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# Overseas education devalued in Finland: Filipino nurses, labor market and integration

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**Session: Recognition of Prior Learning in Higher Education**

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**TRANS-SPACE and MULTI-TRAIN**



# **TRANS-SPACE: Emergence of Transnational Educational Spaces in Social and Health Care Work: Case Study in Training and Integration of Filipino Nurses in Finland**

- A research project funded by the Finnish Work Environmental Fund
- Professor Pirkko Pitkänen
- University of Tampere, Finland and Scalabrini Migration Center, the Philippines
- <http://www.uta.fi/edu/en/research/projects/transspace/index.html>



# Key research questions

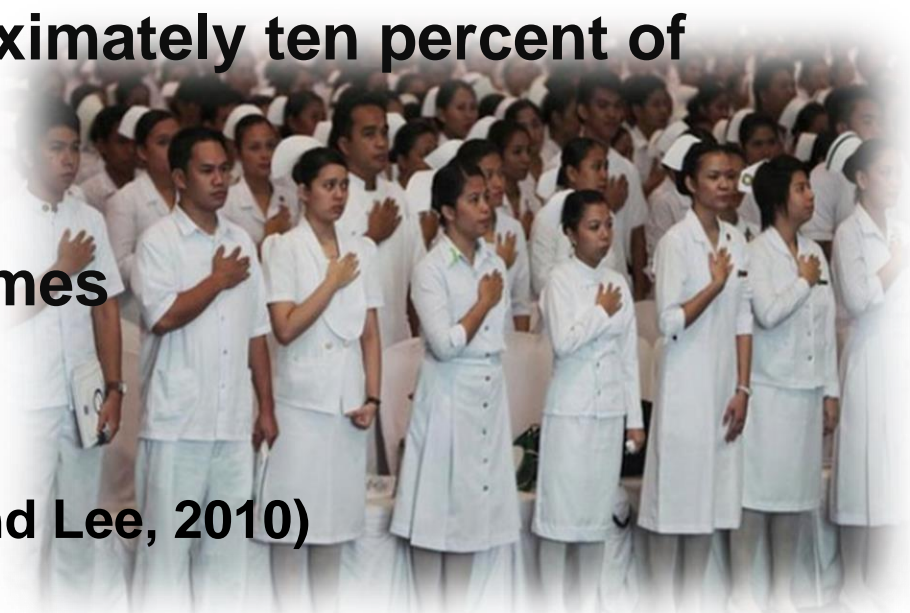
- **The expectations of Filipino nurses migrating to Finland?**
- **The realities in Finland:**
  - **Recognition of the Filipino nurses' skills and qualifications?**
  - **Integration and learning in the work communities?**



## The Philippines is a key supplier of nurses in global scale

- The colonial ties with the USA and English-language education system
- Huge nurse unemployment
- Government policies encouraging migration
- Remittances make approximately ten percent of the GDP.
- 85 % of nurses educated in the Philippines at all times work overseas

(e.g. Lorenzo, 2007; Masselink and Lee, 2010)





# Nurse migration into Finland

- **The fastest aging population in EU → Overseas trained nurses are recruited to private elderly care homes**
- **Two private recruitment agencies exporting nurses**
- **Finland is an example of a new, non-English speaking European destination country for Filipino nurses.**



# Data and the research process

- **Data collected in TRANS-SPACE 2014 – 2016**
- **Survey (n=36) and interviews (n=20) with Filipino nurses in pre-departure training in the Philippines, 2014.**
- **Part of the same nurses (n=10) re-interviewed in Finland, 2015 – 2016.**
- **Additional data with co-workers, mentors and superiors, recruitment agencies.**
- **Qualitative content analysis.**



# PRELIMINARY FINDINGS 1: Why to Finland?

- **Unemployment in the Philippines**
- **Savings: The basic salary of practical nurse in Finland ca. 1,700 euros), around 10 times higher than the salary of registered nurse in the Philippines.**
- **Professional advancement: Nurses' aim was to get their nursing education recognized as valid in Finland.**
- **Specific reasons: Free education (including pre-departure); low-cost health care; safe and clean environment; access to Europe (also for family)**



## **PRELIMINARY FINDINGS 2: The reality – Employers need auxiliary staff, not registered nurses**

- **In elderly care, there is a shortage nursing assistants and practical nurses.**
- **Employment contracts as nursing assistants + apprenticeship training to practical nurse.**
- **Residence permit based on work**





## **PRELIMINARY FINDINGS 3: The reality – Recognition of foreign qualifications**

- **EU-regulations and their implementation in Finland hinder the non-EU citizens to enter the Finnish labour markets as registered nurses (Council Directive 2005/36/EC).**
- **No clear, uniform bridging programme to nurse diploma**
- **Health professionals qualified in EU/EEA countries get automatic recognition under the Council Directive 2005/36/EC**
- **Essentially easier for the EU-citizens to take up employment in Finland.**



# Conclusions

- **In spite of a four-year academic training, Filipino nurses end up as practical nurses or nursing assistants.**
- **Education wasted**
- **There is a need for**
  - **Improvements in the recognition of qualifications completed outside the EU/EEA**
  - **Uniform national bridging program**
  - **Better information /guidelines:**

[http://www.valvira.fi/terveydenhuolto/ammattioikeudet/hakemusohjeet/eu\\_eta\\_valtioiden\\_ulkopuolella\\_koulutetut/ohje](http://www.valvira.fi/terveydenhuolto/ammattioikeudet/hakemusohjeet/eu_eta_valtioiden_ulkopuolella_koulutetut/ohje)



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- **Thank you for your attention!**

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