my daughter would not move”. Living in Alberta means a future for children. Along the way, according to Murmuray Vila, “I have met and made so many friends”. With the formation of new social networks, adapting to a new culture and overcoming the challenges ahead is likely possible. Aiming a “good work and life balance” is, for Fely Cutaran, important and that “moving to a new country always requires adjustment”. And, for many Filipinos, Alberta is now home.

⁴⁷ Uday Rana, “Canada’s International Student Cap is Here. How Will it Work”, *Global News*, January 22, 2024 [accessed 28 January 2024].



CHAPTER 2

PERSONAL AND COLLECTIVE REFLECTIONS OF FILIPINO MIGRATION TO ALBERTA

MIGUEL PATRON

Growing up in a Filipino household, my personal experience when arriving home from school, an outing with friends, or a night of tiring basketball was always, "'Nay, 'Tay; I'm home!'. In turn, my parents would never fail to ask me how I was, who I was with, and if I'd eaten yet. Regardless of how full I may have been, they would still implore me to grab a bite while reminding me to wash my hands before I did so. This has been a consistent experience in my 22 years of life.

While this routine has been a constant in my young life, I have often had to undergo tremendous changes to many aspects of my life due to the nature of my father's work. I have lived long-term in 7 different homes, attended 9 different academic institutions, and moved countries 6 times. Each time, this constant routine remained but the people around me, the culture I had immersed myself into, and the weather that I had acclimated to shifted into something foreign that needed adapting to. What got me through these overwhelming changes was the constant presence, support, and care from my immediate family. Fortunately, I have been blessed to know the comfort of loving parents to go home to every day, siblings to confide in and hang out with, and friends who taught, reminded, and anchored me to my Filipino culture. Moreso, I have been blessed with parents who have been motivated to tackle an innumerable

amount of unseen and uncelebrated challenges while also making countless sacrifices for their children's success, joy, and comfort.

Like my parents, many of the courageous Filipino men and women who responded to the Philippine Consulate General in Calgary's "Filipino Migration in Alberta" book project have been motivated by the same goals. They seek to persevere through unseen and uncelebrated challenges while making countless sacrifices for their own and their family's success, joy, and comfort. To attain these goals, the responses seem to suggest that it is imperative to have the necessary education needed to work prosperous jobs that can financially support children and/or families living back in the Philippines. This financial achievement seems mandatory to continuously support subsequent generations.

This chapter tells the story of selected Filipino men and women who chose to migrate to the province of Alberta. It seeks to highlight the stories of those Filipinos who have struggled and persevered through numerous hardships and challenges to seize the opportunity for a better life for their families and/or themselves. In particular, the chapter focuses on the "why" of their move to a different land and the experience they had during their migration.

However, it is necessary to disclose that the Filipino narratives and assumptions made in this chapter are based on selected responses submitted to the Philippine Consulate General in Calgary. Additionally, while these responses are from individuals living throughout the entire province of Alberta, most of them have been submitted by Calgarians. As such, the presentation of this data in this chapter does not intend to depict a universal experience of motivations, hardships, and successes for Filipinos living in Alberta. Nonetheless, each narrative has a fraction of truth that can be related to by many if not all *kababayans* who have made the courageous decision of moving and persevering in a new and seemingly alien environment.

Alberta as an Opportunity to Succeed

As of 2021, there were 957,535 Filipinos in Canada.⁴⁸ More than 1/10th of them reside in Alberta or 166,200.⁴⁹ Many members of the older and younger generations have found themselves thriving in the province's healthcare sector, working as doctors, dentists, personal caretakers, and nurses. A memorandum of understanding (MOU) was signed on October 6, 2022

⁴⁸ Statistics Canada (2023) Filipino Canadian proud with a strong sense of belonging. *StatsCAN Plus*, June 19. Available at <https://www.statcan.gc.ca/o1/en/plus/3883-filipino-canadian-proud-strong-sense-belonging> [accessed 5 January 2024]

⁴⁹ Danielle Nerman (2021) They'd drive hours in a storm to meet every new arrival: stories from Alberta's first Filipino immigrants. *CBC News*, March 6. Available at <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/first-filipino-alberta-pioneers-1.5938280> [accessed 5 January 2024]

centered on the recruitment of Filipino nurses from the Philippines to Alberta.⁵⁰ It is reasonable to expect an even greater number of Filipinos in this sector. However, despite the stereotype of Filipinos being the world's universal provider of nurses and caretakers, many *kababayans* have established themselves in Alberta through their respective careers.

Being one of the thirteen provinces and territories in Canada, Alberta is one of only two landlocked provinces and is known globally for its oil and gas industry, rich agriculture, quality cuts of beef, and numerous dinosaur fossils and nature reserves. The province is also home to 9 of the 15 most frigid cities on Earth in 2021,⁵¹ averaging -5 to -15 degrees Celsius during the winter season's daytime and dropping to as low as -30 to -40 degrees during certain stretches. One could ask, why is Alberta so attractive to Filipinos? Innumerable individuals, regardless of their ethnic background, constantly complain about the unbearable winters and the hassles that come along with them. For example, the dangers of driving on icy roads for several months, the need to shovel driveways and sidewalks numerous times a day in subzero temperatures, the need to bundle up in multiple layers of clothes, resembling the Michelin man, and the constant dead car batteries and the accompanying routine of jump starting them. Compared to life in the Philippines, all this is foreign and even unheard of. The same goes for life in popular migrant destinations for Filipinos, such as Dubai, Saudi Arabia, and some parts of the U.S. Furthermore, there are distinct social and cultural differences that cause many foreigners to feel alienated and unwelcomed.

Despite these contrasts in weather and lifestyle, tens of thousands of Filipinos have still decided to migrate to Alberta in the past few years. *Edmonton's CityNews* has reported that over 47,600 Filipino immigrants moved to the province from 2016 to October of 2022.⁵² As such, this section of this chapter will focus on illustrating the reasons for Filipino migration into the province.

⁵⁰ Hannah Kost (2022) Alberta, Philippines reach agreement to recruit more nurses to the province. CBC Life News, October 6. Available at <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/alberta-philippines-nurses-recruitment-1.6608688> [accessed 5 January 2024]

⁵¹ Laine Mitchell (2021) *DH News*, December 17. Available at www.dailyhive.com

⁵² Laura Krause (2022) Largest proportion of recent immigrants in Alberta are from Philippines, India: StatCan. *Edmonton City News*, October 26. Available at <https://edmonton.citynews.ca/2022/10/26/recent-immigrants-alberta-philippines-india> [accessed 5 January 2024]

To Dictate a Future Without a Dictator

The first wave of Filipinos migrated to Canada during the 1960s and 1970s.⁵³ These individuals came in organized groups and found employment as engineers, nurses, and teachers. However, while opportunities in the Western world were appealing in and of itself, there were also domestic issues that factored into the decision for many Filipinos to leave their homeland. Primarily, in the 1970s, these issues revolved around the political, social, and economic climates brought about by the imposition of Martial Law in 1972 by President Ferdinand Marcos. While individuals and families had varying experiences during this time, some were more commonly experienced regardless of social or economic standing and regional origin. For instance, while factoring in and adjusting for inflation, the Martial Law Museum⁵⁴ has been able to showcase the general drop of wages for farmers and skilled and unskilled laborers despite the increased prices of basic goods by nearly 350%. As a result of these general conditions, many sought greener pastures elsewhere and some of those struggling to cope with the reality they were facing ended up moving to Alberta.

Carlos Soriano moved to Calgary, Alberta, in 1974 seeking those greener pastures. Ironically, when he reached the city, it was November, and he was informed by a customs and immigration officer that for the next five months he'd see little to no green but a thick blanket of white snow. Facing his first challenge, the biting cold, and having to work three jobs in fields that were unrelated to his Bachelor of Science in Architecture, Carlos found himself filled with doubt and trepidation for the new challenges that his wife and kids would have to face when they joined him. Yet, despite these concerns, he persevered to realize his hope of:

“Living in a free democratic and Christian country...”

...would be much better than the dictatorial state that he fled from the police state as [a] result of the martial law imposed by the regime of President Ferdinand Marcos...”

Several months later, Carlo's wife, Rosemarie Soriano, and her kids completed an 18-hour flight to the city of Calgary and began their life in the new province as well. Despite the numerous challenges that they faced, the Sorianos braved through them with the support of each other, their work, and their faith communities. Presently, the Soriano family has now been residing in Canada for nearly 47 years. Carlos and Rosemarie, sharing 54 years of marriage to-date, came to Calgary with four children and thrived through the support of their respective communities. They now have 11 grandchildren and are filled with appreciation, contentment, and

⁵³ Nerman, *ibid.*

⁵⁴ Martial Law Museum. Martial Law in the Philippines: Martial Law in Data. Available at <https://martiallawmuseum.ph/magalar/martial-law-in-data/> [accessed 5 January 2024]

prosperity in a foreign land that they now consider home. A home that allowed them to bond and grow as a family whilst escaping their day-to-day realities under a dictatorial regime that they would not allow their children to grow up in.

While the experiences of the Sorianos' escape from political strife during the 1970s can be observed amongst Filipino immigrants in general, the data collected by the Philippine Consulate General in Calgary suggests that it is not a common experience for those Filipinos moving to Alberta. Along with Carlos and his family, Ricardo Macabeo was the only other individual to explicitly mention Martial Law as a factor in the move to Alberta. This suggestion may be attributed to numerous factors including the small population of Filipinos in Canada during the 1970s and 1980s. Nonetheless, this section highlights one of many reasons for the move among *Pinoys* (Filipinos) to Alberta.

Pursuing A Better Life

The responses that the Philippine Consulate in Calgary has collected indicate that the political condition of Martial Law was not a major reason for many Filipinos moving to Alberta during the 1970s. They share the most common motivation for moving to Alberta: *greener pastures*. Typically, this meant seeking out the available opportunities in their respective careers, educating and raising their kids in a safer and more economically secure country, and taking care of family and friends "back home". These motivations transcend backgrounds among the Filipino respondents.

Regardless of the decade of migration, whether the individual moved alone or with their family, one's marital status, educational accomplishments, and gender, the motivation to move to Alberta remained the same. Additionally, while it is important to recognize the differences in the general backgrounds of Filipino migrants, it is also important to recognize the similarities in the opportunities that allowed them to make their respective moves. Some of these opportunities include a family member who sponsored the move, a husband or wife who accepted being left behind, and family. Thus, this section recounts the distinct journeys that Filipino migrants embarked on in their pursuit of greener pastures in Alberta, relaying the common motivations, similarities, and differences in their backgrounds, and the opportunities that made their migration possible.

Rather than summarizing the entirety of the stories submitted, it is important to allow the voices of those who persevered in establishing a new life in Alberta to convey their stories themselves. The following quotes depict similar motivations that many Filipino men and women shared when they moved to Canada. Many sought out opportunities to advance their careers. Of course, there were instances of apprehension in moving to the province without any guarantee of

work and decent pay. Others were able to apply from within the country and move with the certainty of a job that could provide economic stability. The following selected narratives reflect these experiences:

I migrated to Alberta to seek a better opportunity in my line of work as a Mechanical Engineer/Skilled Machinist.

Benjamin Ang (Calgary)

I was apprehensive as I was not sure how and when I could find a good compensating job in my profession as Computer Engineer to support and build a better future for my family.

Eugene Sicat (Calgary)

In the last quarter of 2005, three years after I landed in Toronto, ON, it was always on the news that the province of Alberta had more jobs to offer and had the highest migration. I was motivated to move hoping that my husband and I could work in the field of our profession, Engineering and Accounting, respectively... I was a CPA in the Philippines when I applied as an independent immigrant but in order for men to be accepted in the job market, I needed to have a Canadian education and work experience. When I finished my degree, I tried my luck in Alberta in September 2008, hoping for a better job and better pay considering that I had six minor dependent children at that time. Luckily, I got the luxury of choosing which job offer to accept. After a month, my family followed me in Calgary.

Lydia Tenebro (Calgary)

Like many domestic workers, Hong Kong was my stepping stone to move to Canada. After working six years in Hong Kong, I pursued my dream of moving to Canada. I arrived in Canada on July 15, 1985. Why Canada? It is because the quality and standard of living is good. Canada offers a great healthcare system for its residents. It's also a great place for an opportunity to earn more.

Fely Cutaran (Calgary)

While pursuing a career was a major factor in the migration of many Filipino participants, there were even more individuals who sought out greener pastures. I make a distinction between career opportunities and greener pastures. Individuals who moved to Alberta for career opportunities primarily sought the advancement of their already existing careers as a primary means to improve their quality of life. In contrast, those seeking greener pastures moved to Alberta primarily to

seek out a better quality of life and a better future for themselves and their families with no particular focus on employment opportunities in their previous field of work or education. Thus, the following narratives highlight those individuals who sought out a move to Alberta primarily for greener pastures.

I chose to migrate here [Calgary] because living here in Canada will give my family a better future.

Sherry Rose (Alberta)

We migrated to Alberta because we wanted a better quality of life. As we all know, Alberta is a land of opportunity.

Leny Dela Cruz (Calgary)

We migrated to Alberta for a greener pasture. It was truly a blessing for us to move to Alberta. When we moved, things were easy for us. We got everything we needed right away. The country has a good healthcare and education system. Most of the services at the time were free and it was easy to sponsor family and relatives. Because of that, we were able to help a lot of our relatives to come to Canada and work.

Lydia Siapno (Calgary)

I arrived on February 1988... I came here to find a better life. I moved by myself with my sister's sponsorship.

Prescila Atienza (Calgary)

While most individuals did not indicate the quality of life that they had while living in the Philippines, those who detailed their lives in the homeland stated that they left behind a privileged life. This typically consisted of an owned home, a stable job and an accomplished career, and maids and drivers. Additionally, most instances of migration are either a result of the petition of a family member already living in Canada or the intranational move from a different province.

During the 1970s, there were fewer *kababayans* in Alberta compared to today. The following paragraphs illustrate the reasons and experiences for migration among Filipinos who moved to Alberta in the 1960s. The reasons that individuals had when they moved to the province in the 1960s tend to be consistent with what was typically observed from those who migrated in the 1990s to 2010s.

First of all, many of our respondents claimed to have moved into Alberta during the late 1990s and early 2000s mainly due to the desire to reunite with loved ones and the existing job opportunities. However, while many moved to this province knowing that there was a demand for the same jobs in fields they had worked in for years, if not decades, they often faced numerous challenges regarding accreditation of their work experience and completed education. Among these individuals is Eugene Sicat, a computer engineer. He moved to Calgary from Doha, Qatar, to be with his wife and in-laws. While Eugene was able to secure several interviews after a few weeks of applying for jobs, he eventually faced the same predicament every interview. These companies desired local experience. Consequently, he claims:

I took entry-level jobs as (a) maintenance person for Wizards Castle, a video game amusement center in Sunridge Mall.

Additionally, he also had to take up a second job as a computer salesman in the same mall. Eventually, Eugene started his own IT consulting company, "providing services from database administration, programming, business analytics, project management, and program management" to numerous Canadian and US-based companies, such as Nova Gas Transmission Limited, Talisman Energy, and Chevron. However, his struggle to find work in his field is not a struggle he experienced alone. More than three out of four of our already employed participants failed to find jobs in the profession that they had been practicing for years, if not decades. Thus, rather than summarizing these experiences, it's better to let their personal stories convey the realities of migration:

Blending into the Canadian workforce as a professional - I was an engineer since 1985 back in the Philippines and so when I migrated to Canada in 2009, I decided to likewise work as an engineer here. But then since engineering is a regulated profession in Canada, it was impossible to apply for an engineering job without Canadian work experience and appropriate professional accreditation. Hence, I had to first resort to finding survival jobs in order to gain Canadian experience before moving on to my desired profession. This is not to mention the necessary education assessments required for professional accreditation...

Wilfredo A. DeVera (Calgary)

"Carlos works two jobs at times. During the weekdays as a draftsman for a Calgary-based oil company, part-time evenings and weekends as a designer for a contract engineer and independent steel fabrication shops, and part-time weekend nights as a busboy at the Sheraton Hotel. Despite having a Bachelor of Science in Architecture in a prestigious Philippine University, (passed the Board Exam for Architect, Register Architect) he can only get junior work positions as his credentials are not fully recognized in Canada.

Carlos S. Soriano (Calgary)

Our immersion to Calgary Alberta is best described as a humbling beginning. Knowing that both of us have our own educational credentials under our belt we have to prove to ourselves and to prospective employers that we have the skills to add to their current manpower. Jerry with his degree in machine shop technology plus three years of mechanical engineering ended up challenging the journeyman machinist certification as well as completion of the Power Fourth Class Certificate from the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology. Lucy, who is already a US State Board Licensed Registered Nurse as well as (having) five years of diverse experience in acute care couldn't land into a nursing position due to lack of Canadian experience.

Lucy Reyes (Calgary)

Despite the challenges that these Filipinos experienced amidst their move to Alberta, they could all find the determination and resilience necessary to persevere and succeed. Eugene eventually opened his own IT consulting company, and Wilfredo eventually landed a job as a professional engineer in an Alberta provincial government office. Carlos was able to find a job alongside the support from his church community that would allow him to migrate his wife and four boys to Calgary while enjoying (now) 54 years of marriage and 11 grandchildren. Lastly, Lucy eventually found work as a staff nurse, gaining both Canadian experience and the means to attain a nursing license. In 1991, she ended up as one of two nurses appointed by the Ministry of Health to join the Health Expert Panel Committee for Alberta. She found herself as a clinical lead for the Strategic Clinical Network Cardiovascular Arrhythmia Working Group from 2012-2014 and a research administrator at the University of Calgary's Cardiac Sciences Department in 2014.

Stories like that of Eugene's, Wilfredo's, Carlos', and Lucy's are not uncommon for Filipinos who have taken up the challenge of moving to this province. It is a story of negotiating newfound difficulties and adapting to new forms of occupation and/or by persevering in pursuing a career that they had already spent so much time building up. Fortunately, there have also been cases where those immigrating/migrating to Alberta have transitioned smoothly into stable jobs. These are individuals that their employers have sponsored to move to the city, and while they may not have had to deal with the challenge of finding work in their respective fields, there are numerous other struggles that they have had to persevere through.

A New Place Comes with New Challenges

Failing to find jobs in one's field was one of many struggles Filipino men and women faced when moving to Alberta. However, it was far from being the only one they had to deal with. Among the other challenges that our respondents faced were the need to leave behind their families, the

cultural and language barriers, the experience of loneliness, and the adjustment to a hostile climate.

Based on the data gathered for this book project, there are three main trajectories related to migration. First, some had never left their homeland, the Philippines. Second, some had worked in the Middle Eastern region. Third, there were the Filipino men and women who had migrated from somewhere else in Canada and moved to Alberta. Out of all these trajectories, most of them mentioned their struggle to adapt to the harsh winters in Alberta. While the average temperature for Alberta's winters hovers between -5 to -15 degrees Celsius between January and February, they can drop to as low as -30 to -40 degrees Celsius. In contrast, the same months in the Philippines, UAE, and Saudi Arabia see average temperatures of 25.5, 25, and 21.5 degrees Celsius, respectively. Consequently, many individuals found themselves physically and mentally unprepared to face the struggle of keeping warm in bone-chilling temperatures. Moreover, the fact that most newcomers had no financial means to buy personal vehicles and had to spend much time traveling by foot in the winter did not help in their adjustment. Michelle Lucena-Abesamis stated in her response

We had to walk two-and-a-half kilometers, in mostly knee-deep snow roads, to our workplace each day... none of us living in the house own(ed) a car (nor was) able to drive.

Others like Pepe Siapno even went as far as considering moving to Vancouver to avoid having to continue his outdoor-related work in the winter. While Pepe eventually found an indoor job with Calgary's CP Rail, this narrative gives a window into the discomfort that most migrating Filipinos encountered. Similarly, Lucy Reyes describes how she ended up with frostbite on her hands and feet during her first experience of an Albertan winter. Despite this massive discomfort, those who struggled learned to persevere through mental and physical means.

While the notorious winters of Alberta have been a great challenge to many Filipinos who have migrated to this province, it is far from being the only one. There are numerous accounts of individuals experiencing racist encounters, cultural barriers, and loneliness. Out of these three, data found in our responses indicate that racist encounters were experienced the least. Individuals claiming they have had to face these encounters explain that their experiences are composed mainly of generalized Asian remarks and slurs. However, there are also instances of upfront sentiments of inferiority towards our Filipino brothers and sisters. Albert Rosana, a teaching assistant who lectured at the University of Alberta, describes two instances wherein his students requested to be taught by a white professor instead. While examples like this have unfortunately become a common experience for our fellow *kababayan*, these are not the only challenges they have to face. Many of them moved to Alberta from the Middle East or the Philippines and frequently experienced cultural barriers and bouts of loneliness.

Cultural barriers, according to Oxford Reference, refer to “impediments to communication between mainstream culture and members of a societal subgroup that is culturally distinct in significant ways”.⁵⁵ These barriers are seen in many of the relevant responses that we have looked over. One of the most common barriers described is the difference in language and the difficulty Filipinos face in adapting to an English-dominant work setting. Consequently, individuals who lack the confidence to practice and speak English to their colleagues tend to isolate themselves while confiding in the company of other Filipinos within their workplace. Those who did muster up the courage to speak English often found confused faces among their peers when trying to communicate using certain unfamiliar words. Nonetheless, most of the individuals who made this constant effort to practice have indicated their co-workers' support and non-judgmental atmosphere. Dalmacio Martin Jr., a past worker at Palliser Lumber based in Crossfield, describes his experience by explaining that the language barrier was the most difficult of all the challenges experienced during his migration. He stated that he did not trust himself to speak English like Filipinos born in Canada. However, Dalmacio claimed that he never failed to do his best to communicate in the same manner that native English speakers would.

Many of Filipino respondents faced additional cultural barriers, including unfamiliar foods and mannerisms. They struggle to communicate clearly and concisely and the hardships that go hand in hand with building up a career in a new country lead a lot of our *kababayans* down a pit of loneliness. This loneliness is comprised of both homesickness and physical separation from loved ones. Those who miss their motherland describe their craving for a Filipino community, Filipino foods, and the humid weather. While they may represent Alberta as a great place to build a new career and raise and support a family, they recognize that it cannot replace the place where they were raised and supported. Furthermore, most of our respondents explained that they have had to leave someone behind to pursue a new life in a new province. They had to leave behind their spouse, children, parents, or siblings. Some even had to leave all their loved ones behind, migrating to a country with an unfamiliar environment and culture while remaining alone. Those who were fortunate had a friend who migrated here before them to help them settle down into a home, find a job, and to help them meet new people. On the other hand, others were left only with the hope of providing a better life for those they left behind. This feeling of loneliness and the physical separation from immediate family is one of the most prevalent challenges detailed by Filipino respondents. Most indicate that it took several years before they could reunite with their spouse and/or children. Fortunately, through constant petitions through Canada's immigration programs, most of those who have described this hardship have been able to be reunited with their loved ones in Alberta.

⁵⁵ Oxford Reference. Available at <https://www.oxfordreference.com/display/10.1093/acref/9780191844386.001.0001/acref-9780191844386-e-972>

Faith That Moves Mountains

Amidst the challenges described by our Filipino brothers and sisters: the inability to be accredited for education and find work in their respective fields, the frigid cold that is unlike anything in the Philippines, the cultural and language barriers that make connecting difficult, and the homesickness and physical separation from loved ones, one must ask: "*How did they persevere?*" Most of our respondents turned to three main things. First of all, as mentioned earlier, they opened themselves to the possibility of pursuing different careers and/or challenged the accreditation of their education and work experience to continue and build upon their respective careers. Additionally, by putting themselves "out there" and facing the discomfort of adopting a new language and fitting into a new culture, they were able to learn and adapt. Finally, more than 3/4 of those who submitted their migration story attributed their ability to persevere through challenges and the blessings they were graced with to God and their Christian faith.

According to the data from the 2020 Census by the Philippine Statistics Authority, over 80% of the Filipino population have Christian affiliations.⁵⁶ Thus, it is unsurprising that those who migrate to different countries bring their faith along with them, continuing to practice and participate in religious traditions and anchoring themselves to "Almighty God," as many Filipino participants stated in their responses. Most of the individual responses have indicated that their faith enabled them to find supportive communities, whether they be Filipino-dominated or not. Many have indicated that their first friends or contact in communities after migrating have come from the churches that their faith has led them to. Those individuals even claim all their success is owed to God looking over them and guiding them every step. Emma Villanueva, an ex-employee of the Calgary School Board, proudly claims that:

Everything became possible through the incessant guidance and blessings of Our Almighty Lord! It wasn't my slightest dream to embark here in Canada but it was through Him who curved my way and destiny. I am steadfastly thankful for leading men always to the right paths and giving men light during my dark moments.

Similarly, Carlos Soriano, who moved to Calgary with his wife and four boys, claimed that it was his faith and church community that allowed his family to get through the trying times that initially greeted them after their migration. Carlos shares:

Rosemarie, struggling with the adjustment and suffering postpartum depression would find (herself) spending her first Christmas at the Grace Women's Hospital for treatment. Carlos would find it necessary to relinquish his part-time work to care for the kids at home. Help from the Ex-Meralco Filipino community, the evangelical

⁵⁶ Philippine Statistics Authority (2023) Religious affiliation in the Philippines (2020 Census of Population). Released February 22. Available at <https://psa.gov.ph/content/religious-affiliation-philippines-2020-census-population-and-housing> [accessed 5 January 2024]

church communities of the Filipino Christian Fellowship, and First Baptist Church of Calgary would come alongside the Soriano's to provide meals, childcare, and domestic assistance.

This initial connection through a trying period of life eventually turned into what Carlos describes as lasting for decades.

From One Generation to the Next

This chapter shines a spotlight on several Filipino men and women who migrated to Alberta. It focuses on their successful migration to Alberta despite challenges dealing with leaving family behind in the Philippines, adjusting to a different place and culture, and finding jobs. However, what a 'successful migration' looks like was never discussed nor described explicitly. To define a 'successful migration,' one ought to look at the reasons that these courageous Filipino men and women willingly took on such hardships and sought to persevere through the years. The sentiment is echoed repeatedly in the stories that they have shared with us: *for the next generation.*

I also included a peek into my life, being blessed with parents who have been willing to make an innumerable amount of unseen and uncelebrated challenges and sacrifices for their children's comfort, success, and joy. Just like my parents, these Filipino men and women have gone through innumerable unseen and uncelebrated hardships and successes to better their own lives, but primarily for the next generation: *their children.* These Filipino men and women are sons, daughters, fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, and others, to loved ones that were on their minds when they went through the difficulties of finding a new job, adjusting to hostile environments, facing racist remarks and the discomfort of cultural barriers. They were able to migrate in their ability to provide an education, a home, and countless opportunities for their children, while also taking care of the needs and well-being of their parents, and others in need. This is a success.

All in all, these Filipino men and women are the unsung heroes that have spread the spirit of the hospitable, kind, and hard-working Filipinos to Alberta. They have demonstrated the tenacity to overcome the challenges of migrating to a new place, starting new careers, and providing for those around them in Canada and the Philippines. Undoubtedly, they shine a spotlight on sacrifices made by Filipinos to aspire for a better future. Their stories echo the journeys that tens of thousands of Filipinos have made to Alberta, a place they now call home.



CHAPTER 3

PORTRAITS OF THE FILIPINO FAMILY IN ALBERTA

REY ROSALES

They left behind a stable career back home in the Philippines to immigrate to Canada more than 10 years ago. Determined to try their luck in a new land thousands of miles away, Jun and Yolanda Gomez ended up settling in Edmonton, Alberta, to stay close to a few family members. Now in their late 40s, both look back to their early years as newcomers with a sigh of relief and a sense of hopeful optimism. They respond with an unequivocal Yes! when asked if they'd do it all over again. For the sake of providing a brighter future for their two daughters, moving to Canada was worth everything--sweat, blood, and tears, they said.

Jun juggled two jobs early on to make ends meet. Yolly also logged in long hours as a receptionist at a family doctor's clinic. Slowly their hard work began to pay off and it allowed them to own a home and buy a car. They have also been able to send their daughters to university, with one already on the verge of getting her nursing degree. Aside from a full-time job and a landscaping side business, Jun also now co-owns an auto repair shop, managing it with some of his closest friends.

It is worth noting that not all Filipino newcomer stories are like that of Jun and Yolly's. Filipinos who live in Alberta come from varied backgrounds and pursue different life and career pathways as they settle and call this province home.

The Road to a Middle-Class Family Life

For some Filipinos who arrived in Alberta ready to fill in high-earning jobs, such as nurses, educators, engineers, and accountants, the evidence of middle-class life is plain to see. They can send their kids to tennis classes or watch them perform in piano and ballet recitals. They participate in community league activities all the while living in the peace and quiet of a picket-fenced suburban neighborhood.

For other Filipinos who obtained their permanent residency status via the family petition or temporary foreign worker route, the climb to a middle-class life has been much steeper and dotted with hardships along the way.

Some take on two or three jobs, such as caregivers, utility workers, and pizza delivery drivers, among others, to earn a living while still being able to send money back home. Stories of hard tough slogs and resilience are aplenty, especially among Filipina women who endure the loneliness of separation and the occasional heaps of abuse from employers and others.⁵⁷

Despite being considered the second fastest-growing immigrant group, Filipino Canadians today are mostly focused on steadying their life and livelihood. Although signs are emerging, their participation in the social and political life of the broader society still has much to be reckoned with. In Edmonton, for example, Giselle General had a close run for the city council during the fall 2021 local elections. Yet still, Filipinos who decide to run for public office are few and far between.

The Filipino Children and Youth in Alberta

The lure of a job and a quick income can sometimes stop some Filipino youths in Alberta from pursuing university studies and charting a professional career that, over the long term, will pay more and help them achieve a middle-class existence. A lot more work needs to be done in guiding and mentoring the sons and daughters of Filipinos in Alberta to focus more on academic achievement and prepare for competitive admissions into universities. While Filipino children comprise a big chunk of the population in Catholic schools in Alberta, involvement among parents in school governance and activities still has a lot of room to grow, partly because parents are simply busy with their jobs and trying to make ends meet.

⁵⁷ Tungohan, E., Banerjee, R., Chu, W., Cleto, P., de Leon, C., Garcia, M., Kelly, P., Luciano, M.,

Palmaria, C., & Sorio, C. (2015). After the live-In caregiver program: Filipina caregivers' experiences of graduated and uneven citizenship. *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 47(1), 87–105. <https://doi.org/10.1353/ces.2015.0008>

Major cities like Calgary and Edmonton have seen an increase in minority population over the past decade (now roughly 40% of the total population for each city). Filipinos are amongst the major minority groups who call these urban areas home. There is a lot of hopeful optimism that they will be given a seat at the table and be an active participant in the social, political, and economic life of these major cities.



CHAPTER 4

IT'S ABOUT SURVIVING: A MOTHER'S STORY

KELSEY DELAMARTER

Filipinas: My Mother and I

There is no woman in this entire world stronger than my mother. My mother's story follows an overarching narrative of subjugating adversity for the promise of a better life that is shared by thousands of *Filipinos* within Canada and dispersed throughout the world. From a young age, I was acutely aware of the fact that my mother's background was very different from many of my friends' parents growing up. However, it was only in recent years that I began to strive to truly understand the ways in how her background and life history are different.

In seeking to understand my mother's life history, I began uncovering the underlying context of her life. I began with a goal of looking at the role that gender, class, generational potency, and religion played in my mother's depictions of adversity that she experienced throughout her life. This chapter embodies the story of a mother sharing her life with her daughter, my self-discovery, and the ramifications that resulted in our shared understanding of identity to one another. While the forefront goal of this paper is to tell my mother's story, it would be impossible to effectively achieve this without first acknowledging my unique position as both the chapter author and the sole daughter of the interviewee.

Elsa Del Rosario Valenzuela Delamarter was born on July 31st, 1965, in Naic, Cavite, Philippines. As the first-born child to Domingo and Zenaida, she would soon become an elder sibling and primary caregiver to three sisters and two brothers. When reflecting on her upbringing, a common theme that Elsa returns to is how her childhood was sacrificed for the needs of her family. This motif of sacrifice would prove to subsist throughout her adolescence, and young adulthood, and its core elements still form the basis of her worldview today. Elsa herself firmly believes that gender did not limit her access to opportunities when held in comparison to male individuals in her life, such as her brothers. She describes her household and youth as existing in contrast to gender roles suitable to the typical and “conservative” Filipino household. Elsa reasons that the poverty she and her family experienced while growing up subsumed these more conventional modes of gender within the house.

Regardless, in her story there exists considerable restrictions on her physical and social mobility, thus creating a clear power dynamic between her life inside and outside the home. This chapter will tell her story through two separately conducted interviews, explore her upbringing itself, and the factors that ultimately led to her choice to become a transnational migrant Filipina worker.

Home and Having Nothing

Growing up in Naic, Elsa and her family lived and worked on land that belonged to an uncle on her father’s side. They created a home for the family of eight out of an industrial hold that in the past had been used to store rice. Her uncle did not charge the family rent and they farmed his land for the entirety of her youth to try and make ends meet. The narrative and hardship of ‘having nothing’ is one that Elsa had expressed several times throughout my life while I was growing up in Alberta, and it was the cornerstone of our interviews.

When I questioned her on the meaning behind the statement during our first of two interviews in 2018, she was serious and unwavering in her response. “It means that you don’t really have anything, you don’t know what to eat the next meal. We don’t have lots of material stuff. We don’t buy clothing, it’s just hand-me-down’s from some rich relative,” (Delamarter, 2018b). In this case, the rich relatives that she referred to were an aunt and uncle, *Lola* Ester and *Lolo* Pratan who had moved to the United States, making sure to return home to visit at Christmas time. “Lola Ester, when she would come visit from the States, she would give us stuff. She would give us food, candy, apples, every time she come visit she always have something for us,” (Delamarter, 2018b). Throughout both interviews, Elsa described that her surrounding community of Naic exuded a high degree of economic disparity among its people. “When I was growing up, there’s poor and there’s rich. Those rich, they don’t have to worry about anything.

We're poor, we have to worry about everything," (Delamarter, 2018b). She went on to depict that as soon as she was old enough, she actively participated in her family's fight against poverty. "I usually stay at home and work around the house, but at seven years old I started cooking and all that stuff because my mom and dad is not home, I became the mother because my mom and dad is making money outside. They're in the fields doing stuff," (Delamarter, 2018b).

Elsa described that her Lola Ester had made it out of the country and forged a better life for herself and her family, but their relationship was unique and stood as a contrast from other relatives who still lived in the Philippines under far more favorable economic circumstances. While she did not get into the details, Elsa alluded to the existence of great economic stratification between her core and extended family while growing up. This difference was a point of contestation seemingly unacknowledged by the family, and Elsa described the resistance her family exhibited in sharing the details of their economic circumstances with others, a result of a widely known Filipino concept of shame. When I asked her to help me understand this concept, she was quick to explain. "We are taught that anything happens to us, we cannot put it publicly, that is our culture. We have to hide it. Even you are hungry, you cannot tell somebody. In a way, Filipinos is a little bit proud. You have to make face that you can. In a way, it is a good thing, you have to be self-reliant" (Delamarter, 2018b).

While there was an expectation that she would help her family, a point of interest for me was that my Lolo and Lola refused to pull her and her siblings out of school. "My parents believed in education, even though we were poor, because they know that's the only thing that we could be out of poverty" (Delamarter, 2018b). Her parents never had the opportunity to finish school, and Elsa believed this to be pivotal in why they fought so strongly for her and her siblings to accomplish this themselves. "Lola finished school up to grade six. I think Lolo is only grade two," (Delamarter, 2018b). I asked if Lolo and Lola's parents had valued education while they were young and she explained, "my mom's side, his dad value education. It's just my dad's side is not really, they didn't care as much. My mom's side, they did, the only thing with my mom side is the poverty, that hindrance. Because there is a lot of them, how many of them, ten or eleven," (Delamarter, 2018b).

Elsa's mother grew up in a family larger than her own and as a result, there were never any opportunities present for her to pursue an education. Her father, on the other hand, expressed little interest in schooling, often skipping school to go swimming with his friends. Ultimately, he did not have the support or encouragement of his family to pursue education seriously. With these competing formative views on the necessity of education, I asked Elsa if her parents agreed on the importance of an education for their children, or if this was maybe one sided. She revealed that her parents were united in their stance on education, emphasizing how imperative they believed it to be to craft a better life. "They are on the same page because Lolo has seen that

if you do not have education, you not gonna go anywhere. It is his experience, it's hard to find a job," (Delamarter, 2018b).

In Elsa's own opinion, the unforgiving nature of the deep poverty she and her family experienced far outweighed any power that gender, or any other force could have manifested in her life. "When I was growing up, I didn't feel inferior to male or female, it was about surviving" (Delamarter, 2018a). During our two interviews, we discussed existing gender norms in length and the role they played in her understandings of self and individual agency. As previously stated, Elsa firmly believes that the poverty she experienced kept her separate from the reach of traditional gender implications, something she believed to be outside the normal experience of a young Filipina. However, throughout the interview, certain statements she provided serve as an interesting juxtaposition to this belief.

In her own words, "my family is different from the conservative Filipino household. In my family I was raised with responsibility. I have to look after my sibling, do everything, because my mom rely on me quite a bit and my dad is always working," (Delamarter, 2018a). In talking with me, Elsa elaborated on her conception of the conservative Filipino household, "when I was growing up, if you have money, the kids doesn't really do work, they have household maid. The mother doesn't work, the dad has the job to provide for the family. Conservative family, the father does the work and the mother stays at home," (Delamarter, 2018a). In elaborating on the economic stratification of her neighbourhood, Elsa conveyed, "10% would be the elite and then 20% would be average, 70% would be poor where I grew up," (Delamarter, 2018a).

In terms of gender, I asked Elsa if while growing up she felt that she had the freedom of mobility to go wherever she wanted or independence in her own behaviour. Immediately, she laughed and responded, "no, I can't, because I'm going to be in trouble with my mom," (Delamarter, 2018a). She explained how she could only go to three places in her world, to church, school, and back home again. "When you go somewhere, you cannot just go somewhere. My mom had to know, otherwise I will be in trouble. I cannot just go out with my friends, I am not allowed," (Delamarter, 2018a). I asked Elsa if this structure was subjected solely to her and her sisters, and if there was a potential differentiation in freedoms for her brothers. During our first interview, she immediately denounced the idea, explaining that in her family, there was no difference between the treatment of daughters and sons. Her brothers knew that they were to meet the same expectations and rules, lest they incur the wrath of their mother.

During our second interview, however, I revisited the matter and received a different response. She was firm on her stance that she could not go freely into the world on her own, but admitted that she was able to leave home, contingent on being in a group with her sisters. Her brothers, she revealed, experienced more freedom in their social mobility. When I asked her if this was

because they were boys, something she had fervently denied in the first interview, she replied, “I think so, because they are boys. They are not women,” (Delamarter, 2018b). This distinct change revealed that while growing up, Elsa did feel the effects of gender within her life, resulting in differences in treatment, even if poverty largely circumvented these norms from taking hold on her life completely. On her upbringing, Elsa allowed herself moments of conflicted vulnerability. “I would like to have a little freedom but actually, I felt that it’s better for me, too. Some of my friends, they do things that they are not supposed to, and they end up pregnant. At least I have a better life than them because they get married so early,” (Delamarter, 2018a).

In terms of promiscuity and sexuality, Elsa believed her collective upbringing with her sisters met widely held cultural expectations. “I think it’s the norm. They’re more strict with the girls because they don’t want the girls to get pregnant. When I was growing up, virginity was really, really important,” (Delamarter, 2018a). When I asked her next about the consensus on the ideal national image of a Filipina, she didn’t hesitate to answer. “A Filipina should be gentle, not promiscuous, smart, obedient, and courteous,” (Delamarter, 2018a). She broadened her views on this in our second interview, exploring the previously mentioned Filipina ideal of *simple lang*. “You don’t wear a lot of makeup, just natural looking. You dress properly. You don’t have a lot of necklaces and big earrings, you dress appropriately,” (Delamarter, 2018b). In digressing, she conceded that a Filipina should be obedient to her parents, especially if she was still unmarried and living under their roof. In terms of the active role parents should play in the lives of their children, Elsa opened up, specifically emphasizing the power imbued in the role her mother fulfilled throughout her life. “She has a lot of decisions to make since I was single. As soon as I enter into a marriage, she won’t have a thing on that. As long as I am not married, I have to be under her. I have to tell her where I’m going, what I’m doing, all of the stuff,” (Delamarter, 2018b).

This pattern subsisted even after Elsa left the Philippines for Singapore as a live-in nanny because she was still unmarried. “I was single when I was working in Singapore, so the financial thing, I have to send it all to her,” (Delamarter, 2018b). According to this, Elsa’s mother had complete control over her finances, mobility, and overall agency as a young woman and just as Elsa described, this theme would prove to carry on until she eventually married. With this in mind, it was increasingly clear that Elsa’s mother played the largest and most instrumental part in raising her and her siblings. I asked whether or not this was the standard of Filipina mothers when she was growing up and she confirmed, leading into a discussion on the role of fathers during her youth. “The father are kind but they don’t really interact with the kids as much, it is the mom’s responsibility. That I didn’t like. With [my father], he didn’t really react with us as much, it’s just my mom. Discipline wise, it’s the mother’s responsibility,” (Delamarter, 2018a).

She went on to describe her father's role as primarily that of a distant provider, working in the fields in an attempt to make ends meet for his family. While he was isolated from disciplinary actions and largely from Elsa and her sisters, she recalled how he would take her brothers out to teach them how to fish and hunt, obligations that were delineated as male tasks, and spheres of labor that she and her sisters remained separate from. She described feeling that her father did not know how to interact with her and her sisters, speculating that the masculine tasks expected of her brothers aided in developing deeper communication between the boys and their father. These were tasks she and her sisters were barred from due to gender constrictions, despite her adamant belief that gender played no role in her upbringing. Despite this, Elsa was quick to assure me that it was undoubtedly conveyed that her father loved and cared for her and her sisters. She then described how Filipino men were seemingly culturally unable to showcase emotion or carve meaningful relationships with their children. "The interaction with kids is not as much, they are more into work, stability, providing food. Raising of the kids are for the mom," (Delamarter, 2018a).

Elsa spent the majority of her adolescence watching the men in her life work abroad, a trend that today has taken on a distinctly female forefront. "Long time ago, it was usually men leaving the country, not women. [My father] went to Saudi Arabia to work," (Delamarter, 2018a). In 1982, she graduated from high school, and it was during this time frame that she was first exposed to the burgeoning idea of female work overseas. "[Women were] already leaving the country. When I was done college, everyone was going abroad because abroad makes a lot more money," (Delamarter, 2018a).

After graduating from college, Elsa was unable to find work as a teacher. "I didn't have a chance to work as a teacher. I was a substitute, I did not have a position," (Delamarter, 2018b). It was during this stressful year of searching for full-time work post-graduation that an aunt who had been working in Singapore reached out to her with a much-needed opportunity. "I replaced her job. She can't work there anymore because after ten years, you can't work there anymore. I'm not supposed to be her replacement, it was supposed to be her sister, but her sister got married and I was looking for a job" (Delamarter, 2018b). Elsa digressed that this familial connection exempted her from having to pay agency fees and gave her a direct route to embarking on the path of the transnational migrant Filipina.

Elsa was in a unique position where she was able to access opportunities thanks to family connections, such as taking over her aunt's position in Singapore and being spared the lengthy and relatively unaffordable process of going through an agency. She would work in Singapore for a year and a half before embarking on the largest journey of her life to Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, working again as a live-in nanny. She arrived in December and stepping out of the airport and into a North American winter, it was the first time she had ever seen snow.

Conclusion

When I began interviewing my mother, I had a basic understanding of the poverty she had experienced while growing up from stories she had shared with me. Threading together the fragments of her life that she had given me as a child, I developed a reverent respect for the hardships she had endured, and for her determination to ensure that her children would never experience such struggle. Interviewing my mother as an adult and hearing about the entrenching totality of poverty in her own life deepened these feelings and brought us closer together in mutual understanding. When interpreting the events and social forces that influenced Elsa's eventual path to Canada, it is clear that this inner positioning of poverty versus gender and the need to survive is invaluable in understanding the full sum of her life story.

Sources:

Del Rosario Valenzuela Delamarter, Elsa. 2018a, in discussion with the author, March 25, 2018.

Del Rosario Valenzuela Delamarter, Elsa. 2018b, in discussion with the author, November 28, 2018.



CHAPTER 5

SELECTED PROFILES OF FILIPINO STORIES OF MIGRATION IN ALBERTA

Migration is personal; it involves, for example, life-changing decisions that impact career choices and family. The complex interplay of factors that lead to such a decision, especially where to move to, reflects individual abilities and capacities to make it happen. In this section, we present selected individual profiles of stories of Filipino migration to Alberta. These individuals have consented to use their names and narratives as part of this book. The narratives in their voices (i.e., not transcribed) showcase the major reasons for moving to Alberta, their descriptions of their migration, and challenges along the way. These stories complement the sections in Part 1.

For Work

Aurora Dacanay

Calgary

In the '60s, few Filipinos were interested to travel to Canada because of its cold climate. My focus of interest at that time was to follow the leads of my two friends who went to the United States as foreign students. It was while in preparation of my application for a U.S. visa, that I met a friend with her Canadian guest who informed me that Canada was accepting teachers from the Philippines. I took that information as a joke but nevertheless, shared it with my close relatives and friends who gave me funny and unbelievable responses. The mix responses I received, stirred my curiosity and interest to find out the real story. Interestingly, I found a co-teacher who shared the same adventurous spirit and together we went to the Canadian Embassy in Manila. At the Embassy, we were given the application forms with list of documents needed by the Canadian Embassy. To make story short, a few

months later after our personal interview, my friend and I received our approval for immigrant visa along with a list of schools needing teachers in Alberta. On August 25, 1965, my friend and I and another teacher arrived in Calgary, Alberta, very much surprised to witness that Calgary was not as grand as we have imagined it to be. Nevertheless, my optimism to finish further education in “America”, was foremost in my mind. The empty and bleak appearance of the City of Calgary (pop. 311,116) at that time compared to Manila, was not a deterrent to the bright vision that I have for the future.

My migration to Canada was the best decision I have ever made in my whole life. With the grace of God, coming to Canada gave me windows of opportunities to reach my dreams, goals, and aspirations in life that helped me define my definite purpose in this world. In Canada, my thirst for learning, understanding of humanity, spirituality and self-empowerment deepened. It is in Canada where I met the love of my life, my husband, raise family (two children and five grandchildren). Being in Canada enables me to look back to my native land the Philippines, appreciate its culture, understand its enormous challenges and having the opportunity to help its people whenever I can...

I consider my challenges in Canada minor. I accepted them as part of my adventure being in a completely different country compared to the Philippines...I was fortunate enough to live with a beautiful Canadian family...from each member, I learned valuable first-hand lessons...Creeping pangs of loneliness when alone, pining for family in the Philippines and craving and longing for Filipino foods were my first big challenges...My one big challenge in Canada is its very cold winter weather...

Liza Bernardino

Edmonton

I was working in Hong Kong and was recommended by husband's aunt to her employer. I was hired directly by her employer under the Live-in Caregiver Program (LCP) and flew to Canada from Hong Kong in March 2013. I worked for the employer for about 2 ½ years in Fort Saskatchewan. Like everyone else, the opportunity for a better life for my family was motivation enough to migrate here.

When I came to Canada, the LCP required the completion of two years within the same program before becoming eligible to apply for permanent residency. I got my open work permit in 2015 and at the same time, was able to become eligible for PR application. I received my PR in July 2016 and then was able to go home to get my family over.

Weather was the first challenge. It still poses as a challenge until now as I still haven't acclimatized. Also, another challenge was when I worked under the LCP as I was stuck with the same employer until I was eligible to apply for the open permit.

What kept me moving forward was my faith—I would attend church services and would hang out with co-workers. I also have relatives who supported me.

Evelyn Serbout

Calgary

We immigrated to Alberta because this is where my husband and I got the same job that we held prior to moving to Canada. We first landed in Winnipeg, Manitoba, on July 31, 1997 where we joined our parents and siblings, who by then, have been in Manitoba for many years ahead of us.

In the beginning of November that year, just a little over three months after our arrival in Canada, my husband, Abdallah, was sought by the same company he worked with for so many years in the Middle East prior to immigrating to Canada, the Marriott Hotel Downtown Calgary. They offered him the Pastry Chef position and offered him a better salary than what he found in Winnipeg... As for me, I followed my husband of course. But later, it was here in the beautiful city of Calgary where my dream job became a reality. ..

Our children, at that time have already started in the primary school in Winnipeg. For their sake, my husband and I decided to stay behind and allow them to complete the school year. That decision gave us opportunity to spend time with my aging parents. My husband then lived on his own in Calgary. As soon as the school ended the following year, we moved to Calgary, Alberta, on June 30, 1998 from Winnipeg, Manitoba. We brought with us nothing but a car and used clothes to start our new life in Calgary.

When we were in Dubai waiting for our departure to Canada, a co-worker of mine, David, shared of his travel to the city of Calgary with me. He said it was where the 1988 Winter Olympic was held. He described it as a young, vibrant city and an exceedingly popular destination for skiers like him. ...

While my husband was living on his own in Calgary, he kept telling me every time we chatted on the phone, he was certain I will fall in love with the city. ... Therefore, on April of 1998, my husband bought my three kids and I plane tickets to visit him in Calgary to spend the Spring break... from the airplane window, as we descended in the Calgary airport, I could see the Rocky Mountains from afar. I also saw the high-rise buildings concentrated in one area. I uttered to myself, "that must be Calgary's city centre" ... I was impressed by what I saw but hid and contained the feelings when we saw my husband waiting at us in the arrival area. ...

"First impression counts a lot"! *My short visit in Calgary, Alberta, validated all of which my husband told me, the descriptions he gave were all true. I remember he took us for a walk along Stephen Avenue and we ended right in front of the blue glass triangle building called **"The City Hall"**. I stood up in front of the door and solemnly whispered to myself, "Dear Lord, I pray this is where I am going to end up working when we finally move here". That very moment was the defining moment for me because that short, quiet, and solemn prayer came true!*

... just two weeks after our move to Calgary, I went and registered to one of the employment agencies called Adecco. You see, when you are new to a place or a city, you should always take the initiative by researching who and where to go to find a job. Do not just depend on someone you know for help. Well, in our case anyway, we do not know any one in Calgary at that time. I took their computer test which I passed with flying colours. ... The

Monday following, I received a call from the agency saying a short-term work came up and they think I was the right fit for it. ...

The next day, my husband dropped me off an hour earlier to my appointment. Can you guess where? At "The City Hall"! I found out later that the work assignment was a three-month temporary position at the Planning and Building Department. ... As soon as I entered the building, my heart was pounding. I remember telling myself, "Oh my God, help me to do good in this job. I need to impress them; I need to work hard so that I can become full time staff". Long story short, the three months assignment was extended to six months. After six months, the position was formally posted. I applied, got accepted and as of December 14, 1998, I became a full-time City of Calgary employee.

...strategy that my husband and I used when we started experiencing rejection in the beginning was, "No matter what tomorrow brings, we will never compare the then and now"! We decided we will only focus our attention and strength to today, tomorrow, the future and whatever lies ahead of us". .. In Calgary, the first challenge I encountered was office bullying. I have never experienced it, not in the Philippines nor in the Middle East where I worked for years...All I knew and did was work extremely hard as I always do. I also built good relationships with everyone in the department...One major lesson I learned working with people from different countries is that understanding their values, traditions, and work styles will help tremendously in building a harmonious working relationship. These days, it is called Diversity and Inclusion.

For Family Togetherness

Linda Helwig

Lethbridge

I came to Canada with four other nurses. Life in Twillingate, Newfoundland and Labrador (NL), was simple yet full of adventure. Catching Capelin, a type of small fish, spawning on the beach at high tide, with bare hands. In the company of friends who were Mennonites, I helped plant potatoes for an elderly sick patient. I watched in awe as gigantic icebergs, swept by Labrador currents, settle in the harbour.

I was promoted a head nurse then moved to Montreal where life in La Belle province changed my perspective about other immigrants. Marriage to an engineer brought me back to NL, in St. John's. I received a Bachelor of Nursing Degree at Memorial University of NL after two years of studies. Having gained experience in the clinical areas of St Clare's Mercy Hospital, I joined the Faculty of Nursing at St Clare's Mercy Hospital School of Nursing. I was a pioneer, the first Filipino to have taught nursing in Newfoundland. It was a joy to teach eager students whose names were difficult for me to pronounce, to see fresh, young faces, whose eyes and hair were of different colors, something I was not used to seeing.

My achievements are shared and come from the successes of my students; and my children, who through their field of studies and choice of professions, maintained ties with the Philippines during their studies or careers. I

learned from my children. Their travels became mine. I learned from my daughter that 25 years after I stopped teaching and after leaving the province, former students sought her while on obstetrics check-up and related experiences while under my supervision. I moved to Lethbridge in February 2015 to be close to my son and his family (first grandchildren).

I've been active in the Filipino-Canadian communities wherever I have lived within the country. I was Treasurer of Philippine Benevolent Scholarship Society of Quebec (PBSSQ), whose scholars are now outstanding Canadians; Board member of Kalihukang Bisaya—a Cebuano-speaking organization, whose members embraced me as their own. Board member of Kabirup Hiligaynon Association of Quebec, and subsequently its president.

Connie Genilo

Calgary

December 1, 2001, I have four children and only one got married. Only one has two children. So what does that mean for me? I am 84 years old now, and I have two grandchildren that don't live with me. They were in Canada and I was in the Philippines. I could not stand it so I convinced my son to bring me to Alberta. My eldest child is an old maiden then the second one became a priest. I felt hopeless. I had my last chance left on my third child. My youngest son did not marry like the eldest. My grandchildren live with their other grandma. She constantly sends me pictures of them so I said to myself, "She's making me jealous, I'm going there", and I went.

I adjust easily because I travel a lot, especially in Europe, just everywhere. I have an itch to go out. Believe me. Even when I was in the Philippines, I didn't like to be growing up in Manila only to travel to one place, for example, Divisoria. No way, if you notice, when you are well-traveled you become well educated because you know a lot. If there is a conversation about places, you'll know how to contribute because you've experienced it.

I did not have hard time in Alberta because my son was here and he sponsored us because I said "I want to be a part of the growing up of my just two grandchildren." They live in a very beautiful community and we stayed comfortably for two years. I enjoyed being with my grandchildren.

When I said my farewells to my group in the Philippines, one of them asked, "Connie, is there a job waiting for you there?", to which I answered, "And why would I work?" She couldn't respond...

I know other races and their cultures well, so I did not experience cultural shock as a Filipino in Alberta...You should know how to speak without sounding offensive. Sometimes other people aren't as aware of this, so they can't express well and other parties will find their ways offensive.

I had a political life in the Philippines. It helped that I am an outgoing person.

Richard Tumanon

Calgary

I arrived with my family in Calgary, Alberta on May 1, 1980 in pursuit for a better life, a better work and to pursue a professional career. Way back in the Philippines, I graduated with a Bachelor of Laws Degree from San Beda College of Law, passed the Philippine Bar Examination and a practicing Attorney until my immigration to Canada.

I was employed by the Solicitor General Office of the Province of Alberta as a Clerk in the Court of Appeal of Alberta, Judicial District of Calgary. At that time, I was one of the very few minority employees. With dedication and hard work, everyone in the workplace began to respect me and during my resignation (to pursue my study), they organized the biggest Farewell Party in the Court House ever afforded to an employee.

During my employment, I worked for my accreditation and was required to write nine Canadian legal subjects. Having successfully complied, I was qualified to write the Bar Examination and passed. On February 12, 1988, I was admitted to the Law Society of Alberta and I took my oath as Barrister and Solicitor. I have the distinction of being the First Filipino Lawyer to practice in Southern Alberta (Calgary) and the Third Filipino Lawyer in the whole Province.

At the early years of my legal practice, I joined Partnership with several local lawyers. In year 2000, I formed my own Law Firm with my son and daughter as partners and associates. In sum, my migration to Alberta was a good move. My three children graduated with University and College Diplomas and Certificates. Each is presently practicing their respective profession.

Leni Atienza and Benito Atienza

Calgary

Benito: *I worked in the Middle East before moving to Canada, and I could say that it was really hard to work and be away from my wife and my kids. That's why I migrated to Alberta, Canada, with the aim to work and be with my family at the same time. We all arrived in Alberta on July 24, 1995. It was very good. When we moved, Calgary was a growing city. I was intending to settle in Vancouver, but it is an expensive place to live in. I was advised by friends that Calgary, Alberta, is an ideal place to live...despite my degree in the Philippines as a Mechanical Engineer and the work experiences I had in the Middle East...it wasn't recognized.*

I decided to upgrade my education and enrolled in one of the Technical institutions here in Alberta. I studied for two years and I've been fortunate enough to work with a very good company.

Leni: *I migrated to Canada together with my husband and four kids on July 24, 1995. As my husband worked for so many years in the Middle East, and my kids and I are always away from him, we decided to go to Canada to be together and our children achieve their goals in life. Our migration to Alberta was a success. My*

husband and I were successful with our work. Also, we were able to support all our four kids very well...Thankfully, I didn't experience any racism at work. I know my English isn't so perfect...I am good at getting along with other people. I felt respected.

I took up courses so I could gain a certificate and I could be more qualified in my field. Here in Canada, certificates and diplomas are important and that is what employers usually look for. I'm also a prayerful person. I am thankful to God that I overcame all the challenges in life.

For Beter Future

Giselle Quezon General

Edmonton

I came to Alberta, in the city of Edmonton, in July 2008. One year before, I arrived in St. Catharines, Ontario, at 16 years old as a high school student from the Philippines. Initially, I was sponsored by my aunt to come to Canada, as my brother and I became orphans as children back in 1999. My relatives whom I live with moved to Edmonton to find better jobs and told me to come along as they are renting off their house. It was out of necessity to help with my future.

It was abrupt and unexpected for me. For teenagers, drastic life changes can be difficult, because making friends and imagining one's future are important. I arrived in Alberta, in Edmonton, in the middle of summer and I was motivated to go to university by September. Enrolling and figuring out schooling transfer credits, finding a job, getting students loans, and learning how to navigate Edmonton was initially overwhelming. I managed to find a retail job in the summer and enroll in Open Studies classes at the University of Alberta, Grant MacEwan College, and Athabasca University all during that one year, with the goal of applying for the University of Alberta School of Business the following year. I managed to get into the program, and everything accelerated from there. It's been an adventure for the next decade or so.

My main challenge is not having a reference point for practical day to day experiences...I felt that I was navigating all these new experiences by myself. ...receiving guidance as I start these endeavors could have helped me be successful much faster and overcome challenges with ease and confidence.

I overcame many of these challenges by being proactive, eager to learn and approaching things with curiosity. I did a lot of research to fill the gaps in my knowledge, particularly topics that are taboo in Filipino culture such as reproductive health, mental health and assertiveness, interracial relationships, budgeting and more....I have to learn the concepts of self-compassion, self-forgiveness, and being trauma-informed, in order to heal from the failures I faced and turn them into learning opportunities.

Emma Duque Valdez Villanueva

Calgary

In July 1966, my friend and booster, Nela Garcellano nee Leano and I got our visa entry to Canada. The embassy advised us to leave the country towards the last week of August just before the start of the school year for our own welfare. However, our travel agent manipulated our ticket for an earlier departure date so that we could take advantage of visiting places en route to Canada like Hong Kong, Tokyo, Hawaii, and San Francisco...

My journey afforded me to sponsor some of my family members. My mother, Julia Duque Valdez, a widow, (my dad was deprived of life during the Japanese-American war in the Philippines), came over for two years, and so with Bert's parents, Adam and Lourdes Villanueva*, but the cold winters were unfavourable for the elderlies. ..*

As the saying goes, "Life is what you make it" and I made my choices!

... At dusk, on August 25, 1966, the secretary of the County of Foremost fetched us at the Lethbridge airport. The long 70 mile drive to Foremost crushed us emotionally...no lights, pitch-black, no buildings, only flat prairie wheat field with the occasional appearance of tiny lit combines as the farmers were rushing to finish their autumn wheat harvest...Coming from a boisterous crowded city where we boogied, did the twist, and shopped, Foremost was a real shocker!

Jovelita Gacelos

Edmonton

I came to Canada November 2007 as a temporary foreign worker. I worked as a food counter attendant for the company-owned KFC and Taco Bell in Edmonton. Being company-owned, I could work in any location. I was looking for better opportunities for my family. My husband's cousin had opened the opportunity for us to come here. At that time, there was mass hiring in Canada for a lot of fast food workers. I remember there were 16 Filipinos who were at the same flight as me from the same hiring agency. Every week, there were a lot of Filipinos coming here and have the same story.

In the beginning, everything with work has been smooth. Our employers were very great and work was good. After a year, most of us working at the company got promoted as skilled workers. I was able to adapt very well with the culture but there had been instances when I encountered racist people but this did not affect my well-being or my work.

In the beginning, my path to permanent residency, immigration Canada has changed policies multiple times which affected my application timelines. The requirement was completion of two years as a skilled worker. I submitted my application based on this requirement. However, our company HR would submit the LMO for our work permit application as we get our promotion. This has caused my work permit eligibility dates to overlap. I had to delay the coming of my family here and hire an immigration consulting company to submit my application.

I feared that all these changes to immigration policies would affect my family's application and my PR application. In 2014, we were able to obtain our PR and I had moved to work at Naralta in Fort McMurray. Family came here during that time as well...It took seven years before we were finally reunited because of the changes of immigration policies.

I always kept a positive mindset and hoped that everything will work out well. Also, my friends and family have been my support system.

Nitz Mano

Stettler

I migrated to Canada to seek more opportunities and enhance my education. Living here for quite a while makes me realize life is not easy without your family but gave me more chance to prove to myself that I can survive outside of my comfort zone. First set foot in this beautiful country on December 4, 2012.

Migration to Canada is not easy though compared to other countries. There are many steps one has to take in order to successfully apply and get approved for Canada Immigration. In my case, I studied food and beverage service for five months and trained in a five-star hotel for 2000 hours. Had to pass my exams to get my certificates and wait for almost two years to find an employer and working as approved by immigration.

I encountered lots of challenges. First is homesickness. This is my first time to be separated with my family. I am very thankful that Filipinos in every corner of this world are so welcoming. Racism is the second one and I learned how to accept and respect everyone's points of view when you are in a foreign land. Language barrier, cultural shock, and the weather too are common.

I overcome these challenges by attending orientation program...Learning how to deal these hurdles take sometime to find solution (not really a solution but the right way how to handle when caught in a challenging situation). I enrolled to enhance the career that I wanted to settle in and luckily enough to finished it through the support of my employer.

For Peace and Stability

Barry Alvarez

Lethbridge

At first, I didn't have any intention of migrating to Alberta or to any parts of the world. Being a graduate of a state university, my desire was to serve my country by giving back veterinary services to rural communities, particularly in Alfonso, Cavite. After working for three years in the Philippines as a field veterinarian, it was the

lack of leadership and political instability of our government that made me decide to seek migration. It was a nice spring April weather of 2005 when I arrived in Calgary.

The course of migration was not easy for me. Arriving in a foreign land without family or friends was difficult because of limited emotional and social support. Despite these challenges, my employer, Maple Leaf farms, assisted us in securing our nomination for Provincial Nominee Program of Alberta. From then, I applied for permanent residency, and eventual Canadian citizenship...I attended Bredin Institute in Calgary for foreign-trained veterinary program which helped me obtain my veterinary licensure here in Canada. ...After working as an associate veterinarian for nine years, I was able to open the first Filipino-owned veterinary clinic in Lethbridge, Coulee Veterinary Clinic.

Rufus Tidalgo

Calgary

That was 50 years ago. I initially moved here to get married and then next thing you know; I didn't go back to our home country. I decided to stay here because I got tired of my job in the Philippines as a police officer. I wanted a peaceful life because in my past job, we were always running after criminals. It was a tiring job and demanded a lot physically and mentally.

Moving to a province without family, I found that my adjustment went smoothly. Like I said, I came here to build my own family. Nonetheless, I did not have problems with adjusting to the new environment. In 1969, it was easy to get used to the province. I got employed after a few months of getting married. Something that was different to my previous work as a police officer.

When I came here there were only 68 Filipinos in the city. I worked almost every day when I first moved here and I did not encounter problems...I involved myself in the Filipino community from the very start until now. I organized around ten successful organizations. Our group was very close at the time because there were only a few of us. We would have fellowship after work or whenever we are free. Our close ties to our fellow Filipino people helped me with becoming accustomed to Alberta.

Ida Beltran Lucila

Edmonton

We were established in our respective careers and we would be giving up so much with a move to Canada. However, concerns with regards to security and political and economic stability, especially for our children, prompted us to apply for permanent residency under the Skilled Worker Program. Neither of us had ever been to Canada, and we did not know a single person in the country.

My husband and I had our dance company in Manila, the Chameleon Dance Company. Soon after we submitted our application for Canada, our dance company was invited to perform at the Klondike Days presented by Northlands (2002). We were in Edmonton for a month to perform, and represent the Philippines. This time allowed us to experience life in Edmonton, and develop friendships that we decided to make Edmonton our destination instead of Toronto.

In 2005, we moved to Edmonton as permanent residents and went through the hardships that most immigrants encounter: adjustment with the climate; absence of household help; loneliness; trying to be strong for the children despite anxieties faced with regards to settlement. I accepted the first job offered to me, a call centre job and night shift. We had a young son and we worked odd hours to ensure that there will always be a parent with him at home.

True passion is defined as something where you put more energy than is required. And the arts is something that fulfills me even without monetary compensation. I am fortunate that all our voluntary efforts and contributions have been recognized by various organizations. I have been the recipient of: City of Edmonton Citation Award for Arts and Culture (2019); Golden Balangay Awards for Excellence in Arts and Culture (2019); Edmonton Artists Trust Fund (2017); and the Hiyas Award by the Karilagan Dance Society (2017). I have had a fulfilling career as an artist in the Philippines and I use my experience and passion to advocate, and raise the profile of the Filipino, and to empower, through arts and culture. And in the process, this has led me to establish the Philippine Arts Council.

Joel Dizon

Calgary

We decided to migrate to Alberta for our boys. We wanted a better future than what they could have had in the Middle East or back home. We arrived in December of 2010.

Our migration to Alberta was a bit of a challenge with respect to the logistics and timing. I had to complete project commitments before I could move permanently. The job offer I accepted was with the same company I worked for in the Middle East. But eventually, we had to meet the deadline for our entry to Canada. I made sure I settled my family with the proper accommodation and my boys registered into schools before I had to return to the Middle East. I was away for a year and in 2012, finally joined them.

We had not really experienced the challenges as a Filipino here in Alberta as compared to the discrimination in the Middle East.

These stories are not only unique but also reflect shared patterns of migration among Filipinos in Canada, in general, and in Alberta, in particular. There are more unique stories in each of the personal journeys directly from the Philippines, from third countries, or from secondary inter-provincial migration in Canada. The numerous submissions from individual

contributors about their life-changing journeys to the province demonstrate the spirit of endurance, solidarity, and aspirations for a better tomorrow for themselves and their families in Canada, in the Philippines, or wherever they may be



CHAPTER 6

OVERVIEW OF FILIPINO COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS IN ALBERTA

VICTORIO M. DIMAGIBA, JR

In September 2020, the Philippine Consulate General in Calgary released an open letter to several Filipino community groups and individuals covering a very wide spectrum of voices in the province of Alberta. By October 2021, a total number of 96 submissions were received by the Philippine Consulate General in Calgary; 80 submissions were by individuals, 16 were organizations. Some of the submissions were jointly sent by individuals, who also happened to be leaders of Filipino associations.

The range of years of the earliest migrations goes as far back as the 1960's and up to at least the mid to later 2010's. Submissions by individuals reflected a higher number of females, with 53 identified, as opposed to male respondents who accounted for about 23 respondents. Four individuals did not wish to be identified as either male or female. Many of the respondents are active members of Filipino community organizations.

While we cannot say that the submitted responses are truly reflective of the total story of the migration of our Filipino nationals into Alberta, they offer a glimpse of what kind of challenges, at moments in time, our Filipino communities face while starting in the province. In this section, I present an overview of the geographic distribution of Filipino community groups; types of clubs, associations, and groups; and the Filipino community post-COVID-19 pandemic.

Geographic Distribution of Filipino Community groups

Based on the list of Filipino community groups of the Philippine Consulate General in Calgary as of March 2023, a majority of the groups that are listed (whether association, sports, or business) are located in Calgary (47). This is then followed by several other groups which state that they are located in Edmonton (18). The figures are therefore consistent with the trend of the number of Filipinos residing in these two cities, which according to Statistics Canada's 2021 census, holds the two highest numbers of Filipinos in the province (89,055 in Calgary and 80,760 in Edmonton). Airdrie, Banff, Hinton, Jasper, Red Deer, and High River, according to our mailing list, have at least two Filipino community organizations listed. There are also organizations in Okotoks, Lethbridge, Grande Prairie, and Fort McMurray.

Based on the top geographic distribution of Filipinos in Alberta, it stands to reason that locations such as Grande Prairie should have more than one community group as compared to other communities like Banff and Jasper, which do not even register in the top ten locales where Filipinos live in the province. One can suppose that some communities may be more unified than others, therefore creating fewer community groups.

The types of groups that are present in Alberta, specifically in Calgary and Edmonton, are wide and varied. Some are social organizations (e.g., fraternities, provincial affiliations), educational (i.e., UPAA Calgary and Edmonton chapters), senior groups (e.g., Tamaraw, Calgarian Seniors), religious groups (e.g., El Shaddai, Filipino Calgary Society of the Diocese of Calgary). The large number of groups is reflective of not only the bigger Filipino population in these areas, but also the diverse interest and needs of the Filipinos residing in the metropolitan areas. Associations in the other parts of the province seem to be catch-all in terms of their goals and objectives (i.e., generically calling themselves 'Filipino Community/ Association' and attaching the name of the locale). We can surmise that in smaller communities the Filipino community organization's objectives tend to be more general given the lesser number of members.

Clubs, Associations, Groups

Organizations, in whatever setting, are considered as social associations, freely joined in by a set of individuals, and dedicated to a particular interest or activity. The diversity of these clubs, associations, and societies can range from those dealing with sports, or if you came from the same school in the Philippines, or a member of a fraternal association (such as the Masons), which shows the richness of human society's need to connect in a myriad of ways. It is no surprise that Filipinos in Alberta seem to be social as evidenced by the information provided by our respondents when it comes to being members of a formal or loose grouping. A need to

belong, and collectively work together for a common purpose, seems to be important among Filipino groups.

As far back as the 1960s, Filipinos tended to congregate and establish networks with one another. Some of these groups were informal in nature, i.e., having regular get-togethers over meals to de-stress from the challenges they faced in their new surroundings in Alberta. These bonds appear to have helped Filipino migrants to have a sense of *bayanihan* (community spirit), far from their loved ones back home in the Philippines. Over time, more formal associations were slowly established as the population became more diversified and varied and their interests no longer solely rested on the need for camaraderie.

Alumni associations, such as the UP Alumni Association of Edmonton and the Mapua Alumni Association, have been geared towards not only camaraderie of individuals who came from the same schools but also provide them resources and training opportunities (e.g., seminars, webinars, etc.) that are designed to enhance their life skills while working in Alberta. Another aspect that these organizations seem to also do is give back through their various programs and activities such as scholarships for students in the Philippines and fundraising after disasters. At the same time, these organizations also seem to be advocates for Philippine culture, having taken the lead in organizing festivals in their locality. UPAA Edmonton, in its submission, claims that it was one of the original proponents for the proclamation of Filipino Heritage Month in the province of Alberta, Canada. Other groups have on their own led their local communities in celebrating Philippine Independence Day, with a variety of activities. In Calgary, the Philippine Independence Day Organizing Committee Calgary or PIOCC is instrumental in holding the annual flag-raising ceremony in Calgary's City Hall, a tradition that continues to this day.

Other Filipino community groups, however, have more practical and simpler objectives. The various senior associations, mentioned in the various responses gathered by the Philippine Consulate General in Calgary, are a natural offshoot of a growing population of retired first-generation, or in some exceptional cases, second-generation migrants, into Alberta. Most of the responses by these groups seem to gear their organization towards keeping their members active and fit despite their age (e.g., exercises, Zumba, yoga), and other fun activities (e.g., picnics, field trips). A practical activity that they do is aid their members, especially when they are sick or have passed away, by 'passing the hat' or giving monetary contributions to its members who are in need.

That is not to say that Filipinos only join or are members of one group only. Anecdotal evidence, when attending Filipino community gatherings, seems to show that in some cases, Filipinos are members of one or more groups. A typical Filipino community event, such as a gala or holiday dinner, invariably has several tables reserved for some organizations that are

considered by the inviting group as their ‘partners’ or ‘sister-organizations.’ with some members being officers in one or the other club. One can attribute common interests or friendships with individuals in the other organization as a contributing factor of the Filipino community members being affiliated with multiple groups.

The functions of Filipino groups, based on the respondents, are all designed specifically for sections of the Filipino community in Alberta. A glance at their priorities and their programs may seem to show that there is no difference between their group and such organizations of Filipino migrants whether they be in the United States, Singapore, or London. What would make it distinct is of course the traditions they have developed along the way and the kind of camaraderie they have built over the years with one another, given the more permanent nature of their stay in Alberta, than say a place like Dubai, Hong Kong, or Kuwait with temporary residency.

Filipino Community Post COVID-19 Pandemic

Since the conclusion of the collection of data from Filipino community associations, Alberta and the rest of the world had experienced the brunt of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic created an environment wherein clubs and organizations were unable to conduct meetings or hold their annual activities due to various public health mandates imposed by the provincial and federal governments.

While most of the restrictions remained in place in 2021, there was a gradual loosening of these mandates, such that community groups began restarting their activities for their members and the community at large. Some community groups, like the Binhi ng Lahi Folk Dance Troupe, managed to transition to virtual performances and even co-partnered with the Philippine Consulate General in Calgary in a series of webinars on Philippine culture.

The Philippine Consulate General in Calgary collaborates with Filipino community groups in hosting events and projects to promote Philippine culture, heritage, and identity. The most significant was, of course, the construction of the Dr. José Rizal Monument located in Nose Creek Regional Park in Airdrie, Alberta. It was a project initiated and led by Consul General Zaldy B. Patron and implemented in partnership with the Airdrie City Council, Filipino Airdrie Association (FAA), and the Rizal Monument Project Team (composed of seven individuals that Consul General Patron formed and headed).

Aside from the corporate and individual sponsors, many community organizations supported the Rizal Monument project. They included the FAA, Philippine Cultural Center Foundation (PCCF), Mapua Alumni Association Alberta Chapter, Calgary Golfers Association,

APO Alumni Association of Alberta, UP Epsilon Chi Fraternity Alumni Canada, Filipino Overseas Grateful Workers Association, PIOCC-SKS, Adamson U Alumni Association, UP Alumni Association of Alberta, Filipino Women's League, and AKP Society of Canada.

These groups recognized the significance of the Rizal Monument, which has the distinction of being the first Philippine monument, the first monument of the Philippine national hero, and the first Philippine Historical Site in Alberta.⁵⁸ By contributing to the completion of the Rizal Monument, these Filipino community organizations saw themselves as being part of history.

Community organizations in Alberta also supported the advocacy of the Philippine Consulate General in Calgary for the easier recognition of the credentials of the Filipino internationally educated nurses in Alberta. One of the outcomes of this advocacy, which was also led by Consul General Zaldy B. Patron was the establishment of the Philippine Canadian Nurses Association (PCNA) in May 2022. The PCNA became a partner of the Philippine Consulate General in Calgary in advocating for reforms in the healthcare sector and a champion for Filipino healthcare workers.

Philippine business associations are also important partners of the Philippine Consulate General in Calgary, as they support its various economic diplomacy initiatives. Notably, these groups lent their support for these major projects of the Philippine Consulate General in Calgary – the Filipino Restaurant Month in Canada (April 2022 and April 2023), Philippine Trade Expo (July-August 2022), and the Philippine Franchising Webinar (November 2022).

In the field of education, the PCCF and the Filipino Canadian Saranay Association of Alberta, two Filipino community groups working to promote the Philippine language and culture in Alberta, partnered with the Philippine Consulate General in Calgary in organizing the first Conference on Filipino Language and Culture in October 2022. The National Commission for Culture and the Arts in the Philippines supported this conference.

As an active partner of the Filipino community in promoting Philippine culture and heritage and the Filipino identity, the Philippine Consulate General in Calgary also played a part in the formation of Philippine Folk Dance Society in Alberta. It also organized two one-month painting exhibits in 2022 and 2023 and organized the Philippine Independence Day Masses from 2021 to 2023 in Calgary and Airdrie and co-sponsored the first Simbang Gabi in Calgary.

⁵⁸ The Dr. Jose Rizal Monument in Airdrie, Alberta, is listed in the National Historical Commission of the Philippines' National Registry of Historic Sites and Structures - https://philhistoricsites.nhcp.gov.ph/registry_database/jose-rizal-1861-1896-2/

Most Filipino community organizations have resumed their regular programs and activities, which cater to the interests of their members, since the end of the pandemic. However, some community groups are going farther by broadening their scope of activities beyond the needs of their members. This is a positive development as we see many community organizations working for the benefit of the whole Filipino community in the province.

Concluding Thoughts

The varied responses of the Filipino community organizations in Alberta show a unique story from those of other Filipino migrants' stories from other communities. In Alberta, the Filipino community is more permanent compared to those who are in Hong Kong and the Middle East. They have made a conscious decision to stay in Alberta, specifically, and in Canada, generally, for the long term. This gives them a strong motivation to develop their roots. Filipino organizations in Alberta realize the importance of having stronger networks with like-minded individuals from their home country. It may be seen as retaining familiar ties or strengthening their links with the home country and, in some cases, creating associative families of their own beyond biological bonds.

The general feeling of acceptance has therefore led most of our respondents to give back to their communities within Alberta, in whatever little ways possible - be it running a program in their local school, serving in their churches or places of worship, or, as cited above, founding and serving in community groups that have a desire and a mission to be of great benefit to more Filipinos. Filipinos in Alberta appear committed to being part of the story of the province, by contributing their talents, resources, and time to making it truly their home.



CHAPTER 7

BUILDING COMMUNITIES: ACTIVITIES AND RELEVANCE OF FILIPINO ORGANIZATIONS IN ALBERTA

ROXANNA BALBIDO EPE

The discussions on building communities are based on the available information submitted by eight Filipino organizations in Alberta, Canada. Four of the eight identified Filipino communities are senior citizen associations: 1) Filipino Calgarian Senior Citizens Association, 2) Filipino Senior Citizens Association of Calgary, 3) Golden Generation Seniors Club of Calgary, and 4) Young Once Seniors Association of Calgary. The other four are the BABAE: Council of Filipina-Canadian Women, Diaryo Alberta Society (DAS), Filipino Catholic Society of the Diocese of Calgary (FCSDC), and University of the Philippines Alumni Association Edmonton (UPAAE).

This section describes how Filipino immigrants have built communities in Alberta. The first part reveals the nature and profile of the eight Filipino organizations including when they were organized and their respective strategic frameworks that indicate their vision, mission, and objectives. The factors that motivated the founders to establish their association are shown in the second part. The type of activities they organized or sponsored and their relevance to the Filipino community in the third part. The last part focuses on the impact of these activities on the larger Canadian community and moving forward.

Filipino Organizations in Alberta: Strategic Frameworks

A summary of the vision, mission, and objectives of eight Filipino organizations is presented in this section.

The BABAE: Council of Filipina-Canadian Women is one of the Filipino-Canadian communities registered with the Alberta Societies that was established on September 17, 2003. It was founded by six like-minded Filipina migrants led by Dolly Castillo, Marichu Antonio, Maribel Javier, Connie Raz, Joanne Zulueta-Schultz, and Annette Lengyel. Building a community has been a personal pursuit of these women wherever they are destined. Many of them engaged in grassroots social work initiatives in the Philippines and have worked in immigrant-serving organizations⁵⁹ in Canada. They observed and perceived the inadequate voice and representation of women leaders in a patriarchal society with men-dominated leadership. In their home country, most Filipina-Canadian immigrants are professionals. Thus, their talents and gifts need to be optimized within the community in Canada. The organization's name BABAE is the Filipino term for WOMAN with all her dignity and integrity. In some colloquial usage, it means the 'other woman' or 'mistress'. It is in the original context that the organization got its name, to elevate the word BABAE or WOMAN and its original meaning to what it was meant to be, as a dignified person with integrity.

The organization has envisioned *that Filipino-Canadian women have successfully integrated into diverse backgrounds and become strong leaders*. It is committed to carrying out its mission, *to nurture and empower Filipino-Canadian women*. Towards fulfilling its mission as a non-profit women's volunteer community, its efforts are on social initiatives. It is guided by its objectives and four pillars of core strategies that focus on *leadership, support groups, partnerships, and education/training*. The organization intends to foster leadership and collaborative roles with other organizations in developing and promoting the technical and soft skills of Filipino-Canadian women. The second objective is to provide support groups and help through referrals for Filipino-Canadian women who are coping with common issues of newcomers and long-term residents like resettlement, employment, health⁶⁰, family conflict, parenting, and others. To build partnerships and networking through collaboration and coordination with the municipal, provincial, and federal government agencies, and private organizations in addressing issues affecting the Filipino-Canadian women and their families. The organization's start-up goals were built on partnership

⁵⁹Many of the BABAE: Council of Filipina-Canadian Women founding members work in immigrant-serving organizations like the Centre for Newcomers (CFN, formerly Calgary Mennonite Centre for Newcomers), Action Dignity (AD, formerly Ethnocultural Council of Calgary), Calgary Catholic Immigration Society (CIS), Women's Resource Centre.

⁶⁰ Health issues can be physical, mental, and emotional in nature which can be attributed to environmental/ weather, culture, and economic shocks experienced by the Filipino migrants and their families.

and collaboration with similar organizations. The partnership model rested more on the promotion and marketing of events, and active participation either as facilitators, testimonial sharers, or attendees. This third objective also includes participation in fora that are relevant in designing social programs. The last objective is to disseminate appropriate information using modern technology by providing platforms, information exchange, and conversation hubs for updated and accurate information by recognized experts and role models of the different sectors in the community.

The Diaryo Alberta Society (DAS) started in 2009 as the media arm of Canadians of Filipino descent, Filipino immigrants, and temporary foreign workers in Alberta and Saskatchewan. It was formerly the Diaryo Filipino (DF) that evolved into Diaryo Alberta Society in 2018 after it gained an increasing number of collaborations with individuals, businesses, professionals, Filipino, and other ethnic associations. The society's vision is *to be the best-sought media- and non-profit community-based society for the promotion and advancement of immigrants/ newcomers, particularly Filipino-Albertans in Canada and abroad.* To realize the main goal and future direction, it carries out two missions for its dual legal personality. As a media organization, it is aimed at providing quality and cost-effective media (print, broadcast, and digital) platform, information, and opportunity resource society. Its mission as a non-profit community-based society is to lead, empower, and add value to its members and partners. Its mandate is to adhere to diversity and reach more communities.

The Filipino Catholic Society of the Diocese of Calgary (FCSDC) was established in 1986 as a small informal group, originally called The Filipino Catholic Community Association. The spiritual adviser was Rev. Fr. Raul Ranola. It was formally registered with the Alberta Society Act in 1987 led by Tigs Tidalgo. It has evolved and changed its original name to the Filipino Catholic Society of the Diocese of Calgary after its application for charitable organization was approved by the Canadian government through Revenue Canada on February 15, 1990. It was spearheaded by a group of 16 Filipino-Canadians (Tigs Tidalgo et al), who formally elected the officers and enhanced the formulation of the organization's fundamental operating principles, rules, and procedures. The elected president, Betty A. Struder, her husband Dennis, and Fr. Oloy Lawenko were instrumental in crafting the organization's Constitution and By-Laws. In 1994, Rev. Fr. Rudy Badiola was appointed by Bishop Paul O'Byrne as the pastor of the Filipino community. It was also in that year when the Filipino Mass was finally celebrated in Tagalog through the coordination of Val Penaranda.

The FCSDC has envisioned the least fortunate and the needy can rise to their feet again and restore human dignity. Its mission is to provide appropriate and timely responses to the vulnerable and deprived based on spiritual strengthening and extending their vision to the home country (Philippines). Realizing its vision and mission through evangelization and assistance, the FCSDC is making strides based on three objectives. The first objective of evangelization is to

provide support to those who can capably carry on the responsibility of spreading God's word – striving, eager, young men, blessed with the calling. The second objective focuses on the support for orphanages and street children, the vulnerable and marginalized. The third objective is to extend humanitarian assistance to disaster-affected communities. Three decades is an amazing accomplishment of posterity and perseverance. As a charitable organization, the FCSDC has evolved and is evolving to the radiant future with a continuum of growth and development, unlike any formative process.

The University of the Philippines Alumni Association Edmonton (UPAAE) was founded in 2013. It started many years back with a small group of UP alumni who got together because of a common bond that connects them. The association has the vision of promoting the Philippine culture and heritage, supporting education and skills training, and fostering a welcoming community for UP Alumni and all Filipinos alike in Edmonton and nearby areas. It serves as a meaningful medium through which the members can collectively channel their resources to achieve the following objectives:

To promote education and skills training through (a) regular delivery of programs to benefit the community, including but not limited to programs on language financial literacy, and cultural awareness; and (b) scholarships and/or bursaries to equip beneficiaries with training and skills that will enable them to be more productive members of the community.

To undertake projects that will support and assist the community in areas of need (e.g., legal, socio-economic, and the like).

To support the promotion of Philippine culture and heritage; and collaborate with other organizations to this effect.

To foster fellowship and cooperation among the members of UPAAE as they plan and implement projects and programs that will benefit the members, the UPAAE, and the community at large.

To provide a channel of communication between the University of the Philippines and the members of the Association.

The Filipino Calgarian Senior Citizens Association was founded in 1982 with 200 members. Its main objective is to share happiness from one person to the whole group. The members enjoy the fellowship with each other. The organization listens to feedback from other members to be incorporated into other activities.

The Filipino Senior Citizens Association of Calgary started in 1969. Its main objective is simply to build camaraderie among the members. In their old age, they have more time for themselves.

The Golden Generation Seniors Club of Calgary is one of the Filipino communities incorporated in Alberta, Canada on March 18, 2002. Its main objective is to provide social and recreational activities for Filipino-Canadian senior citizens. The club has the following specific objectives:

To facilitate programs and activities for the senior citizens' well-being;

To provide nursing care support and facilities for the elderly that underscore the first-generation Filipino immigrants' tradition, language, culture, and lifestyle;

To raise funds and solicit donations for their support programs intended for needy seniors and those elderly in distress;

To arrange and conduct information, education, and communications (IEC) activities like lectures on social, educational, economic, health and on any subject of senior citizens' interest, fora, workshops, and seminars that promote awareness raising on senior citizens' rights and obligations;

To encourage and motivate senior citizens to stay active in society;

To establish and maintain a library and reading room;

To manage, lease, dispose, or sell the property of the club; and

To acquire land and construct a place for senior citizens' use.

The club wants to help senior citizens. It "doesn't matter if they're in the streets we will support them".⁶¹

The Young Once Seniors Association of Calgary started when more Filipino immigrants came to Alberta. The main objective of the association is to help and support its members. Material, financial, emotional, and spiritual support are extended to those members in need or in distress.

⁶¹ The respondent or source of the quote is unknown.

Motivating Factors in Building Filipino Organizations

There are eight thematic reasons or factors that motivated the founders to establish the Filipino organizations:

- Address issues and challenges of Filipinos and other migrants
- Spirit of volunteerism, care, and compassion
- Embracing inclusivity and diversity in community service
- Reliving cultural identity, connections, and belongingness of Filipinos in Canada
- Capture media audience and partnerships in Alberta and Saskatchewan
- Fellowship and socialization needs of senior citizens
- Clamor for monthly Filipino Mass
- Strong faith, evangelization, and assistance for the vulnerable

Address Issues and Challenges of Filipinos and Other Migrants

The founders and members of Filipino organizations in Alberta are aware of the social issues, struggles, and challenges faced by Filipinos and other migrants. They have their own lived experience as immigrants, who have navigated the adjustments and struggles of Filipinos and other migrants in coping with the cultural barriers, stigma, deskilling, and the overarching issues related to social and economic integration, access to social services and employment, racialization, inequality, inequity, and belongingness that greatly affect them. All these have paved them to form support and informal networks that also led to the formal organization of the different Filipino–Canadian communities in Alberta. In the case of the BABAE: Council of Filipina–Canadian Women with their lived experience as immigrants and have been immersed in providing social services to newcomers and other migrants have seen the urgent need to build an association that focuses on the social issues of unique women.

Spirit of Volunteerism, Care, and Compassion

Being able to meet and connect with some Filipino immigrants who have the same passion, social awareness, and sensitivity to the challenges and opportunities of migrants, their care for the Filipinos and vulnerable groups (e.g., newcomers, women, elderly or senior citizens, and children), and their compassion are the drivers of building communities in their newfound place called home or community away from home. The willingness of co-Filipino immigrants to selflessly share their resources like time, knowledge, services, skills, expertise, networks, and whatever form

of material or financial assistance has encouraged like-minded Filipinos in Canada to converge as a collective with a purpose.

The volunteering, empathy, care, and compassion for Filipinos and other migrants have motivated the initiators or founders and members of the different organizations to build their respective communities in Alberta. These are demonstrated through the implementation of initiatives, interventions, or activities; resource mobilizations; building and establishing partnerships; and strengthening the support networks of the Filipino communities such as the BABAE: Council of Filipina–Canadian Women, Diaryo Alberta Society, Filipino Catholic Society of the Diocese of Calgary (FCSDC), University of the Philippines Alumni Association Edmonton (UPAAE), Filipino Calgarian Senior Citizens Association, Filipino Senior Citizens Association of Calgary, Golden Generation Seniors Club of Calgary, and Young Once Seniors Association of Calgary.

Embracing Inclusivity and Diversity in Community Service

The BABAE: Council of Filipina–Canadian Women organization values and promotes inclusion and intergenerational membership from 16 years old and older women with cross-sectional fields of specialization, and steadfast commitment to community service.

The Diaryo Alberta Society (DAS) thrives with diversity and inclusion. Their contemporary approach to staying relevant is to dedicate their best and work with various funding options for each member's group, business, and organization. Thus, they are reaching their target audience and benefiting their communities, organizations, and supporting businesses.

The Filipino Calgarian Senior Citizens Association has valued inclusion. The organization is not allowed to refuse any senior citizen as a member.

Reliving Cultural Identity, Connections, and Belongingness of Filipinos in Canada

The regular activities of Filipino communities such as the commemoration of the month-long Philippine Heritage CARAVAN, promotion of the Philippine culture and arts on various occasions and activities, featuring and recognition of Filipino achievers, partnership and capacity building, meetings, socialization, and other activities done annually in the province are ways of reliving the cultural identity, connections, and belongingness of Filipino immigrants, newcomers, foreign workers, and those of Filipino descent in Alberta, Canada. The Diaryo Alberta Society (DAS) with its collaborators and the other Filipino organizations in Alberta and Canada have continued carrying out various activities and partnerships to remain grounded in their roots, strengthening the needed support system of Filipino immigrants and those of Filipino descent.

Communicating through the Pilipino language is a way of reliving the heritage and shared traditions among Filipinos in Canada. It is a means of reminding the Filipinos and the Filipino-Canadians of their roots and cultural identity while adapting to the Canadian culture. It is very unlikely to forget one's heritage because it defines one's identity and origin. Thus, using the local dialect or the Pilipino language in social relations with Filipinos in Canada facilitates connections and belongingness in a foreign land.

The experience of the BABAE: Council of Filipina-Canadian Women volunteers who encourage Filipino newcomers and long-term residents to use the Pilipino language or the mother tongue in accessing their organization's social services have facilitated their connections and belongingness, dissolved the cultural barriers, and re-clarified the notions of stigma. The founding officers and members of the University of the Philippines Alumni Association Edmonton (UPAAE) worked hard to find and bring together UP alumni and general members who share the association's vision which is stated in their strategic framework in the first section that focuses on promoting the Philippines culture and heritage including support programs that would always remind them of their racial identity by reliving the Filipino culture, making connections, and ensuring belongingness as immigrants in Canada.

Capture Media Audience and Partners in Alberta and Saskatchewan

The presence of Canadians of Filipino descent, Filipino immigrants, newcomers, and temporary foreign workers in Alberta and Saskatchewan has ensured the operation of *Diaryo Filipino* and its expansion as the Diaryo Alberta Society (DAS) that created and spearheaded different programs and activities.

Fellowship and Socialization Needs of Senior Citizens

The need for fellowship and socialization of senior citizens is the motivating factor of the Filipino Calgarian Senior Citizens Association to organize. The aging of some Filipino immigrants and the coming of their parents or relatives have increased the number of senior citizens. They have wanted to live a normal and social life. They long for companionship while their household members are preoccupied. Maintaining social relations with their peers is advantageous for the psycho-social well-being of senior citizens. On the part of the organizers of the Filipino Senior Citizens Association of Calgary, they started forming their group as part of their relaxation. They do not want boring lives. As senior citizens, they have more time for themselves. They sought fellowships and socialization to make them more active and productive. The members feel very close and they treat each other like siblings.

Clamor for a Monthly Filipino Mass

Before the formation of the FCSDC, the Filipino-Canadians in Calgary loudly insisted on a monthly Filipino mass. Such clamor was heard and accommodated. The Filipino Mass was launched through the coordination of Val Penaranda with the assistance of Tigs Tidalgo. Each mass celebration and liturgy were nicely blended and were capped with traditional socialization through fellowship potluck. Some challenges emerged in the beginning stages that were centered on having a consistent host church and church availability. The situation affected church attendance and church logistics of set up and clean up. The association's spiritual adviser, Fr. Raul Ranola, approached Bishop Paul O'Byrne and requested a host church for the monthly Filipino mass. Then, in 1990, St. Anne Church was designated as FCSDC's host church. Fr. Dick was appointed as the Priest Coordinator for the Filipino Mass. The choir was headed by combined Filipino choirs from different churches such as St. Gerard, St. Mark, and St. Bernadette. In its evolution, the Filipino Mass has geared towards a bilingual approach in its liturgy readings. Most of the readings are still in the heritage language of Tagalog interspersed with the English homily and gospel. This is in response to having second-generation Filipino-Canadians appreciate the beauty of the mass in both languages that they understand. The choir selections are in Tagalog.

Strong Religious Faith, Evangelization, and Assistance for the Vulnerable

At the core of the Filipino Catholic Society of the Diocese of Calgary is grounding with faith and believing that "if you were raised with Christ, seek the things that are above,⁶² set your eyes on things that are above and not on things that are on earth" (Colossians 3:1). This gospel excerpt has motivated the organizers to build a faith-based charitable community. The founders and members of the Filipino Catholic Society of the Diocese of Calgary have recognized the demand for promoting evangelization and assistance to those who are socially and economically vulnerable and deprived. They have shared the same passion, care, and compassion in responding to the challenges and needs of the least fortunate in the community. From a mustard seed of an idea, they sought to answer what needs can best be worked on, and they have expanded their reach in the home country, the Philippines.

⁶² The term above refers to heaven.

Type of Activities Organized and Sponsored by the Filipino Organizations

Filipino community organizations in Alberta submitted various inputs in 2020-2021 about their activities. This section outlines the types of activities organized and sponsored through the years and provides a glimpse of their dynamism in making a difference in the lives of Filipinos in the area and the communities they call home. These are categorized and tabulated in Table 1.

There are 19 categories of activities and five special activities organized and sponsored by Filipino organizations. The regular activities organized and sponsored are the following:

- 1) Team building
- 2) Setting up and Provision of Effective Communication Tools, Information Dissemination, and Publications
- 3) Workshops
- 4) Information Sessions / Webinars
- 5) Orientation Sessions Orientation Sessions
- 6) Fairs and Exhibits
- 7) Meetings and Socials
- 8) Group Discussions
- 9) Sports and Wellness Activities
- 10) Culture and Arts Related Activities
- 11) Partnership Building and Networking Partnership Building and Networking
- 12) Scholarship Assistance
- 13) Financial Assistance to Non-profit Institutions
- 14) Financial aid for Reconstruction or Renovations of Structures,
- 15) Community Support Activities
- 16) Commemoration of Religious Traditions
- 17) Election of Officers
- 18) Fundraising activities
- 19) Recognition of Individual and Group Achievements

The special activities organized and sponsored are the following:

Computer Literacy for Senior Citizens

Engaging Seniors in Developing Creative Skills

Social Responsibility / Humanitarian Outreach Activities

Information, Education, and Communication Activities (Fora, Symposia, Caravans)

Advocacy

Table 1. The type of activities of Filipino Organizations/Communities in Alberta.

Activities of Filipino Organizations in Alberta	Name of Filipino Organization	Remarks / Partners and Sponsors
<i>Regular activities organized and sponsored</i>		
Team Building	BABAE: Council of Filipina-Canadian Women	The team building is done in a fun and wholesome environment.
Setting up and Provision of Effective Communication Tools, Information Dissemination, and Publications	BABAE: Council of Filipina - Canadian Women	
	Diaryo Alberta Society	- Present for Book Project in 2009 (note: the slideshow is no longer available online) - Developed the Pinoy Business Finder in 2010 – a Directory for Filipino Businesses - Launched the Diaryo Filipino 1st Issue in May 2010 and publications in 2011–2012 - Launched the Philippine Review Magazine in April 2012 - Digital news and information delivery in 2013, to fit in the digital economy. The print media delivery of news and information is facing extinction due

		to digital communication, the worldwide web, and social media. - Introduction of the Main Ingredient Digital Channel in 2014 - Diaryo Filipino was officially transformed into the “Diaryo Alberta Society” (DAS) in 2018, to continue serving and providing inputs to the provincial and federal governments in Alberta and Canada - Launched the Diaryo Alberta Society in 2018 - In 2019, the following resource media were launched and have been available to the public: Established the DAS social media resources like the www.diaryoalbertasociety.com , https://www.facebook.com/diaryoalbertasociety/ Blogs diaryoalbertasociety.com (Weekly) Diaryo Alberta Digital News (Monthly) DARN Anti-racism Newsletter (Monthly) ALLbertans Magazine (Quarterly) - Launched and produced the Recipe Book/Magazine (24 – 48 Recipes) made of beans, lentils, and utilizing local ingredients in 2019- 023
	University of the Philippines Alumni Association Edmonton (UPAAE)	Book donation drives Donation to UP Cebu’s digital access program
Workshops	BABAE: Council of Filipina - Canadian Women	Leadership Workshops
	Diaryo Alberta Society (DAS)	Annual Events in 2021 - 2023 Basic Food Handling Certificate Workshop for Individuals (Fall) Special Event Food Handling Certification Workshop for Community (Fall) Special Event Food Handling Certification Workshop for Entrepreneurship (Fall) Community Leaders Grant Application Workshop (Winter) Anti-Racism Programs and Workshop (Spring)
	Golden	Workshops are arranged and facilitated that promote awareness of senior

	Generation Seniors Club of Calgary	citizens' rights and obligations and motivate them to remain socially active
Information Sessions / Webinars	BABAE: Council of Filipina - Canadian Women	
	Golden Generation Seniors Club of Calgary	Arrange and facilitate fora and seminars that promote awareness on senior citizens' rights and obligations, and motivate them to remain socially active
	University of the Philippines Alumni Association Edmonton (UPAAE)	Information dissemination drive on promoting environmental care
Orientation Sessions	BABAE: Council of Filipina - Canadian Women	Newcomers' welcome and orientation sessions
Fairs and Exhibits	BABAE: Council of Filipina - Canadian Women	Health fair info sessions and exhibits, Multicultural resource fairs
Meetings and Socials	BABAE: Council of Filipina - Canadian Women	Members monthly meetings and socials, Annual summer picnics, Halloween party, Christmas caroling, Christmas party
	Filipino Calgarian Senior Citizens	Picnics, excursions, birthday celebrations, hosting bingo events, volunteering, mahjong, and dances. Zumba is scheduled every Tuesday and is inclusive for senior citizens of any race.

	Association	
	Filipino Senior Citizens Association of Calgary	The association organized various social activities such as: Indoor events like dance parties during winter for the members' entertainment; organized vacations of the members going to the United States every year. The members love going to warmer places like California during winter.
	Golden Generation Seniors Club of Calgary	- Weekly dancing and singing activities - Quarterly Birthday celebrations of senior citizens whose natal day falls within the quarter. It is a big party that involves all the club's members and their families - Mrs. Seniors Philippines, a beauty contest done annually - Annual picnic with the other seniors' association in Calgary - Simbang Gabi (Dawn Mass) - Christmas Party
	Young Once Seniors Association of Calgary	- Picnic once a year is both a socialization and fundraising activity, and they invite other senior citizens of other associations to join - Parties - General dance is also both a socialization and fundraising activity - Little Ms. Philippines and Little Mr. Philippines are both socialization and fundraising activities - Mrs. Seniors Calgary is both a socialization and fundraising activity
Group Discussions	BABAE: Council of Filipina - Canadian Women	Small group discussions on chosen common topics of interest
Sports and Wellness Activities	BABAE: Council of Filipina - Canadian Women	Annual bowling events
	Golden Generation Seniors Club of Calgary	- Tai chi and Zumba activities done weekly - Running Club which is one of the special interest programs for the members
Culture and Arts-	BABAE: Council of	Community Role Plays and Skits

Related Activities	Filipina - Canadian Women	
	Diaryo Alberta Society	- Introduction of International Ice Carving Champions to Albertans: Fil-Am Victor Dagatan in 2013 - Introduction of TFW of the Year in 2015 - Online Real Taste Cook-Off in 2015 - Introduction of Sen. Tobias Envarga (First Filipino Senator) and Tomas Avendano (Father of Filipino TFW in Canada) in 2015 - First Philippine Cuisine Food Gala “Pearl of the Orient Seas Cuisine” in 2017 - Introduction of International Ice Carving Champions to Albertans Fil-Cans: Baisas Brothers in 2017 - Month-long Celebration of Philippine Heritage CARAVAN in Southern Alberta with Fil-Can Organizations/Collaborators in 2018, 2019, 2021 – 2023 [Tentative Dates: June 1 - 30 & July 1 (Airdrie, Banff-Canmore, Calgary, Chestermere, Lethbridge, Okotoks) – All Collaborators] - Balik Kultura “Filipino Food Movement YYC” in 2018 - Pasko sa Pilipinas in 2018, 2019, 2021 – 2023 - Philippine Cuisine Gala Celebration in collaboration with the Philippine Culinary Federation of Canada, the Philippine Consulate General, the Calgary – DFA, and the Department of Tourism – San Francisco, USA - Globalfest The Most Explosive Festival in Alberta in partnership with the Globalfest Fireworks Society - Alberta Glowing Culture in collaboration with the Government of Alberta in 2019, 2021 – 2023 (Fall, All Collaborators) - Stampede Parade Participation in 2021 – 2023 (Summer) - 10th Year August Globalfest Cultural Pavilion and Ethnic Food Kiosk (Collaborating Community Organizations and Businesses) in 2021 – 2023 (Summer)
	University of the Philippines Alumni Association Edmonton (UPAAE)	- Philippine Arts and Culture Orientation (PACO) Program for 6–14-year-old Filipino children which is done monthly. It is an information and education session that enables this target group of Filipino children in Canada to learn about the Indigenous groups in the Philippines and at the same time enjoy making the diorama. An example of this program is the Bahay Kubo Series, a 10-month crafts program. The 6–14 target age group of Filipino–Canadian children will learn about indigenous life in the Philippines while they enjoy making dioramas of <i>bahay kubo</i>, rice terraces, flora and fauna, and the coastal environment. - Activities of the Fiesta Family Zone during the Annual Edmonton Filipino Fiesta, such as the Arts and Crafts for kids, Face Painting, Aling Iska Sari-

		Sari Store, Pinoy-themed photo booths, Higantes and Carabao paper mache projects. - Activities of the Historya (History) Series. The UPAAE was the celebration host for 2018 and 2020 Alberta Culture Days during the month of September. In 2018, the association hosted the Historya 1: Walking Through the Story of the Filipino People with different activities such as the Interactive Map, History Exhibit, Flora and Fauna presentation, Storytelling, Baybayin Calligraphy, and many others. In 2020, the UPAAE hosted the Historya 2: The Filipino Culture and Identity in a Multicultural World. It was a two-day learning series of visual and intercultural dialogues about historical and cultural experiences of Filipinos as a way of building bridges across cultures.
Partnership Building and Networking	Diaryo Alberta Society	- Collaboration with the Filipino community of High River in 2013 - Collaboration with the Filipino community of Cochrane in 2015 - Collaboration with the Filipino Canadian Community in the Rocky Mountains (FORM) in 2016 - Partnership with the Philippine Culinary Federation of Canada (PCFC) in 2017 - Collaboration with the Filipino–Canadian Association of the Bow Valley - Collaboration with Okotoks Filipino Community and Fil-Can Association of Lethbridge in 2018 - Collaboration with Chestermere Filipino Community and Fil-Can Association of Canmore in 2019 - Alberta Community Leaders Consultation in 2021 – 2023 (Winter)
	All the 8 identified Filipino communities	All the identified Filipino associations in this report have continued building partnerships and networking with various government, non-government, private, and business institutions, similar organizations, and communities as they sustain their initiatives, program interventions, and reach.
Scholarship Assistance	Filipino Catholic Society of the Diocese of Calgary	- Scholarship assistance to more than 50 seminarians in the Philippines, which covered their tuition fees until graduation from their theological studies. A thorough review of the candidate's academic credentials and demonstration of commitment to their calling are regularly assessed. The school management of the respective candidates is quite involved in making sure the screening process results in the successful completion of their studies. The first recipient is Fr. Bernard Banares from Holy Rosary Major Seminary. - Provides assistance to the Diocese of Calgary scholarship fund for seminarians
	University of the Philippines	- Scholarship grants for two scholars in UP Diliman - Grants for Filipino newcomers in Edmonton to support professional

	Alumni Association Edmonton (UPAAE)	upgrading
Financial Assistance to Non-profit Institutions	Filipino Catholic Society of the Diocese of Calgary	Financial assistance to 8 non-profit institutions ⁶³ like orphanages since 1994 - 2019. It is providing food, shelter, and education to orphans and abandoned street children in the Philippines. Like the seminarian beneficiaries, the orphanages are screened and chosen from all over the Philippines. The same comprehensive screening process is followed. The Mother superiors of these orphanages are regularly updated on the support and success stories
Financial aid for Reconstruction or Renovations of Structures	Filipino Catholic Society of the Diocese of Calgary	- Financial aid for church renovations in six parishes in the Philippines (2 churches in Virac, Catanduanes; Urdaneta, Pangasinan; Bicol; Misamis Oriental; and Surigao). - Monetary donations for church renovations, roof replacements, etc. of the Marian Shrine in Canmore and Sacred Heart Church roof replacement in Alberta, Canada.
	University of the Philippines Alumni Association Edmonton (UPAAE)	Library reconstruction
Community Support Activities	Filipino Catholic Society of the Diocese of Calgary	Provision of assistance to the Diocese of Calgary – Southern Alberta projects: - Christmas Hampers to at least 20 churches every year since 1994 - Donation or monetary assistance in support of the appeal initiative of the Bishop of the Diocese of Calgary for the completion of the retirement home for the priests and Elizabeth House⁶⁴ as a center for vocation discernment - Provision of financial aid to seminarians (e.g., vestments, outfits, etc.) during ordination ceremonies

⁶³ Three of the eight orphanages are in Luzon (Sta. Cruz, Laguna, Quezon City, San Fernando, Pampanga), three in the Visayas (Leyte, Talisay, Cebu, Dumaguete City), and two in Mindanao (Davao City and Tagum, Davao del Norte).

⁶⁴ Elizabeth House is a recipient of the Diocese of Calgary charity.

	Golden Generation Seniors Club of Calgary	The Golden Generation Seniors Club of Calgary supports the events of fellow Filipino organizations like - Fundraisers (the most notable was the fundraising for the Haiyan-affected communities in 2013) - Musical plays and film showing
Commemoration of Religious Traditions	Filipino Catholic Society of the Diocese of Calgary	The FCSDC upholds and celebrates the following religious traditions: - 3rd Sunday of the month Celebration of Filipino Mass - January Feast of Santo Niño - February Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes - March Feast of St. Joseph - April Feast of San Pedro Calungsod - May Flores de Mayo - June 9-day Mother of Perpetual Help Novena Celebration - September Feast of San Lorenzo de Ruiz - Feast of Our Lady of Penafrancia - October Feast of Our Lady of Fatima - Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary - December 9-day Simbang Gabi
Election of Officers	Filipino Catholic Society of the Diocese of Calgary	Since 1987 to present, the FCSDC has had 13 elected presidents, namely: Tigs Tidalgo (January 1987 – December 1988) Val Penaranda (January 1989 – December 1989) Betty Studer (January 1990 – March 1998) Elvie Valeroso (April 1998 – March 1999) Ellen Sarmiento (April 1999 – March 2000) Betty Studer (April 2000 – March 2002) Connie Raz (April 2002 – March 2004) Josie Estoque (April 2004 – March 2008) Myrna Castro (April 2008 – March 2010) Jimmy Ang (April 2010 – March 2014) Dolly Castillo (April 2014 – March 2016) Benito Atienza (April 2016 – March 2018) Ellen Sarmiento (April 2018 – present)
Fundraising	All the 8 identified	Fundraising and solicitation of donations are undertaken by the different Filipino communities to finance their initiatives, program interventions, and

activities	Filipino communities	activities. In the case of the Golden Generation Seniors Club of Calgary, they have their annual fundraising every September.
Recognition of Individual and Group Achievements	University of the Philippines Alumni Association Edmonton (UPAAE)	Activities of the Tatak UPAAE that recognize achievements and celebrate the successes of individuals and as a group.
	Young Once Seniors Association of Calgary	Recognition and awards for hardworking committees and their members
<i>Special activities organized and sponsored</i>		
Computer Literacy	BABAE: Council of Filipina - Canadian Women	Project funded by the federal government through New Horizons for Seniors Program ⁶⁵
	Golden Generation Seniors Club of Calgary	Computer literacy for senior citizens
	BABAE: Council of Filipina - Canadian Women	Computer literacy for senior citizens
Engaging Seniors in Developing Creative	Golden Generation Seniors Club	Painting workshops and <i>bangus</i> [milk fish] deboning are special interest programs for the members

⁶⁵ “The New Horizons for Seniors Program (NHSP) is a federal grants and contributions program. It provides funding for projects that make a difference in the lives of seniors and in their communities” (retrieved from <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/new-horizons-seniors.html>)

Skills	of Calgary	
Social Responsibility / Humanitarian Outreach Activities	BABAE: Council of Filipina - Canadian Women	Fort McMurray outreach for the 2016 wildfire-affected persons/families
	Diaryo Alberta Society	DAS extends its social responsibility in various roles as a volunteer, committee, organizer, lead, or collaborator - Calgary's Come Hell or High Water and High River Floods in 2013 - Helped in the organization of Operation Pagbangon Movement for Typhoon Haiyan in 2013 - Unity Run for Ilog Pasig Rehabilitation in 2013 - Feeding Programs for Orphanages in the Philippines in 2014 – 2018 - Fundraisers with different Fil-Can organizations in 2014 – 2018 - Adopt-A-School Program in several schools in the Philippines in 2019 – 2023 - Cooking Demonstration and Feeding Programs (Philippines and Alberta) in 2019 – 2023
	Filipino Catholic Society of the Diocese of Calgary	The FCSDC has given financial aid to disaster-affected communities through various parishes in the Philippines. ⁶⁶ Donation for Filipino workers in Calgary and surrounding areas who were unemployed due to COVID-19.
	Golden Generation Seniors Club of Calgary	Support programs for senior citizens in need and distress (Note: not specified their support programs)
	Young Once Seniors Association of Calgary	Financial or material assistance, emotional (visitation), and spiritual (prayers) support are extended to members who are sick or in distress

⁶⁶ The disasters are caused by volcanic eruptions like the Mt. Pinatubo in Pampanga; flooding, landslide and soil erosion in Ormoc; typhoons and floodings in Camarines, Bicol (Albay Typhoon), Libon, Albay, Manila and Leyte (Typhoon Yolanda/Haiyan); the Boac River flooding of toxic mine waste in Marinduque, and the Surigao Earthquake.

Information, Education, and Communication Activities (Fora, Symposia, Caravans)	Diaryo Alberta Society	Migrants Forum Alberta against TFW moratorium in 2015 Initiated the Philippine Independence Day Caravan in Banff, Alberta in 2016
	Golden Generation Seniors Clun of Calgary	Organized the elder abuse film “While the Sun Shines in Earth” in 2013, which was the first one in Canada. The said film was also shown in other countries like Germany, Spain, France, and the Philippines
Advocacy	Diaryo Alberta Society	Helped in the petition for the representation of the Career Consulate Office in Alberta in 2013 Canada 150 th Tree Planting in Banff, Alberta (Tree Name: Jose Rizal) in 2016 Helped in the petition for June as the Philippine Heritage Month in Alberta in collaboration with the Philippine Arts Council in 2018 Stand Up Against Racism in partnership with the Government of Alberta
	University of the Philippines Alumni Association Edmonton (UPAAE)	Advocacy campaign for the declaration of June as the Philippine Heritage Month. With other Pinoy organizations, the month of June is proclaimed as the Philippine Heritage Month in Edmonton and the province of Alberta in perpetuity.

Relevance of Activities

The organized and sponsored activities of the BABAE: Council of Filipina-Canadian Women are relevant to the Filipino community. The members’ volunteering work and engagements, care, and compassion in implementing their social initiatives have provided value-added interventions and support to Filipino immigrants, especially newcomers and other migrants. They have applied their knowledge and work experiences in actual immigrant-serving roles and other members’ expertise as immigration consultants, counselors, administrators of human rights workshops, and liaisons on behalf of immigrants and newcomers. Other members have contributed their business acumen in private sector employment, integration, and cross-cultural assimilation.

Diaryo Alberta Society's organized and sponsored activities are truly relevant to the Filipino community. Over 11 years of operations, the Diaryo Alberta Society has enthusiastically built four pillars: information, collaboration, integration, and innovation in all corners of Alberta. They have provided easy access to relevant information and resource links through various communications and media platforms that are especially important to the Filipino community. They put a premium on promoting the Philippine culture, arts, and heritage as well as the

contributions and recognition of Filipino achievers, which are the pride of the Filipino community. They have built partnerships and established collaborations with other Filipino communities and multi-stakeholders, and they continue to scale up partnerships and networking.

Activities of the Filipino Catholic Society of the Diocese of Calgary are relevant to the Filipino community. Through the years, the FCSDC has quietly worked behind the scenes with no fuss, delivering goodwill and charity. From peace-filled and healed interior worlds spring forth positive and compassionate souls. These agents of goodwill have proven immeasurable help in keeping the religious community alive and well.

The activities of the Philippines Alumni Association Edmonton (UPAAE) are relevant to the Filipino community. In the past years, the organization reached out to over a hundred UP alumni and made lasting relations with government offices, other organizations, and notable individuals in its events and projects launched. The UPAAE considers itself as an organization for and with the Filipino community. As UP alumni who were privileged to have access to quality education at the University of the Philippines, they commit to giving back to the Filipino community, whether in the Philippines or Canada. The officers and members are guided by the needs and opportunities experienced by Filipinos such as the need to connect through social activities and ease their adaptation to a new homeland.

UPAAE's cultural programs are aimed at reaffirming many Filipinos longing for their cultural toots and making sure that the new generation of Filipino-Canadians are aware and proud of their cultural heritage. The association is currently partnering with a multi-cultural organization in Edmonton that serves a considerable number of Filipino families to bring an art and culture lens to their children's program. They have received a request for training in financial literacy, parenting, and education. The UPAAE was recognized for its meritorious and exceptional activities that did not only benefit its chapter members, but also the University, the UPAA, and the alumni in general. On August 24, 2019, the UPAAE was awarded the Distinguished Alumni Award at the UP Bahay ng Alumni in Diliman, Quezon City. The award puts the organization and the community on the map, exemplifying honor, and excellence in raising the Filipino spirit despite being miles away from home. In the activities and meetings leading to the ceremony, the UPAA Edmonton was able to bring forward matters concerning the chapter and the community, as well as network for future partnerships to widen its scope in the next years.

Regular activities of the Filipino Calgarian Senior Citizens Association are relevant to the Filipino community. They foster a sense of belongingness and social engagement. The organization provides a venue for senior citizens to participate in activities of their interests and cultivate meaningful relationships.

Members of the Filipino Senior Citizens Association of Calgary have considered the relevance of their activities to the Filipino community. For example, the newcomers will feel that their group helps them become closer to Filipinos. They welcome them and celebrate their arrival in Canada. The members of the association have fostered unity and social relationships of sisterhood and brotherhood like a family in the diaspora. They have shared memories and connections as they grow through their community.

The activities of the Golden Generation Seniors Club of Calgary are important to the Filipino community, especially to its members' health and well-being. They keep them active and socially engaged. If members are at home all the time, they tend to get bored. The Filipino–Canadian senior citizens are very happy with the activities of the club. They do the things they enjoy and make up for those activities that they missed in the past while coping with the responsibilities of raising their respective families. In 2012, the lead organizer of the club was recognized as the Outstanding Pinoy of Calgary, Alberta which was published in the city magazine.

Activities of the Young Once Seniors Association of Calgary are relevant to the Filipino community. All the activities are for the good of the community. The members love the association's activities. They are organized and have helped their members. For example, when one of the members gets sick, they raise funds for and visit the sick member. When a member passes away, they help pay for the funeral. Help is extended to members in need or in distress through material or financial assistance, emotional (comfort and visitation), and spiritual (prayers) support.

Impact of Filipino Activities on the Canadian Community

The regular and special activities conducted by the UPAAE have showcased the Philippines' culture and heritage, goodwill, responsiveness, and the contributions of Filipinos and the Filipino–Canadian communities at the local, provincial, and national levels as well as in the Philippines. They are instruments of social change, empowerment, cultural sensitivity, and social responsibility. They have promoted the well-being, support system, social protection, and visibility of Filipino immigrants in their communities. The Filipino–Canadian communities or organizations are part of the change catalysts in the larger Canadian community and beyond. Their generosity, care, and compassion have touched lives and made a difference as they continue to move forward and expand their reach. They have facilitated the integration of newcomers and the cultural assimilation of other immigrants. Partnerships with various stakeholders are built and networks are expanded and strengthened at the local, provincial, and national levels including beyond the borders of Canada.

All the identified Filipino associations in this report have continued building partnerships and networking with various government, non-government, private, and business institutions, similar organizations, and communities as they sustain their initiatives, program interventions, and reach. Of equal importance is the showcasing of the talents, skills, competitiveness, and dedication of Filipino immigrants who have filled the human resource requirements of the Canadian economy. These competencies and proficiency of Filipino immigrants are value-added attributes that partly address the gaps and demands to sustain the Canadian economy. These have a significant impact on the larger Canadian community especially in addressing the prevalent issue and concern of deskilling, which has been a continuing challenge and barrier to equity and equality of Filipino foreign workers and immigrants including other racialized immigrants.

The Filipinos and Filipino-Canadian communities have made significant strides in their advocacy activities that translate to favorable and tangible outcomes like the declaration of June as the Philippine Heritage Month, the representation of the Career Consulate Office in Alberta, Standing Up Against Racism in partnership with the Government of Alberta, among others.

The following are the specific impact of the Filipino organizations' activities:

BABAE: Council of Filipina - Canadian Women

Empowering Filipino–Canadian women with a voice against social injustice and unfairness

Facilitated the integration and assimilation of newcomers and immigrants in Alberta

Established partnerships and collaborative activities

Visibility in Philippine and mainstream societies with a strong voice and representation on social issues through proactive and timely response. One good example is the visibility of the BABAE's strong representation in the study and survey groups of the Healthy Family Relationship Project which underscores the domestic violence in both genders and age groups. The organization also participated in university research focus group discussions on topics like gambling, citizenship, and senior preoccupations to firm up programs that respond to loneliness, isolation, and language deficiencies.

Added-value interventions or social initiatives, support systems, and networks provided to newcomers, immigrants, and Filipino-Canadians in Alberta

Facilitated the awareness and skills development of Filipino newcomers and immigrants in Alberta

Enhanced social responsibility with multi-stakeholder involvement in humanitarian response and development causes in Canada and the Philippines

Facilitated the computer literacy of seniors in Alberta

Established partnerships and strengthened collaborations of Filipino communities with other communities, government agencies, private, business, and civil society organizations, and funding institutions.

Diaryo Alberta Society

Relevant, factual, and unbiased information for the promotion and advancement of immigrants/newcomers, particularly Filipino-Albertans in Canada and abroad are disseminated locally and globally through print and digital communications and media

Access to business directory, communications and digital platforms, programs, projects, events, partners, funding/sponsorship, and development opportunities

Philippine culture and arts are promoted locally in Alberta, nationwide in Canada, and globally

Filipino and those of Filipino descent achievers are recognized and honored at the local, national, and global levels

The Diaryo Alberta has become a more inclusive, diverse, relevant, and opportunity-oriented paper

Media arm of Filipino–Canadians, newcomers, immigrants, foreign workers, those with Filipino descent, and its diverse partners

Contributed to building inclusive and advancing local communities in Alberta and Canada through various programs, projects, workshops, and events

Enhanced social responsibility in humanitarian response and development causes in Canada and the Philippines

Established partnerships and strengthened collaborations of Filipino communities with other communities, government agencies, private, business, and civil society organizations, and funding institutions

It is an honor and great privilege of the Diaryo Alberta Society to share all their initiatives and milestones with the province and the larger Canadian community as well as beyond borders in reaching more communities.

Filipino Catholic Society of the Diocese of Calgary

Three decades is an amazing accomplishment of posterity and perseverance. The FCSDC continues to influence and make a difference in the lives of the faithful and communities that impact the larger Canadian community through its initiatives and interventions.

The monetary support for the schooling of seminarian scholars has contributed to the increase of the workers in God's vineyard and religious vocation. The multitude of parishioners are inspired by the dedicated faith leaders and the community in putting evangelization and support for religious vocation into action and examples. This initiative has an impact on honing faith-based leadership and sustaining spiritual guidance that provides benefits and rewards, more than we can ever imagine. Since 1991, the FCSDC has assisted more than 50 seminarians in numerous seminaries in the Philippines. The graduates became full-pledged ordained priests who are compassionate in serving their parish communities. The scholarship assistance intervention of FCSDC has focused its reach on the Philippines, but its impact on the larger Canadian community is visible in the strong religious faith and nurtured values of compassion and generosity of FCSDC members, parishioners, and benefactors in the community.

FCSDC works with marginalization and vulnerability alleviation. The orphans and street children have decent family lives and environments through the FCSDC's assistance. They are young and vulnerable who are ensured with necessities in their growth and development which are crucial in nurturing responsible citizenry. Their fragile hope becomes sturdy hope, enlightening the minds and transforming the hearts.

FCSDC contributed to easing the crisis of Filipino citizens in Alberta, who are hit with misfortunes such as death, accidents, hospitalization, or family problems. The newcomers and temporary foreign workers are usually the recipients of aid and support. FCSDC collaborates with other organizations in providing this community intervention that is considered part of the social protection preventive measure. FCSDC assisted in the completion of the retirement home of the clergy and Elizabeth House as a center for vocation discernment through monetary support.

FCSDC builds synergy with the Diocese of Calgary, different organizations, or communities in Alberta and beyond the province, and the Philippine Consulate of Calgary. FCSDC is well respected and known within the Calgary Filipino community and the mainstream Canadian community. For example, different organizations are invited and encouraged to partner with FCSDC in sponsoring the monthly Filipino masses through liturgy sharing and hosting the potluck after the mass and Eucharistic celebration. Consequently, this enhanced communication, cooperation, and support for spiritual projects and initiatives like retreats, and annual Gala fundraising for the charities they support. FCSDC is one of the active participants in Fiesta

Filipino, the most well-attended Labor Day cultural weekend festival held annually at the Calgary Olympic Plaza from 2015 to the present. The Philippine Consulate of Calgary is a staunch partner in community relations, the betterment of ‘kababayans,’ and any social issues and charity, such as family health underlying family violence, and Philippine Heritage Month Celebration activities in June.

The social impact of FCSDC in the larger Canadian community is fostered by the members’ learnings, individual growth, respect, passion, and faith. These characteristics of its members have sustained and scaled up the FCSDC in continuing its noble cause as a charitable organization reaching within and beyond Alberta. The FCSDC members are brought together by their love and faith in doing and practicing God’s will and teachings. As fellow pilgrims, human and imperfect, they struggle each day to live on the straight path. They stumble at times, and with God’s grace, manage to disagree without being disagreeable, to voice out and be heard, to concede to the light of reason and fairness, and to bow out of each encounter with laughter and dignity intact. They are enlightened and transformed in God’s infinite love and mercy which are outpoured in concrete works of charity.

FCSDC has contributed to building an inclusive, diverse, and compassionate Canadian society grounded in faith in God and care for humanity, as it prides itself in its principles of inclusivity, ecumenism, and charitable actions. In line with this, the FCSDC has received prestigious awards such as the:

1991 CAFFA Award for most outstanding solicitor in sending monetary aid to the earthquake-affected population and communities of Baguio City, Philippines

1992 Award from the Immaculate Major Seminary in Vigan, Ilocos Sur for dedicated service

1993 Outstanding Award from the Philippine Ambassador to Canada-Ottawa for promoting Filipino–Canadian amity

2000, 2002, 2003, and 2004 CAFFA Awards for outstanding community service

2018 Award of Appreciation from Carmelite Monastery and Divine Mercy, Diocese of Legazpi, Albay for community service

University of the Philippines Alumni Association Edmonton (UPAAE)

The Filipinos constitute one of the top three ethnocultural communities in all of Canada and across the provinces. The UPAAE has received attention for its outstanding participation in province-wide art and culture events where the organizers and members have featured authentic cultural events and artifacts. They recognized and presented UP alumni who have important

contributions to Edmonton in the Historya Series, and many people were amazed that some of the landmarks in the city were designed by Filipinos and those who have shown exemplary achievements in their fields or practice. The association continues to participate in civic engagement and lend its support to issues impacting the Filipino community as well as other immigrants by participating in community consultations and advisory committees hosted by the municipal/city, provincial, and federal governments. The regular and special interventions and activities carried out by the UPAAE have exhibited Filipino immigrants' culture, heritage, and contributions that have promoted information dissemination, knowledge, awareness raising, and cultural sensitivity in the larger Canadian community. Showcasing Filipino talents and skills is very important not only for the Filipino immigrants who need jobs in Canada, but also for the larger Canadian community to know the availability of talented, skilled, and competent Filipino immigrants.

Filipino Calgarian Senior Citizens Association

The activities of the Filipino Calgarian Senior Citizens Association have an impact on better health and well-being of the larger Canadian community. Loneliness or getting bored of staying at home and social exclusion are normal lived experiences of the elderly or senior citizens. They “can increase feelings of depression or anxiety, which can have a negative impact on many other aspects” of a person’s health or well-being. [. . .] Research has shown that older adults with an active lifestyle are less likely to develop certain diseases, have longer life spans, are happier and less depressed, are better prepared to cope, and may be able to improve their thinking abilities” (National Institute on Aging).⁶⁷ Thus, engaging in fellowship activities, socials, or activities that make them happy and active is good for their health and well-being. For example, dance events like Zumba can feel therapeutic and energizing. Exercising as a group during their events helps people combat stress and encourages them to socialize with other people through talking and sharing happiness during fellowship.

The importance of social engagement as we age is very important for long life, better health, and improved quality of life. A Harvard longitudinal study of Adult Development reveals⁶⁸ that

⁶⁷ National Institute on Aging, retrieved from <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/healthy-aging/participating-activities-you-enjoy-you-age>

⁶⁸ The Harvard Study of Adult Development is “one of the world’s longest studies of adult life, , researchers have collected a cornucopia of data on their physical and mental health” (Mineo, 2017). Source: Mineo, L. (2017). Good genes are nice, but joy is better: Harvard study, almost 80 years old, has proved that embracing community helps us live longer, and be happier. The Harvard Gazette on Health and Medicine. Retrieved from <https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2017/04/over-nearly-80-years-harvard-study-has-been-showing-how-to-live-a-healthy-and-happy-life/>

“the most important determinant of living a long life was flourishing close relationships and embracing community. In many other studies, social engagement was linked to better health outcomes, combatting loneliness, preventing cognitive decline and dementia, and improving quality of life” (Chen Senior Medical Center, 2023).⁶⁹ Another study shows loneliness in older persons (the participants who were older than 60 years old) is a predictor of functional decline and death (Perissinotto et al., 2012, 1078).⁷⁰

Filipino Senior Citizens Association of Calgary

The association’s activities are like those of other senior citizens’ organizations, so their impact is the same to the larger Canadian community. They have contributed to better health and well-being of the elderly in Canada. Their members are socially active and engaged. The association’s activities are mostly focused on Filipinos, so their impact on the larger Canadian community is minimal.

Golden Generation Seniors Club of Calgary

Like the other organizations of Filipino–Canadian senior citizens in Alberta, the activities of the Golden Generation Seniors Club of Calgary have contributed to the social protection, better health, and well-being of the elderly in the larger Canadian community. Aside from making the Filipino–Canadian elderlies active, socially engaged, and happy, they also raised the awareness of their members and the community on the rights and obligations of the senior citizens. The awareness-raising interventions can lead to the empowerment of senior citizens, enabling them to exercise their rights and claim their social protection and entitlements. Likewise, it would create a rippling effect on the duty bearers and service providers to be proactive and more responsive to the needs and issues of the senior citizens. Those who are in need and in distress are aided. For the Filipinos, the Golden Generation Seniors Club is the biggest one in Calgary. The club received a grant from the New Horizon Seniors Program for their projects. It was supposed to be for photography, but the officers through the president diverted and used it for grocery support of the senior citizens during the COVID-19 pandemic. It was a form of social protection for the

⁶⁹ Chen Senior Medical Center. (2023). The Importance of Social Engagement and How to Promote it Among Older Adults. Retrieved from <https://www.chenmedicalcenters.com/>

⁷⁰ Perissinotto, C. M., Stijacic Cenzer, I., & Covinsky, K.E. (2012). Loneliness in older persons: a predictor of functional decline and death. *Arch Intern Med.* 172(14):1078-83. doi: 10.1001/archinternmed.2012.1993. PMID: 22710744; PMCID: PMC4383762.

elderly, who are most vulnerable and at risk during the pandemic. They did not have to go out for groceries because the goods were delivered to them.

Young Once Seniors Association of Calgary

The association is very happy with its activities; the members feel more closer together and help each other. They have activities that keep them engaged and socially active. They make the senior citizens happy. In turn, these contribute to the quality of life of the senior citizens in the larger Canadian community.

Moving Forward

The Filipino organizations in Alberta, those that have submitted inputs for this book project, are looking forward to a better future and continuing their activities post-COVID-19 pandemic.

BABAE: Council of Filipina - Canadian Women

Continue to promote women's empowerment and gender equality. The organization is steadfast in advancing its cause and interventions to promote gender equality and empowerment of Filipina–Canadian immigrants to be at par with their counterparts. This entails a continuum of strategies and interventions to elevate the image and development of strong Filipino–Canadian women leaders, such as Regular Strategic Plan Review and Enhancements; Membership recruitment and retention especially the young and active members; more collaborations with other community and mainstream organizations; review of BABAE's Constitution and By-Laws to expand its mandate and responsiveness to the community needs; Improve and solidify its Partnerships model for a Win-Win benefit; sustain information sessions and projects exposure to sharpen the leadership skills of empowered women who are strong and assertive; appeal and accelerate the learning process for the representative of Filipino–Canadian women.

Implementation of value-added services. The BABAE: Council of Filipina-Canadian Women ensures the implementation of value-added services that do not duplicate or are not offered by non-profit organizations or agencies.

Information dissemination and bridging communities. The Diaryo Alberta Society (DAS) remains committed to informing and bridging communities to other organizations with the opportunities available in Alberta, Canada, and globally.

Diaryo Alberta Society (DAS)

Contribute relevant information through print and digital communications and media. The Diaryo Alberta has a great pool of professional writers and correspondents who are committed to contributing only relevant, factual, and unbiased information that matters to its citizens, immigrants, and foreign workers.

Greater understanding of integration, innovation, collaboration, and information dissemination. The DAS pursues its short-term and long-term goals while achieving a greater understanding of integration, innovation, collaboration, and information dissemination.

Continue to offer remarkable future developments in publications and multi-media, news, and information. The DAS takes pride to continue in blazing new trails as the leading hybrid media in print, digital, and live-streaming platforms for Filipino–Canadians, and Albertans of Filipino descent in reaching more communities in Alberta, Canada, and the rest of the world.

Filipino Catholic Society of the Diocese of Calgary

*Sustain their initiatives and interventions through their regular and special activities organized and sponsored.*⁷¹

University of the Philippines Alumni Association Edmonton (UPAAE)

Since the UPAAE's inception, the association has organized activities and collaborated with organizations to fulfill its objectives. The officers and members have a set of regular programs and a suite of projects and initiatives that respond to emerging issues and opportunities of the organization. They will continue to implement different programs such as the Professional, Leadership, and Continuing Education (PLACE) program, the Philippine Arts and Culture Orientation Program (PACO) for 6–14-year-old children, and the Fiesta Family Zone of the Annual Edmonton Filipino Fiesta in which the UPAAE has been the primary mover of activities for families and kids since 2016. Tatak UPAAE is a regular program that celebrates successes and recognizes the achievements of individuals and as a group. We have yet to hear of a substantial number of Filipinos making their mark in various sectors of society, from the business, academic, social services, political, and the arts. In this regard, it is UPAAE's vision and hope that the organization becomes one of the platforms to showcase Filipino talents and skills.

⁷¹ The society's transcript has no available information on moving forward.

The Four Senior Citizens Associations

*Sustain their initiatives and interventions through their regular and special activities organized and sponsored.*⁷²

Building communities is a positive step towards integration in Canadian society. Filipino organizations in Alberta, as gleaned through the eight Filipino associations, indicate the vitality of Filipino solidarity based on shared interests and aspirations to make a difference. Their establishments, relevant activities, and contribution to Filipinos mark a space to belong to in Canada.

⁷² The transcripts of the four senior citizens organizations have no available information on moving forward.



CHAPTER 8

SELECTED PROFILE: THE PHILIPPINE ARTS COUNCIL

The Philippine Arts Council was established in 2016 by Ida Beltran Lucila, Herald Casana, Jojo Lucila, Lito Velasco, and Paul Briones. Ida Beltran Lucila serves as Executive Director. According to its website, the main objective of the Philippine Arts Council is “the promotion and development of Philippine art and culture, and the Filipino artist”. The Filipino artist is central to the work of the Philippine Arts Council which seeks to “strengthen the artist’s/creative position and impact in the Canadian landscape”.⁷³ Five types of members comprise the Philippines Arts Council:

“artists, creatives and cultural workers who are engaged in Philippine art forms; artists, creatives and cultural workers who are Filipinos or of Filipino-descent; persons and organizations involved in the work of/on Philippine art and culture; students and persons participating and/or volunteering in the programs of the Philippine Arts Council; and arts benefactors and sponsors”.⁷⁴

Since 2016, the Philippine Arts Council has made a strong mark in Alberta with its numerous activities, projects, and programs. Some highlights of these activities include the Edmonton Filipino Fiesta (2016), Alberta Culture Days (2017), proclamation of Philippine Heritage Month by the Legislative Assembly of Alberta (2018), workshops on Philippines dance (2019), *Hulaan Mo!* interactive game about Philippine history (2020), release and premiere of *Paglalayag*: the

⁷³ Philippine Arts Council, <https://www.philippineartscouncil.com/our-story>

⁷⁴ Ibid.

Philippines to Canada Journey (2021), and “The Filipino in Me” online exhibit on Philippine living heritage.⁷⁵

One of the major accomplishments of the Philippine Arts Council was the production of the Filipino documentary, *Paglalayag*, in 2021. Written and directed by Ida Beltran Lucila, *Paglalayag* involved “26 storytellers, 37 performers, 19 contributors, and 9 in Memoriam tribute honourees”.⁷⁶ This significant undertaking was supported by both provincial and federal government agencies, namely the Canadian Heritage of the Government of Canada, and Alberta’s Ministry of Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women.⁷⁷ *Paglalayag* received media coverage from local and national TV outlets like *Global News*.⁷⁸ The *Alberta Filipino Journal* also advertised its premiere on February 20, 2021.⁷⁹

Paglalayag captures the stories of the migration of Filipino pioneers in Edmonton. The names of those who arrived in the 1960s are included in the documentary and the paths they ventured signify their rich contribution to the community. *Paglalayag* provides an important source to anyone interested in the history of Filipino migration and Filipino lineage or ancestry. Identification is an important step towards recognition.

Like the Philippine Arts Council, many more Filipino community associations in Alberta continue to offer activities and programs for their *kababayans* and others. Shared causes and interests often foster solidarity and cross-cultural understanding between and among Filipino organizations (see Appendix)⁸⁰ and the general public.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ From a circulated write-up by Ida Beltran Lucila sent to email

⁷⁷ See Philippine Arts Council, <https://www.philippineartscouncil.com/paglalayag>

⁷⁸ Global News, <https://globalnews.ca/event/7563088/paglalayag-the-philippines-to-canada-journey/>

⁷⁹ Alberta Filipino Journal, <https://www.albertafilipinojournal.com/2020/04/17/paglalayag-the-philippines-to-canada-journey/>

⁸⁰ The Philippine Consulate General Calgary compiled the names of some Filipino community associations in Alberta.



CHAPTER 9

INTERNALIZED NARRATIVES OF FAMILY ADVERSITY THROUGH THE LENS OF FILIPINO MALE YOUTH WHO COMPLETED UNIVERSITY

*CHRISTA SATO*⁸¹

Introduction

According to the 2016 census, Filipinos are one of the largest and fastest growing ethnic minority groups in Alberta and Canada. A salient issue identified in the literature is poor educational outcomes of Filipino youth, particularly for Filipino males concerning academic advancement in higher education. Increasingly, there is a need to understand the impact of migration across generations, since a primary motivation for immigrants is to provide better opportunities for their children. Many Filipino parents come to Canada hoping their children will have better educational opportunities. However, Filipino male youth seem to be experiencing challenges in accessing and completing university. Evidence demonstrates that Filipinos have strong labour market participation rates and high levels of university education, but these forms of social capital are not being passed on to their children.

In this book chapter, I draw from my MSW thesis research that qualitatively explored processes that facilitated university completion by young, second-generation Filipino men living in Calgary. Specifically, I will share themes that emerged from eight in-depth interviews with a focus on the internalized narratives of adversity encountered by their Filipino immigrant families through the lens of their Canadian-born Filipino sons. The term internalized narratives is defined

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here as the stories of immigration told by family members, which then become an essential part of how participants understand and make sense of their own experience as children of immigrants.

During the analysis of my data, it became evident that family was a central and recurring theme. In particular, rich narratives were shared about first-generation Filipino family members' experiences of adversity from pre-migration to post-migration, as they settled and adapted to life in Canada. It became evident that these stories were so deeply a part of who these men are, and the extent to which it shaped their educational experiences as young Filipino males. Hence, the chapter's primary purpose is to examine the internalized narratives of adversity among Filipino families through the lens of second-generation Filipino male youth in Calgary who completed university. Secondly, I explore how these family narratives of adversity influenced Filipino men's experiences throughout university.

The paper is organized in the following manner. This first section provides a brief introduction to the topic including the purpose and its significance. Next, I give some context about the Filipino community in Canada, then focus on the diaspora in Alberta and Calgary. This is followed by a brief synthesis of knowledge on immigration, employment, and education among Filipinos primarily in the Canadian context. The fourth section describes the methodological details of the study that this chapter is based on. Section five highlights the study's major findings, which suggest that the migration experiences of Filipino parents play a major role in influencing the educational trajectories of Filipino-Canadian youth. I argue that the Filipino male youth who participated in the study have a deep awareness of the struggles their parents endured to provide them with educational opportunities in Canada. The stories of their family's adversity played a key role in motivating the men to attend and complete university as a form of reciprocity to their parents. In other words, the Filipino male youth were driven to succeed in university as a way of showing respect to their parents for the sacrifices they made in coming to Canada. The final section discusses the implications of the study's findings including strategies that social service providers and relevant stakeholders can engage in to be more inclusive in their practices with Filipino youth, their families, and communities.

Context on Filipinos in Canada and Alberta

According to the most recent census data, the Philippines is the leading source country of immigrants to Canada. The total number of people who self-identify as Filipino in Canada is 837,130, which makes up 2.4% of the total population. Of Canada's Filipino population, a sizable portion have settled in the prairies.ⁱ For example, approximately 175,130 (20.9%) live in Alberta with the overwhelming majority residing in the two largest urban centres. Edmonton is

home to approximately 64,275 (4.9%) Filipinos and 75,020 (5.4%) in Calgary.ⁱⁱ The city of Calgary is home to many immigrants and their families, totaling 382,580 or 30.9% of the city's population.ⁱⁱⁱ Of the city's recent immigrants, meaning they arrived within the last five years, 23.6% are Filipino which exceeds recent immigrants from both India and China.^{iv}

Despite the size and growth of the Filipino community in Calgary, there is very little research focused specifically on this population.^v Given the increasing presence of Filipinos in the city and province, it is surprising this community has not garnered more attention in academic and grey literature. In the following section, I summarize some of the literature that does exist about Alberta's Filipino community, particularly on first- and second-generation Filipino's educational and employment experiences.

Filipino's Employment and Educational Experiences

It is well known in the scholarly literature that Filipinos have strong labour market participation and are highly educated upon arrival to Canada. They have one of the highest levels of education and labour market participation of immigrant groups in Canada.^{vi} Generally, higher educational attainment among Filipinos is higher than that of the overall Canadian population.^{vii} Yet these forms of social and educational capital are not being reproduced or passed on to their children. This is especially true for Filipino men.^{viii} This is concerning since a primary motivator for immigrants to come to Canada is to provide a better life for their children, especially when it comes to education.

For the majority of Filipino immigrants living in Canada, their education and professional experiences were attained in the Philippines and are consequently devalued here through a process of deprofessionalization.^{ix} This means many Filipinos are not able to use the education and professional work experience they received back home and often end up working in lower-paying and lower-skilled jobs. The second-generation may not have the same educational barriers that their parents experienced, but they deal with a different set of challenges in Canadian society. They do not feel a sense of belonging or inclusion in mainstream society, and experience personal and structural exclusion in the education system (e.g., streaming, race, and cultural differences). This points to the importance of paying attention to the race and gendered dynamics that Filipino males encounter in the education system. There are cultural and gendered expectations embedded within their experiences as Filipino *and* Canadian men that may be conflicting. Filipino-Canadian youth may be reluctant to seek help if they are struggling in school due to masculinity and stereotypes of Asians being "smart." While students may see the value of higher education, they may also need to immediately enter the labour market to support family,

especially if they have limited financial resources. In the context of Alberta, many men are encouraged to enter the labour market to work in the oil and gas sector.

Another possible reason discussed in the literature suggests the second-generation may be disillusioned by the struggles their parents experienced as part of bearing witness to their deprofessionalization. However, most of the settlement literature focuses on the perspectives of first-generation Filipino immigrants; very few studies examine parents' experiences through the lens of the second-generation. Yet, listening to the experiences of second-generation youth not only provides valuable insights in terms of how young people make sense of their family's migration experiences, but it also provides a unique lens for understanding young people's perspectives on their parents' immigration experiences.

These perspectives are starting to be addressed to a small extent in the literature. For example, Philip Kelly, who was the lead on, "Filipino Youth Transitions in Canada (FYTiC)," raises the issues of deprofessionalization among Filipino immigrants and the importance of thinking about immigration settlement as an intergenerational process.^x Also, in building on Hirsch's notion of "post-memory," Geraldine Pratt argues that Filipino youth experience "hauntings of dislocation," whereby the second-generation relives the experiences of the parents' struggles with racism and deskilling in Canada as their own.^{xi} This suggests that migration experiences are not simply contained in the first generation but manifest in the second generation and contribute to their sense of displacement or feelings of not belonging. In her study on Filipino-Canadian students in Vancouver, Mendoza's findings highlight how the students acknowledged the sacrifices made by their parents and "weave them intricately into their own identity."^{xii}

A gap in the literature is understanding how second-generation Filipino males internalized these family narratives and the ways this shaped their experiences throughout university, which ranges from their decision to pursue higher education to attain their degrees. This study will add to the literature by providing insights from Filipino male youth living in Calgary, Alberta.

Methodology and Methods

This study followed a pragmatic qualitative research design, which allows flexibility in determining research strategies provided they are used ethically.^{xiii} A criterion sampling strategy was used to identify and recruit community members to participate. Eligible participants had to be second-generation Filipino males between 22 and 34 years old, have a university degree from a Canadian institution, and were residing in Calgary at the time of the study. Multiple recruitment strategies were used to identify potential participants including contacting personal networks within the Filipino community, recruitment posters, and social media. Recruiting through these means was a challenge and snowball sampling was used as an additional strategy.^{xiv} A total of eight

in-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with Filipino-Canadian males as the primary data collection method. An initial protocol was developed to guide the interview process. Generally, participants were asked about personal values and expectations about education; the role of family, culture, and gender in shaping their educational expectations; motivations for attending university; factors that contributed to their decisions to pursue university education; and their insights about reasons Filipino males are not accessing and completing university. The interviews lasted between 45-90 minutes and were audio-recorded then transcribed. A second data collection strategy used was journals that were collected a week following the interview. Its purpose was to provide individuals an opportunity to reflect on their interview and secondly, to add any commentary related to their university experiences. All participants completed and submitted their journals to the researcher. Interview data and journals were anonymized using participants' self-selected pseudonyms.

Data was collected and analyzed through an iterative process. An inductive approach and thematic analysis were used to analyze the data.^{xv} According to Thomas, inductive analysis involves detailed readings of raw data to derive concepts or themes interpreted by the researcher.^{xvi} Responses were coded and thematically analyzed through the use of Atlas.ti to help manage the data.

Locating Myself within the Research

Before discussing the findings, it is important that I locate myself within the research process as part of being a self-reflexive researcher. I am a second-generation (Canadian-born) racialized female of mixed Filipino and Japanese ancestry. Given my mixed ethnic identity, one of the constant tensions I grapple with is how to locate myself within the research given my insider-outsider positionality and relationship with the Filipino community. As someone who has been educated in predominantly Western, Eurocentric knowledge systems, I am consistently reflecting on how these systems have structured my thinking and approach to “researching” the community which often embodies the dominant norms of Canadian society.

This is reflected linguistically, as English is my first language which has afforded me benefits in the Canadian mainstream. However, this also signifies my outsider status in relation to the Filipino community, where language is so central to developing a strong sense of ethnic identity. At the same time, my parents' decision not to teach me their native languages was due to colonial processes that deemed non-English languages as subordinate and thus inferior, but has consequently served as a mechanism for ‘separating’ or ‘distancing’ me from my culture to assimilate toward ‘white’ norms. Yet, there are clear markers based on my racialized and gendered

status that mark me as ‘other’ and are a consistent reminder that I am not truly accepted into Canadian society.

As such, my struggle to engage in research with the Filipino community is often fraught with these internal conflicts I have discussed. My stance is that the Filipino community is dynamic, fluid, and constantly changing and it also does not represent a monolithic culture. Cultural identities are constantly negotiated, co-constructed, and represent a diversity of voices and perspectives. My intention in doing this research is to understand aspects of the Filipino-Canadian experience that resonate with my experience as a child of immigrants in academia. My interpretation of these findings cannot be generalized and were co-constructed during the interviews with participants through our shared interactions. Therefore, my analysis is one interpretation influenced by my positionality and relationship with participants that is not neutral, objective, nor value-free.

Major Findings

In this section, I present themes from my analysis of the data. First, I provide a demographic profile of the participants including some contextual data about their parents’ socioeconomic status. Second, I present the following four key themes narrated from the participants’ perspectives on their Filipino family’s experiences of adversity including: 1) pre-migration; 2) migration; 3) and post-migration. The fourth theme discusses the impact of these experiences of family adversity on participants’ educational journey in university.

Participant Profile

At the time of the interview, participants’ ages ranged from 23 to 33 years old (average 28). Seven individuals attained their degree(s) from the University of Calgary and one from Mount Royal University. The types of degrees obtained ranged from Bachelors of Sciences in Biological Sciences (2), Computer Sciences (3), Electrical Engineering (1), and Nursing (2). Participants took between 4 and 8 years to complete their undergraduate degrees, which averaged approximately 5.5 years. Two of these men continued with master’s degrees in biomedical technology with one completing a second master’s in social work. All their graduate degrees were completed within two years. Five of the participants were employed full-time, two were part-time, and one was unemployed. About half the men had occupations in the health sector (4), and the rest were in IT/Software (2), social sciences (2), and business (1). Three quarters reported earning an annual income ranging from \$50,000 to \$99,999 while they earned less than \$50,000.

To get a general idea of how the participants' employment and educational outcomes differed from their parents, they provided information about their mother and father's level of education, employment status, occupation/employment sector, and combined income. The highest level of education attained by their mothers were bachelor's (3), college or diploma (3), and high school (2), while their fathers were bachelor's (2), college or diploma (1), some post-secondary (3) and less than high school (2). In terms of their parents' employment status, most mothers (5) and fathers (4) were employed full-time, approximately a third of mothers (3) and fathers (3) were retired, and one participant's father was deceased. Their mothers' occupations were in health care, accounting, or ran their own business while the fathers' occupations were in manual labour, engineering, accounting, and IT. Half the participants reported their parents' combined income ranging from \$50,000 to 74,999 (4), followed by \$75,000 to 99,999 (3), while one person did not respond.

Although the sample is too small to make any generalizations, this information provides a glimpse of the participants and their parents' social and economic situation to complement the qualitative themes.

Pre-migration Experiences of Adversity

Many of the men shared rich narratives of the social and economic hardships their families encountered while living in the Philippines, before coming to Canada. These stories were often passed down to the younger generations as a way of remembering the difficulties the family endured. It also served as an inspiration and motivation to the children to take advantage of the privileges they have in Canadian society, especially concerning school. The following excerpt illustrates the internalized narrative of Jackson Espiritu with respect to his family's pre-migration experiences:

My dad didn't get to finish his degree, but he's doing pretty well...maybe it's just a personal thing for my dad cause school is really important to him. They grew up really poor, dirt poor. And I think for my dad, education was a way to not be poor. But [me and my sister] didn't have that same experience...I think their personal experience of being poor...like my grandmother told me many stories. She told me, my sister and all my other cousins time and again how poor they were. My dad only had two pairs of pants. She's told that story to me crying...So I think being in poverty shaped them. And poverty is synonymous with living in the Philippines—or not synonymous, what's the word I'm looking for? It's a third world country.

Within this quote, the participant discusses the economic conditions his family endured in the Philippines and how poverty served as a barrier that prevented his father from completing his university education. The interviewee also highlights the value the family placed on education. Within this narrative, education was viewed as a way of achieving socioeconomic mobility, yet in

spite of the importance of education, the family was constrained by economic and social conditions that structured their lives. Consequently, Jackson Espiritu's father was not able to complete his studies because as the eldest, he had to work in order to provide for his family. This narrative also clearly reflects how he has internalized these stories of adversity. His retelling of his family's narrative reflects the pain and guilt of the grandmother that her son was not able to finish his degree because of financial barriers. Jackson Espiritu connects these narratives to his own educational experiences, noting that he and his sister "didn't have that experience," which implies that those same barriers of poverty did not structure their educational aspirations. Hence, those stories of his family's adversity pre-migration effectively influenced his motivations to pursue university. As a Canadian-born young Filipino male, Jackson Espiritu did not experience poverty as a barrier to education and therefore their privilege to access higher education represented a way of fulfilling family aspirations that could not be realized before migrating to Canada.

This sentiment was echoed by another participant, EJ, who internalized the narratives his grandparents told him about their family's experiences back home. This young man felt strongly connected to his grandfather who was a successful engineer in the Philippines that allowed him opportunities to travel through his work. Similar to Jackson Espiritu, poverty shaped a significant part of EJ's family's experience in the Philippines:

My grandparents, they grew up in a poor family. My grandmother, I don't even think she finished high school. My grandfather put himself through school working some sort of job and then he finished his degree and got the opportunity to travel all over the world doing engineering work; it was just a really good story that could happen to someone and because he did it in such hard circumstances...it makes you want to try to do it too or you get inspired to do it.

As illustrated in the excerpt above, EJ admired his grandfather for being able to complete his education despite all the hardship they endured as a result of the structural conditions of poverty. This served as an inspiration to EJ when he encountered challenges throughout his academic journey, recognizing that as a Filipino-Canadian, he did not have to deal with the same difficult economic circumstances that his grandparents and parents endured. Hence, the family stories passed on to the next generation are entwined as they make sense of their antecedents' migration and educational experiences.

Migration Experiences of Adversity

The process of immigrating is often challenging for Filipino migrants. Uprooting from one's home and leaving behind the support systems and networks to navigate life in another country created a lot of disruptions that were shared by participants. A salient example of migration

experiences of adversity was discussed during my interview with John Smith. The quote below illustrates how his entire family was affected by the migration process, which coincided with Canada's immigration patterns where a large influx of Filipinos migrated to Canada post-1967 following immigration reforms. Prior to migration, all family members had some post-secondary, yet it signaled a disruption following the migration process, where they were uprooted from their homes in the Philippines:

My dad—I don't know if he completed his engineering degree—I want to say he did, but he moved here in the mid-seventies, so I think it was precipitated by my aunt who moved here for teaching and then she wanted everyone else to come with her, so they all just filtered in to Canada—for some reason, Calgary for the past 10 years after the mid 70s. My father, I think he finished his engineering degree in the Philippines. My mom was in sciences. She finished it there, then she moved here.

Though both his parents were educated and had professional experience in the Philippines, the process of immigrating to Canada was an interruption that prevented them from gaining employment in the areas they studied in university, which essentially meant they had to start over and find whatever work they could to establish themselves in a new country. Neither parent was employed in Canada in the field that they studied back home. Rather, they worked labour jobs with his father as a meat cutter and his mother as a nurse aid.

As part of retelling this story through the perspective of the second-generation, John Smith understood that their educational and employment aspirations were interrupted, and they could not fulfil their dreams. The participant understood the sacrifices his parents made in coming here, and this motivated him to persevere in school and complete his MBT.

Post-migration Experiences of Adversity

After the participants' families migrated from the Philippines, the adversity continued as they attempted to settle and integrate into Canadian society. The majority of interviewees talked about their family's post-migration experiences of adversity, which is likely due to these memories being a part of their lived experiences growing up as the children of immigrants in Canada. One of the Filipino males, John Doe shared family narratives of his parents' working long hours in entry-level jobs:

Growing up, my dad worked two jobs for most of my life, from the early mornings to...I'm not exactly sure what time. No he got home around 3 or 4. Then he would leave again cause he would get up early and worked at a meat-packing plant. He worked a full-day there, would come home, take a nap and then go to a night job where he was part of the night cleaning staff in a dental office. So, that was both long hours and hard labour. And my mom, as long as I've been alive she worked at the shoe store—probably before that...she's kind of a success story.

She worked for the same guy at the same store for the same company for decades and then when the original owner passed away, the family sold the business to her. But it was still not a glamorous job. She was just selling shoes. It was an okay living, but I think they both wanted to see me in sort of an office job; something better than what they had.

The narrative sheds insights into the realities of his parents working long hours in entry level jobs to make ends meet. Moreover, this respondent bore witness to the struggles his parents faced as they attempted to succeed in Canada. In effect, he internalized his parent's experiences of adversity within his own narrative, recognizing his parents' sacrifices were for the children's sake. As such, he felt a strong sense of responsibility to do well in school and obtain a professional "office" job that would lead to more social and economic stability.

It is also important to note that there was a diversity of migration experiences among participants and their families. For example, Lawrence's mother came to Canada as a young adolescent. Nevertheless, the interviewee also shared his family's post-migration experiences of hardship:

My mom for sure as I told you, she's gone through the most out of all of us. She's lost a lot of things; she's worked very hard to get her education. She's went through a lot of medical decisions and still she's gone through all these things and still supported us no matter what. I think her drive was having us as kids was a big thing and I think that was a good influence in my life for sure and my grandparents were always the ones who helped me to do the best as possible even through they're old [laughing].

In this quote, Lawrence shares the adversity his mother faced including obtaining her post-secondary education in Canada, while managing health concerns and family responsibilities. The multigenerational support is apparent in the role of grandparents, as they not only supported Lawrence's mother in dealing with her challenges, but also ensured they helped the grandchildren. This included taking on childcare responsibilities as well as instilling the importance of education.

Impact of Experiences to Educational Trajectories

The previous three themes highlighted the experiences of adversity that participants' families experienced throughout the three stages of pre-migration, migration, and post-migration. This final theme highlights the impact of these experiences on the interviewee's educational trajectories. The articulations of their family's experiences of adversity were discussed in-depth during the interviews, which provide a glimpse of their internalized narratives in how they make sense of their family's experiences. This sentiment was reflected in the following words by John Smith, who remarked:

They're [parents] sort of the prototypical Filipino idea of self-sacrifice for your family. There's a reason why so many Filipino workers don't complain or are willing to work in horrendous conditions or whatever in order to send money back to their family. There's a reason why foreign currency is one of the largest GDP earners in the Filipino economy—it's crazy. So, I think the idea of familial self-sacrifice always had an effect on me growing up. Yeah, like my parents always said we moved here just so you can get an education... Well they always maintained or paint a picture of the Philippines as, 'we left paradise for you [laughing]' but the entire system was corrupt. You had homelessness in the city while Imelda Marcos is buying all these shoes. They had that whole, 'well we moved to Canada so that you could have a better life' type idea. I sort of tried to put in that, 'I don't want to let my parents down' mentality. They moved all the way over here so I might as well try to put in some effort.

This excerpt clearly illustrates the impact that his family's experiences of adversity had on him and his decisions to not only pursue higher education, but successfully complete it too. Moreover, he discusses the structural conditions of adversity at a broader macro level and connects this to the stories his parents passed on to him and his siblings as a means of motivating them to do well in school. In turn, John Smith internalized these narratives and perceived his parent's immigration experiences as a form of self-sacrifice. As such, this notion of parental self-sacrifice put pressure on him to excel in university as a means of achieving "upward social mobility."

This notion of achieving upward mobility through university education as a means of obtaining socio-economic stability was also internalized by Lawrence. The struggles his family faced from his father leaving at a young age as well as his brother moving away, meant that Lawrence assumed responsibility from a young age to be the *padres de familia* (loosely translated as father of the family). His family's stories of adversity coupled with his personal experiences witnessing the struggles served as a motivation for Lawrence to attend and complete university to help provide for his family:

My parents aren't, weren't together... they were separated when I was young so since my brother's a lot older than me, he moved away at a younger age—when I was really young, I felt like I was a parent. So, during that separation, that's probably why I decided to do the best I can and make sure I get through university. It was a big struggle—that was another thing that made me a stronger person today. It was, like you've seen all the struggle I went through making sure it wouldn't be the same thing for me.

He viewed higher education as a means to ensure he was financially secure and able to support his family's needs. These narratives were internalized by Lawrence and deeply impacted his experiences as a young man.

Many of the Filipino-Canadian men in the study echoed similar sentiments. Essentially, the ways in which they made sense of their family's adverse experiences strongly affected them and served as a motivation to not only pursue university education, but these narratives were drivers that helped them overcome their own adversity they encountered while attending post-secondary.

These youth often viewed completing university as a form of repayment to their parents for their sacrifices in coming to Canada, as expressed in the following journal reflection by John Doe:

As far as the journal, I didn't have anything to record really...oh except for one point regarding your question about whether there was a difference in pressures for Filipino females to go to university. I think there is. I think the difference is that Filipino parents...expect females to put in work to be successful as a way to repay their parents or showing respect to them and their efforts to provide...To be honest, I also felt that my success in school and even life in general was the same kind of respect and repayment for what my parents gave me so perhaps that isn't as much a difference between males and females in the Filipino culture, but I think the extra lengths that parents of females might go to may possibly extend the expectations they have of success higher.

While John Doe acknowledges that there may be increased expectations and pressure for women to succeed in post-secondary from a gendered perspective, he has also internalized his parents' sacrifice as part of his own narrative that drove him to be successful in university. Moreover, he discusses the implications of his parents' sacrifices as a form of debt that is repaid by the children by means of higher educational attainment.

Discussion, Limitations, and Implications

As part of trying to understand the complex relationships between Filipino immigrant parents and their Canadian-born children, this chapter focuses on internalized narratives of family adversity through the lens of Filipino male youth who completed university in Calgary, Alberta. As children of immigrants who were born and raised in Canada, second-generation Filipinos are uniquely positioned to interpret their parents' experiences through a different lens, which garner critical insights about the settlement and integration experiences of their first-generation antecedents. This study focused on how Filipino-Canadian men who completed university talked about their family's immigration experiences as Filipinos in Canada. Major findings suggest that the migration experiences of Filipino parents play a major role in influencing the educational trajectories of Filipino-Canadian youth.

It is important to note that I explicitly decided to only interview Filipino men who completed university to adopt a strengths-based approach rather than comparing them to those who chose different post-secondary pathways such as trade schools and colleges or who "dropped out." I maintain my position that deficit-based perspectives are part of reproducing a dominant hegemonic narrative that Filipinos "choose" these pathways and therefore justify their subordinate position in the social hierarchy. Rather, I wanted to highlight the experiences of those in the community who successfully completed university to highlight the strengths that exist and resist the idea of comparing those who "did succeed" with those who "did not." Despite this arbitrary definition of "academic success" by completing a university degree, it

illustrates the many barriers and challenges that these men encountered. My intention in a study of this nature was to provide hope or inspiration by understanding the paths that racialized Filipino males navigated to obtain a university degree in predominantly white institutions and to not only recognize the challenges but also celebrate the successes of those in the community.

At the same time, it is important to humanize the educational processes of the Filipino-Canadian men as they navigated university to recognize and understand that at multiple times throughout their journeys, they experienced barriers and resilience. Therefore, acknowledging the structural barriers experienced beyond simply reducing their successes to individual merit contextualizes Filipino-Canadian men's experiences within broader macrostructural forces that constrain their agency to thrive in academia. Notably, a major limitation of this study is that it focuses only on the experiences of eight second-generation Filipino men who completed university in Calgary, Alberta. This means that their experiences are not representative of the Filipino community, but rather they provide important insights on the topic.

In her book *Pinay on the Prairies: Filipino Women and Transnational Identities*, Bonifacio remarks, "Filipinos believe that there is gold in education, that it acts as an equalizer among those of different social classes and status. Parents invest in their children's education, and it is common practice in many households to prominently display any evidence of their accomplishments...Attainment of an education degree accords respect and dignity not only to the individual but also to the whole family."^{xvii} The narratives shared by participants illustrate the ways in which intergenerational migration trauma and strength is experienced by the second-generation. These experiences of Filipino immigrants are passed down through stories to the children, and internalized as their own stories of adversity and resilience. Accordingly, it is imperative to generate strategies that social service providers and relevant stakeholders can engage in to be more inclusive in their practices with Filipino youth, their families, and communities.

First of all, many studies that are deductive in nature may not capture the complexity of the contexts surrounding educational experiences of the children of immigrants. Both are important in informing each other and developing a more holistic understanding of Filipino integration across the generations. As service providers and professionals, it is important to understand individual and family experiences in context, meaning that their everyday realities are contextualized within the broader structures and systems they encounter and interact with.

Secondly, we need to pay attention to the impact of deprofessionalization among first-generation immigrants on their children and the consequences that this has across generations. Policies regarding deprofessionalization and lack of recognition of international credentials that are discriminatory towards first generation Filipino immigrants (and other immigrant populations)

have important implications for the next generation, who is mostly made up of youth. Federal policies dealing with immigration and provincial policies dealing with accreditation need to be addressed.

Finally, for human services professionals working with both first- and second-generation Filipino males, it is important to understand how they deal with adversity at each stage of the migration process. Collectively, insights from this study and these strategies are a step towards identifying areas that can be refined and improved to make higher education more accessible to underrepresented learners such as young Filipino–Canadian men.



CHAPTER 10

MENTAL HEALTH OF FILIPINO YOUTH IN ALBERTA

MISCHA TAYLOR AND CARLA T. HILARIO

Introduction

Canada has a long history of immigration from the Philippines. In recent years, newcomers from the Philippines have arrived within Canada's borders primarily as economic or family-sponsored immigrants (Kelly, 2014) and now comprise the fourth largest visible minority newcomer community in the nation (Statistics Canada, 2021a). Youth make up a large proportion of the Filipino Canadian community as first-, second-, and third-generation immigrants (Toronto Immigrant Employment Data Initiative [TIEDI], 2012). As visible minorities, the intersecting identities of Filipino youth, especially those who are newcomers, may make them more susceptible to psychological distress, including depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation (Mental Health Commission of Canada [MHCC], 2020). In addition, the social conditions and stressors associated with the COVID-19 global pandemic disproportionately affected the mental wellness of youth compared to adults (MHCC, 2020). However, Filipino youth are less likely to access mental health resources and may not be receiving the care they need (Javier et al., 2018; Kirmayer et al., 2007). Understanding and addressing mental health among Filipino youth in Canada is a growing yet largely unrecognized need. To address this gap, we provide an overview of what is currently known about Filipino youth mental health in North America generally, and Canada and Alberta specifically.

Filipino Immigrants

The Philippines has been a source country for newcomers to Canada for nearly a century. Arriving first in small numbers and then in growing cohorts with each decade, Filipinos have been settling in Canada since the 1930s (Laquian, 2008). By 2016, individuals of Filipino background made up the fourth largest visible minority group (Statistics Canada, 2021a), with the greatest number of newcomers immigrating to Canada between 2011 and 2016 arriving from the Philippines (Statistics Canada, 2017a). Within Canada, more than 21 percent of Filipino Canadians reside in Alberta (Embassy of the Philippines, n.d.). Although currently the second-most popular province of residence among those of Filipino background, Alberta received the highest number of new immigrants from the Philippines between 2011 and 2016 (Embassy of the Philippines, n.d.), and Filipino-Canadians now make up 4.4 percent of Alberta's total population (Statistics Canada, 2017b). Filipino communities in Canada tend to have a younger age structure compared to the general population (Statistics Canada, 2007). In 2006, 50.4 percent of 1st, 2nd, and 3rd generation Filipino-Canadians were under the age of 35 years old (TIEDI, 2012), whereas 44.4 percent of the general population in Canada were within this age range (Statistics Canada, 2021b).

Youth Mental Health

Among all youth, mental health is an increasingly critical health and social consideration. As youth encounter various life transitions and navigate corresponding shifts in their identity, roles, and relationships, the state of their mental health can become more precarious (Canadian Mental Health Association, 2021). Reports of poor mental health are highest among younger Canadians aged 15-30 compared to middle-aged and older adults (Garriguet, 2021), as 70 percent of Canadians reporting mental illness experienced the onset of symptoms before the age of 18 (MHCC, 2022). Self-reported mental wellness among youth has steadily decreased over time, from a high of 76 percent reporting excellent or very good mental health in 2003 to 60 percent in 2019 (Garriguet, 2021). Suicide rates have remained consistent within the Canadian youth demographic with suicide as the second leading cause of death among those aged 15-24 since 2002 (Government of Canada, 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic served to exacerbate the already troubling state of youth mental health. Public health measures such as school closures and physical distancing applied further strain to youth psychological well-being as adolescents nationwide experienced increased anxiety and depression, and a three-fold increase in self-reported suicidal ideation from pre-pandemic levels (Jack.org, 2020; MHCC, 2020). Visible minority youth, who already experience greater social vulnerability, were especially at risk of being detrimentally affected by the COVID-19

pandemic (MHCC, 2020). Such significant and swift deteriorations in youth mental health have underscored the precarious state of youth mental health in Canada, and the need to better understand and address it.

Mental Health among Filipino Youth

Although mental health poses a concern across all ethnic groups, immigrant youth are more likely to have poorer mental health outcomes than their Canadian-born counterparts (Rousseau et al., 2008). In the American context, youth from Filipino backgrounds are disproportionately represented among other Asian-American subgroups and the white majority in reporting depression and suicidal ideation (Javier et al., 2014; Javier et al., 2018), emphasizing the need for mental health supports. Yet, Filipino youth in both Canada and the United States are also less likely to access available mental health services and resources (Javier et al., 2018; Kirmayer et al., 2007). A concerning reality for Filipino youth is evident, defined by a growing need for mental health support.

Focus of the Chapter

This chapter focuses on what is currently known about the mental health of Filipino youth in Alberta, Canada, and North America. Far fewer studies have been conducted with Filipino youth in Canada, and even less in Alberta. While still limited in volume and scope, most of the current knowledge on the mental health of Filipino youth is derived from American studies. As such, understanding the state of Filipino youth mental health in Alberta and Canada requires drawing on literature from all North American contexts for exploration and comparison. The next section of this chapter will present the findings of studies to date on Filipino youth mental health in both Canada and the United States, to attempt to map their experiences of mental wellness and accessing appropriate support and treatment.

What is Known?

Literature to date on the mental health of Filipino youth focuses on three general themes: barriers to and facilitators of mental wellness; responses to psychological distress; and barriers and facilitators to accessing mental health supports.

Barriers to and facilitators of mental wellness

Although few articles described the factors that affect mental wellness among Filipinos in Canada and the United States, some barriers and facilitators were identified. In Canada, perceived racism has been associated with conduct disorders in Filipino youth (Rousseau et al., 2008). When exploring perceived discrimination and ethnic identity, Mossakowski (2003) found a link between the perception of ethnic discrimination and higher levels of depressive symptoms among Filipino Americans of all ages.

Canadian studies also highlighted family dynamics as a barrier to mental wellness. Where family conflict was pronounced, problem behaviours suggesting psychological distress were more common among Filipino youth (Rousseau et al., 2008). Since Filipino migration to Canada is often initiated by the mothers arriving to fill temporary trained positions or through Canada's 'fast track' economic immigration path, families may be separated across borders until children join their mothers in Canada (Beiser et al., 2010). Family reunification may be accompanied by diminished mental wellness for Filipino children as they navigate the emotional challenges of their experience of family separation (Beiser et al., 2010). A separate study found that Filipino and Chinese parents' poor English or French language skills may detrimentally impact children's mental health as well. Parents may feel depression or somatization as they struggle to communicate in Canada, which can impact their children's mental well-being (Beiser et al., 2014). Further, as children generally adapt more quickly than their parents and learn English or French at a faster rate, parents' limited proficiency in these languages can cause parent-child misunderstandings and increased tension within the family (Beiser et al., 2014).

Only one study has specifically examined factors that promote mental wellness among Filipinos, examining the relationship between ethnic identity and mental health in Filipino Americans (Mossakowski, 2003). Ethnic identity refers to an aspect of self-concept and includes a sense of ethnic pride and commitment to one's ethnic group (Mossakowski, 2003). This study found an inverse relationship between strong ethnic identity and decreased depressive symptoms, where ethnic pride and commitment directly benefited mental health among Filipino Americans (Mossakowski, 2003). More research is needed to identify additional factors and conditions that enhance mental health among Filipinos, particularly for the Filipino youth population in Canada.

Responses to psychological distress

There is little evidence to date of how Filipino youth respond to psychological distress, although more studies have been conducted with Asian youth as a broad group and with Filipinos of all ages. What is known is that when Canadian-Filipino youth encounter psychological distress, it often remains unacknowledged or untreated (Rousseau et al., 2008). Although ethnic or racial

minorities are likely to experience poorer mental health outcomes than the ethnic majority (American Psychiatric Association, 2017; Rousseau et al., 2008), Filipino-Americans of all ages are less likely to report symptoms of poor mental health than all other ethnic groups (Lairmore, 2019). Yu et al. (2004) found that Asian youth in the United States were less likely than non-Asian youth to use healthcare services in general. Similarly, first-generation Filipinos in Canada used mental health services at one-third of the rate of Canadian-born individuals (Kirmayer et al., 2007).

Alcohol consumption has been identified as a response to the psychological distress of racism. When psychological distress is present, alcohol use among Filipino young adults may increase to psychologically cope with encounters of racially motivated microaggression (Paves, 2016). However, little is known about the use of alcohol to manage other mental health challenges. Further, no other studies have discussed alternative coping mechanisms to mitigate or manage psychological distress.

Barriers and facilitators to accessing mental health supports

The bulk of the literature on Filipino youth mental health focuses on barriers to accessing mental health services, with some discussion of facilitating factors. Most significantly, the interaction of cultural and familial factors can inhibit the use of mental health supports. For instance, a focus on academic achievement over emotional wellness can weaken relationships between parents and children and make children less likely to share their experiences of depression or anxiety with their parents (Arora & Khoo, 2020; Javier et al., 2014). In Canada, an ‘emotionally reticent’ parenting style has been assumed to hinder emotional openness between parents and youth (Beiser et al., 2014). Stigma against disclosing psychological distress and help-seeking in the Filipino community has been attributed to culture, causing conflict within families when youth attempt to talk about or access mental health supports (Javier et al., 2018). In some cases, parents do not permit their children to access services (Arora & Khoo, 2020). Stigma also prevented parents of Filipino origin from attending parenting interventions aimed at mental health awareness and suicide prevention (Flores et al., 2015; Javier, 2018).

Accessing services has also been linked to parents’ language ability. Language was identified as a barrier more frequently in Canadian studies, where limited proficiency in English or French acted as a barrier to seeking mental health treatment among Filipino parents (Beiser et al., 2010) and Filipinos in general (Kirmayer et al., 2007). In the United States, limited language skills have been associated with lower general healthcare utilization among Asian American youth (Yu et al., 2004).

Studies suggest that youth also face barriers to accessing mental health due to stigma. Peer-related stigma has been linked to youth's willingness to access mental health treatment with Asian-American youth expressing concern about being perceived as 'crazy' or rejected by their peers if they used mental health supports (Arora & Khoo, 2020). In addition, the internalized stigma of mental health has been cited as a barrier, as youth expressed that requiring mental health treatment represented a "loss of face" (Lairmore, 2019, p. 67) or personal weakness (Arora & Khoo, 2020). Other youth expressed that they lacked mental health literacy, specifically in terms of how to access treatment and resources (Arora & Khoo, 2020).

Current literature also identifies several factors that enhance the use of mental health supports among youth of Filipino origin. Although family and culture have been found to inhibit youth access to and uptake of mental health resources and treatment, the family, as a highly valued social unit in Filipino culture, can also facilitate utilization. Where family cohesion was strong, open communication tended to follow (Javier et al., 2018). In connected family environments, youth were able to share their mental health needs and were supported by their parents to attend therapy or receive other services (Javier et al., 2018). Further, when parents of Filipino origin participated in mental health awareness and suicide prevention interventions, relationships between parents and youth improved, as did youth health behaviour (Javier, 2018; Javier et al., 2016). Parenting interventions may directly improve youth mental health by "equipping parents with the tools needed to raise successful and well-adjusted children" (Flores et al., 2015, p. 5). Consequently, the mental well-being of Filipino youth could be enhanced through greater family cohesion and interventions that target improving communication, trust, and openness within Filipino families (Javier et al., 2018). One study noted that church leaders were especially well positioned within the Filipino community to advocate for mental wellness and could address the topic openly with attendees, or provide parenting and mental health programs (Javier et al., 2014).

Discussion

While studies of Filipino youth mental health in Canada are very limited, research conducted in the United States with youth from Filipino backgrounds can shed some light on this topic. It is possible to begin to create a picture of the state of mental health among this group by piecing together what is currently known. Statistics from both the United States and Canada find that Filipino youth have poorer mental health outcomes than youth from other Asian backgrounds and the ethnic majority group (Javier et al., 2014; Javier et al., 2018; Rousseau et al., 2008); face additional challenges to their mental wellness as visible minorities and immigrants or the children of immigrants (Beiser et al., 2010; Rousseau et al., 2008); and are less likely to access available mental health services and resources (Javier et al., 2018; Rousseau et al., 2008). While the picture

appears grim by these measures, the existing research offers insights to contextualize and improve mental health outcomes for Filipino youth. Specifically, the research describes the role of family and family dynamics in Filipino youth mental health and the relationship between ethnic identity and mental health.

Several articles discussed the role of family, particularly parent-child relationships, in youth mental health. Family circumstances were found to contribute to youth's psychological distress as well as hinder their uptake of available mental health supports (Arora & Khoo, 2020; Beiser et al., 2010; Beiser et al., 2014; Javier et al., 2014). Yet, the cultural importance of strong family ties also contributed to youth mental health service use in some cases. Where family cohesion was present, greater openness between parents and children often followed, normalizing youth's mental health needs, and facilitating a pathway to receiving professional help (Javier et al., 2018). Other studies found that parenting interventions focusing on mental health awareness and communication with their adolescent children had positive outcomes for youth mental health and treatment (Flores et al., 2015; Javier et al., 2016; Javier et al., 2018). In a study of the mental health of young immigrant men, a Filipino participant shared that having roles and responsibilities within the family positively influenced their mental wellness (Tulli & Hilario, 2020). Consequently, the family could be seen as a strength of Filipino culture and communities that can be utilized to improve mental health among its youth. More research could further examine the interaction of family and culture and its impact on Filipino adolescent mental wellness, as well as youth perceptions of receiving mental health supports within family and cultural contexts.

The existing research also indicates a relationship between identity and mental health. Mossakowski's (2003) study of how ethnic identity affects mental health among Filipino Americans found that a sense of ethnic pride and commitment are strongly associated with fewer depressive symptoms, suggesting that a healthy ethnic identity may benefit mental wellness for this group. This study, however, does not examine ethnic identity among adolescents specifically, nor does it include Filipinos in Canada for whom ethnic identity may differentially interact with mental health and perceived discrimination, a key factor related to mental wellness. These studies reveal a possible facilitator of mental wellness that, given current gaps in knowledge, could be further explored among Filipino youth in Canada.

Conclusion

As individuals and families from the Philippines continue to settle in Canada and the Filipino diaspora grows, it becomes increasingly important to understand their unique capacities and needs. Research demonstrates that Filipino youth are at greater risk of experiencing psychological distress, a reality that has been intensified by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, very little

research has been done to further explore the state of mental health among Filipino youth in Canada or Alberta. This chapter outlines what is currently known and points to gaps in knowledge. Studies to date in the United States and Canada provide some insight into Filipino youth's mental wellness, how they may respond to psychological distress, and factors related to accessing mental health supports. This knowledge highlights key areas where more research could contribute to a better understanding of Filipino youth mental health and enhance their overall quality of life in Canada and Alberta.

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CHAPTER 11

STRENGTH IN UNITY: ENGAGING MEN IN CALGARY'S FILIPINO COMMUNITY TO PROMOTE MENTAL HEALTH THROUGH ANTI- STIGMA ACTIVITIES

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Introduction

The Filipino community is the fastest growing ethno-cultural group in Calgary, Alberta.^{xviii} A major issue concerning Filipino men in Alberta is mental health, which intersects with family, community, and culture. Mental illness stigma exists in Asian communities across Canada, intensifying the suffering of those with mental illness and those closest to them. Within Asian cultures including the Filipino community, mental illness stigma is a major barrier that prevents men from seeking help. Furthermore, there are limited community-based interventions that address stigma in Asian communities from a culturally sensitive lens.

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In this chapter, we present activities accomplished by Filipino men to address mental illness stigma within their communities in Calgary, Alberta. Data was drawn from the Strength in Unity (SIU) project, a multisite community-based study addressing mental health in Asian communities in Canada. The study evaluated anti-stigma interventions and enhanced mental health knowledge among South, East, and Southeast Asian men. After completing the interventions, participants mobilized to become community advocates, leading to greater empowerment; uptake of anti-stigma attitudes; and activism toward stigma reduction.

The chapter is organized as follows: We begin by providing context on Filipinos in Canada, Alberta, and Calgary. A brief overview of SIU is then presented. Third, we discuss relevant literature on mental health/illness, stigma, and help-seeking behaviours among Filipinos in North America. Fourth is a description of how this study was conducted. The study's major results are presented, followed by the implications of the knowledge mobilization activities and their impact on Filipino men, their families, and communities.

Filipino Context in Alberta

According to Statistics Canada, the Philippines was the leading country of immigrants to Canada. Alberta accounts for 11.5% of Canada's Filipino population. In Calgary, 17% of recent immigrants are Filipino.^{xxix} As the Filipino population in Calgary has increased, the city is now home to the fourth largest Filipino community in Canada.^{xx} Despite the size of the Filipino population in Alberta and Calgary, there is a dearth of grey and scholarly literature.^{xxi} A few notable exceptions exist. For instance, in her seminal book, *Pinay on the Prairies: Filipino Women and Transnational Identities*, Dr. Bonifacio examines the lived experiences of Filipinas (Pinays) in rural and urban areas in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta.^{xxii} She draws attention to gendered and racialized aspects of migration, highlighting the complex and diverse identities of Pinays, and situating their settlement experiences, activism, and community building within historical, social, political, economic, and global contexts. Studies specific to Calgary include Alama, Hertzprung, Sato, and Wells et al.^{xxiii} Moreover, limited research literature explores issues focused on mental health/illness stigma among Calgary's Filipino community. To assist Filipinos to settle in Calgary, the Calgary Immigrant Women's Association (CIWA) offers "The Filipino Community Development Program." Its primary objective is to foster the integration of Calgary's Filipino community members. Services offered include parenting workshops, youth engagement activities, and in-home support.^{xxiv}

Alberta's first Filipino Leadership Conference occurred in June 2018 with 176 attendees across Alberta, including provincial and federal government leaders and representatives. This conference aimed to "build a common voice for the Filipino community in Alberta; strengthen the network

of cooperation; and, identify key issues and actions.”^{xxv} A key issue identified was the precarious health concerns facing Alberta’s Filipino community. In response to this issue, a community action discussed was the “[a]doption of a comprehensive cross-cultural assessment when working with Filipino families on mental health and domestic violence concerns.”^{xxvi} Importantly, a broad range of diversity within the Filipino community in Alberta was noted at the conference, reflecting the overall diversity of Canada’s Filipino population. This includes Filipinos of varying migrant status with distinctive languages and regional differences (e.g. Visayas, Ilocanos) who identify as first, second, and 1.5 generation (those who immigrated as a youth or adolescent); mixed heritage; LGBTQ2IA+; and gender non-binary who prefer *Pilipinx* to denote their decolonized approach to gender identity. The varying experiences of all these subgroups present challenges in generalizing the mental health experiences of Filipinos in Alberta.

The unique mental health experiences of Filipino temporary foreign workers (TFWs) and front-line workers have also been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Cargill, a meat-processing plant in High River, Alberta, faced the largest coronavirus outbreak in Canada. This severely impacted Alberta’s Filipino community as 70% of Cargill’s workers are Filipino. Consequently, Filipinos in Alberta garnered considerable media attention during this pandemic.^{xxvii} The mental health experiences of these Filipino workers are shaped by financial struggles, health/safety concerns, possible deportation, and job loss. Many Filipino families have at least one family member working the front lines which compounds the several mental health concerns within the community.^{xxviii} This illustrates the need for adequate mental health support specific to Filipinos in Calgary and Alberta.

The Strength in Unity (SIU) Project

SIU was a national multisite community-based research project aimed at decreasing mental health stigma by training and mobilizing Asian males to become Mental Health Ambassadors (MHAs). This mixed-methods study, conducted between February 2014 and October 2017, represented the first collaborative attempt at addressing stigma among Asians residing in Toronto, Vancouver, and Calgary.^{xxix} All participants were 17 years or older Asian men who were either a) living with or had a family member affected by mental illness, or b) a community leader interested in advocacy. Individuals were assigned to one of four groups: Acceptance and Commitment Training (ACT), Contact-based Empowerment Education (CEE), Multi-component Intervention (MCI); or Mental Health 101 [MH101].

ACT is an empirically-based, psychological intervention that incorporates mindfulness, acceptance, commitment, and behaviour change processes to increase psychological flexibility, reduce mental health stigmatizing attitudes, and enhance coping with mental stresses.^{xxx} CEE

draws on principles of transformative learning and empowerment theories to enhance participants' capacities as MHAs to challenge mental health stigma.^{xxxii} To achieve this objective, CEE engages participants in collaborative learning activities with individuals who have lived mental health/illness experiences. CEE provides mental health literacy programming and advocacy skill training. The MCI is a novel intervention that was tested in this study, combining both ACT+CEE. MH101 is a control group condition, essentially an educational lecture providing an overview of mental health/illness, factors affecting mental health, and approaches to peer support, treatment, and recovery.

Filipino Mental Health and Help-seeking

Most of what we know about mental health/illness, stigma, and approaches to helping those affected by mental health come from studies that focus on Asians as a broad population.^{xxxiii} There is very little published research specific to Filipino mental health, especially in Canada. While there are commonalities, Filipinos have unique historical and cultural experiences that make them distinct from other Asian groups like Chinese, Japanese, or Koreans.^{xxxiii} This section brings together some of the literature related to mental health/illness, stigma, and help-seeking behaviours that are common among Filipinos in North America. Virtually all the studies we refer to here come from the United States because to our knowledge there has not been a specific study that addresses mental health and well-being specifically with Filipino Canadians.

Filipino Americans have high rates of mental health concerns such as depression, suicidal ideation among youth, eating disorders, substance use, engaging in high-risk sexual behaviours, and stress that is unique to those from immigrant backgrounds.^{xxxiv} Although these rates are high, when compared to the general population and other Asian groups, Filipinos are less likely to seek help for these issues.

There are several reasons that Filipinos in North America may underuse mental health services. Some research suggests certain cultural norms may discourage individuals from getting help such as saving face, cultural mistrust, communication styles, language, spiritual beliefs, and colonial mentality (internalized oppression).^{xxxv} As well, Filipinos may turn to other types of support for mental health concerns such as religious leaders, family members, or close friends.

Another explanation for why Filipinos underuse services is due to differences in how they understand mental health and illness.^{xxxvi} This might include different values, beliefs, and attitudes they have about the causes, symptoms, and ways to manage mental illness. Mainstream mental health services often do not take these cultural differences into account when thinking about ways to help a Filipino who may be suffering from mental illness. Nadal and Monzones suggest

that generational issues and experiences with race and acculturation are important when considering the mental health experiences of Filipino Americans.^{xxxvii}

Sanchez and Gaw identify common contributors to mental health perceptions among Filipinos: religion, family and support systems, and indigenous traits and coping styles.^{xxxviii} Some common Filipino cultural views about the causes and symptoms of mental health and illness include a tendency to express emotional or psychological concerns as somatic, meaning they relate it to a physical condition in their body.^{xxxix} Tuliao states, “Philippine folk conceptualizations of illness do not differentiate between physical and mental disorders,” which differs from the medical model.^{xl} For example, many Filipinos believe mental illness is caused by supernatural forces like gods, spirits, or *mangkukulan* (witches). Other common beliefs about the causes may be due to an imbalance (physical/emotional/spiritual), relationship problems, or attributing personal responsibility for their illness.^{xli}

Hence, “the argument towards the need to understand conceptualizations of mental illness is straightforward: the type of help sought will depend on how the illness is defined and what the etiological attributions are.”^{xlii} Essentially, how Filipinos define, perceive, and understand mental illness including its causes and symptoms will depend on the type of help they seek. Common barriers to seeking help include stigma, reliance on traditional healing practices, limited knowledge of mental health services, limited access due to costs or a shortage of mental health professionals, and a lack of culturally relevant services.^{xliii}

To address these barriers, different approaches have been noted in the literature such as relying on religious clergy, prayer, spiritual counseling including consultation with indigenous faith healers, support of family, friends, or other lay networks, and preference for an authoritarian approach by medical experts.^{xliv} Many authors highlight Filipino cultural attitudes, values, and beliefs that may influence how we seek help or talk with professionals about mental health concerns including *bahala na* (fatalism), *pakikisama* (avoiding offending or disagreeing openly with others), avoiding *hiya* (shame or embarrassment), *amor propio* (fragile sense of self-worth), *utang ng loob* (debt of reciprocity), *timbang* (balance).^{xlv}

Finally, E.J.R David’s influential book, *Brown Skin White Minds* examines the historical and contemporary roots of Filipino colonial oppression under Spanish and American rule by exploring how legacies of colonialism have produced and continue to reinforce colonial mentality within Filipino -/American psychology.^{xlvi} The author historically contextualizes colonial mentality by looking at pre-colonial indigenous Filipino culture (Tao); colonial mentality as a psychological construct to situate it in our contemporary society; and advances *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* (Indigenous Filipino Psychology) as a model and approach to decolonize the field of

psychology. He offers a Filipino-centered way of understanding and addressing mental health in the American context.^{xlvi}

This section provided an overview of what is known in the literature about Filipino mental health/illness, stigma, and help-seeking behaviours. We hope this study will add to the literature regarding ways that Filipino men acted as advocates to promote mental health in Calgary's Filipino community.

Methods

The methods section presents how this study was conducted including the purpose of the activity logs, sampling and recruitment strategies, how the data was collected and analyzed, and the study's limitations.

Activity Logs

Participants completed monthly logs documenting activities they were engaged in since completing the training. The logs were a mechanism utilized to achieve the project's objective of developing MHAs. Hence, the main purpose of the activity logs was to appraise successes, facilitators, and challenges/barriers of being a MHA.

Sampling and Recruitment

In this study, we used criterion and snowball sampling strategies. Criterion sampling "involves identifying and selecting all cases that meet some predetermined criterion of importance."^{xlvi} Accordingly, participants had to be at least 17 years old and self-identify as a Filipino male. The second strategy, snowball sampling, "involves asking participants for recommendations of who might qualify for participation, leading to referral chains."^{xlv}

Upon ethical approval from the University of Calgary's Conjoint Research Ethics Board, we initiated recruitment utilizing strategies such as canvassing campuses, social media, flyers, information sessions for agencies serving men, outreach at community events, and engaging with key community personnel. Sites of recruitment included the Genesis Centre, the Philippine Cultural Centre Foundation, and Fiesta Filipino.

Data Collection and Analysis

We developed a specific form that participants used to track their activities and categorize their activities and target audiences for the actions they performed. We tracked this information for six months post-completion of the intervention, then proceeded to analyze the logs through simple frequency counts, categorized as the types of activities performed; and the particular audiences of the actions of the Filipino participants. For the analysis of the men's commentary on their experiences performing the advocacy activities, we conducted a thematic data analysis. Thematic analysis is described as, "a method for identifying, analyzing and interpreting patterns of meaning (themes) within qualitative data."¹ One team member developed an initial coding framework which served as the foundation of the analytic process, subsequently reviewed by a second researcher. From the analysis, four salient themes emerged: mindfulness practices; supporting family members with mental health concerns; physical activities and exercise; and spiritual/faith-based activities.

Limitations

The primary limitation associated with the activity logs is that all the information is self-reported by participants. Moreover, the small sample size is limited to those who participated in the study. Hence the findings are not generalizable.

Major Findings

In this section, we present a participant profile and provide frequency counts illustrated in charts associated with the activity logs. This is followed by the major themes that emerged from the participants' commentary about the activities they engaged in.

Participant Profile

There were 55 men in the study who self-identified as Filipino. The assigned intervention distributions were ACT (18.5%), CEE (31.5%), MCI (40.7%), and MH101 (9.3%). Participants were of diverse backgrounds, which shaped the experiences shared in their logs and their engagement with the activities. Their ages ranged from 17–63 years old which averaged 42 years (SD13.25). The overwhelming majority were foreign-born (90.7%), all of whom were born in the Philippines (except one) and lived in Canada on average for 11.2 years (SD10.4), ranging from 6 months to 40 years. Most participants were Canadian citizens (59.3%) or immigrants with permanent resident status (37%). A small portion were TFWs (3.7%). Thirty-two participants

(59.3%) had children (range of 1–5). Concerning the first language, 90% of the participants spoke Tagalog, English, or both, while 10% spoke Bisaya/Visaya or Illongo. Additional spoken Philippine languages included Cebuano, Ilokano, Pampango, Surigaonon, and Karay-a. Other spoken languages included Japanese, Chinese, Spanish, and Arabic, all of which highlight the Filipino participants' linguistic diversity.

The distribution of marital status was as follows: single (24.1%), married/common-law (68.6%), and divorced/widowed (7.5%). Ninety percent of the men lived with someone including family members (partner/spouse, children, siblings, parents, uncles/aunts, nieces/nephews, in-laws), roommates, or a landlord. Ten percent were living alone. Their primary source of income was wages/salaries (72.2%), investments (11.1%), old age security/Canadian Pension Plan (9.3%), self-employment (5.6%), or unreported (1.9%). Most participants did not identify as having a mental illness (77.8%); the remainder either self-identified, were unsure or did not wish to say if they had a mental illness. Participants were asked if they had a family member who was living with mental illness; 72.2% stated no, while the remaining stated either yes, unsure, or did not wish to say. We collected data on the average time spent on social activities including faith-based, media, social justice, sports, youth groups, etc. Forty-two men (77.8%) reported being actively engaged in at least one of these activities with an average length of time of 9.5 years (SD8.8), ranging from 3 months to 40 years.

Frequencies of Activity Logs

Figure 1 provides a breakdown of the various activities performed by the Filipino men which totaled 75 different activities. The top three included self-care/self-acceptance; the combination of activities (two or more); and mental health promotion. The activity type that was performed the most in combination with others was addressing mental illness stigma.

Breakdown of Activities Performed by the Men

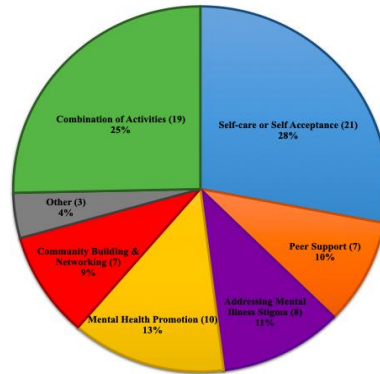


Figure 1. Breakdown of activity type performed by the Filipino men (n=75); frequency count shown in brackets.

Figure 2 captures the different audiences of the activities performed by the participants. The total number of audiences was 67. The top four were: self or personal; the combination of audiences; peers/family/friends; and workplace and/or schools. In analyzing the different audience combinations of the activities, the top three were peers/family/friends, workplace and/or schools, and community.

Breakdown of Various Audiences

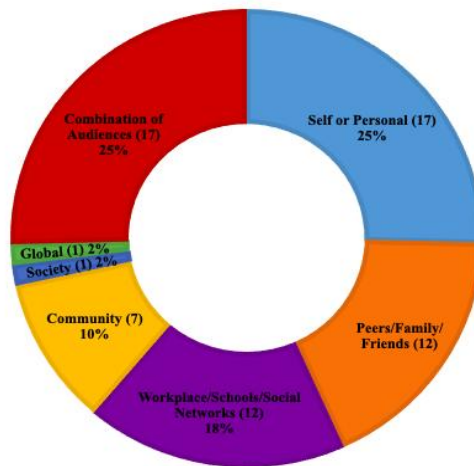


Figure 2. Breakdown of the activities by various audiences (n=67); frequency count shown in brackets.

Qualitative Findings

In analyzing the qualitative data of the activity logs, four major themes emerged. Each of them is discussed below in detail.

Mindfulness Practices. One of the dominant activities performed by the men was mindfulness practices. Thich Nhat Hahn defines mindfulness as “the practice of being fully present and alive, body and mind united... to know what is going on in the present moment.”^{li} Participant examples of mindfulness practices included: yoga, meditation, and activities learned from their training. Furthermore, the men turned to yoga and meditation as forms of self-care/self-acceptance, while being mindful in the presence of their family/friends, social networks, and community. Two men in particular stated, respectively:

“Participation in exercise, yoga and meditation. 5-7 days per week. Maintaining consistency and focus on relaxation” (CEE, Group1).

And,

“Began practicing mindfulness meditation regularly” (MH101, Group1).

These statements illustrate the men’s willingness not only to begin practicing mindfulness but to also perform these activities on a consistent and regular basis. Participants also developed healthy habits for self-care and their mental health.

The use of the Bull’s Eye Exercise is another example of a mindfulness practice learned from the training, specifically within the interventions involving ACT. This exercise is a visual tool for Filipino males to track how well their actions and values align with one another. Specifically, men can use this exercise to better understand how their values are shown through their everyday actions. One participant noted:

“Anytime I felt like I was out of balance, I referred to the bullseye practice to realign myself” (ACT, Group1).

This demonstrates participants’ ability to apply mindfulness learnings from the training when feeling out of balance and wanting to realign themselves.

Finally, respondents spoke about practicing mindfulness through an increased awareness of their environment. One individual remarked:

“Promote[d] mental illness stigma and its effects to an individual to family and friends. Was beginning to notice my surroundings” (MCI, Group1).

It is clear throughout our findings that mindfulness was practiced in a variety of ways. This allowed participants to use these practices with not only themselves but to also share these activities with their families, social networks, and community.

Supporting Family Members with Mental Health Concerns. The next major theme identified the ways participants supported family members with mental health concerns. Examples provided by the men included: bringing family members to public spaces, applying skills and concepts learned from the trainings, and showing emotional support with loved ones. A participant commented on how he supported his mother living with mental illness by frequently taking her to public places:

“Make a conscious decision to continue to take my mom to public places as much as possible and not be afraid of people's attitudes” (ACT, Group1).

The participant's fearlessness regarding others' attitudes in response to his mother's illness demonstrates his willingness to resist mental illness stigmas. Moreover, he challenges commonly held negative perceptions of people with mental illness and is actively being a MHA within his family.

Another individual also spoke about supporting a family member (his son) who is living with mental illness. The father described his efforts to actively apply his learnings from the training in providing support to his son's mental health needs. He stated:

“Just being aware of mental illness within my family and applying what I've learned from the workshop... Continue supporting my mentally ill son on his needs” (MH101, Group2).

Finally, some participants discussed their use of empathy and emotional support when engaging with loved ones. One shared his experiences supporting a friend in crisis:

“Supporting anti-stigma and to prevent common stigma that people are facing in everyday lives. I helped my friend who was in Vancouver and she was facing a crisis in [an] educational aspect of her life. She was confused on how to move forward and to be focused. [The] solution I found was a) engage in activities (outdoor or indoor) with your friends or take a break and you could focus on studies. It was successful” (CEE, Group2).

Through this example, we clearly see how he created an action plan to support his friend. His solution of engaging them to do indoor/outdoor activities with friends and taking breaks to better focus on studying, demonstrates his ability to apply the skills learned in the CEE training to address mental illness stigma and support loved ones with mental health concerns.

Physical Activities and Exercise. Another theme that emerged was participation in physical activities and exercise for self-care. Walking, badminton, biking, and general exercise were examples of physical activities stated by the participants. Several men spoke about walking as a

form of self-care that they either performed alone or with family. One individual set out a goal of achieving 10,000 steps a day:

“As part of self-care, I plan on doing at least 10,000 steps a day ... in the future [I will] reach for 20,000 steps a day” (MCI, Group2).

Similar sentiments were expressed by another participant:

“At least once a week our family goes for a walk (at park) and my daughter gets to play at the playground” (MCI, Group2).

Taken together, these findings suggest how walking and performing physical activities outdoors were key methods of care for Filipino men and their families. The statement of a timeframe by each of these men also demonstrates their consistency in performing their self-care practices regularly.

One participant discussed various sports activities he engaged in with his friends and family to promote mental health and wellness. He commented:

“Inviting friends and families to get involved with sports activities such as playing badminton, tennis and biking to promote wellness and at the same time to avoid boredom that leads to mental health issues. Friends and families were so happy because they are not only becoming physically but mentally fit” (CEE, Group2).

Another spoke about his feelings of appreciation and happiness when engaging in physical activities and exercise:

“Promoted and applied some health activities to my life such as exercising and afternoon walks. Started to appreciate what I have ... I started to do the things that make me happy. I also became mentally healthy by performing physical activities and being accepted by friends and family” (MCI, Group1).

The mental health benefits experienced by Filipino men who engaged in physical activities and exercise were clearly articulated through the comments in their activity logs.

Spiritual or Faith-based Activities. Finally, spiritual or faith-based activities were the last major theme. Religious teachings and prayer were the main examples of these activities discussed by the participants. The Philippines is the only nation in Asia that is Christian, with over 86% of the population being Roman Catholic.^{lii} Thus, spirituality and religion play fundamental roles in the lives of many Filipinos in Canada. One of the participants engaged in mental health promotion with his peers through a discussion on religious teachings. He spoke about how an individual's mental health is shaped by the relationship one has with their religion and family:

“We believed that wrong teaching [with] regard to religion will affect the mind of individual, most especially the people who had past bad experiences with family” (MCI, Group1).

Another participant utilized prayer when performing self-care/self-acceptance or facing challenges:

“Last December 2 is a memorable day, when I was in an accident 16 years ago. [I’ve] recovered so thanks be to our mighty God ... Last November I [told] my wife [she] needs to replace [the] disk brake assembly of my car, and she said we don't have [the] budget. Just to pray and God will provide for my problem” (MCI, Group2).

This illustrates the strong Christian faith that is practiced by many Filipinos and how this individual drew on faith to support his mental health.

The final section discusses the implications of our findings about how it benefits the Filipino men and their families, practitioners, and professionals who work with this population, and the broader Filipino community in Calgary and Alberta.

Implications and Conclusion

The overall aims of SIU were to decrease mental illness stigma through training Asian males to become community MHAs and to evaluate the effectiveness of ACT and CEE as interventions for addressing mental illness stigma in these communities.

By participating in the study and engaging in the MHA activities, it became evident that these men displayed their personal and collective agency to address mental health/illness stigma. This process is defined as, “an individual’s capacity to determine and make meaning from their environment through purposive consciousness and reflective and creative action.”^{liii} Through the interventions, the men gained knowledge about aspects of mental health and developed or refined their skills to address mental health concerns. This coupled with the support of their peers motivated them to share their learnings from the training. In analyzing the activity logs, we observed the men did not associate their mental health promotion activities with formal supports such as counseling or other mental health services. Rather, their activities were grounded in holistic and informal supports, like mindfulness and physical exercise. This is consistent with the literature on Filipino-Americans and mental health help-seeking: Filipinos’ preference for lay networks when searching for mental health support and relying on their personal and community agency in dealing with personal concerns.^{liv} This preference for self and community agency was evident throughout the SIU project: as participants progressed through the project, they were being transformed from individuals or community members to becoming important educators within their community and there were repeated requests from the men for more training sessions once the program ran its course.

The men's post-intervention activities suggest marked improvements in their health literacy concerning mental health. Health literacy is "the personal characteristics and social resources needed for individuals and communities to access, understand, appraise, and use information and services to make decisions about health."^{lv} Improved mental health literacy allows individuals to confidently advocate for themselves and articulate concerns when communicating with mental health professionals and service providers. In this sense, the family members of the Filipino participants with mental illness benefitted from the interventions, as these trainings may also improve their mental health literacy.

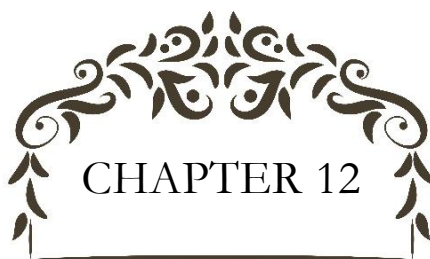
For practitioners and professionals (e.g., social workers, teachers, nurses, and physicians) who work with Filipino families and communities, there are lessons to be gleaned from Filipino men's mental health promotion activities. Since supporting family members was a major theme to emerge from the activities, it is important for practitioners to incorporate and seek family involvement when working with a Filipino with mental health concerns. Secondly, practitioners should reframe their understanding of mental health to align with the ways Filipino men and their families understand mental health.^{lvi} When performing assessments of Filipino clients, practitioners should seek to understand what mental health means to them while exploring for signs of mental health concerns.^{lvii} As a result, professionals may develop or adapt interventions to be culturally relevant for Filipino men. These suggestions align with past evidence that family involvement in professional care and treatment is beneficial for persons with mental illness as well as family members, and the need for adapting interventions across cultures.^{lviii} Further, non-Filipino practitioners working with Filipino men and their families should have a basic understanding of the socio-historical context of colonization of the Philippines and the role that colonial mentality plays as a pathologizing construct in the psychology of Filipino-Canadians. For practitioners and professionals of Filipino origin, it may be helpful to incorporate a decolonizing approach, such as *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* when working with this population.^{lix}

The design of the SIU project meaningfully engaged Asian men throughout the process, from recruitment, implementation, and dissemination of results. This involved a relationship-building process with participants throughout the study and understanding their perceptions/experiences of mental illness. From a community practitioner's perspective, it is important not to impose health-specific promotion activities (or any community-building activities) on what Filipino men should do to help themselves, their families, and their communities. Rather, it would be ideal to offer collaborative support to Filipino men as they accomplish their activities. This approach acknowledges participants as experts in their lives who are best positioned to address mental health stigma in culturally responsive ways.

There are existing structures and systems that create race and class hierarchies for the Filipino community in Alberta, and these coupled with the barriers for Filipinos in accessing formal

mental health supports render the community in Calgary vulnerable to mental health issues.^{lx} Although not reported on in this paper, there are specific mental health promotion activities led by the men that aimed to spread mental health awareness through community forums and gatherings. Resilience is “the capacity of individuals to navigate their way to the psychological, social, cultural, and physical resources that sustain their wellbeing, and their capacity individually and collectively to negotiate for these resources to be provided and experienced in culturally meaningful ways.”^{lxi} Resilience does not have simple outcomes, but is recurring and continuous and should consider socio-cultural community contexts.^{lxii} Continual access to education and information are important outcomes of building community resilience, and Filipino men’s efforts in spreading their mental health awareness to their fellow community members are important examples.

Areas that warrant further exploration of mental health promotion within Alberta’s Filipino community include the mental health experiences of Filipino women, youth, Pilipinx individuals, LGBTQ2IA+ individuals, Filipinos with disabilities, seniors, and Filipinos with varying migrant status.



CHAPTER 12

CELEBRATING OLDER MEMBERS OF THE FILIPINOS DIASPORA IN CALGARY, ALBERTA

*ILYAN FERRER, SHERRISA CELIS AND
ROCHELLE DELORIA*

Older Filipinos represent a growing community within Canada's increasingly diverse society. Statistics Canada (2016) has noted that the Filipino-Canadian community is generally young; where 34.9% is under the age of 25 compared to 30% of the general population. Indeed, existing scholarly literature has noted the accelerated growth of younger Filipinos in Canada, and in particular, the influx of Filipino newcomers and labourers. The most recent census in Canada has highlighted that of the 987,355 Filipinos living in Canada, one-third arrived within the last decade (Statistics Canada, 2023). However, less focus has centered on the rapidly growing and aging segment of the Filipino community; particularly older Filipino members who have either immigrated in later life, migrated under the Parent and Grandparent Super Visa, and those who are actively aging and growing older within Canadian society. The number of Filipinos over the age of 65 in Canada is rapidly rising, doubling from 18,285 in 2001 to 38,274 in 2010 (Pino & Coloma, 2016). In 2024, 78,295 Filipinos were reported to be over the age of 65, representing 8.2% of the Filipino-Canadian population. This number is expected to grow especially considering the 103,230 (or 10.8%) Filipino-Canadians between the ages of 55 and 64, and thus transitioning into retirement and later life (Statistics Canada, 2023). Today, 19% (or 181,525) of the Filipino population in Canada is over the age of fifty-five

(Statistics Canada, 2023). Parts of Canada that warrant particular attention are Filipinos living and working in the Prairies. Outlining the need to identify the stories of Prairie stories, Bonifacio (2014) documented and showcased how the lived experiences of small-town Filipino diasporas are largely absent within Canadian literature. Indeed, the urgency to share stories of Filipinos living in the Prairies is made apparent when considering how we represent one of the largest racialized communities in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba (Statistics Canada, 2022). The province of Alberta alone is home to 216,710 Filipino-Canadians with more than ten thousand Filipino-Albertans over 65.

Sharing Stories of Our *Lolos* and *Lolas*

In 2018, the Philippine Festival Council of Alberta (PFCA) held the first iteration of the Alberta Filipino Leaders Conference (Alberta Filipino Journal, 2018). The conference was a pivotal moment for the Filipino-Albertan community because it was held in conjunction with the first Philippine Heritage Month in Alberta (Alberta Filipino Journal, 2018). During the conference, leaders discussed the need for better supports for older Filipino-Albertans through the following policy and program recommendations: 1) the training and presence of a *community advocate* to represent the urgent needs of older Filipino-Albertans; 2) the elimination of dependency clauses within immigration programs such as the 20-year dependency period under the Parent and Grandparent Program Visa; 3) Old Age Security/Guaranteed Income Security that reflect financial realities of older Filipinos; and 4) the elimination of residency requirements so that older people can access maximum Old Age Security/Guaranteed Income Supplement. Another key recommendation was the need to intentionally document the experiences and contributions of our older community members so that younger Filipinos remember the ongoing legacies left by our *lolos* and *lolas*. Drawing from the First Alberta Filipinos Leaders Conference and the ground-breaking work of Glenda Bonifacio's "Pinay on the Prairies", this chapter documents and celebrates the life stories and histories of older Filipinos living in Calgary, Alberta. We use storytelling to acknowledge the biographies and intergenerational life lessons of our elders, and forefront their perceptions and reflections about community-building and legacy-making in Alberta. To curate the life histories of our elders, Sherrisa Celis and five volunteers (Rachel Galingana Argota, Allyssa Sicam, Abigail Ranada, Hazel Grace Fuentes, and Nick Celis) at the Calgary Catholic Immigrant Society (CCIS) collected interviews with 24 *Lolos* and *Lolas* who were either 1) active members of CCIS, and/or 2) community builders within the Filipino Canadian community in Calgary. Due to COVID-19 and the ensuing physical distancing measures, volunteers conducted telephone interviews and asked the following questions to our older storytellers:

Why did you immigrate to Alberta? When did you arrive in Alberta?

How would you describe your immigration to Alberta?

What challenges have you encountered as a Filipino in Alberta?

How did you overcome these challenges?

Table 1 offers a demographic overview of our participants, as well as a short life intergenerational lesson shared with the readers of this chapter.

Table 1. Portraits of our *Lolos* and *Lolas*.

Name	Age ⁸⁵	Gender	Date of immigration	Intergeneraitonal Life Lesson
Rufus Tigs Tidalgo	87	Male	1969	<i>Life is treated well in Canada unlike in the Philippines. Retirement is very good in Canada. Our seniors are respected.</i>
Murray Vila	81	Female	1970	<i>To each [their] own. You can choose whatever direction you want to take with your life. In Canada, when your child is 18, many would choose to live on [their] own.</i>
Ricardo Macabeo	83	Male	1973	<i>I have a huge network of influential people in the government when I was in the Philippines. I felt that I can do anything. Before, I thought that you will get hungry, or your life will not improve if you don't steal or if you're not corrupt. But when I moved to Canada, I became closer to God and learned to value life and to love my neighbours.</i>
Susan Palanca	67	Female	1974	<i>Life in Canada is beautiful and calm. The environment is clean. People here are kinder and you have more opportunities in education. It is also easy to raise a family. The lifestyle in Calgary is very good. I have only lived in Calgary since I moved to Canada. I love Calgary.</i>
Ben Isidro	75	Male	1975	<i>Life in Canada is better compared to life in the Philippines. If you have work, you can buy anything you want even if you are an ordinary citizen. Even if you don't earn much, you can afford to buy and eat the food you</i>

⁸⁵ We are presenting the age of our storytellers at the time of our interviews.

				<i>want unlike in the Philippines.</i>
Francisco Pepe Siapno	80	Male	1978	<i>Life in Canada is beautiful. I feel safe here and [our] health care is great. When I was younger, I got the job that best suit my qualifications.</i>
Lydia Siapno	82	Female	1978	<i>Life here is easier and there are more work opportunities. People are easy to get along well. Communication here is easier because of the English language compared to the countries we've been through.</i>
Carmelita Fuentes	74	Female	1970s (Winnipeg) 2005 (Calgary)	<i>I quickly learned to be more domesticated and independent. I learned to work harder which helped me achieve a successful career. Working hard brings great success.</i>
Domingo Fuentes	76	Male	1970s (Winnipeg) 2005 (Calgary)	<i>Education in Canada is very important. Even with limited English I was able to adjust to the life in Canada with the help of my friends from other diverse background[s]. I learned different ways of being independent.</i>
Espirita Bautista	87	Female	1983	<i>I learned the value of camaraderie among friends. In the Philippines, I haven't experienced this. Life is happier here. I have many good friends and I learned how to make good with my life.</i>
Connie Penny	71	Female	1984	<i>I love my life here. I was able to help my family. I can't stay long in the Philippines anymore; only for short vacation. Canada is now my home.</i>
Fely Cutaran	73	Female	1985	<i>It is easier to live here if you have work. Otherwise, it is also difficult. But in general, life is better in Canada.</i>
Cora Cordero	74	Female	1985	<i>I learned from my previous employers on how to live a simple life even if you have more than enough. I learned not to be materialistic.</i>
Celestino Bautista	73	Male	1986	<i>Life is better here compared in the Philippines. Work here is easier because you work based on the job description. If you are given an assignment, that</i>

				<i>is what you only need to do. No stress. Life is easier.</i>
Orlando Argota	75	Male	1986	<i>Always live within your means and enjoy the beauty of nature.</i>
Avelina Celis	86	Female	1988	<i>Be industrious and earn money. Be frugal and save money.</i>
Leny Dela Cruz	65	Female	1989	<i>Life is good as long as you have <u>perseverance</u> and <u>determination</u> to have a better life.</i>
Prescila Atienza	75	Female	1988	<i>Life is a hard sacrifice. I learned how to deal with people of diverse background and the value of humility.</i>
Benito Atienza	73	Male	1995	<i>My wife and I thank the Lord for the wondrous gift that we achieved during our stay in Canada. All the graces and blessings of love, of family, of our successes, and of the attainments of our dreams. I praise and thank Him also for all the trials, challenges, and failures because these are honed and refined as a lesson learned to be better as a witness of His love and power.</i>
Lenie Atienza	70	Female	1995	<i>I learned the value of close family ties. I took care of my children and gave them the guidance they need in life. I am proud of where they are now.</i>
Victoria Valencia	79	Female	1999	<i>Canadians are very courteous...and very respectful to the seniors. I am enjoying the benefits of being a senior in Canada especially in Alberta.</i>
Purificacion Romasanta	80	Female	1999	<i>I became independent by being financially disciplined. Knowing that working hard and living in Canada will give me better opportunities to enjoy life versus working hard back home. Sometimes [it] is not enough to live a comfortable life. Being exposed to other culture[s] brought me more awareness to the diversity we have in Canada.</i>
Connie Genilo	85	Female	2001	<i>Even if you are on your own, your life is still whole. Now that I live alone, I am still okay compared if I am living in the Philippines. You set your own</i>

				<i>destiny.</i>
Ramon Balagat	86	Male	2009	<i>Life is challenging in Canada.</i>

Stories of Early Settlement in the Prairies

The city of Calgary is on Indigenous lands known as *Moh'kins'tsis*, and is traditional Treaty 7 territory and home of the Blackfoot confederacy which includes the Siksika, Kainai, Piikani, and the Îyâxe Nakoda and Tsuut'ina nations. The territory is also home to the Métis Nation of Alberta, Region 3 within the historical Northwest Métis homeland. As authors, we acknowledge the desire for Filipinos to immigrate and settle into Canadian society, but we often forget that we are guests to this land. Older Filipinos in Canada have either immigrated at a young age and have subsequently aged in Canada (an experience known as *aging in place*) or have recently arrived as older adults. To date, there are few Filipinos born in Canada and are now considered older adults. However, this number is expected to increase as second-generation Filipinos age in Canada.

While the first recorded Filipino immigrants arrived in Canada during the 1930s (Alberta Filipino Journal, 2018), the proliferation and growth of the Filipino-Canadian diaspora started in the 1960s during the Ferdinand Marcos dictatorship, the creation of global labour export programs, and the liberalization of the Canadian Immigration Act in 1967. While reasons for leaving the Philippines varied, the majority of our participants wanted to find economic, social, and political stability. *Lolos* and *Lolas* like Rufus “Tigs” Tidalgo, Ricardo Macabeo, Murray Villa, Susan Palanca, Celestino Bautista, and Ben Isidro spoke about coming to Calgary in the early days. *Lolo* Tigs shares with us his recollection of being an early settler in Canada, where there were only sixty-eight Filipinos in the city. The early Filipino settlers came to Canada and found jobs in different sectors as they found their way within Canadian society.

“Fifty years ago...I initially moved here to get married and then next thing you know; I didn’t go back to our home country. I decided to stay here, because I got tired of my job in the Philippines as a police officer. I wanted a peaceful life because in my past job we were always running after criminals. It was a tiring job and demanded a lot physically and mentally. ...Moving to a province without family, I found that my adjustment went smoothly. Like I said, I came here to build my own family. ...In 1969, it was easy to get used to the province. ...When I came here, there were only 68 Filipinos in the city. ...I worked for Firestone for nine years until they closed in Calgary. I was in a high position there. I worked in insurance until I was 65 years old”.

Rufus “Tigs” Tidalgo

Lolos Pepe and Orlando similarly recall their immigration story by highlighting the opportunities awaiting in Canada. Rich in natural resources, many Filipinos found work in Alberta's oil and gas sector where they built their careers by showcasing their skills within the industry.

"We moved to Calgary by accident. In 1959, I was working in Iran. ...We went to an airport from San Francisco to...Calgary. When we came to Calgary, [customs] gave us 72 hours to tour around. Luckily, when we went to the airport in August 1978, I opened the telephone directory [and found] my friend from when I worked in Brunei, Malaysia. ...He brought us to his house [and] instead of touring around, I opened the Calgary Herald. There was a lot of job vacancies. I phoned Gulf Canada they [asked] me, "are you an immigrant? You can start anytime." I wasn't an immigrant. So, I phoned another company...and told them that I'm a tourist. They were willing to give us a working visa. My friend drove us to immigration to get sponsored for an immigration visa. The immigration officer allowed to give one to my kids, wife, and I. It was only my third day in Canada at the time. ...[Immigrating here was] truly a blessing because we got everything right away".

Francisco "Pepe" Siapno

"I migrated to Alberta to be with my wife who sponsored me. I arrived on December 21, 1986. ...My migration to Alberta was successful. I was able to work and land in a very good company. My wife and I earned and saved enough for our retirement. Now, we're just enjoying life and our retirement. ...I was patient with my work and I never complained. ...From a clerk at a convenience store, I was able to get a more stable job in an oil and gas company downtown. ...I didn't further my degree here in Alberta but being able to work in an oil and gas company for years until I retired is what I consider as my major professional achievement."

Orlando Argota

As our testimonials have shown thus far, experiences within the Canadian diaspora in Alberta were largely shaped by immigration programs. Many early settlers arrived in Canada after the 1967 Immigration Act and the 1976 Multiculturalism Act, when the Canadian nation-state was in demand for people and labour (particularly from the Global South). As such, early Filipino settlers like Carmelita Fuentes, Domingo Fuentes, Ricardo Macabeo, Murray Villa, and more arrived individually (and sometimes with a spouse) and would later sponsor other members of their families. Here *Lolo* Ricardo and *Lola* Murray discuss the circumstances of their arrival in Calgary.

"I migrated to Alberta in 1973 for a better life. It was during Martial Law in the Philippines. I was still single when I moved. It is in Alberta where I met my wife. I worked as a handyman for Canadian Pacific Railway, and I retired in 2000. ...When I arrived, there were only a few people, and it was too cold. ...Good thing I lived

here in Calgary. Maybe if it's in a different province, I won't survive living. ...We are lucky we are here in Alberta."

Ricardo Macabeo

"Originally, we were from Manitoba. [When] my husband moved to Manitoba in October 1969, he worked as a mining engineer. My kids and I migrated because we wanted to be with my husband. My kids and I came to Manitoba on January 27, 1970. After seven years living in Manitoba, we moved to Alberta in 1977. My husband then worked as an electrician engineer for City Rail. ... I could say that we had a good life here in Alberta. There were more people, and the place was more developed compared to Manitoba where we came from. ...I was a full-time mom to my kids. When they were big enough to take care of themselves, that was the time I started working as a dietary aid for Calgary General Hospital. ...I have met and made so many friends."

Murray Vila

"I could say that the challenge of raising Filipino kids in a Canadian society was the only challenge...when I moved here. I had a 10-year-old daughter and a 7-year-old boy when we moved. When they were already teens, I was so anxious that they were going out with friends and coming home late. ...As time went by, I learned to adapt to cultural differences. I know at that time, I was just being protective of my kids. And I know that my kids becoming teens and young adults is inevitable. I can only advise and guide them."

Leny Dela Cruz

While the early settlers were grateful for their chances and opportunities to build in Calgary and in Alberta, many also recounted challenges common to newcomers. Experiences of loneliness and sadness from being away from family members, and barriers in the workforce including receiving professional accreditation were common experiences shared by our storytellers. For instance, Purificacion Romansanta shares the culture shock she experienced when coming to Canada, and the ensuing feelings of being homesick. These experiences impacted her early adjustment to Canadian life. Another common barrier to Filipino settlement in Alberta was, and continues to be, the lack of recognition of their existing education and skillsets. While some early settlers were fortunate to find work commensurate to their professional and educational credentials, many encountered initial de-accreditation and deskilling. Other storytellers like *Lolas* Susan, Precila, and *Lolo* Jun also spoke about the challenge of having to work and gaining "Canadian experience" while juggling family and work-life responsibilities.

"Back in 1974, opportunities here in Canada were really better than in the Philippines. As the eldest among my siblings, I decided to move and join my relatives here in Alberta. ...My migration to Alberta was good and rewarding. Before, it was easy to come to Canada. When a relative sponsor[s] you, you just have to do the

interview, do the medical and then you get the immigration papers. I've worked mostly in the office because I have a Bachelor of Science in Commerce; Major in Accountancy. I started as a secretary in an engineering company, then I never stopped doing clerical accounting jobs and business processing until I retired. ...One of the challenges that most immigrants encounter like us, is the need to upgrade our education. Even if you're a degree holder in the Philippines, you still have to go to school and take university courses so you can apply for the profession that you really like. When I migrated, I studied accountancy again, but when I got married and had a baby, I only finished my accountancy course up to the third year. ...Even if my accountancy credentials in the Philippines were not recognized in Canada, I was still blessed because I was still able to do clerical accounting and business processing jobs."

Susan Palanca

"I arrived in February 1988. ...I came here to find a better life. I moved by myself with my sister's sponsorship. It helped that I have family [and] I was fortunate to bring all my children here. ...It was hard because I needed to adjust to the climate. The life adjustment in general was difficult too. After two weeks of arriving, I worked as a caregiver like most newcomers. It was how most people started off. ...The challenges in general [were] difficult, especially in my job as a caregiver. In the Philippines it is unusual for us to go to other peoples' houses to earn money. I felt the need to work hard, and I experienced the true meaning of sacrifice here. I acknowledge that as the major challenge since my arrival here. I took courses to perform catheter on the elderly. I travel a lot because I was an on-call employee. It was hard to drive and travel through the night and take the snowstorms into consideration as well. Sometimes I would get called into work at one or three in the morning. ...I handled it best I could because I am a government figure in the Philippines. ...I finished my Masters' degree at National Teachers' College. ...All my achievements in the Philippines convinced me that I can conquer my new life in Alberta."

Prescila Atienza

"I worked in the Middle East before moving to Canada, and I could say that it was really hard to work and be away from my wife and my kids. That's why I migrated to Alberta, Canada with the aim to work and be with my family at the same time. We all arrived in Alberta on July 24, 1995. ...I had so many challenges, however, the main challenge that I encountered was having to go back to school and study again. Despite my degree in the Philippines as a mechanical engineer and the work experiences I had in the Middle East. When I moved to Canada, it wasn't recognized. ...I decided to upgrade my education and enrolled in one of the technical institutions here in Alberta. ...[My greatest accomplishment is] having all my educations and work experiences accredited by the International Qualifications Assessment Service (IQAS) of Alberta and been a Certified Engineering Technologist under the Association of Science and Engineering Technology Professional of Alberta (ASET). I am fortunate to land in a very good construction management company. I regarded this as my major professional achievements where I was involved in various infrastructural projects in Calgary and Edmonton."

Benito (Jun) Atienza

In addition, to overcoming deskilling and de-accreditation, other realities of racism were also shared by our older *Lolos* and *Lolas*. While the majority of the older adults we spoke to express a successful integration into Canadian society, some disclosed stories of having their skills questioned explicitly or implicitly. As *Lola* Lenie and *Lolo* Ben share, while they were grateful for their opportunities and many successes within Canadian society, they also noted microaggressions and workplace tensions. Nonetheless, many *Lolos* and *Lolas* expressed the need to rise above these experiences to establish better lives for themselves and their families.

“I migrated to Canada together with my husband and four kids on July 24, 1995. As my husband worked for so many years in the Middle East, and my kids and I are always away from him, we decided to go to Canada to be together and see our children achieve their goals in life. ...When we moved, I needed to study again so I could land on a better job. I needed to upgrade myself because my credentials were not credited here in Alberta. Thankfully, I didn’t experience any racism at work. I know my English isn’t so perfect but at work instead of correcting me, they would just say “you’re so funny Lenie”. I am good at getting along with other people. I felt respected. ...I took up courses so I could gain a certificate and I could be more qualified in my field. Here in Canada, certificates and diplomas are important and that is what employers usually look for.”

Lenie Atienza

“I migrated to Quebec in 1975 and Alberta 1978. During that time Alberta was booming. ...It was very successful. When I first moved to Calgary, I started employment in Safeway in their computer department. Then, I received a job at Petro Canada. After 18 years I retired from Petro Canada. The only thing that I observed when I worked at Petro Canada is that the promotion [process] was not very good for coloured people. I was hired at Petro Canada as a computer operator. I later retired as a computer software supervisor until I retired.”

Ben Isidro

Stories of Care: Love for Past, Present, and Future Generations

Many of our older storytellers came as domestic workers who came to Canada to build better futures for themselves and their intergenerational family members. Both academic and community-based research has documented the extent to which the Filipino diaspora in Canada has grown through domestic work (im)migration and labour policies such as the Foreign Domestic Movement (1982-1992), the Live-in Caregiver Program (1992-2014), and the current Caregiver Program (2014-present), which facilitated applicants to work as caregivers before applying for permanent residency status (Kelly, 2014; Tungohan et al., 2015). These occupational programs allowed some early Filipina settlers (particularly those who came in the 1990s and early

2000s) to enter the Canadian labour force earlier in their life course. Glenda Bonifacio's "Pinay in the Prairies" (2008) provides documentation of the experiences of Filipina domestic workers settling in the provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba through the Live-in-Caregiver program. In particular, Dr. Bonifacio highlights the challenges of migration and settling in Canada, and the lack of supports available for early Filipina immigrants. However, Dr. Bonifacio's work also calls attention to how local community organizations and networks are the impetus for resistance, resilience, and community-building. For instance, older storytellers like *Lolas* Fely, Cora, and Connie are early settlers who started as domestic workers in Hong Kong, and together entered the Canadian workforce together through the Live-in Caregiver Program. Their friendship lasted 33 years, and they shared their experiences within the program. Here *Lolas* Fely, Cora, and Connie express gratitude for their ability to immigrate to Alberta.

"Like many domestic workers, Hong Kong was my steppingstone to move to Canada. After working 6 years in Hong Kong...I arrived in Canada on July 15, 1985. Why Canada? It is because the quality and standard of living is good. Canada offers a great health care system for its residents. It's also a great place for an opportunity to earn more. I can say that moving to Canada gave me and my husband a better life. It is a great blessing moving here because the quality of life is good. ...Work was easy, and I was treated nice all the time at my workplace. I was a nanny for 35 years and I never had a problem with my employer. I have lots of Filipino friends too, so I had a good work and life balance."

Fely Cutaran

"I worked in Hong Kong as a nanny for 10 years, but their government never offered a clear path to citizenship. So, when a nanny program opened in Canada, I took the opportunity. I really wanted to migrate to Canada because it offers a clear path to citizenship and of the great opportunities/benefits it provides. I landed in Alberta in 1985. ...I felt I was home because the people are friendly. Especially our neighbors. Although the weather is cold, I really love living here in Canada. ...I was happy with my job and my employer, so I never tried looking for a different profession."

Cora Cordero

"I moved to Canada because I wanted a better life for myself and my family. I landed in Alberta on January 9, 1984. ...Moving to Alberta was definitely great. I liked it! Because of the great opportunities here, I was able to help my family a lot. I also made a lot of friends here already and they made my stay here really fun."

Connie Penny

While *Lolas* Fely, Cora, and Connie paint a rosy picture of Canadian domestic work programs, both community-based and academic literature have also shown the many challenges and abuses

that these programs pose to Filipinas. For instance, *Lola* Espirita discussed the negotiations that some Filipina domestic workers face in their desire to receive permanent residency in Canada while facing difficult workplace conditions.

“I arrived in Alberta by myself in September 1983. I moved here in the hopes of a better life. ...I was employed right away through an agency. My first work here was in a place of someone else’s home. ...My first job was to care for a child. The hardest part was my employer’s restrictions. For example, you cannot kiss the baby and a lot of stricter guidelines on how to handle my client. I was faced with my client’s attitude problems and therefore left that home quite immediately. After[wards] a fellow Filipino helped me to find a temporary job while I look for a permanent one. Eventually I worked to care for the elderly. ...My first job was the only time I quit. When I worked for the elderly, I did not like jumping from one place to another. ...The difference between my life here and the Philippines is that I am happy here. I am very happy with my job and very well-established in Canada. ...I am very much established. ...I spent my life volunteering and even received awards for it. I got certificates and pins for my volunteer work for the government in Calgary.”

Espirita Bautista

Care stories were a prominent theme for our older storytellers; both in terms of employment but also care for other members of the family. Caregiving to children and grandchildren was a common experience disclosed by *Lolos* and *Lolas* like Victoria, Avelina, Connie Genilo, and others who emphasized their desire to be with their grandchildren.

“First, I came as a tourist. My sole purpose was just to visit my daughter who is based here in Alberta. ...After a few visits, my daughter finally sponsored me, and I was able to [be granted] a Permanent Residence Visa. I moved to Alberta on February 22, 1999. When I moved, I initially took care of my two grandchildren. Then years later, I worked as a hair stylist for 10 years... and I consider it as one of my professional achievements. ...I had a very good working environment, and... am truly blessed and now I am just enjoying my retirement.”

Victoria Valencia

“As someone who grew up in a poor family, I am used to hard work. I believed that nothing is easy. There is no easy job. I worked as a helper here in Canada. Luckily, my employer didn’t give me any hard time. They were always happy with my work, and I received a lot of compliments from them. ...Every time I would feel tired from my work, I would always convert what I earned in Peso. It made me happy knowing that my hard work really paid off well.”

Avelina Celis

In a study on transnational care in Canada, Ferrer, Brotman, and Grenier (2017) found that older Filipinos spoke frequently about forms of reciprocity that transcended international borders and often included intergenerational and transnational family members. Financial remittances were perceived as the primary contribution made by older Filipinos to family members living in the Philippines. The combination of scarce financial resources, the facilitation of outward migration, and the availability and organization of the extended family unit in the Philippines (and elsewhere around the world) creates a context whereby older people who have immigrated to Canada, increasingly engage in transnational care exchanges. For this chapter, some *Lolos* and *Lolas* shared stories of travel to and from the Philippines, where they provided and received care from their transnational families. Here, *Lolo* Ramon talks about working and providing care to his children locally in Alberta and supporting his loved ones transitionally in the homeland.

"I migrated to Alberta in September 2009. My daughter sponsored me and my wife. It's because of the sponsorship of my daughter that I am here in Canada. ...I had to be brave enough to face these challenges because if I go back to the Philippines my life would be the same. Compared to the situation in Canada, life here is better. I was hoping that our situation would improve in the Philippines, however, it never gets better. That is why my daughter told me that the reason they sponsored us to come to Canada is because of the opportunities and benefits for the seniors that we don't have in the Philippines. Everything is shouldered by the Government. However, just living with my daughter as time went by was sometimes boring, so what I did was, I looked for a job. I landed a job in a certain retailer [where] I worked for...about 9 years. I was a greeter, I welcomed the shoppers and helped customers."

Ramon Balagat

Aging in Alberta: Life Lessons from Our Lolos and Lolas

As the Filipino community in Calgary and Canada continues to grow, many of our *Lolos* and *Lolas* were grateful to impart their wisdom, challenges, and intergenerational life lessons they have learned in Canada. Now in their later lives, our storytellers spoke about their daily activities as elders living in Calgary. Table 1 offers life lessons and reflections that our *Lolos* and *Lolas* would like our readers of this edited book to know. In particular, *Lolos* and *Lolas* like Fely, Connie Genilo, Lydia, and Ricardo offer explicit advice to newcomers.

I believe that moving to a new country always requires adjustment. In my case, I always reminded myself to keep an open mind, learn to always adapt to changes so my life journey here will be easy. I also believe that learning the Canadian culture is very important. If you want to be happy and successful in life, it is important to

always adapt and embrace changes. ...Fortunately, Filipinos are fast learners. We always learn and adapt easily. ... Keep an open mind, learn to adjust so your life will be easy.

Fely Cutaran

“Remember that when you do anything, do it deliberately. Put in good effort, even if you’re just cooking. Even in your conversations. Don’t throw out words that you don’t clearly understand, because it will produce a completely wrong sentence. I think I help the associations into becoming popular and bringing their vision to life. I teach them Filipino values and manners. For example... manners will never go out of style, because it is easily forgotten for others. I teach them little things like that, because I want Filipinos to be looked up to by others.”

Connie Genilo

“Just try to be patient and try your best to get along with your officemates or the people around you. I am happy that we are really blessed. My work environment before was really good, as well as our neighborhood. Actually, our neighbor now even helps us do our lawn. We are old now, so every time they would see my husband ...they would always offer to help us. We are touched by the gesture and the love of the people around us.”

Lydia Siapno

“It’s important to have patience. Moving to a different country is not easy. You have to work hard. I thought to myself, I am already here, I just have to make the best of what I have. Canada is a land of milk and honey. It’s never easy to move to a foreign country but it doesn’t make sense if you just quit when things get hard”.

Ricardo Macabeo

Building Community in Calgary, Alberta

Taking place alongside the intergenerational, local, and transnational settings, our *Lolos* and *Lolas* also spoke about providing and receiving care within informal networks in the Filipino community. Older storytellers spoke about community building with others who were not related but were considered ‘like family’. In many ways, older *Lolos* and *Lolas* spoke about community building for current and future generations of Filipinos through community networks such as church groups, seniors’ associations, and social and cultural groups. These networks serve a role in responding to difficulties of accessing health and social care services, and the absence of extended family support. In the following excerpts, *Lolos* and *Lolas* Ramon, Connie Genilo,

Orlando, Tigs, Fely, Murray, and Victoria speak about the importance of Filipino community building during the early days of settlement.

“Our culture as a Filipino is different from Canadians. ...I had a problem when I was a new immigrant. Given I [was] new to the place, I had lots of questions. Sometimes when I asked questions, the people I asked didn't give me good information. ...On the good side, there were also fellow Filipinos who encouraged [me] to be a member in different clubs and participate in different activities to make our stay here in Canada worthwhile.

Ramon Balagat

Friendships develop when you see one another quite often. ...That is a way of bringing out the character of Filipinos. Every time we have events, [we] are storytelling. Everything [we] talk about has value and it's relevant. [We have] ongoing conversations about [our] achievements, [we] talk about their jobs, family, [we] talk about everything. And that is good. ...A person who volunteers a lot will gain experience and our associations develop relationships. There are many associations available here in Calgary especially for seniors.

Connie Genilo

I was one of the people who worked and organized the Philippine Cultural Center here in Calgary, Alberta. When I moved here, there wasn't Philippine Cultural Center yet. I joined an association and our association's main objective was to acquire a cultural center for the Filipino community in Calgary, which we were able to do. I am also an active member of Filipino Calgarian Seniors Club.

Orlando Argota

I started my first association in 1969. ...We do not want boring lives, and we are not boring. We were all very close and treated each other like siblings. ...Now that we are older, we have more time for ourselves. Our associations' main objective is simply to build camaraderie among our members. ...In winter, times it's difficult to leave your house, so we try to garner up more ideas for indoor events. We have organized many dance parties mainly for our entertainment. Every year we go on vacations going to the United States. We love going to hot places like California. ...Newcomers for example will feel that our group helps them bring closer to Filipinos. We celebrate them and make them feel welcome. Our group is together as one and as a family. We treat each other like brothers and sisters. We have shared memories and connection as we grow through our community.

Rufus “Tigs” Tidalgo

I always have a heart for volunteering in different Filipino organizations. I find happiness in serving and helping the community in my own simple ways. I volunteer for Christian Catholic Immigration Society. I am also an active member of Newcasa Filipino Organization. I also participated and finished an eight-month Community Development Elders Service Course. If not only because of COVID, for sure we have more activities to do. ...I am a senior now, but I never stop learning. I encourage the young generation and even my fellow seniors to never stop learning. Volunteer if there's an opportunity to volunteer. I find happiness in serving the community.

Fely Cutaran

I love to go to Church. I also like to commute by train, by bus or by walking. It's a good exercise for me. And when I meet friends along the way, they invite me to different associations. One is Golden Seniors. We were busy going from town to town, we also did excursions and picnics. ...I find happiness in teaching new immigrants who can't speak the English language. I am also a member of two Filipino Seniors Association. We always have activities but due to COVID, we don't have any for now. Our activities are really fun, we usually dance and sing to the public. I could say that Filipinos are really talented and smart.

Murray Vila

Now that I am old, I started to feel the signs and symptoms of aging like arthritis. ...I am a very positive person. I always try to look at the positive side of life that's why I overcome anything right away. I was happy doing my job and I was successful at it. I am also an active member of Golden Senior Association. I am happy to participate in the different activities and volunteer work of the association. In fact, I was hailed as the Mrs. Philippines for the Golden Senior Association [in] 2019”.

Victoria Valencia

In acknowledgement of the organizations that were built, we also asked some of our older storytellers about the leading community organizations that catered to older Filipinos in Calgary. Many of the *Lolos* and *Lolas* we spoke to were founders and/or former/current presidents of these organizations. To help curate our discussions, we asked the following questions:

What motivated your group to establish a Filipino organization in your community? When was your group established?

What is the main objective of your group?

What types of activities do you organize and sponsor on a regular basis?

Do you consider these activities relevant to the Filipino community? Why?

What is the impact of these activities to the larger Canadian community?

The following section showcases six organizations that have historically and currently serve older Filipinos in Calgary, Alberta. Acknowledging their work here is an intentional gesture to establish institutional memories of their work, and to honor their contributions in building and sustaining the Filipino diaspora in Calgary.

Young Once Seniors Association of Calgary:

The Young Once Seniors Association of Calgary was established to support their members socially and financially. As the long-time past president of the association Pepe Siapno notes, “*if a member gets hurt, we pray for them. When someone gets sick, we visit them and get them a gift. If someone passes away, we give the family money and pay for the cemetery lot. ...All the activities are for the good of the community. The members love it. It’s organized very good and it helps them. ...The impact is that we feel more closer together. The association is happy because they have the activities and we work together to help each other*”.

New Canadian Seniors Association of Calgary (New CASA):

The New Canadian Seniors Association of Calgary (New CASA) was founded in 2005 to offer older Filipino adults’ activities such as Zumba, excursions, birthday celebrations, and gala nights. According to president Prescila Atienza, New CASA members “*hold different events [to celebrate] each other ...[and] to encourage movement [among] our seniorsto foster a sense of enjoyment. ...Each association has their own purpose and activities.*”

Golden Generation Seniors Club of Calgary (GGSCC):

The Golder Generation Seniors Club of Calgary was established in 1991 and seeks to engage older Filipinos in regular social and recreational activities such as bingo, picnics, fundraising and beauty pageants, and outings to the casino and other out-of-town vacations. Programs at the GGSCC are also meant to facilitate the well-being of its seniors, and they offer a range of informal services such as procuring nursing care facilities with an emphasis on “*first generation immigrant’s tradition, language, culture and lifestyle*”, and educational workshop series that focus on the social, educational, economic, health and any subject with on senior’s rights and activities. Recognizing the importance of support for older adults, the GGSCC offers bereavement support to members who have lost their loved ones by way of financial support. Lola Espiritu also offers a brief historical overview of the Golden Generations Seniors Club of Calgary.

Our happiness and enjoyment is considered a big deal to us seniors. Associations are important because it encourages you to help other communities. ...In the earlier days of Golden Generations, we would get together with other Canadian associations through picnics and that is how we connect and meet others.

Espirita Bautista

Filipino Calgarian Senior Citizens Association:

The Filipino Calgarian Senior Citizens Association was founded in 1982 with 200 members. The main objective of the organization is to share happiness from one person to the whole group and receive feedback from its members to be incorporated into activities. Activities include picnics, excursions, birthday celebrations, hosting bingo events, volunteering, mah-jong, and dances. Zumba is scheduled every Tuesday and is inclusive for senior citizens of any race. The organization places an emphasis on health which influences the larger Canadian community. For example, dance events such as Zumba, can feel therapeutic and energizing. Exercising as a group during their events helps people combat stress and encourages them to meet other people through talking and sharing happiness during the fellowship. These events are sponsored by the organization and foster a sense of belongingness in the Filipino community to engage Filipino *Lolos* and *Lolas* to cultivate meaningful relationships.

New Sunrise Seniors Club:

The New Sunrise Seniors Club was established in January 2008 to leverage provincial funding opportunities (such as the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission) to support the health and wellness of older Filipinos in Calgary. The New Sunrise Seniors Club's organizational mission is to engage and promote social and physical activities for older Filipinos so that they are physically and mentally active. Key events include Seniors Birthday Celebrations, Masquerade Ball, Mardi Gras, and Hawaiian-themed dinners, as well as their annual "Stampede Barn Dance".

Tamaraw Seniors Club of Calgary:

The Tamaraw Seniors Club of Calgary was established in early 2005 to meet the increasing number of new older adults in Calgary. The Tamaraw Seniors Club was organized with that need in mind focusing first on reaching out to older adults originating from the Visayas and Mindanao regions in the Philippines and then to everyone in Calgary. The Tamaraw Seniors Club is registered with Alberta Registries as a non-profit organization whose mission is to, "*slow down and to make enjoyable the aging process of seniors with programs and assistance that will improve and maintain senior's well-being.*"

Concluding Thoughts

While our chapter sought to maintain the stories of our *Lolos* and *Lolas* in their own words, we as scholars and service providers working in aging and immigration would also like to share additional challenges that the aging community faces. For instance, experiences of financial exclusion, insecurity, and precarity are due to structural events over the life course related to deprofessionalization and deaccreditation, delays in receiving citizenship or permanent residency status, family separation, and inaccessibility to pension entitlements. Because the Filipino diaspora is a relatively young one that spans three generations, our community is only beginning to make sense of what it means to grow older in Canada. The amount of time that older adults have lived in Canada is important because it has direct implications for how and when Filipinos retire. While older adults in Canada generally receive the Canadian Pension Plan/Quebec Pension Plan, contributions from Filipinos are likely to vary given the recency of Filipino migration into Canada, and the fact that more Filipinos in Canada predominantly enter and work within the secondary labor market. As such, pension entitlements and provisions are dependent on residency status, years in the labour market, etc. The intersections between immigration, work, and retirement have significant implications for older Filipinos in Canada. Those who immigrated earlier in their lives, and who have aged most of their lives in Canada were more likely to come through the Economic Class which includes labor programs such as the Foreign Domestic Movement/Live-in Caregiver Program, and through the Family Sponsorship program (Family Reunification). Those coming in later in the life course (particularly post-2015), were likely to have come in as temporary residents under the Parent and Grandparent Super Visa and/or the Parent and Grandparent Program where there is heavier reliance on sponsors to provide financial support. This creates a perfect storm for financial insecurity where some older Filipinos have reported experiencing financial precarity. Moreover, the risk for abuse is particularly salient for older newcomers under the Parent and Grandparent Program, and the Parent and Grandparent Super Visa. Both programs impose dependency clauses on the sponsor, which restricts access to basic pension schemes and incurs high costs for insurance and other medical requirements. This area of research is urgently needed especially as our community continues to settle, grow, and age within Canada.

While the academic and community-based reporting on Filipino-Canadian aging is sparse, the existing literature highlights the (in)visible yet pervasive realities of older Filipinos living in Alberta. The stories collected for this chapter are meant to offer a starting point in documenting the ongoing legacies and memories of our *Lolos* and *Lolas* in the Prairies, and in particular, those living in the city of Calgary, Alberta. By emphasizing their words and intentional lessons, we hope that readers of this book and chapter think about how their intergenerational life stories of immigration, settlement, and aging have been shaped by those who came before.

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APPENDICES

A-22-2020

“Make Your Story, Our Community’s Story”: A Public Call for Contribution



Philippine Consulate General, Calgary

Suite 920, 517 10th Ave SW, Calgary AB, T2R 0A8 • Tel: 403-455-9346; 403-455-9457 •
Website: www.philcongencalgary.org

A- 22 -2020

8 June 2020

“MAKE YOUR STORY, OUR COMMUNITY’S STORY” A PUBLIC CALL FOR CONTRIBUTION

The Philippine Consulate General (PCG) in Calgary wishes to announce that it is undertaking a book project to document the Filipino migration in Alberta, Canada. This project will be in collaboration with Dr. Glenda Tibe Bonifacio, Professor, Women and Gender Studies, University of Lethbridge, and with other Filipino scholars and practitioners in the province.

The PCG invites the Filipino community organizations and long-time Filipino immigrants in Alberta to participate in this endeavor which will document the lives, achievements, and challenges of Filipinos in Alberta. It will capture the various stories of Filipino migration to Alberta and describe how the Filipinos have contributed in various fields to the enrichment of the Canadian community and society.

Those interested to participate are requested to accomplish the attached questionnaire and consent form, and email it to calgarypcg.culturalsection@gmail.com (put “Book Project” in the subject line) before **31 October 2020**. Responses will be collated and organized by the editorial team.

Thank you and we hope to hear your stories.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "ZalDY B. Patron".

ZALDY B. PATRON
Consul General





Philippine Consulate General, Calgary

Suite 920, 517 10th Ave SW, Calgary AB, T2R 0A8 • Tel: 403-455-9346; 403-455-9457 •
Website: www.philcongencalgary.org

**QUESTIONNAIRE AND CONSENT FORM
FOR THE “FILIPINO MIGRATION IN ALBERTA” BOOK PROJECT**

Individual

1. Why did you migrate to Alberta? When did you arrive in Alberta?
2. How will you describe your migration to Alberta?
3. What challenges have you encountered as a Filipino in Alberta?
4. How did you overcome these challenges?
5. What would you consider as your major professional achievements and community undertakings (if any) in Alberta?

Note: Please use separate sheets for your answers.

I agree to the use of the information I contributed for this book project. ☐ Yes ☐ No

I agree to the use of quotations under my name. ☐ Yes ☐ No

(Printed Name of Participant)

(Signature)

(Date)

(Email address)

(Phone no.)

*Please email the accomplished form to calgarypcg.culturalsection@gmail.com (put “Book Project” in the subject line) before **31 October 2020**.*



Philippine Consulate General, Calgary

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Website: www.philcongencalgary.org

**QUESTIONNAIRE AND CONSENT FORM
FOR THE “FILIPINO MIGRATION IN ALBERTA” BOOK PROJECT**

Community Group

1. What motivated your group to establish a Filipino organization in your community?
When was your group established?
2. What is the main objective of your group?
3. What types of activities do you organize and sponsor on a regular basis?
4. Do you consider these activities relevant to the Filipino community? Why?
5. What is the impact of these activities to the larger Canadian community?

Note: Please use separate sheets for your answers.

I agree to the use of the information I contributed for this book ☐ Yes ☐ No
project.

I agree to the use of quotations under my name. ☐ Yes ☐ No

I agree to the use of quotations under the name of the organization.
☐ Yes ☐ No

(Printed Name of Participant, Position, Organization)

(Signature)

(Date)

(Email address)

(Phone no.)

*Please email the accomplished form to calgarypcg.culturalsection@gmail.com (put
“Book Project” in the subject line) before **31 October 2020**.*

Partial List of Filipino Community Organizations in Alberta

(as of March 2023)

A. Filipino Community Associations

CALGARY

1. Adamson University Alumni Association on Calgary
2. Alberta Fil-Can Community Leaders' Association
3. Alpha Phi Omega Alumni Association of Alberta
4. Answering the Cry of the Poor (ANCOP)
5. Association of Kalinga Residents in Alberta
6. BABAE: Council of Filipina Canadian Women
7. Batangueño Association
8. Bathala International
9. Bicol Association of Alberta
10. Calgary Filipino Lions Club
11. Calgary Golfers Association
12. Calgary NOVA Lions Club
13. Calgary Storm
14. Council and Assembly of Filipino Foundations and Associations
15. Couples for Christ
16. Diamond Seniors Club of Calgary
17. El Shaddai
18. Filipino Calgarian Seniors Club
19. Filipino Canadian Women Multi-Purpose Cooperative
20. Filipino Catholic Society of the Diocese of Calgary
21. Filipinos Rising for Inclusion and Equity to Nurture Democracy
22. Golden Generation Seniors Club
23. Golden Sparkles Dance Group
24. Handmaid of the Lord
25. Knights of Rizal - Calgary Chapter
26. Knights of Rizal - Calgary East Chapter
27. Knights of Rizal - Calgary North Chapter
28. Knights of Rizal - Calgary West Chapter
29. Legacy Seniors Association of Calgary
30. Maharlika Divas

31. New Canadian Seniors Association
32. New Sunrise Seniors Club
33. Pangasinan Society of Calgary
34. Partners in Christ Fellowship
35. Philippine Canadian Nurses Association
36. Philippine Cultural Centre Foundation
37. Philippine Folk Dance Society - Alberta Chapter
38. Philippine Independence Day Organizing Committee Calgary -Sulong Kalayaan Society
39. Quezonian and Friends of Calgary & Area
40. Samahang Katagalugan ng Alberta
41. Singles for Christ
42. Tamaraw Seniors Club
43. The Filipino Champions of Canada
44. University of Calgary Filipino Student Association
45. University of the Philippines Alumni Association of Alberta
46. Westwinds Lions Club
47. Young Once Seniors Association

Organizations Outside of Calgary

AIRDRIE

1. Filipino Association of Airdrie
2. Filipino Women's League
3. Knights of Rizal Airdrie Chapter

BANFF

1. Filipino Canadian Association of Bow Valley
2. Filipino Organization in the Rocky Mountains

CANMORE

1. Canmore Filipino Canadian Society

COCHRANE

1. Filipino Canadian Association of Cochrane

EDMONTON

1. Congress of the Philippines Association of Alberta
2. Council of Edmonton Filipino Associations
3. Couples for Christ
4. Edmonton Philippine International Centre
5. Filipino Senior Citizens Association
6. Heart of YEG Filipino Community
7. Filipino Academic and Cultural Educators Society of Alberta
8. Filipino Seniors Citizen of Alberta
9. Karilagan Society
10. Koro Filipino
11. LINGAP-Canada
12. Migrante Alberta
13. Nasipitnons in Edmonton Association
14. Philippine Arts Council
15. Philippine Bayanihan Association of Alberta
16. Taguig Community of Edmonton
17. United Bicolano Association
18. University of the Philippines Alumni Association - Edmonton Chapter