

Chapter 4

Comparison of the Qualifications Framework for Long-term Care between Japan and the Philippines

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Chapter 4

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1. Introduction

1.1. Overseas Filipino workers

Supported by one of the highest fertility rates amongst the countries in the region, the population of the Philippines still has a comparatively young age structure, with the percentage of people aged 60 years or above estimated to be just 8.6% in 2020 (UNDESA, Population Division, 2019). Although this percentage is one of the lowest in the region, some older people inevitably have disabilities. A survey of older people in the Philippines shows 13.4% reported that their activities had been severely limited because of health problems for at least the past 6 months, and 2.5% of older Filipinos had been bedridden during the past 2 weeks. Among the respondents who have primary caregivers in this survey, more than 75% were cared for by spouses, daughters, or sons; 22.5% were cared for by extended families, such as daughters-in-law, grandchildren, etc.; and only a few older Filipinos were cared by non-family members (Cruz, Cruz, and Saito, 2019).

The high dependency of families on overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) affects the tradition of family care for older people. According to the 2019 Survey on Overseas Filipinos, the number of OFWs was about 2.2 million, 56% of whom were females. As for the age groups, 46.9% of female OFWs were 25–34 years old, while 32.7% were 35–44 years old. Considering that most family caregivers are females, it is expected that cross-border migration may undermine the capacity of family caregiving of Filipino households.

On the other hand, the remittance from OFWs can improve the finances of their home households in the Philippines. The total remittance sent by OFWs from April to September 2019 was estimated at PHP211.9 billion (Republic of the Philippines, Philippine Statistics Authority, 2020). It can be interpreted that the Philippines is heavily dependent on remittances from OFWs

if it is compared with the gross domestic product of the Philippines from April to September 2019, which is estimated to be PHP4.84 trillion at constant prices of the year 2000 (Republic of the Philippines, Philippine Statistics Authority, 2019). If the remittances from OFWs stop when they complete the contract periods or any other reasons, home families would face a financial crisis. This is why 'reintegration programmes' are encouraged by the government so that returned OFWs could mitigate the impact of decreased incomes caused by their repatriation.

1.2. Reintegration programme

The Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) is the leading government agency responsible for the welfare and wellbeing of OFWs (Public Services International, 2015). OWWA organises several reintegration programmes. They provide programmes even for the OFWs who still work abroad, such as a financial literacy programme, entrepreneurial development training, techno-skills, and capacity building, etc. For the immediate relief of returning OFWs who are distressed or displaced, OWWA provides the 'Balik-Pinas! Balik-Hanapbuhay!' programme as a start-up or additional capital for the livelihood project. The applicants are required to develop business plans approved by OWWA Regional Welfare Officers.

OWWA also provides a loan programme for returning OFWs. In partnership with the Land Bank of the Philippines and the Development Bank of the Philippines, OWWA runs Overseas Filipino Workers – Enterprise Development and Loan Program. Applicants are required to complete Enhanced Entrepreneurial Development Training. The purpose of the loan should be the acquisition of working capital and fixed assets (Republic of the Philippines, OWWA, n.d.).

As a one-time grant assistance to the organisations supporting OFWs, OWWA has a programme called Tulong Pangkabuhayan sa Pag-unlad ng Samahang OFWs. The grant is provided aiming for the formation, enhancement, or the restoration of livelihood-supporting projects of OFW-supporting organisations.

The Migrant Workers Act of the Philippines created the National Reintegration Centre for Overseas Filipino Workers (NRCO) at the 2010 amendment as a one-stop centre related to all the reintegration services for returning OFWs. NRCO provides such services as counselling, enterprise development, assistance to distressed OFWs, etc. (Public Services International, 2015).

1.3. Training and protection of Overseas Filipino Workers

Working as a cross-border care worker is one of the common options for Filipinos to improve their financial condition, especially for women. The Philippine government has been promoting programmes to improve the skills of cross-border care workers so that they can gain advantage in the international labour market. Apart from nursing education, which is supposed to be provided at higher education institutions, care workers are trained at vocational schools and curricula have been developed in cooperation with other countries, which can be the destination countries of cross-border care workers.

The development of a Philippines qualifications framework (PHLQF) is also a part of the government's effort to build the capacity of cross-border workers. PHLQF fully complies with the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRF), as endorsed by the AQRF Committee (Commission on Higher Education, 2019).

In response to cases involving OFWs, in particular by the execution of Flor Contemplacion for allegedly killing two persons in Singapore in 1995, the Philippine government enacted the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995 (Republic Act No. 8042). The Act highlights the protection of Filipino workers overseas and states that the government must not promote overseas employment but only facilitate the deployment of Filipinos to the countries that uphold and guarantee the individual rights and protection of OFWs (Rodriguez, 2002; Guevarra, 2006). With this background, the Philippine government has been encouraging the development of knowledge and skills of potential migrant workers. The Philippine-Japan EPA programmes, under which Japan accepts candidates for registered nurses and certified care workers (CCWs), were also agreed by both countries based on this principle of the policy of the Philippines on migrant workers.

The Philippines creates many migrant workers who have considerable knowledge and skills, but it also means that the intellectual capital necessary for the development of the country is draining out. To facilitate the 'brain gain' rather than 'brain drain', the international harmonisation of qualifications framework is crucial so that knowledge and skills of returning OFWs are properly recognised and utilised well in the country.

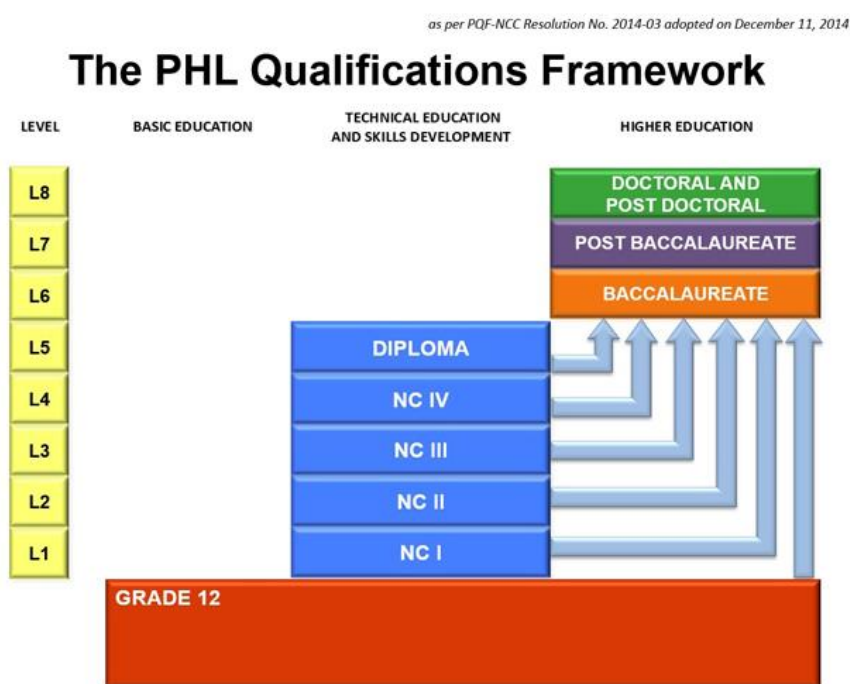
2. Structure of the Philippine Qualifications Framework and Long-term Care Related Occupations

2.1. Overview of the Philippine Qualifications Framework

The PHLQF has eight levels of qualification. It considers Senior High School (Grade 12) as the foundation of the eight levels. The Philippines used to have a 10-year basic education system and it created inconsistency with most of other countries in the world, which had 12-year basic education system; however, after the reform of education system starting from early 2010s, the Philippines has also had a 12-year system.

The PHLQF has sub-frameworks corresponding to the subsystems of education and training system: basic education, Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) subsystem, and higher education. The graduates of Senior High School (Grade 12) are eligible for obtaining qualifications up to Level 5 as well as the admission to degree programme in Level 6 (Figure 4.1). The TESDA subsystem covers National Certificates (NCs) I through IV, which correspond to the first four Levels of PHLQF 1 through 4 depending on the extent of expertise. The higher education subsystem covers baccalaureate and above that correspond to PHLQF Levels 5 through 8 (Republic of the Philippines, Philippine Qualifications Framework, n.d.).

Figure 4.1. Philippine Qualifications Framework



NC = national certificates, PHL = Philippines.

Source: Republic of the Philippines, Philippine Qualifications Framework (n.d.), *Framework*. <https://pqf.gov.ph/Home/Details/7> (accessed 31 March 2021).

2.2. Levels of the long-term-care-related personnel in the PHLQF

As described in section 4.2.1, the PHLQF has three sub-frameworks. Among several job categories related to LTC, ‘nurse’ falls into the sub-framework of ‘higher education’ because the applicants for nursing licensure are required to have a baccalaureate; if so, they are ranked at Level 6 in the PHLQF, or if they have post-graduate degrees, they are at Level 7 or 8.

Other LTC-related job categories are included in TESDA subsystem. TESDA promulgates training regulations, which are used as the basis for the development of competency-based curricula, instructional materials, and competency assessment tools, as well as the competency standards for national qualification (Republic of the Philippines, TESDA, n.d.-a). As the LTC-related competency categories, the following three items can be found: Caregiving (Elderly) NC II, Domestic Worker NC II, and Health Care Services NC II. These training regulations clearly advise the terms that are commonly used to represent the job categories suitable for the persons who acquired the qualification based on each training regulation. The persons who acquire the qualification based on ‘Caregiving (Elderly) NC II’ are supposed to be competent as ‘Caregiver for

Elderly’ (Republic of the Philippines, TESDA, 2020); the qualification of ‘Domestic Worker NC II’ is good for ‘Domestic Worker’, ‘Houseboy’, ‘Housemaid’, ‘Housekeeper’, ‘Hand-lauderer’, ‘Helper, Kitchen’ or ‘Cleaner, Hotel’ (Republic of the Philippines, TESDA, 2017); and the qualification of ‘Health Care Services NC II’ can work for ‘Nurse Attendant’, ‘Nursing Aide’, ‘Hospital Assistant’ or ‘Health Aide’ (Republic of the Philippines, TESDA, n.d.-b).

2.3. TESDA’s training regulations of ‘Caregiving (Elderly) NC II’

Each training regulation developed by TESDA has the following four sections: Definition of Qualifications (Section 1), Competency Standards (Section 2), Training Arrangements (Section 3), and Assessment and Certification Arrangements (Section 4). The training regulation for ‘Caregiving (Elderly) NC II’ is not the exception. The following contents of this subsection is the summary of this training regulation (Republic of the Philippines, TESDA, 2020).

Section 1: Definition of qualification

The ‘Caregiving (Elderly) NC II’ qualification consists of competencies to recognise the ageing process, participate in the implementation and monitoring of client’s care plan, perform caring skills, perform specialty care procedures, and assist clients in administering medication.

The competencies required for this qualification are classified into basic, common, and core competencies. Each category of competency is divided into several units and each unit is assigned with unit codes. For example, the category of ‘Basic Competencies’ is divided into eight units: ‘Participate in workplace communication’, ‘Work in team environment’, ‘Solve/address general workplace problems’, etc. The ‘Common Competencies’ has four units, such as ‘Respond effectively to difficult/challenging behaviour’, ‘Apply basic first aid’ etc., while the ‘Core Competencies’ has five units, such as ‘Develop the ability to recognise the ageing process’. ‘Participate in the implementation and monitoring of client’s care plan’, ‘Perform caring skills’, etc.

Section 2: Competency standards

This section gives the details of the contents of each unit shown in Section 1. Each unit is divided into several elements. For each element, ‘performance criteria’, ‘required knowledge’, and ‘required skills’ are provided. Taking an example of one unit from eight units under ‘Basic

Competencies', the unit 'Participate in Workplace Communication' has three elements: 'Obtain and convey workplace information', 'Perform duties following workplace instructions', and 'Complete relevant work related documents'. Table 4.4 shows the detail of the element 'Obtain and convey workplace information', as an example.

This section also provides the definition of the unit, resource implications, and the assessment guide. For example, the competency covered in the unit 'Participate in Workplace' is defined as the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to obtain, interpret, and convey information in response to workplace requirements.

As for the resources, the guide requires equipment, such as a fax machine, writing materials, computer with an internet connection, etc.

The candidate is required to show evidence of the following critical competencies: 1) preparing written communication following the standard format of the organisation; 2) accessing information using workplace communication equipment/systems; 3) making use of relevant terms as an aid to transfer information effectively; and 4) conveying information effectively adopting formal or informal communication. Methods of assessment are also suggested here: 1) demonstration with oral questioning; 2) interview; 3) written test; and 4) third-party report.

This is just an example of one unit. For all 17 units defined in the training regulation for 'Caregiving (Elderly) NC II', a detailed assessment guide is provided.

Table 4.1. Example of an Element of a ‘Participate in Workplace Communication’ Unit under ‘Basic Competencies’

ELEMENT	PERFORMANCE CRITERIA	REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE	REQUIRED SKILLS
1. Obtain and convey workplace information	1.1 Specific and relevant information is accessed from appropriate sources 1.2 Effective questioning, active listening and speaking skills are used to gather and convey information 1.3 Appropriate medium is used to transfer information and ideas 1.4 Appropriate non-verbal communication is used 1.5 Appropriate lines of communication with supervisors and colleagues are identified and followed 1.6 Defined workplace procedures for the location and storage of information are used 1.7 Personal interaction is carried out clearly and concisely	1.1 Effective verbal and nonverbal communication 1.2 Different modes of communication 1.3 Medium of communication in the workplace 1.4 Organisational policies 1.5 Communication procedures and systems 1.6 Lines of communication 1.7 Technology relevant to the enterprise and the individual’s work responsibilities 1.8 Workplace etiquette	1.1 Following simple spoken language 1.2 Performing routine workplace duties following simple written notices 1.3 Participating in workplace meetings and discussions 1.4 Preparing work-related documents 1.5 Estimating, calculating and recording routine workplace measures 1.6 Relating/ Interacting with people of various levels in the workplace 1.7 Gathering and providing basic information in response to workplace requirements 1.8 Applying basic business writing skills 1.9 Applying interpersonal skills in the workplace 1.10 Performing active-listening skills

Source: Republic of the Philippines, Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) (2020).

Section 3: Training arrangements

This section provides the standards of technical and vocational education and training, including the important requirements for the training providers that should be considered when they design their programmes. As for the duration of the training curricula, this regulation prescribes at least 37 hours for 'Basic Competencies', 112 hours for 'Common Competencies', and 252 hours for 'Core competencies', as well as 160 hours for 'Supervised Industry Learning'. The total is 561 hours. The training regulation says the learners must complete all units prescribed for this qualification, in order to demonstrate their competencies to be employed.

Table 4.5 shows the curriculum-designing guideline of the unit 'Develop the Ability to Recognise Ageing Process' under 'Core Components' as an example. Each unit under any competency category is provided with 'Learning Outcomes', 'Learning Activities', 'Methodology', 'Assessment Approach', and 'Nominal Duration' like this.

This section also shows the requirements for the trainees. They must have completed at least 10 years basic education or must be the holders of the certificate equivalent to that. Basic communication skills are also required. The training can be delivered through any mode, as in the following: institution-based, enterprise-based, or community-based.

There are the requirements for trainers as well. A trainer must be a holder of National TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) Trainer's Certificate Level I in Caregiving (Elderly) NC II, must be a graduate of any allied health courses or possess a Bachelor's degree, must possess good communication skills, and must have at least 2 years industry experience within the last 5 years. The section also provides the recommended lists of tools, equipment, and materials.

Table 4.2. Example of Curriculum Guideline: ‘1. Develop the Ability to Recognise Ageing Process’ Unit under ‘Core Competencies’

Learning Outcomes	Learning Activities	Methodology	Assessment	Duration
1.1 Interpret knowledge of ageing process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read and understand the ageing process • Read and understand phases of the ageing process to determine any problems regarding client health • Apply caregiver’s roles and responsibilities in giving care and support for elderly in accordance with standard policies and regulations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interactive discussion • Role play • Demonstrate with guided demonstration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oral question • Written Test 	16 hours
1.2 Apply principles of caregiving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read and understand principles of caregiving practice • Read and understand legal standards based on applicable laws and government regulations • Apply legal and ethical fundamentals in accordance with established industry standards • Apply interpersonal skills • Use keen attention to details • Apply therapeutic and non-therapeutic communication techniques 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interactive discussion • Role play • Demonstrate with guided demonstration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oral question • Written Test 	8 hours
1.3 Apply infection control principles and sanitation practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read and understand infection control principles and sanitation practices • Apply infection control principles and sanitation practices • Apply interpersonal skills • Use keen attention to details • Apply effective oral and written communication • Use of materials, supplies and tools • Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interactive discussion • with power point presentation • Film showing • Role play 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oral question • Demonstration • Written test 	8 hours

Source: Republic of the Philippines, Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) (2020).

Section 4: Assessment and certification arrangements

Assessment can be conducted only at the Assessment Centre accredited by TESDA. Competency assessors should also be authorised to conduct assessment of competence. Assessment focuses on the 'Core Competencies' and the 'Basic Competencies' and the 'Common Competencies' are integrated concurrently with 'Core' units. Besides the graduates of the training programmes related to 'Caregiving (Elderly) NC II', experienced workers who gained competencies in providing caregiving services for at least 2 years within the last 5 years are also qualified to undergo assessment and certification. The successful candidates are awarded with the National Qualification of Caregiving (Elderly) NC II signed by the TESDA Director-General.

2.4. Lack of the opportunities for recurrent education

One of the problems with vocational education in the Philippines is the lack of opportunities for recurrent education, which is a crucial element of career paths that are embodied in the PQFs in the Philippines.

Taking the example of 'Caregiving (Elderly) NC II', which is the second lowest rank of PHLQF, it has not been advised by TESDA or any other stakeholders involved with the development of PHLQF how people who attained this qualification can promote themselves to higher levels within the same job category through work experience and/or training experience; in other words, through recurrent education. The stakeholders of PHLQF are encouraged to show what kinds of knowledge and skills are required for care workers to be certified as higher levels of PHLQF, i.e. Level 5 or above.

Such efforts can solve the deskilling problem. Registered nurses are ranked at Level 6, at the lowest, in PHLQF because only baccalaureates can apply for the national examination of nurses in the Philippines. The Philippines-Japan EPA programme allows registered nurses to apply for the CCW-candidates under this programme, but the PHLQF does not have the appropriate rank for highly skilled care workers, which are equivalent to registered nurses. If the career paths for care workers are established together with the recurrent education system for care workers as one distinguished job category, the caregiving skills of Filipino nurses returning from working in Japan as EPA CCW-candidates would be satisfactorily recognised and the deskilling problem could be avoided.

3. Position of Long-term Care Worker in Qualifications Frameworks of ASEAN, Japan, and the Philippines

3.1. ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework and PHLQF

As one of the major countries that send migrant workers, the Philippines has been actively promoting mutual international recognition of qualifications. The ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRF) was developed in 2014 by a task force comprising officials and experts from ASEAN ministries of trade, labour and manpower development, education, etc., and endorsed by relevant ASEAN ministers' meetings in 2014 and 2015. The PHLQF was endorsed by the AQRF committee in 2019 as aligned with the AQRF referencing criteria (Commission on Higher Education, 2019). The AQRF has the following six objectives: 1) support recognition of qualifications; 2) develop qualifications frameworks to encourage lifelong learning; 3) develop approaches to validate non-formal education; 4) promote learner and worker mobility; 5) lead to better understanding of qualifications systems; and 6) promote higher quality qualifications systems (The ASEAN Secretariat, 2018). The AQRF is shown in Table 1.3 and the PHLQF is shown in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3. Description of Philippine Qualifications Framework

Level	Qualification Type	Knowledge, Skills and Values	Application	Degree of Independence
Grade 12		<p>Possess functional knowledge across a range of learning areas and technical skills in chosen career tracks with advanced competencies in communication; scientific, critical, and creative thinking; and the use of technologies.</p> <p>Have an understanding of right and wrong; one’s history and cultural heritage; and deep respect for self, others and their culture, and the environment.</p>	<p>Apply functional knowledge, technical skills, and values in academic and real-life situations through sound reasoning, informed decision-making, and the judicious use of resources.</p>	<p>Apply skills in varied situations with minimal supervision.</p>

I	National Certificate I	Knowledge and skills that are manual or concrete or practical and/or operational in focus .	Applied in activities that are set in a limited range of highly familiar and predictable contexts; involve straightforward, routine issues which are addressed by following set rules, guidelines, or procedures.	In conditions where there is very close support , guidance or supervision; minimum judgment or discretion is needed.
II	National Certificate II	Knowledge and skills that are manual, practical and/or operational in focus with a variety of options .	Applied in activities that are set in a range of familiar predictable context; involve routine issues which are identified and addressed by selecting from and following several set rules, guidelines, or procedures.	In conditions where there is substantial support , guidance, or supervision; limited judgment or discretion is needed.

III	National Certificate III	<p>Knowledge and skill that are a balance of theoretical and/or technical and practical. Work involves understanding the work process, contributing to problem solving, and making decisions to determine the process, equipment, and materials to be used.</p>	<p>Applied in activities that are set in contexts with some unfamiliar or unpredictable aspects; involve routine and non-routine issues which are identified and addressed by interpreting and/or applying established guidelines or procedures with some variations.</p>	<p>Application at this level may involve individual responsibility or autonomy, and/or may involve some responsibility for others. Participation in teams including team or group coordination may be involved.</p>
IV	National Certificate IV	<p>Knowledge and skill that are mainly theoretical and/or abstract with significant depth in one or more areas; contributing to technical solutions of a non-routine or contingency nature; evaluation and analysis of current practices and the development of new criteria and procedures.</p>	<p>Applied in activities that are set in a range of contexts, most of which involve a number of unfamiliar and/or unpredictable aspects; involve largely non-routine issues which are addressed using guidelines or procedures which require interpretation and/or adaptation.</p>	<p>Work involve some leadership and guidance when organising activities of self and others.</p>

V	Diploma	<p>Knowledge and skills that are mainly theoretical and/or abstract with significant depth in some areas together with wide-ranging, specialised technical, creative, and conceptual skills. Perform work activities demonstrating breadth, depth and complexity in the planning and initiation of alternative approaches to skill and knowledge applications across a broad range of technical and/or management requirements, evaluation, and coordination.</p>	<p>Applied in activities that are supervisory, complex, and non-routine, and that require an extensive interpretation and/or adaptation/innovation.</p>	<p>In conditions where there is broad guidance and direction, where judgment is required in planning and selecting appropriate equipment, services, and techniques for self and other. Undertake work involving participation in the development of strategic initiatives, as well as personal responsibility and autonomy in performing complex technical operations or organising others.</p>
VI	Baccalaureate Degree	<p>Demonstrated broad and coherent knowledge and skills in their field of study for professional work and lifelong learning.</p>	<p>Application in professional/creative work or research in a specialised field of discipline and/or further study.</p>	<p>Substantial degree of independence and or/in teams of related fields with minimal supervision.</p>

VII	Post-Baccalaureate Program	Demonstrated advanced knowledge and skills in a specialised or multi-disciplinary field of study for professional practice, self-directed research and/or lifelong learning.	Applied in professional/creative work or research that requires self-direction and/or leadership in a specialised or multi-disciplinary professional work/research.	High substantial degree of independence that involves exercise of leadership and initiative individual work or in teams of multi-disciplinary field.
VIII	Doctoral Degree and Post-Doctoral Programs	Demonstrated highly advanced systematic knowledge and skills in highly specialised and/or complex multi-disciplinary field of learning for complex research and/or professional practice and/or for the advancement of learning.	Applied for professional leadership for innovation , research and/or development management in highly specialised or multi-disciplinary field.	Full independence in individual work and/or in teams of multi-disciplinary and more complex setting that demands leadership for research and creativity for strategic value added. Significant level of expertise-based autonomy and accountability.

Source: Republic of the Philippines, Philippine Qualifications Framework (n.d.), Domains and Descriptors. <https://pqf.gov.ph/Home/Details/4> (accessed 7 April 2021).

Both PHLQF and AQRF have been deliberately developed based on a strong theoretical background, but the detailed career paths of each job category are not necessarily described well. In the case of LTC, both PQFs have not recognised highly skilled LTCWs, such as those who have acquired Japan's national qualification of CCWs, or who have worked as TITP-LTC trainees for several years, etc. The lack of a relevant rank in the PQFs can create deskilling. In this circumstance, even if migrant workers have accumulated working experience abroad, until they can be recognised as highly skilled workers, they will not be able to utilise such competencies in their home countries after returning. Reintegration programmes could be developed if they could be coupled with the recognition of returnees' competencies in the PQFs of their home countries. ASEAN and the Philippine government are encouraged to work together to improve their PQFs so that they can fairly appraise any competency, including autonomy, independence, and leadership, that can be obtained through work experience and training programmes, as well as formal education.

4.3.2. Importance of harmonisation between PHLQF and Japan's career grading system

As discussed in Chapter 3, one of the main reasons why Japan has developed LTC-related services, including the qualification system of CCWs, is its finance system based on the social (compulsory) LTC insurance. Japan's LTC Professional Career Grade System has also been developed to be consistent with the LTC insurance system, but another goal of Japan's LTC career grading system is to appraise the competencies of foreign LTCWs and integrate them into Japan's LTC system in response to their growing number in Japan. To this end, Japan's LTC career grading system shares the same goal with AQRF and PHLQF, though the number of levels is different.

To facilitate the self-promotion of LTCWs, Japan's career grading system focuses on career development from beginner's level up to the expert level. As discussed in section 3.3.3, however, the higher three levels (Levels 5, 6, and 7) have not been working, though some suggestions have been made to map the already-existing certifications for LTCWs and/or new certification systems for LTCWs on the higher three levels of this career grading system (Table 3.9). On the other hand, the AQRF and PHLQF have comparatively more detailed description than Japan's LTC career grading system, particularly for highly skilled level (Table 1.3 for AQRF, and Table 4.6 for PHLQF). Instead, the AQRF and PHLQF do not fully incorporate the system of career development. For

example, as already discussed in this chapter, the PHLQF has only 'Caregiving (Elderly) NC II' as the competency-recognising levels for LTCWs, which is ranked at the second lowest level: Level 2, and it does not provide which level is equivalent to highly skilled LTCWs like Japan-certified LTCWs in PHLQF.

From the Philippine side, Japan's TITP for LTC is an unfair system. As described in Chapter 3, TITP-LTC trainees are supposed to be gradually upgraded depending on the duration of their working in Japan from category 1 (first year), category 2 (second and third year), up to category 3 (fourth and fifth year). Their rank on career grading system can be also upgraded in accordance with the progress in their category of TITP-LTC; for example, TITP-LTC trainees of category 1 are ranked at Level 1 of Japan's career grading system. The Philippine certification of 'Caregiving (Elderly) NC II' requires 561 hours of training as already described in this chapter, so it should be equivalent to or more skilled than the LTCWs who completed 450 hours of training who are ranked at Level 3 of Japan's career grading system. Nevertheless, even if Filipino TITP-LTC trainees have acquired 'Caregiving (Elderly) NC II', they are obliged to start as category-1-TITP-trainees, which are ranked at Level 1 in Japan's system. In case of TITP-LTC trainees who are registered nurses in the Philippines, their rank is downgraded in Japan's system because only baccalaureates (Level 6 or higher) can apply for the national examination for registered nurses in the Philippines.

In this sense, deskilling is taking place at both sides. The competencies of Filipino care workers acquired in Japan, like the acquisition of CCW qualification, are not incorporated in PHLQF, while their competencies that have already been endorsed by PHLQF before heading for Japan are not recognised there. The stakeholders involved with PQFs for LTC work are encouraged to fill the missing link between Japan's PQF and PHLQF (and AQRF) so as to avoid deskilling and utilise the high competencies that cross-border LTCWs acquire through their working experience and training.

3.3. Solution to deskilling

PHLQF is a collaborative programme by the Department of Education, TESDA, Commission on Higher Education (CHED), Professional Regulation Commission (PRC), and Department of Labor and Employment (Republic of the Philippines, Philippine Qualifications Framework, n.d.). To promote the harmonisation of QFs of both countries, particularly for higher competency levels,

dialogue between the agencies in charge of higher education is required, rather than the agencies in charge of vocational training like TESDA. Support for university reform and/or degree awarding organisations is also crucial. Establishment of professional universities and/or graduate schools for LTCWs may contribute to the development of career paths of LTCWs and to the creation of relevant ranks for LTCWs who have advanced competencies in the PQFs of both countries. Of course, the development of LTC service industries in the Philippines is indispensable for LTCWs to get good job opportunities in the country, not only in Japan. Both countries are strongly encouraged to collaborate to develop the qualification frameworks that show visible career paths for any job category from beginners' level to expert level. It can be achieved through close dialogue between two countries and amongst the agencies and other stakeholders from vocational education to higher education.

4. Harmonisation of Language Education between Japan and the Philippines

4.1 Language skills required for 'Caregiver (Elderly) NC II' in PHLQF

Language Proficiency is a critical component of the competencies of care workers. Looking at the TESDA's training regulation for 'Caregiver (Elderly) NC II', language-related competency can be found in the unit of 'Participate in Workplace Communication', which is classified as one of the 'Basic Competencies'. Any of language skills (speaking, listening, reading, and writing) are required for all three elements under this unit: 1) obtain and convey workplace information; 2) perform duties following workplace instructions; and 3) complete relevant work-related documents.

The Japanese language has an extremely complicated writing system, but practical writing skills are required to satisfy the elements stated in the TESDA's training regulation for 'Caregiver (Elderly) NC II'. In the actual working site of LTC facilities, the information-sharing about clients is critical to providing quality care services and preventing accidents. Written records and oral communication, including under computer-based system, are still the main tool of information-sharing from shift to shift. Some terms commonly used in LTC services are shared with medical services, though such terms are not often used by ordinary people. It is quite challenging for Japanese-language learners to acquire the language skills required for 'Caregiver (Elderly) NC II', but it is also true that the number of 'LTC-specific' terms is limited, even if such terms are

uncommon and difficult even for native speakers. This obstacle may be overcome through the language education specifically oriented to LTC services.

4.2 Language training for TITP trainees

As described in the section 3.2.2, TITP trainees for LTC are required to undergo intensive language education, which is not applied to TITP trainees of other industries. As described in the section 3.3.1, the goals of TITP trainees are different depending on the length of their training (or *de facto* work experience) in Japan. Considering the characteristics of LTC as human-oriented services, language education should be continued throughout the training period for TITP-LTC trainees in accordance with their achievement goals. The achievement goals are linked to the ranks of Japan's LTC Professional Career Grade System, for example, TITP-LTC trainee of category 1 is ranked at Level 1. It has not been clear, unfortunately, whether the language skills in Japan's care grading system is equivalent to the levels in the PHLQF.

Language proficiency is closely linked to the overall competencies, particularly cross-border LTCWs. To promote the harmonisation of QFs, language proficiency should be taken into considerations, otherwise their competencies could not be appraised properly by QFs.

5. Recommendations for the Utilisation of the Competencies of Returned LTCWs

5.1. Integration of medical professionals into QF for LTC

This chapter discussed the merits and demerits of PHLQF, particularly TESDA's training regulation 'Caregiver (Elderly) NC II', and Japan's LTC Professional Career Grade System. The PHLQF fails to present the explicit career paths for LTCWs, while Japan's career grading system has not clearly indicated how to appraise the highest skills of LTC services. This report is based on the thought that LTCWs should be clearly differentiated from medical professionals, such as nurses, rehabilitation therapists, etc., but considering the proximity of the practices of both professionals, integration of both in PQFs can also be realistically discussed. For example, how can Filipino nurses, who are ranked at Level 6 in PHLQF, be ranked in Japan's career grading system for LTC? Even for Japanese nurses, how can they be ranked in Japan's career grading

system for LTC? LTC industries have many workers who have the background of medical professionals. Balance between differentiation and integration is required when the qualifications framework for LTCWs is discussed.

5.2. Importance of the development of LTC system in the Philippines

It is expected that more and more LTCWs will return from Japan to the Philippines. Reintegration programmes for repatriated OFWs are promoted by the government, but the job opportunities are still limited to paid retirement communities for older foreigners or non-LTC industries that require Japanese language skills, etc. Most older Filipinos who need care are dependent on family and/or community care, but the population of the Philippines is also steadily ageing. Whatever pathways they take when they are recruited as foreign LTCWs in Japan, their skills and knowledge acquired in Japan are highly useful and important to develop good LTC system in the Philippines.

The Philippine government and stakeholders of LTC in the Philippines are strongly encouraged to develop a reliable LTC system that is suitable for the Philippines and affordable for ordinary Filipino people, utilising the high competencies of returned LTCWs. Such an attempt will contribute to the development of reintegration programmes and lifelong education courses for LTCWs, as well as the establishment of career paths of LTCWs in PHLQF. Population ageing will surely come even in the Philippines. The high skills of returned LTCWs will be indispensable components of the LTC system in the Philippines. Japan is also encouraged to work together with the Philippines to establish the quality LTC system in the Philippines as a beneficiary of cross-border LTCWs.

The PHLQF is, unfortunately, still far from total harmonisation with Japan's LTC career grading system. Filling the gap between them will benefit both countries through the utilisation of competencies of cross-border LTCWs. Recognising high competencies of LTCWs in officially endorsed qualification frameworks is expected to change the general view on LTC from unskilled and onerous work to decent work, and will contribute to the empowerment of women, who are still predominant in LTC industries.

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