COVID-19, characterized as a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO), and with an increasing number of countries experiencing clusters of cases or community transmission and with no available vaccine yet, countries around the world implemented an unprecedented shutdown on operations of almost all services to at least limit the number of and rate of transmission. With the shutdown, small to large industries all over the world were forced to limit and/or permanently ceased operations.

A never seen before scale of migrating overseas workers ensued, seeking the comfort and support of their home countries. The most affected are the domestic workers and other workers in Asia, Middle East and Europe whose employers have been affected by the economic impact of COVID-19. Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) who were repatriated as a consequence of the pandemic arrived by the thousands and there are still thousands who are going to come home in the next months because of the economic crisis. Most of those who came home are not prepared and do not have enough savings, psychosocial and technical preparation for reintegration. There are also several micro-enterprises owned by individual or group of OFWs who returned that have been affected by the pandemic. These OFWs need assistance so they will not revert back to poverty.

While there are available grants and loan program of the DOLE-OWWA-NRCO, DA, DTI and DOST for returning OFWs, they need technical assistance and mentors in accessing available financing grants and loans. The returning OFWs need technical assistance and mentors as starting or re-strategizing their business and developing marketing strategy. Without enough technical support, they might just end up in debt and unable to sustain their reintegration.

OFWs have helped our economy stay afloat while most of the world were hardly hit in the past economic crises. OFW remittances provided the growth that matters most in the lives of the Filipinos as money transferred from all over the world accounts for at least 10 percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

The Balikabayanihan Campaign is reliving the spirit of “Bayanihan” or volunteerism among Filipinos from all walks of life and creed to contribute in whatever they could to provide a helping hand to our Overseas Filipinos by providing them the necessary support they most need to reintegrate and succeed in their chosen investments and/or business endeavors. Balikabayanihan calls on the volunteerism spirit of Filipinos to help the returning OFWs. It is also a call for partnership by the Overseas Filipino organizations with government agencies, local government units, development agencies, civil society organizations and the private sector to look into the plight of the OFWs by providing the needed resources – manpower and funds and/or mobilizing their volunteer network to serve as mentors, trainers, counselors and provide other support services to the OFWs.
The campaign was initiated by Atikha, a non-government organization working with Overseas Filipinos and their families to maximize the gains of working abroad. It is supported by Overseas Workers Welfare Administration -National Reintegration Center for OFWs (OWWA-NRCO), National Economic and Development Authority through the Philippine National Volunteer Service Coordinating Agency (PNVSCA), Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), Department of Science and Technology (DOST), Department of Agriculture (DA) and the Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO) Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and Cooperative Development Authority (CDA). The initiative is implemented in partnership with other national and local government agencies, NGOs, development agencies, Overseas Filipino organizations and private sector.

**Goal**
- Provide COVID-19 displaced and repatriated OFWs with sustainable livelihood opportunities in the country

**Objectives**
1. To mobilize technical assistance from diaspora, migrants, civil society organizations, development agencies and private sector to help the returnees access capital, market, training and other services to start, scale up or re-strategize their business; and
2. Engage the support and participation of the National and Local Government in the Balikabayanihan by mapping and providing access to their services that can assist in the reintegration of repatriated OFWs.

**Implementation Mechanism**

1. **Reintegration Implementation Scheme**
   - Economic and Social Program – provide integrated social and economic interventions
   - Multi-stakeholder – involves national and local government, migrant organizations, NGOs, faith based organizations, private sector and other migration stakeholders working on migration and development initiatives
   - Gender Responsive – mainstreams gender equality, gender sensitivity, need for shared responsibility in all information and training program among migrants, families and migration stakeholders
   - Rights Based – promotes the welfare of OFWs and their families and empowers them as partners in migration and development initiatives.
   - Development Oriented – interventions contribute to the sustainable development of the migrants, their families and communities. Enterprises promoted should be mindful
of its impact on environment and people. It also assists in establishing social enterprises/ group enterprises/ cooperatives.

2. **Steering Committee and Structure**

A National Steering Committee (NSC) composed of the lead organizations oversees the overall implementation of the project. The NSC is composed of the following:

- PNVSCA – Chair and Secretary
- Atikha – Co-Chair
- OWWA – NRCO Member
- CFO - Member
- TESDA - Member
- DOST - Member
- DA - Member
- DTI – Member
- DOST- Member
- DSWD – Member
- CDA - Member

A partnership agreement is entered into by the members of the steering committee as well as with the cooperating organizations to ensure that the members deliver their commitments.

At the regional level, the Regional Development Councils particularly the Sub-Committees on International Migration and Development shall take the lead in the campaign. The SCIMDs which are multi-sectoral and with membership from the provincial governments shall be responsible in cascading the initiative at the local level. If the provincial committees of migration and development have not been organized, it is suggested that committees under the Provincial Development Councils may be designated to take the lead in implementing the campaign at the sub-regional level who shall also oversee the implementation and monitoring of the program in the grassroots-level.
3. **Mechanics of the Campaign**

a. Tri-media campaign will be launched to inform prospective volunteer mentors and partners and repatriated OFWs and OFW owned group enterprises to participate in the program. PNVSCA to spearhead the call for the voluntary support of Private Business Sector Groups, Foundations, Civil Society Organizations, Development Agencies and private sector as mentors, trainors and advisers.

b. On-line Registration of participating volunteer mentors and service providers and partner organization as well as repatriated OFWS and OFW owned group enterprises. The registration link is at www.balikabayanihan.org;

c. PNVSCA, Atikha, and OWWA-NRCO will provide orientation to mentors and repatriated OFWs on the mechanics of the engagement of the Balikabayanihan mentors and repatriated OFWs. The orientation of mentors and repatriated OFWs will include the reintegration services of the government, civil society and private sector in the region as well as business opportunities and priority commodity and industry in the region;

d. PNVSCA will match the volunteer mentors with the repatriated OFWs who enrolled with Balikabayanihan.
e. Engage staff of national and local government agencies as coordinators, service providers, mentors, financial literacy and business advisers.

f. Regular communication via FB Page and web based consultations will be conducted for coordination and complementation of services.

g. PNVSCA will provide tools for outcome evaluation and all partners and repatriated OFWs who participated in the program will respond to the evaluation to be conducted.

PROCESS FLOW for OFWs, MENTORS and PARTNERS:

- Log on to [www.balikabayanihan.org](http://www.balikabayanihan.org) website and partners and OFWs provide information.

- All mentors, partners and OFWs will receive orientation to be provided by OWWA/NEDA-PNVSCA/Alikha and confirmation of commitment.
  - Orientation includes:
    - Information on reintegration services of government
    - Regional Development Priority Program/ Priority Commodity and Value chain in the regions
    - Balikabayanihan on-line platform for sharing of resources and information

- PNVSCA/OWWA will match service providers with repatriated OFWs based on the information provided.

- On-line step ladder training / Blended Learning (financial literacy/reintegration planning/business and investment opportunities / skills training/ entrep training/ OJT) / link to capital/link to service value chain/market)
  - Mentoring and link to services of government and other organizations
  - Balikabayanihan Mentors (Close FB Group) for communication and updates
  - Partner organization updates will be via email and regular zoom updates of partners

- PNVSCA provides tools for the outcome of the adopt a returnee/ OFW owned businesses/ social enterprises and other services
  - Individual volunteers and partner organizations will provide PNVSCA with the report
4. **Support Services**
   
   - Adopt a returnee – Returnee can be in need of financial, technical and counseling services and if one adopts a returnee this person will link the returnee to needed services required until they are able to set up their own livelihood or job etc.
   
   - Adopt an OFW owned cooperative or social enterprise – Individual or Organizations can adopt a group or a cooperative to help re-strategize, link to market, technical assistance or capital.
   
   - Other services – a volunteer mentor or partner can choose not to adopt a repatriated OFW or organization but can provide other services to large number of repatriated OFWs such as training, counseling, financial assistance, scholarships, provision of equipment or raw materials, link to supply chain and market, provide business opportunities or other services.

5. **Program Beneficiaries**
   Who can enroll in the Balikabayanihan Campaign?
   a. Repatriated OFWs and their families interested in setting up Business/ scaling up or re-strategizing business
   b. OFW returnees and their families interested in re-strategizing business
   c. OFW organizations interested in starting, re-strategizing or scaling up business
6. **Volunteers and Partners**

Who can participate as Volunteer Mentor or Partner?

a. Any individual interested to adopt a repatriated OFWs, OFW organizations and provide any form of assistance can participate as volunteer of Balikabayanihan;

b. Any organization who can provide any of the following:
   a. Skills and Entrepreneurship Training
   b. Business Mentoring
   c. Psychosocial Counseling
   d. Financial Assistance
   e. Mobilize Mentors
   f. Link to Supply Chain and Market
   g. Information on business opportunities
   h. Equipment
   i. Raw materials
   j. Other services

7. **Monitoring**

The PNVSCA to prepare a monitoring and evaluation form on the implementation of the program.