

Promoting Post-Secondary Pathways Among Filipino Youth in Ontario

Philip Kelly
Jennilee Austria
Jeanette Chua
Conely de Leon
Enrico Esguerra
Alex Felipe
Mila Astorga Garcia
Allison Magpayo
Julia Mais
Christopher Sorio
Ernest Tupe

Report funded by the Ontario Human Capital Research and Innovation Fund, 2013-14.
Presented to the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities.
March 19th 2014





This study arises from a collaborative research project — the Filipino Youth Transitions in Canada (FYTIC) project — which involved numerous organizations and individuals. It was initiated in collaboration with the Community Alliance for Social Justice (CASJ) in Toronto and conducted in conjunction with the CASJ, Aksyon Ng Ating Kabataan (ANAK) in Winnipeg and the Migrant Workers Family Resource Centre in Hamilton. The many contributions of the FYTIC steering committee in Toronto are gratefully acknowledged: Jennilee Austria, Jeanette Chua, Conely de Leon, Mithi Esguerra, Ricky Esguerra, Alex Felipe, Mila Astorga-Garcia, Hermie Garcia, Veronica Javier, Julia Mais, Christopher Sorio and Ejay Tupe. Thanks also to the project’s research assistants: Veronica Javier, Allison Magpayo, Jeanette Chua and Conely de Leon in Toronto; Josephine Eric in Hamilton; Darlyne Bautista, Daisy Bautista and Kezia Malabanan in Winnipeg; and Maureen Mendoza and May Farrales in Vancouver. Funding for this project was provided through a Standard Research Grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, and through the Ontario Human Capital Research and Innovation Fund. The project was administered through the York Centre for Asian Research. Project administration was provided by Alicia Filipowich. The FYTIC logo was created by Divine Montesclaros and this report was designed by Ysh Cabana. For more information on the project, contact Professor Philip Kelly: pfkelly@yorku.ca. Or go to <http://ycar.apps01.yorku.ca/research/programmes-projects/filipino-youth-transitions-in-canada/>

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Identifying the Issue of Filipino Educational Outcomes	4
3. Methodology.....	7
4. Factors Affecting PSE Access Among Filipino Youth in Ontario.....	9
i) Household Economics and Deprofessionalization	9
ii) Affordability of PSE and Debt Aversion	14
iii) Navigating the Educational System, and Prioritizing Filipino Students.....	16
iv) Mentoring and Role Modelling.....	19
v) The Role of Extended Family	21
vi) Gender and Masculinity.....	23
vii) Filipino Identity in Canada	24
5. Conclusion	26
6. References	28

Promoting Post-Secondary Pathways Among Filipino Youth in Ontario

1. Introduction

Various studies have shown that, in aggregate, the children of immigrants do relatively well in Ontario, and in Canada as a whole (Aydemir et al. 2008; Finnie and Muller, 2010; Reitz et al. 2011). Immigrant children graduate from university at significantly higher rates than their Canadian-born counterparts, and at higher rates than their parents. On face value, it might be assumed that there is an effective system of post-secondary access for new Canadians, and, more broadly, a pathway to upward social mobility for the children of immigrants.

Within that aggregate pattern, however, there are some very wide variations in different immigrant communities and across genders. Studies in the literature on 1.5 and 2nd generation outcomes have therefore emphasized the need to understand group-specific dynamics when analyzing intergenerational social mobility (Abada et al. 2009; Anisef et al, 2010; Finnie and Muller, 2010; Abada and Lin, 2011).

In this report, we examine the case of Filipino youth in Ontario, who represent an unexplained anomaly. Despite having parents with among the highest rates of university degree holdership of all immigrant groups, Filipino youth have among the lowest rates of university graduation. This applies particularly to those who arrive in Canada during childhood. Furthermore, while women have overtaken men in post-secondary educational achievement across all groups, the gender disparity in the Filipino community is especially pronounced. Young Filipino men have among the lowest rates of university graduation of any group.

This report addresses the anomaly in a number of stages. First, we use statistical data to identify the patterns of Filipino youth educational outcomes in Ontario. Second the methods used in this project are explained. Third, we will examine the factors that our data suggests might lie behind the patterns of educational outcomes. In each case, we offer a series of policy and programming recommendations to address the issue.

2. Identifying the Issue of Filipino Educational Outcomes

Table 1 uses the 2011 National Household Survey¹ to summarize the problem. Taking data for the province of Ontario, the table looks specifically at young people who arrived with their families in the 1990s and who were aged 25-29 by 2011. This means that they were aged 5-18 when they landed in Canada and therefore likely spent some or all of their schooling in the Ontario system.

Among the non-immigrant population in this age bracket, 25.4 per cent of women have no post-secondary education, and 37.6 per cent of men. For different visible minority groups², the equivalent figures vary widely. For example, less than 20 per cent of Chinese men failed to gain PSE, while almost half of Southeast Asian³ men failed to do so.

Across all groups, the gender disparity is pronounced, with men far more likely to stop their education at the high school level or below. The Filipino community stands out in this regard because of the sheer size of the gender gap. Filipino men are almost twice as likely to be without post-secondary education as Filipina⁴ women.


Those who have completed some level of post-secondary education follow varied pathways including apprenticeships or trade diplomas, college diplomas and university degrees. Success at the university level varies very widely, both across different groups and by gender. Among Chinese women in this cohort, 68 per cent have university degrees, but only 20.1 per cent of Latin American women. While Filipina women fare more poorly than the non-immigrant average, and significantly worse than some other groups, it is Filipino men whose outcomes are most anomalous. In Ontario, only 13.2 per cent of Filipino men have graduated from university – a rate that is half the number for non-immigrants and less than a quarter of the Chinese community.

¹ The 2011 National Household Survey (NHS) (Statistics Canada 2011) is a less reliable source of data than the 2006 census. Although it used a larger sample than the long-form census (one in three households, rather than one in five), the NHS was voluntary and therefore elicited a lower response rate (69.3 percent, compared with 93.5 percent for the 2006 long-form census) (Statistics Canada 2012). It is expected that the survey likely undercounted marginalized groups such as new immigrants, those on low incomes and those with poorer official language skills.

² Visible Minority categories are defined by the federal government. They are useful in understanding the experiences of different racialized groups, but it is important to note that they relate to specific countries of origin in only a few cases (Filipino being one of them). Categories such as 'Black', 'Chinese' or 'South Asian' include individuals who self-identify in this way but they reflect very diverse origins. Chinese immigrants, for example, might originate in China, Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, Vietnam, Indonesia, the United States or anywhere else with a Chinese diaspora community.

³ As a geographical region, Southeast Asia includes the Philippines, but in this case the category refers to Southeast Asians excluding Filipinos. The largest group within this category would be Vietnamese.

⁴ 'Filipina' refers to women in or from the Philippines, or who identify ethnically as Filipina. In this report we use this gender-specific term when referring exclusively to women, and follow the common convention of using 'Filipino' when referring to men or to both men and women.



There is a further anomaly that is not revealed by these data. The parental cohort of first generation immigrants from the Philippines is unusually highly educated. Again using 2011 National Household Survey data, Kelly (2014: 13) shows that approximately 40 per cent of the parental generation has a university degree – double the average for the non-immigrant population in the same age cohort, and significantly higher than other comparable immigrant groups. Given that university graduates are more likely to have children who themselves earn degrees, the outcomes among Filipino youth are unusual.

University education should not, of course, be seen as the *only* pathway to success, and nor does taking this pathway necessarily *lead* to success. Nevertheless, there is no escaping the conclusion that there are many young Filipino-Canadian men and women in Ontario who could benefit from advanced university-based education but who are not getting access to such programs. Our goal in this project is to identify reasons why this might be the case, and ways it can be addressed.

The situation of Filipino youth has been noted in some quantitative studies (e.g. Abada et al. 2009; Abada and Lin, 2011) and qualitative research in Vancouver has explored the role of family separation imposed by the Live-In Caregiver program, which plays a significant role in Filipino migration (Pratt et al. 2008; Farrales and Pratt, 2012). Press reports have also drawn attention to this issue in Toronto (Toronto Star, June 1st, 2013). No study, however, has yet sought to establish a comprehensive understanding of the factors that shape educational trajectories and employment outcomes in the Filipino community in Ontario (Kelly, 2014, provides a Canada-wide assessment).

Table 1: Immigrants aged 25-29, who arrived between 1991-2000, by visible minority, gender and education, Ontario, 2011

Immigrant Group by Visible Minority Status	Total		No Post-Secondary Education (HS diploma or less)		Apprenticeship or trade certificate/diploma		College diploma		University degree, bachelors or above	
	Female N	Male N	Female %	Male %	Female %	Male %	Female %	Male %	Female %	Male %
South Asian	8115	8975	19.7	27.4	2.2	4.2	20.5	19.4	48.4	38.8
Chinese	4920	5175	11.8	19.2	1.1	1.4	13.2	13.5	68.0	59.8
Black	4215	2770	30.5	41.7	5.2	8.5	33.9	26.0	25.7	17.5
Filipino	2370	2470	21.9	39.1	4.4	12.1	34.0	23.5	29.7	13.2
Latin American	1645	1385	38.3	45.8	5.2	11.2	33.1	22.7	20.1	17.3
Arab	1420	1605	18.3	19.6	1.8	2.8	25.7	15.6	49.3	52.3
Southeast Asian	995	1100	36.2	47.7	6.0	4.1	21.6	20.0	30.2	20.0
West Asian	1630	1830	23.0	31.4	2.8	5.7	21.2	20.5	46.9	37.4
Non visible minority	8535	9460	20.6	34.1	3.5	6.3	24.5	22.2	46.5	32.3
All Non-Immigrants aged 25-29	289105	286220	25.4	37.6	3.4	8.4	28.5	24.7	39.1	26.4

Source: Statistics Canada, 2011 National Household Survey, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 99-012-X2011038.

Note: Percentages are calculated separately by gender. Row percentages do not add up to 100% as university certificates below the bachelors level have been excluded. Visible minority groups (Japanese, Korean) have also been excluded along with those declaring multiple visible minority affiliations because of very low numbers in this cohort.

3. Methodology


This report draws on data collected by the Filipino Youth Transitions in Canada Project (FYTIC) – a research project undertaken in collaboration with several Filipino community organizations and funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. The project was based at York University and was initiated in collaboration with the Community Alliance for Social Justice, a Filipino community organization focusing on research, education and advocacy, founded in 2004 (Garcia, 2007). In Hamilton the project worked with the Migrant Workers Family Resource Centre, and in Winnipeg with Aksyon Ng Ating Kabataan (ANAK) (Filipino Youth in Action). Research was also conducted in Vancouver. This reports draws specifically upon the data gathered in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton areas in order to address the Ontario case in particular.

The FYTIC project was guided by a steering committee in Toronto, which comprised individuals with affiliations to many Filipino community organizations. The questions asked by the project, and the implementation of data gathering, were therefore both undertaken with extensive participation by community leaders.

The first stage of the FYTIC project consisted of more than 70 key informant interviews with Filipino community leaders, educators and youth workers across Canada. These have yielded over 150 hours of qualitative material reflecting on the factors that lie behind the educational and employment trajectories of Filipino youth. Just over half of these interviews were conducted in Ontario.

A second stage of data gathering (in 2011-13) consisted of a nation-wide online survey of Filipino-Canadians who were born in Canada or who arrived here before their 13th birthday. The focus of the survey was on these groups because the intent of the project was to address intergenerational mobility rather than first-generation settlement issues. In total, just over 650 surveys were completed, with over 400 from Ontario⁵. The questionnaire was detailed and extensive, and this undoubtedly represents the richest data collected on Filipino youth in Canada. It should be noted, however, that recruitment for the survey was a relatively slow and difficult process. Although multiple networks and outreach strategies were operationalized, the end result was a sample set that was heavily skewed towards university graduates. Although less than one third of Filipino youth attend university, two thirds of our respondents were university students or graduates. Most of the rest had some form of post-secondary education. Those who completed only a high school diploma, or less, were greatly under-represented. This is a weakness of the data, although it is still informative in two ways. First, it allows us to

⁵ In this report, the tabulations report only those who attended high school in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton area. Depending on the specific survey question, this yields a response group of about 280 Filipino-Canadian adults in the 1.5 and 2nd generation



assess the factors that enabled university attendees to get that far. Second, there are enough non-university college attendees in the sample to assess what might motivate young people to choose that route instead of university.

A final source of data comprised 12 focus group discussions with over 50 Filipino youth in four cities across Canada in 2012-13. Seven of these focus groups were conducted in Toronto and one in Hamilton. The participants in these focus groups were specifically recruited from among youth over the age of 18 who had not attended university. This allowed us to explore some of the reasons or rationales behind the route they took. As with the survey, however, very few of these respondents had no post-secondary education at all, and so our methodology clearly under-sampled those with the lowest outcomes.

The process of data analysis undertaken by the project was also collaborative. For the purposes of this report, anonymized transcripts of interviews and focus groups were circulated to the project's core team in Toronto. Through on-line collaboration and a full-day workshop, the themes discussed in this report were identified. These represent a set of key interconnected factors that serve to explain the educational outcome patterns among Filipino youth. In the process, these themes were also considered against the extensive community engagement and experience embodied in our project team. In that sense, there was an added layer of 'ground-truthing' and triangulation created.

Although questions around policy and programming solutions were addressed during interviews and focus groups, these too have been largely generated through the front-line experience of our research team. The team includes Filipino-Canadians who have worked as immigrant settlement workers, social workers, policy researchers, advocacy group leaders, community centre workers, journalists and youth cultural leaders. These experiences provide first-hand insights into the practical strategies that might be adopted to enable Filipino youth to reach their potential.

4. Factors Affecting PSE Access Among Filipino Youth in Ontario

i) Household Economics and Deprofessionalization

“At the end of the day I don't regret my decision, but it came down to resources, finances. Not being able to afford it [university]. Whereas college was a lot more affordable and it was shorter program, two years”.
(Focus group with Filipino Youth, Toronto, 2013)

Full-time post-secondary study means extensive financial outlays to cover tuition fees and other expenses, as well as the foregone income that could have been earned with full time employment. This means that the household financial circumstances of Filipino families are a significant factor in explaining access to post-secondary education. University education is unaffordable for many, especially when placed alongside less expensive, and shorter, college programs.

The roots of this affordability issue lie in the processes of labour market integration experienced by first generation Filipino parents. Despite their educational and professional credentials, many are employed in low-wage and precarious employment meaning that it is difficult to make ends meet in expensive urban contexts such as Toronto. Low household incomes are inevitably linked to the ability of families to support their children's post-secondary education, and the need for children to opt for paid employment rather than further study or training.

Many of our respondents described, for example, how temporary part-time jobs in the latter years of high school, taken on to support inadequate family budgets, would expand into full-time jobs rather than successful high school completion and post-secondary study.

In our survey, we asked those who had not attended university why they did not pursue their studies further. Table 2 provides the frequency of responses chosen as the first, second or third reason. It is notable that many were satisfied with their education (likely reflecting a conscious choice to attend a program at a college), but it is also important to note that the prohibitive expense of further education exceeded academic ability as a reason for not going further. We also note that “wanting to work instead” is a major factor for both men and women.

Table 2 – Reasons for not pursuing further education among non-university FYTIC survey respondents in Ontario, 2011-13.

Reason for not pursuing education further:	Number of times reason was chosen	
	Female	Male
Satisfied with education	30	22
Wanted to work Instead	29	26
Too expensive	21	16
Had to care for family	13	7
Didn't have good enough grades	12	12

Source: FYTIC Survey

Another insight into the role of family finances in educational options is provided by university attendees who explained how they paid for their studies. It is apparent in table 3 that loans and scholarships played a relatively minor role for many students, although loans are significant (used 'a lot' or 'a great deal') for about one third of them. For the majority, however, it is parents who provide the mainstay of their post-secondary funding. Family finances are therefore crucial in determining their options.

Table 3 – Sources of financial support for post-secondary studies among those who had attended university, FYTIC survey respondents in Ontario, 2011-13.

	Not at all	A little	Some	A lot	A great deal
Parent	9	42	33	25	84
	4.70%	21.80%	17.10%	13.00%	43.50%
Myself (working)	20	46	56	26	37
	10.80%	24.90%	30.30%	14.10%	20.00%
Siblings	147	13	3	1	0
	89.60%	7.90%	1.80%	0.60%	0.00%
Other Relatives	140	13	3	2	3
	87.00%	8.10%	1.90%	1.20%	1.90%
Loans	75	18	23	22	40
	42.10%	10.10%	12.90%	12.40%	22.50%
Scholarships	77	44	37	6	10
	44.30%	25.30%	21.30%	3.40%	5.70%

Source: FYTIC Survey

The key issue shaping the financial circumstances of immigrant families is their integration into the Canadian labour market. This has often been related to the process of deprofessionalization. However, as Table 4 shows, our survey findings may suggest that this alone does not define the difference between those that make it to university and those that do not. Around a third noted that their parents worked in jobs for which they were overqualified, but this does not appear to correlate with attendance at university. In fact, children who did not attend university were only slightly less likely to have parents who were working in the fields for which they were qualified. A rather larger disparity exists among those whose parents are working in fields unrelated to their training – in these situations it does appear that children are less likely to attend university.

Table 4 – Parental labour market skill (mis)match in relation to children’s educational outcomes, Ontario, 2011-13

Parental labour market situation	In relation to Father’s situation		In relation to Mother’s situation	
	Child Did NOT Attend University	Child Attended UNIVERSITY	Child Did NOT Attend University	Child Attended UNIVERSITY
My father/mother's qualifications are much higher than he needs to do his job	24	62	24	61
	34.3%	36.7%	28.6%	33.0%
My father/mother's qualifications are just about matched with his job	30	76	49	110
	42.9%	45.0%	58.3%	59.5%
My father/mother's qualifications are below what he should have to do his job	1	6	1	3
	1.4%	3.6%	1.2%	1.6%
My father/mother works in a field that is unrelated to his qualifications	15	25	10	11
	21.4%	14.8%	11.9%	6.0%
Total	70	169	84	185
	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Source: FYTIC Survey

One final point should be noted in Table 4. The rate of mismatch for men (i.e. fathers) appears to me higher than for women (i.e. mothers). This is an interesting finding that we will return to later in discussing aspirations, role models and masculinities.

The data in Table 4 should, however, be treated cautiously for two reasons. First, survey respondents were not always closely familiar with their parents’ level of education or occupational category before leaving the Philippines. Second, it is likely to be family resources of money and time that shape post-secondary outcomes more than

deprofessionalization *per se*. It is when parents are working in low-paid occupations and holding down multiple jobs that youth outcomes are likely to be affected.

A distinctive feature of the Filipino immigration experience in relation to deprofessionalization has been the role of the Live-In Caregiver Program (LCP). The LCP requires 24 months of service as a child/elderly/disabled caregiver in the home of an employer. After that, an open work permit can be requested and eventually an application for permanent residency can be submitted. In reality, it takes far more than two years before women arriving through the program are in a position to enter the general labour market, and when they do, their Canadian experience is limited to domestic caregiving work. Regardless of their professional training and background, then, they are commonly confined to further low paid and precarious caregiving work.

In our survey sample, 14.2 per cent of respondents had a mother whose first job in Canada was listed as a nanny, caregiver or domestic worker.⁶ Taking this as a proxy for live-in caregiver arrivals, table 5 shows the distribution of respondents according to educational outcomes. Although the numbers are relatively small, there is clearly a greater likelihood of non-university respondents having a mother who arrived under these circumstances.

Table 5 – Educational Outcomes for Respondents according to Mother’s first job in Canada

Mother’s first job	Child’s Educational Outcome	
	No University	University
Caregiver	14	21
	17.9%	12.4%
Other	64	148
	82.1%	87.6%
Total	78	169
	100.0%	100.0%

Source: FYTIC Survey, 2011-13

⁶ We did not ask respondents about the specific immigration channel through which their parents arrived, as many have only a vague sense of the precise channels and categories that have been used over the years. We did, however, ask about their mother’s first job in Canada and here we have assumed that those mothers who were listed as ‘nanny’, ‘domestic worker’, ‘cleaning homes’ or live-in housekeeper, originally arrived through the LCP or its predecessor the Foreign Domestic Movement.

Policy and Programming:

- The issue of deprofessionalization and foreign credential recognition is well-recognized as a policy issue by federal and provincial governments. We would, however, suggest that it should be viewed not just in terms of fairness and lost human capital among first generation immigrants. It should also be seen as having intergenerational impacts and thereby affecting the ability of the children of immigrants to reach their potential. In this context, efforts to ensure access, fairness and bridging/upgrading programs need to be intensified.
- The Live-In Caregiver program (LCP) represents a distinctive process of deprofessionalization among first generation Filipina women in particular, but one with ramifications in the wider community and next generation as well. It is important that measures be put in place to support live-in caregivers making transitions from the program to the open labour market. This might include: providing settlement services for those still serving their 'live-in' requirement; allowing access to educational programs prior to permanent residency; providing subsidized bridging programs for those coming out of the program; and, providing settlement and counseling services that are tailored to the circumstances and needs of women who have been through the LCP.

ii) Affordability of PSE and Debt Aversion

My parents told me, "we're not going to do OSAP, we're trying to avoid doing OSAP in all types of ways". So I don't know exactly where they were pulling it from, but they pulled it off for me to go to college... I had talked to my mom about this after college and I was like "What if I go to university?" and she's like "I really don't think you can". So finances is a big part of my choices in my education, of course.
(Focus group with Filipino Youth, Toronto, 2013)

A striking feature of table 3 was that loans played a significant role in financing the studies of only a minority of students. We believe this reflects two processes. The first is a strong obligation felt by parents to support their children through post-secondary studies (just as their parents would have supported them in the Philippines). There is a tendency therefore to choose the post-secondary option that fits with what parents can afford, rather than the one that matches the academic abilities of the student. The second process is a widely-noted debt aversion within the community. Regardless of income-linked repayment programs and low interest rates, there is a widespread feeling that graduating with a large debt load is to be avoided if at all possible.

Nevertheless, just over half (53.1 per cent) of our respondents who had attended university had used a student loan to some extent. We asked those who did not access OSAP support why they decided not to. The most important reasons were that they were rendered ineligible in some way, or they simply didn't need the money (presumably because their parents were supporting them). Almost a quarter, however, declined OSAP support because of a fear of becoming indebted. This is not surprising given that Filipino families are coming from a context where borrowing money for educational expenses would be very uncommon.

Table 6 – Reasons for not using OSAP loans among university attendees who did not access loans, Ontario, 2011-13

Reason for not using OSAP	N	%
Not Aware	2	2.2%
Not eligible	33	36.3%
Eligible but didn't want debt	21	23.1%
Didn't need the money	32	35.2%
Other	3	3.3%
Total	91	100%

Source: FYTIC Survey, 2011-13

Policy and Programming:

- We believe that taking steps to ensure financial literacy among immigrant families and their teenage children would have positive benefits. In particular, parents need to be aware of the tax deductions, rebates and grant programs associated with registered education savings plans and tuition fees. That said, fears of heavy indebtedness also need to be addressed with appropriately targeted bursary schemes.
- Community-specific outreach and educational campaigns to highlight the role that OSAP loans can play in supporting post-secondary education could alleviate some of the fears associated with the program.
- We also believe that private sector employers could play a role. Major corporations that employ very large numbers of first generation immigrants and their children could develop scholarship and bursary programs to help employees (and their children) cope with the costs of higher education.

iii) Navigating the Educational System, and Prioritizing Filipino Students

“Honestly, at that time I went to see [my guidance counselor], she’s like “okay, you know what you want. You just need to pay this to go to college, you need to pay this to go to university and that’s pretty much it.” I’m like, aren’t you supposed to help me out here? Help me with the career I wanna do or anything , but I never got that, I never really got any help from her. I dunno maybe it is, um, judgmental, I dunno.”
 (Focus Group participant, 2013)

While children may have been born, or at least raised, in Canada, their chief guides in navigating the educational system, and its bewildering options, are often their parents. To them, the long term significance of certain choices and decisions may not be at all clear. For example, decisions made by schools about placing children in academic or applied streams are sometimes made before they have had a chance to adjust, and the implications may not be understood by families. Children who have migrated with, or arrived to join, a parent may be placed in grade levels or ESL levels that are not appropriate to their circumstances.

Parents may also recommend courses and programs that reflect a limited understanding of the Canadian labour market. For example, the regulated professions (especially in health) might be emphasized ahead of creative fields, yet labour market opportunities may be expanding in the latter areas. Students will also tend to gravitate towards those courses and occupations with which they have some familiarity, which may serve to reproduce the heavy concentrations of Filipino-Canadians in a few areas of work.

Because parents are often holding down multiple jobs or working shifts, engagement with the school can be difficult. It may also represent an intimidating environment that is dominated by white teachers and officials. Table 7 indicates the level of engagement with high schools among parents of youth according to their subsequent educational trajectory. Although both university-bound and non-university youth recall low levels of school engagement among their parents, this disengagement is more pronounced among the parents of non-university youth.

Table 7 – Recalling engagement with High Schools among parents.

In High School, how often did your parents...	University			Non-University		
	Often/ Very Often	Sometimes	Rarely/ Never	Often/ Very Often	Sometimes	Rarely/ Never
Meet with teachers/staff?	25 12.8%	62 31.6%	109 55.6%	2 11.1%	3 16.7%	13 72.2%
Attend school events?	48 24.6%	50 25.6%	97 49.7%	2 11.1%	4 22.2%	12 66.7%

Source: FYTIC Survey

It needs to be emphasized, however, that parental disengagement from the school system is not a result of disinterest. More commonly it reflects the over-participation of parents in the labour market as they attempt to make ends meet. It does, however, imply that more could be done within the schools to ensure that youth receive the support and advice that they need.

In the past few years, both TDSB and TCDSB have experienced high numbers of Chinese international students entering the high schools. This has pushed Filipino issues to the side, not least because such international students are paying substantial tuition fees. School administrators see Filipino students as more polite and affable, with undetermined goals; thus, even in schools that are predominantly Filipino, the community is often deprioritized.

In the TDSB, ESL students are well supported due to programs such as ESL Civics, ESL Geography, ESL Food & Nutrition, and ESL Drama. In the Catholic board (where most Filipino students are located) these are not offered. Students only receive one ESL language class, and are integrated with the other students for all of their other classes. This creates an uneven playing field for newcomer students. Since Filipino students are generally more passive than others, this academic integration decreases their likelihood of participating and succeeding in school.

Many high schools have ESL classes that are not separated by level. Thus, when Filipino students are in the same class as visa students, such as an ESL A/B/C class, Filipinos are often expected to help the other students with schoolwork because their levels of English are much higher. When schools do not have separate classes for each level of ESL, the teacher's priority is no longer on those who are already reading, writing, and speaking English. Their attention instead goes to those who are in the lower levels of language attainment. In this situation, Filipino students are more likely to feel listless and disengaged.

Policy and Programming:

- There is potential for Settlement Workers in School (SWIS) to provide far more assistance to immigrant youth, and the children of immigrants. For example, at present, SWIS workers come across newcomers only after receiving referrals from school staff, if they are allowed access to ESL classes, or if they find them through outreach. A systematic way of ensuring that all newcomer youth are made known to settlement workers is needed. Principals with settlement services should be mandated to give each SWIS worker school lists of newcomers who have arrived in the past three years. This will allow counselors to proactively reach out and ensure that youth are receiving the help that they need.

- SWIS workers, although placed in elementary and middle schools, are not allowed to see children—even just to check in with them on a one-on-one basis, or to run children-specific workshops. This must change. Many elementary school teachers have lamented the fact that SWIS workers are restricted to only seeing parents; this impacts the Filipino community because the parents are almost always unreachable due to having multiple part-time jobs. While many high school newcomers came to Canada during elementary school, by the time SWIS workers are allowed to meet with them one-on-one, the damage to their academic career, to their family life, and to their poor settlement in Toronto has already been done.
- There is also a need for a system that intentionally reaches out to contact and assist parents. This might even involve personal visits rather than waiting until they seek help. Parent councils could also do more to reach out to immigrant parents. They could also be made more aware of grants available for parent engagement. But events to engage parents in schools need to go beyond parent councils, which can be intimidating for newcomers. Culturally-specific events can be devised by Filipino community organizations (examples include the outreach organized by the Kababayan Community Centre, and in the past by AWARE Filipino Family Services).
- ESL programs need to be sufficiently differentiated so that the needs of students who already have a reasonably good command of English are not neglected in favour of those still at the level of basic instruction.
- Schools could do more to become hubs for community engagement, where community organizations can provide services to youth. It is often difficult for Settlement Workers in Schools to bring outside organizations (for example, facilitators from the Filipino community) into the schools. This could be recognized in the targets for settlement workers, who are currently judged based on individual contact rather than the organization of collective workshops.
- Many services are limited in their accessibility. Individuals requiring CIC-funded programs need to be convention refugees or permanent residents before they receive settlement services, and they are no longer eligible after citizenship is granted. This system fails to acknowledge the needs to those, for example in the caregiver program, who have not yet ‘landed’ but are already present. Nor does it acknowledge the ongoing needs of immigrant families after citizenship is granted.
- Universities could do more to reach out to specific under-represented communities, including Filipino youth. This might be done through community-specific outreach sessions to high schools, and through working to establish Philippine Studies in their course and program offerings.

iv) Mentoring and Role Modelling

I often wonder, do boys have role models to look up to? Do you know who was put up in front of me when I was growing up? It was Rey Pagtakhan who was the Member of Parliament from Winnipeg. And so sometimes I wonder, now who is it? (Interview, School Board Worker, Toronto, 2011)

Many respondents in Toronto commented on the lack of local role models from within the Filipino community. These could be individuals who might be admired from a distance but would set high aspirations for what a young Filipino-Canadian could achieve. Or, they might be individuals who could provide more direct mentoring, advice and networks to assist youth in their educational and career choices. Here, Toronto seems to differ from Winnipeg in interesting ways. The size (relative to the city), coherence and concentration of the Filipino community in Winnipeg have led to the emergence of many local leaders and role models. This is less apparent in Toronto. That said, there are many Filipino-Canadians forging successful careers in diverse fields in Toronto and more could be done to connect them to the younger generation.


Within the community there are dense social networks. For example, we asked our survey respondents about the profile of their parents' circle of friends. As indicated in Table 8, more than 80 per cent indicated that the majority of their parents' friends were fellow Filipinos. What this suggests is that despite the relatively dispersed spatial pattern of Filipino residential settlement in the Greater Toronto Area, social networks within the community are tight. But, this kind of 'bonding' social capital needs to be balanced with 'bridging' social capital so that young people have exposure to information and role models outside of their existing circles.

Table 8 - Parental Social Networks Reported by Survey Respondents, Ontario, 2011-13

Percentage of Parents' friends who are also Filipino	Female	Male	Total
0-60%	41	13	54
	23.2%	11.9%	18.9%
60-100%	136	96	232
	76.8%	88.1%	81.1%

Source: FYTIC Survey

There are also divides within the community that need to be overcome. Among the first generation, these might be class divides between those who have achieved different levels of economic well-being during their time in Canada. They might also be between those who arrived as caregivers and those who came under skilled worker immigration program. Among the younger generation, there is often talk of a "FOB vs. Bacon" divide,



between FOBs (“Fresh Off the Boat”) who have recently arrived from the Philippines, and “Bacon” who were born and/or raised in Canada. More can be done to overcome these divisions, which serve to limit the reach of social capital within the community.

Policy and Programming:

- Ethno-specific community organizations play a key role in providing supportive spaces and affirmation of identity among young Filipino-Canadians. These include community centres, sports teams, arts groups and religious communities. Supporting their outreach and programming, especially that which is directed to youth, will, we believe, have positive effects on the educational trajectories of young Filipino-Canadians.
- Programs are needed to deliberately and intentionally cultivate a generation of youth leaders in the Toronto Filipino community. There are numerous community organizations that could deliver such programs if provided with adequate support.
- Programs are needed that will create bridging social capital for young Filipinos. For example, internships might allow them to experience diverse working environments beyond those that are readily accessible through first generation family and friend networks. But the accessibility of internships needs to be considered. Unpaid internships, which are becoming increasingly common, effectively exclude those who do not have the financial means (or family support) to forego earnings. Filipino youth from low-income families would need access to paid internships in order for a system of this kind to truly increase their social capital and range of options.

v) The Role of Extended Family

A: I wish someone would have taken me under their wing. I always wanted to be a mechanic right? Taken me to their garage, work on engines, something like that. I needed a father figure, 'cause I never really had that.

B: But in the Philippines that would happen because...

A: My grandpa was there, my uncle was there...

(Focus Group Discussion, Toronto, 2013)

Extended family members play a significant role that is often unacknowledged if they are evaluated solely upon their individual role in the labour market. For example, grandparents who are not formally employed may be a critical part of the upbringing of young people. In the Philippines, the close involvement of extended family members in the everyday lives of youth would be quite normal, and living very close to extended relatives is common. The process of migration undermines this social fabric and makes for a far more isolated upbringing in a city like Toronto. In their absence there is far less oversight and accountability imposed on young people who, in the Philippines, would have had many eyes upon them.

The nuclear family is also placed under great stress in the migration process. The family separations caused by the Live-In Caregiver Program, and other 'two-step' migration channels, often translate into difficulties for children in school upon arrival in Canada. This has been noted in research on the LCP in British Columbia (Pratt et al 2008; Farrales and Pratt, 2012)

Policy and Programming:

- The Live-In Caregiver Program enforces family separation for women who leave children behind in the Philippines. We advocate for a minimization of the period of separation through rapid processing, or, better still, eliminating the need for separation through granting permanent residency to caregivers on arrival (thereby recognizing both the skills that the job requires and the need for workers in that field in Canada). There is also an urgent need to address the significant backlog that exists in LCP permanent residency applications. The longer these applications sit, the longer the period of separation extends, the older children will be when they join their mothers, and the greater the risk of youth facing difficulties in adapting to school life in Canada.
- When families are reunited in Canada, there should be pro-active counseling provided to support them in this transition. Schools in particular need to have a heightened awareness of how children are affected by periods of family separation and reunification. Filipino community organizations (e.g. Kababayan Centre) are best-placed to assist them in providing services for young people in these situations, but need resources to do so.
- A wider perspective needs to be taken on family reunification categories in the immigration system. The role of extended family members who join relatives already in Canada extends beyond their personal engagement in productive employment. Their role in the socialization of young people is also crucial. Family reunification should not, therefore, be seen as unproductive and non-economic. The extended networks created are positive in a variety of ways. To the extent that an Ontario immigration strategy has any influence on such categories, the role of extended family members should be considered.

vi) Gender and Masculinity

A lot of boys feel lost to me because it's like, they're given so much more freedom than the girls that they're lost, they don't know what to do... They never get that push. Whereas the girls totally get pushed hard! "You have to be in school. You have to do this."
(Interview, Toronto, 2011)

The data presented earlier makes clear that lower educational achievement is a concern among Filipino male youth in particular. We believe that there are a variety of factors that contribute to this pattern.

In the Filipino community, the significance of the live-in caregiver program has meant that women are often the migrant pioneers in the family as well as being the main breadwinner. Fathers, on the other hand, may face difficulties in adapting to the deprofessionalized work that often awaits them in the Canadian labour market. This disrupts what are seen as normalized gender relations in the Philippines and undermines their role and 'provider' and 'head of household'. Within the family, they may feel that their authority is undermined and their ability to act as role models for young boys is compromised.

Relatedly, while Filipina women tend to be racialized and stereotyped in Canadian society into caring and healthcare-related jobs - roles that conform to traditional notions of femininity in the Philippines - no such occupational niche exists for Filipino men. Male Filipino immigrants find themselves in a range of occupations unrelated to their previous professional training and experience. They are, for example, heavily over-represented in manufacturing employment. As table 4 indicated, deprofessionalization is at least as much a problem for first generation male Filipinos as it is for women. The result is that the role model of a father who works in a rewarding occupation for which he was trained is absent for Filipino boys.

Finally, gender differences are also often evident in parenting styles. As the interview quote above suggests, girls tend to be supervised far more closely than boys during childhood. It is hard to generalize about the universality or significance of this observation, but our respondents suggested that in many cases girls are kept on 'straight and narrow' in terms of academic achievement, while boys are given far more latitude.

Policy and Programming:

- Explore possible models for male-specific programming in schools and development of mentorship programs targeted at Filipino male youth. For younger ages this might involve tutoring, developing social skills and career building. For older age groups, programming would focus on life skills, job preparation and relationships.

vii) Filipino Identity in Canada

I have students who could do something, they could be something, but they say “Well why? Because all Filipinos just end up as cleaners anyway.” And that’s a really scary thing to believe when you’re 17 or 18 - that’s there’s no reason to try.
(High School Settlement Counselor, Interview 2011)

A recurrent theme in our interviews was the meaning of Filipino identity in Canada. The Philippines itself has a unique colonial and post-colonial history that shapes its current place in the world, and that of its people. Spanish and American colonialism left economic, institutional, religious, linguistic and cultural legacies. Filipinos are predominantly Christian and the use of the English language is widespread. The educational system and institutions of government are products of the US colonial period and modeled on the American system. Less tangibly, colonialism left a legacy that valorized Western culture, the English language and whiteness. Furthermore, while most post-colonial countries experienced a revolutionary rupture with their declining colonial overlords, in the Philippine case independence was granted (in 1946) by an ascendant global power. As a result, for many decades there remained a deep cultural, economic and political dependence on the United States.

This history has several contemporary ramifications. First, there is a tendency in large sections of the community in Canada for English to be prioritized rather than encouraging children to retain their parents’ Filipino dialects. Table 9 shows that in our survey, almost 87 per cent of respondents reported that English was the home language used during their high school years. While this has positive implications in terms of the degree of integration of both youth and their parents, a number of our respondents felt that it was ultimately counter-productive. This was because it reflected shame rather than pride in Filipino identity, which ultimately lowered the sense of self-worth among young people. This, in turn, translates into lower educational and occupational aspirations. While it is hard to make a causal link here, other research does imply that retention of non-official languages is correlated better youth outcomes (Kucera, 2008; Abada and Tenkorang, 2009; Anisef, 2010).

Table 9 – Use of English and Filipino Dialects in the Home

Home language used during High School	Female	Male
English	154	91
	86.5%	86.7%
Filipino Language	24	14
	13.5%	13.3%
Total	178	105
	100.0%	100.0%

Source: FYTIC Survey

A second ramification of a unique colonial and post-colonial history is that Filipinos have historically been integrated into lower-status subservient occupations. The contemporary labour market positioning of many first generation parents is no exception to this historical pattern (and this is true around the world, not just in Canada). The result is not only that youth lack the mentors and contacts in diverse professions as noted earlier, but also that they cannot see, or imagine, people like themselves in higher-level jobs. This leads to lowered expectations and aspirations as the quote above illustrates.

Policy and Programming:

- School Boards, especially those with large numbers of Filipino students, should make concerted efforts to ensure that their staffing is reflective of the student body. Seeing Filipino teachers and other staff in the school system will disrupt the tacit sense that Filipinos occupy only marginal places in the Canadian labour market
- Schools need to develop programs, in collaboration with Filipino community organizations, that will provide parents with the tools to recognize and address identity issues with their children. Tagalog as a heritage language programs should be expanded, with encouragement and incentives for youth to enroll.
- Curriculum content should ‘mainstream’ examples from the Philippines and Filipino culture. Encounters with Filipino history, culture and social practices should be an everyday affair and not restricted to specific festivals such as Asian Heritage Month. This will require that teachers are trained and have the curriculum materials to deliver this kind of content.
- Beyond schools, support for the celebration of Filipino culture should be seen as more than just a commitment to multiculturalism. It is also affirming the identity of young Filipino-Canadians and acknowledging that they can take pride in what they bring to Canadian society.

5. Conclusion

The general pattern among the children of immigrants in Canada, and in Ontario specifically, is one of dramatic upward mobility. In many immigrant communities, youth are far more likely to be university graduates than either their parents or their peers in the 3rd-plus generation (i.e. those who were born in Canada to Canadian-born parents). There are, however, significant exceptions to the general pattern of upward social mobility in specific immigrant communities. If Ontario is to have a truly meritocratic system of educational advancement allowing talent to flourish, and if Canada's implicit promise to its immigrants of a bright future for their children is to be realized, then we need to understand the impediments to university admissions and fulfilling careers that exist in such communities.

The Filipino community has become one of Ontario's fastest growing immigrant groups. While experiencing many of the same difficulties as other immigrants groups, there are also some distinct elements in the Filipino case. We summarize these unique factors here:

- Processes of deprofessionalization are widespread across many immigrant groups, but the **unusually high levels of education** among the Filipino first generation means that the mismatch between skills and occupation is even more accentuated (Kelly et al., 2009). This mismatch has implications in terms of low incomes, which render post-secondary education unaffordable and means that youth are often already working to support family budgets before even leaving high school. But first generation experiences also mean that youth may see higher education as futile given where it led their parents.
- The distinctive role of **the live-in caregiver program** is important to note in the case of the Filipino community. Although it represents only a minority of Filipino arrivals in Ontario, its effects are deep and widespread. It contributes to lost years of professional practice for those involved, and caregivers lack access to settlement services and educational opportunities while still in the program. The separations endured by caregiver families mean that youth who join their mothers after many years of separation often do not perform well in school. The caregiver stereotype also shapes the racialized social identity attributed to Filipinos and the labour market roles into which they are seen to 'fit'.
- The **labour force participation rate** of first generation Filipino immigrants is exceptionally high (exceeding averages for the population as a whole and for all other immigrant groups). In part this reflects the necessity of participation as multiple members of the same household (e.g. mother, father, older children) seek to make ends meet from multiple low-paid jobs. It also reflects the human capital (education, linguistic capacity etc.) that enables labour market participation among Filipino immigrants. The consequence, however, is that parents have

fewer opportunities to assist their children with homework, encourage academic success and engage collaboratively with teachers, counselors and school administrators.

- The Philippines' **distinctive colonial history**, and its legacy in economic and cultural dependency, has resulted in a national orientation towards migration as a development strategy that is perhaps unique in the world. This may seem far removed from the experiences of Filipino youth in Canada, but the **racialization of Filipino identity** and its association with subservient and caring labour is closely connected with this legacy. This in turn affects the place that Filipino youth see for themselves in Canadian society.
- A final distinctive aspect of Filipino settlement in Canada is its residential geography. Unlike communities that have created urban enclaves and cultural landscapes in cities such as Toronto, the Filipino community is **remarkably dispersed across the urban region** (Kelly, 2006). This lack of concentration and visibility has meant that, despite the community's overall size, it has seldom been represented in elected office. Its concerns are also too often ignored in the development of curricula, services and policies.

For all of these reasons, there is a strong case for specific action that targets the needs of the Filipino community to support students, families and community organizations. In the various ways we have described in this report, such supports would enable Filipino-Canadian youth to reach their academic potential. Enabling upward mobility in this way will ensure that the underutilized talent of the first generation of deprofessionalized immigrants is not reproduced in the next generation.

6. References

Abada, T., F. Hou, and B. Ram. 2008. Group Differences in Educational Attainment among the Children of Immigrants. Analytical Studies Branch Research Paper Series cat. no. 11F0019M, no. 308. Ottawa: Statistics Canada.

Abada, T., and S. Lin. 2011. The Educational Attainments and Labour Market Outcomes of the Children of Immigrants in Ontario. Toronto: Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario.

Abada, T., and E. Tenkorang. 2009. "Pursuit of University Education among the Children of Immigrants in Canada: The Roles of Parental Human Capital and Social Capital." Journal of Youth Studies 12 (2): 185-207.

Anisef, P., R. Brown, R. Sweet, and D. Walters. 2010. Educational Pathways and Academic Performance of Youth of Immigrant Origin in Toronto. CERIS Working Paper 82. Toronto: CERIS — Ontario Metropolis Centre. Accessed January 20, 2014. http://www.ceris.metropolis.net/wp-content/uploads/pdf/research_publication/working_papers/wp82.pdf

Aydemir, A., W-H. Chen, and M. Corak. 2008. "Intergenerational Education Mobility among the Children of Canadian Immigrants." Analytical Studies Branch Research Paper Series cat. no. 11F0019M, no. 316. Ottawa: Statistics Canada.

Farrales, M., and G. Pratt. 2012. "Stalled Development of Immigrant Filipino Youths: Migration, Suspended Ambitions and the ESL Classroom." Metropolis British Columbia Working Paper Series 12-10. Vancouver: Metropolis British Columbia Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Diversity.

Finnie, R., and R.E. Mueller. 2009. Access to Post-secondary Education in Canada Among the Children of Canadian Immigrants. Measuring the Effectiveness of Student Aid (MESA) Project Research Paper 2009-01. Toronto: Educational Policy Institute. Accessed January 20, 2014. http://higheredstrategy.com/mesa/pub/pdf/MESA2008_Finnie_Mueller.pdf

Garcia, M.A. (2007) The Road to Empowerment: Toronto's Filipino Community Moving from Crisis to Community Capacity-Building. CERIS Working Paper 54. Toronto: The Ontario Metropolis Centre.

Kelly, P. 2006. "Filipinos in Canada: Economic Dimensions of Immigration and Settlement." CERIS Working Paper 48. Toronto: CERIS: The Ontario Metropolis Centre.

Kelly, P., M. Astorga-Garcia, E.F. Esguerra, and Community Alliance for Social Justice, Toronto. 2009. Explaining the Deprofessionalized Filipino: Why Filipino Immigrants Get Low-Paying Jobs in Toronto. CERIS Working Paper 75. Toronto: CERIS — Ontario Metropolis Centre.

Kelly, P. (2014) Understanding Intergenerational Social Mobility: Filipino Youth in Canada. Institute for Research on Public Policy, Study 45.

Pratt, G., Philippine Women Centre of BC, and Ugnayan ng Kabataang Pilipino sa Canada. 2008. Deskillling across the Generations: Reunification among Transnational Filipino Families in Vancouver. Metropolis British Columbia Working Paper Series 08-06. Vancouver: Metropolis British Columbia Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Diversity.

Reitz, J., H. Zhang, and N. Hawkins. 2011. "Comparisons of the Success of Racial Minority Immigrant Offspring in the United States, Canada and Australia." *Social Science Research* 40 (4): 1051-66.

Statistics Canada. 2011. National Household Survey. Ottawa: Statistics Canada. Accessed January 16, 2014. <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/survey-enquete/household-menages/5178-eng.htm>

Statistics Canada. 2012. Final Report on 2016 Census Options: Proposed Content Determination Framework and Methodology Options. Ottawa: Statistics Canada. Accessed January 16, 2014. http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/fc-rf/reports-rapports/r2_index-eng.cfm

Toronto Star, June 1st 2013. Filipino students adjust to new parents — their own. http://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2013/06/01/filipino_students_adjust_to_new_parents_their_own.html