

COMMUNITY NEWS

NGO eyes livelihood training for returning overstayed moms

By Vir B. Lumicao

Livelihood skills training for overstaying migrant mothers will be the next focus of NGO PathFinders to prepare the women for their reintegration into the Philippine society when they finally return home with their babies.

This emerged from a briefing on the PathFinders' Home Country Integration Program, launched in 2018 to help former domestic workers with children born out of wedlock get on their own back home.

The program was

highlighted during the first visit to the Philippines by a team led by board director Lara Fabregas, to meet up with various NGOs and government agencies that could assist the overstayers who take part in the program.

Fabregas, home country integration manager Medina Speers and Carmen Lam, director of services, community education and outreach, gave a briefing on the visit on Apr 24.

"Last year, we had 255 migrant mothers in Hong Kong and about 13.7% of our clients returning home, so, we



PathFinders client mothers being briefed by a volunteer in the NGO's office in Tai Kok Tsui, Kowloon.

see that the trend (for going home) is going up and we would need more assistance," Lam said.

She said the returnees represented 35 families (mothers and their children) comprising 50% Filipinos and 50% Indonesians.

"We hope we can provide more assistance to the ladies

who return home as they can face different challenges back home," Lam said.

She pointed out the case of one returnee, identified only as "Elma," who was already set to return home with her son by a South Asian asylum-seeker but hesitated at the last minute, revealing for the first time alleged threats by her

estranged husband.

"She didn't tell us that she had a husband back home. It made the whole process challenging because we didn't know about her husband and the difficulties she faced," Lam said

After being told of the possible risk and consequences of overstaying,

Elma returned home as planned.

Lam said that during their visit to the Philippines, they sought help from the Consulate in getting connected to government agencies like the Department of Social Welfare and Development that could

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