

Final Report – Report of Activities

Title of Project: Aging Migrants in a Multicultural Society: Exploring the Case of Filipinos in Malaysia

As a follow-up to my periodic report submitted last 2 March 2018, this final report will provide a summary of my research activities in Malaysia from 1 February to 13 March 2018.

During my stay in Kuala Lumpur, I was hosted by the Gender Studies Programme of the University of Malaya. As an affiliated scholar with them, I was able to meet several academics who share the same research interests as I do. I also visited Monash University Malaysia and was introduced to several professors in the School of Arts and Sciences, particularly academics in the social sciences. I was asked to give a talk about my research when I go back to Kuala Lumpur. As an affiliated scholar with the University of Malaya, I was asked to give a talk about my research last 5 March. I was also asked to give a short lecture to undergraduate students in the Gender Studies Programme last 28 February. I also visited the University of Malaysia-Sarawak in Borneo, East Malaysia, to give a talk about my research at the Faculty of Social Sciences on 7 March.

In total, I was able to conduct 11 semi-structured interviews of Filipino women and 2 focus group discussions on several women, most of them domestic workers, while others are permanent residents and married to Malaysian citizens. The interviews were carried out in Kuala Lumpur and Petaling Jaya. I visited two church communities – the St. John's Filipino Ministry at the St. John's Cathedral in Kuala Lumpur, and the *Bahay ni Maria* (House of Mary) at the St. Francis Xavier Church in Petaling Jaya. These centres are usually open on Sundays, and this is where I spent my Sundays at – talking to Filipino women, joining in their activities (i.e. birthday party, farewell party, induction and oath-taking ceremony). Much of my interviews and focus group discussions were conducted on Sundays, although I was also able to meet with some informants on weekdays. I was able to conduct focus group discussions at the St. John's Cathedral and St. Francis Xavier Church on 4 March and 11 March. As I mentioned in my periodic report, my initial findings were varied; but it can be expected that class, family background, life chances are important factors that influence these women's perceptions on migration, work, family, and aging. I intend to go over my interviews and research notes for further analyses.

I have also met with some Japanese women working and living in Kuala Lumpur. Two alumnae of Soka University gladly met up with me and told me that they would be

happy to help with my research. They introduced me to some of their Filipino helpers as well as some Japanese women who employ Filipino women. Due to time constraints, I was not able to meet with some of their employees, but I plan on doing so when I go to Malaysia in August to conduct more interviews as well as follow-up on the women I have spoken to. This opportunity also opened up another probable research topic that I want to explore in the near future – that of the socio-cultural dynamics between Japanese women in Southeast Asia employing Southeast Asian women as helpers.

The remainder of my stay (9 March to 12) was spent meeting with colleagues with the University of Malaya as well as visiting the St. John’s community on 11 March. I could say that I have earned the trust of the Filipino women I spoken to as well as established good relationships with them during my stay, as I have been invited to some events, which unfortunately I could not attend since I was on my way back to Japan (e.g. a Filipino woman married to a Malaysian wanted to invite me to lunch and to a wedding so that she could introduce me to her Malaysian friends, etc.)

As this project is in its early stages, I scheduled a subsequent research trip to Malaysia in August. This will enable me to conduct more interviews to further deepen my analysis of this phenomenon of aging migrants.

