



Filipino Nurses Doing Domestic Work in Canada: A STALLED DEVELOPMENT

Filipino Nurses Doing Domestic Work in Canada: A Stalled Development is a historic and important community-based initiative that exposes the startling experiences of Filipino nurses in Canada.

It was initiated in October 1998 by the Philippine Women Centre of BC. (PWC), and funded by the Status of Women Canada. Through the PWC, the Filipino Nurses Support Group (FNSG) conducted the study using a participatory action research model. The stories and experiences of 26 Filipino nurses who are or were doing domestic work in Canada were gathered.

The research explores the urgent questions of how and why the full individual and collective development of these women – who achieved professional status and skills in the Philippines – is being forcibly stalled in Canada, as they are relegated to household work under exploitative conditions. The image of Third World women doing domestic work, while other Canadian women are “liberated” from household work, poses a serious challenge to the question of the overall advancement of women’s equality in Canada. As well, in the midst of a critical nationwide nursing shortage, marginalized Third World mi-grants and immigrants are systemically prevented from using their skills and education to their full value and potential, despite possessing the requisite training, knowledge and skills. The 300 members and contacts of FNSG here in BC are not being valued as an important part of alleviating the nursing shortage, improving the quality of health care, and countering the increasing privatization of health here in Canada.

The study documents the systemic and institutional barriers to Filipino nurses seeking to practice their profession in the areas of immigration, labour, accreditation, health care, equality rights, and human rights. In particular, it examines the impact of the Live-in Caregiver Program and the lengthy, costly and irrelevant barriers to accreditation.

As part of the project, recommendations, resolutions and proposed policy changes were developed and presented to the Canadian and Philippine governments and key institutions in British Columbia. Ultimately, it is hoped these recommendations will result in institutional and policy changes that will end the marginalization of Filipino and other foreign-trained nurses doing domestic work.

The stories of Filipino nurses in this report are a concrete testimony to their strength and resilience. By coming forward to share their experiences, they have all helped us deepen our understanding of a sector of the Filipino people, a people who have historically migrated in search of better opportunities abroad. By opening up their dreams and aspirations, they have also begun the important process of collectively working for change.

A Stalled Development is available for \$15 from the Filipino Nurses Support Group. Send a cheque or money order with your name and address to: Filipino Nurses Support Group, 451 Powell Street, Vancouver, BC, Canada, V6A 1G7.

