

Empower Migrants: A Journey to Support and Strengthen OFWs

Ople Center and Food Panda Collaborate to Launch BuyAnihan Palengke

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A Vibrant Food Fair in Ortigas Center Celebrates Community Reselling Program

In a remarkable collaborative effort, the Ople Center and Food Panda introduced the BuyAnihan Palengke Project on April 23. The launch event unfolded in the heart of Emerald Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City and featured a vibrant food fair designed to promote this community reselling initiative.

The BuyAnihan Palengke Project is a creative endeavor aimed at showcasing a diverse array of products and concessionaires that former Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) are now able to offer to the public. It not only supports their entrepreneurial spirit but also helps them establish a viable livelihood.

The program's significant impact was evident in the presence of eight female former OFWs who had completed the first round of training in community reselling. These individuals were identified as potential victims of Trafficking in Persons (TIP) and illegal recruitment (IR) and were under the care of the National Capital Region (NCR) OFW Federation, particularly their chapter in Manila.

Distinguished guests, including Food Panda Philippines executives and Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) Administrator Hans Leo Cacdac, graced the event. The attendance of all four Federation members, alongside representatives from the project areas, further underscored the importance of this initiative. Representatives from Bulacan, Calatagan, Cabuyao, and NCR played an active role by reselling their products, directly engaging with the public.

The BuyAnihan Palengke Project represents a vital step towards empowering former OFWs, providing them with opportunities to create sustainable livelihoods while also preventing them from falling prey to illegal recruitment and trafficking. This initiative not only celebrates entrepreneurship but also reinforces the sense of community and shared prosperity.



Ople Center Initiates OFW Associations' Orientation on DMW, Expanding Efforts Against Trafficking

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In a significant stride toward enhancing the protection of migrant workers, the Ople Center spearheaded an orientation on June 28, bringing together OFW Associations to shed light on the pivotal role of the Department of Migrant Workers (DMW) in combatting the trafficking of migrant workers. The event, held at the Hive Hotel in Quezon City, aimed to equip these associations with a comprehensive understanding of the DMW and its potential in safeguarding the rights and welfare of migrant workers.

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During the orientation, the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) was invited to present on the DMW, with Atty. May Rose Lumbre and Atty. Geraldine Mendez representing the agency's Anti-Illegal Recruitment Branch. Their presentation emphasized the DMW's status as the government's principal hub for addressing migrant workers' concerns, solidifying its position as a key player in protecting these workers' rights.

The orientation delved into the salient provisions of the DMW Law, encompassing its structure, functions, and significant legal aspects. These aspects highlight the DMW's authority in prosecuting, preventing, and protecting against trafficking of migrant workers. Furthermore, a groundbreaking referral pathway for trafficking and illegal recruitment cases was introduced—the 24/7 Action Center, which serves as the central coordinating unit for assisting trafficked and abused OFWs, particularly in rescue and repatriation efforts.

The Federation members expressed their support and enthusiasm for the 24/7 Action Center, viewing it as an invaluable channel that facilitates the submission of cases and requests for assistance. The development of this pathway is anticipated to streamline the process of addressing trafficking and abuse cases, reinforcing the commitment to protect the rights and well-being of migrant workers.

This orientation marks a substantial step toward equipping OFW Associations with knowledge and resources that will enhance their capacity to prevent trafficking and support affected workers effectively. The expansion of the Integrated Case Management System (ICMS) to include other forms of trafficking, especially those involving children or minors, signifies a collaborative effort to address the evolving challenges faced by migrant workers. The Ople Center's unwavering commitment to this cause underscores the importance of safeguarding the rights and dignity of these workers.

Ople Center and APPROACH Consortium Unite to Educate OFW Associations on Combatting Child Trafficking

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Orientation on OSAEC and Related Laws Strengthens Knowledge and Support Against Child Exploitation

In a dedicated effort to combat child trafficking and promote awareness, the Ople Center, in collaboration with the APPROACH Consortium, conducted a comprehensive orientation for OFW Associations.

The program was designed to enhance their understanding of the Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children (OSAEC) and other forms of child trafficking, held at Hotel Jen in Pasay City.

The collaborative initiative extended beyond physical borders, with the APPROACH Consortium members joining the orientation remotely from the Visayas region. This demonstrated the collective commitment to addressing child trafficking concerns across the country.

Central to the orientation were presentations by representatives from the Children's Legal Bureau. These presentations delved into the critical legal aspects surrounding child trafficking, anti-child pornography, and laws against child abuse. This knowledge-sharing aimed to empower OFW Associations with the tools necessary to recognize, prevent, and report child exploitation cases.

Recognizing the urgent need to address sex trafficking of children, especially OSAEC, this orientation was a pivotal step in gaining support against this form of trafficking. The training brought together 44 OFW Federation leaders and their youth focal persons, equipping them with a comprehensive understanding of OSAEC and other relevant laws. These participants actively engaged in discussions on how to raise awareness about OSAEC within their respective project areas, with particular attention to cases that may involve children of OFWs.

This initiative represents a significant stride in the collective effort to combat child trafficking and protect the rights of children. By arming OFW Associations with knowledge and strategies, the Ople Center and the APPROACH Consortium are working together to create a safer environment for children and bolster efforts to eradicate child exploitation.

