

BALIK SCIENTISTS AIR FILIPINO RESEARCHERS' PLIGHTS

MANILA – Even if the Balik Scientist Act was already signed into a law in June 2018, Filipino researchers and Balik Scientists (returning scientists) still experience challenges.

In separate interviews with the Philippine News Agency (PNA), two Balik Scientists shared that among these challenges include low salary, work overload, less exposure to world-class research and low publication rates.

Rodrigo Amisola, Jr., senior lecturer at the Botswana University of Science and Technology, and Josefino Comiso, scientist at NASA Goddard Space Flight Center, both availed of the Balik Scientist short-term program, which enables them to do their engagement here for 30 to 90 days.

"The 'good' monetary benefits (of Balik Scientist law) only apply to short-term program. When you apply for long term, or to be permanently stationed here, those benefits disappear. I am talking about salary and not about (research) funding opportunities because funding is heavily invested by government at the moment," said Amisola.

He added that he wishes the government to give competitive salaries to Balik Scientists, and if possible, extend the good salary rate to all Filipino scientists here.

Currently, incentives under the short-term program include PHP3 million accident/travel insurance; reimbursement of excess baggage up to 25 kg; one round trip air fare (between country of origin to the Philippines); USD200 or the prevailing UNDP rate (whichever is higher) per day; attendance to a local conference; membership endorsement to the National Research Council of the Philippines (NRCP); and PHP500,000 one-time incentive upon completion of engagement.

For the long-term program wherein Balik Scientists could opt to stay here for at least two or three years, the

benefits are: PHP3 million accident/travel insurance; reimbursement of excess baggage up to 25 kg; reimbursement of excess baggage of his or her spouse and dependents; round trip air fare for the scientist, his or her spouse and dependents; one-time relocation allowance of PHP250,000; monthly housing (maximum PHP40,000 per month); PHP5,000 monthly transportation allowance; salary equivalent to at least Salary Grade 24; attendance to three local conferences; NRCP membership endorsement; and PHP500,000 one-time incentive upon completion of engagement.

With regard to workload, Amisola said researchers abroad are not as loaded as those who are here. "Most universities or companies abroad doing research are most likely serious in trying to get research outputs, so the researchers are not as loaded as those who are here back home," he said.

For Comiso, the publication rate for scientists in the Philippines are generally low compared with neighboring countries. He said there are many research results that are being presented in conferences, but the way to facilitate that presentations into papers "is not there yet".

Comiso also commented that the "bureaucratic impediments" hinder researchers to acquire the tools and equipment they need on time. "This makes it sometimes impossible to get a proposed research program to be completed on time," he lamented.

Department of Science and Technology (DOST) Secretary Fortunato dela Pena told the PNA on Thursday he will study these comments.

Earlier, he noted an increasing trend among Balik Scientists, saying that if this continues, it might surpass the target for this year.

TESDA chief welcomes tech-voc grads from Capiz

MANILA -- Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) Secretary Isidro Lapeña on Wednesday afternoon welcomed 45 technical vocational (tech-voc) graduates from Capiz, Roxas, in a ceremony held at the TESDA central office in Bicutan, Taguig.

TESDA-Capiz conducted a special recruitment last month, and the 45 tech-voc graduates are among the 166 workers recruited by D.M. Consunji, Inc. for various projects.

"They will be immediately employed to work for various ongoing projects of DMCI. They just need to undergo an orientation," TESDA-Capiz Director Abdel Hajan told the Philippine News Agency (PNA).

He added that 80 percent of these skilled workers already have TESDA national certificates (NC).

Hajan said DMCI shouldered the bus fares of the

workers, and would deduct these little by little from their salaries.

According to Hajan, the workers would be deployed in DMCI projects in Metro Manila and nearby provinces. "They would work for SCTEX, LRT line, and other projects of DMCI in Metro

MANILA -- Two operatives of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) were wounded in a shootout with drug suspects during a buy-bust operation in Pasay City on Wednesday.

PDEA Special Enforcement Service Director Levi Ortiz identified the PDEA agents as Charlemagne Karol Tang and Richard Seure, who both sustained

Manila, Batangas and Laguna," he said.

In terms of lodging, Hajan said DMCI would provide them with barracks in the project sites.

Meanwhile, TESDA noted that employing TESDA graduates is a good help for the government's "Build, Build, Build" program.

TESDA has been prioritizing the provision of free training or infrastructure-related technical and vocational education and training (TVET), saying the "Build, Build, Build" program requires about 200,000 construction workers. (PNA)

around 7:30 a.m. at the Unioil Gas Station at the corner of Buendia Avenue and F. B. Harrison Street.

Sandoval fired after sensing the presence of the law enforcers, prompting Tang ang Seure to fire back and hit the drug suspect in different parts of the body.

Seized from Sandoval was a kilo of suspected shabu worth PHP6.8 million and buy-bust money. (PNA)

2 PDEA agents wounded in Pasay City buy-bust

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PATAS AT MAKATARUNGANG PAHAYAGAN

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Prayer for Healing

JESUS, may Your pure and healthy blood circulate in my ailing organism, and may Your pure and healthy body transform my weak body, and may a healthy and vigorous life throb within me, if it is truly Your holy will.

Amen.

O BLOOD AND WATER WHICH FLOWED OUT FROM THE HEART OF JESUS AS A FOUNTAIN OF MERCY FOR US, I TRUST IN YOU!



Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One, Have Mercy on us and on the whole world. Amen.

3 O’CLOCK PRAYER

“You died Jesus, but the source of life flowed out for souls and the ocean of mercy opened up for the whole world. O Fountain of Life immeasurable Divine Mercy, cover the whole world and empty Yourself out upon us.”

“O Blood and Water which flowed out from the heart of Jesus as a Fountain of Mercy for us, I trust in you!”

“Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One have mercy on us and on the whole world.” (3x) Amen.

Jesus, King of Mercy, I trust in you!

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