

FROM THE FRONT PAGE

RP gov't looks into reversing country's 'brain drain'

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government could lend them a hand, Manzala said.
Manzala, also executive director of the National Reintegration Center for Overseas Filipino Workers (NRCO), said she was convinced that a "brain gain is the silver lining [in] the global recession."
She said the skills being introduced by these returning OFWs could help shape new industries that could weather the financial and trade slowdown, which has impaired export-oriented industries in the Philippines and in most developing nations.
The retrenched OFWs contribute by developing more micro enterprises or small-scale businesses that would sustain local community

employment and trade should the crisis worsen, she said.
Manzala said the government had been strengthening domestic markets and had high hopes for small and medium scale enterprises which make up 98 percent of domestic trade.
OWWA loans for former OFWs
This conviction, she said, is supported by reports of engineers who used to work abroad forming consultancy firms in Cagayan province, as well as a retrenched oil driller who took out a P50,000 loan from the government to finance a gold milling service in Benguet province.
John Gallong, who lost his job at an Australian oil rig, received his loan check from Manzala, who has been touring the provinces to hand out loans offered by OWWA's Filipino Expatriate Livelihood Support Fund.
Gallong said he and 23 other drillers had a four-year contract but the firm terminated the deal after only seven months as part of cost-cutting measures in Australia.
Manzala said the government was prepared for two types of

displaced workers—the veterans and the junior OFWs who were sent home prematurely.
Both types of OFWs share one basic problem, she said.
Global recession alters behavior
"It's either they were not able to save [money] because they were not given enough time when their contracts were terminated or they never saved even if they had spent long years working abroad," she said.
She said the global recession had provided enough shock to alter people's behavior "so everyone can finally start saving [money] in case the crisis worsens."
Most of the displaced workers are not likely to stay in the country because jobs abroad have not declined despite the global crisis, she said.
"We still see 3,000 OFWs leaving the country each day... It's guaranteed that nine out of 10 OFWs who return home would strive to [go] abroad again," she said.
But even when they do, the government has been asking these workers to leave something behind—whether it's the skills or the investments they pour into new businesses. ■

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Filipina migrant among dead in NY massacre

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according to city statistics. They are a cosmopolitan mix of Kurds, Chinese, Filipinos, Africans, Iraqis—but only a fraction of the city's predominantly white population of 43,000.
Police Chief Joseph Zikuski said most of the dead had multiple bullet wounds.
It was the nation's worst mass shooting since the April 16, 2007 Virginia Tech massacre, considered the bloodiest killing spree in modern US history. On that day, a South Korean student majoring in English shot dead 32 people before aiming the gun at himself.
The bespectacled Wong, who had taken classes at the center to improve the broken English that had left him feeling isolated, had burst in wearing body armor and shooting two handguns—a 9 mm and a .45 caliber.
The dead included four Chinese nationals, Beijing state media said.
Receptionist was a hero
Receptionist Shirley DeLucia, 61, played dead, then called police despite her injuries and stayed on the line while the gunman remained in the building.
"She's a hero in her own right," Zikuski said.
DeLucia remained in critical condition. Police said she and three other hospitalized victims

were all expected to survive.
Con Thi Thach, 53, an immigrant from Vietnam, had scuttled in late for her 10 a.m. English class, where other immigrants were taking turns trying to discern the meaning of the phrase "in the black." Some thought it might relate to the black market, others were puzzled at why a color would have any other meaning.
"Pop, pop, pop," Thach said, reenacting the terrifying events.
It remains unclear why Wong strapped on a bulletproof vest, barged in on the class and opened fire.
Perhaps most implausible of all is that the killer was one of their own—as well as a son of one of their own.
The gunman's father was well known in the area through his work years ago at the now-defunct World Relief Organization, helping new arrivals. He would hook people up with a doctor, help them get on food stamps.
Violent homelands
The volunteer-based civic group was founded in 1939 by 11 immigrants. It helps roughly 60 to 100 people a day with finding housing, food, clothing, medical care and jobs, as well as offering English classes, interpreters, personal counseling and more.
Some of the victims left violent homelands only to be slain in

a quiet, industrial city at the confluence of two rivers.
Layla Khalil, an Iraqi woman in her 50s, came to the United States after surviving three car bombings in Iraq, said Imam Kasim Kopuz. "To think that would happen here," Kopuz said.
She had three children, including a son who is a doctoral student at the Sorbonne in Paris and a daughter who is a Fulbright scholar.
Zikuski said Wong, who used the alias Jiverly Voong, had apparently prepared for a gun battle but changed course and turned the gun on himself when he heard sirens approaching.
"He had a lot of ammunition on him, so thank God before more lives were lost, he decided to do that," the chief said.
Hoping for miracle
Zikuski said the actions of Wong, an ethnic Chinese who arrived from Vietnam in the early 1990s, should have been no surprise to the man's family.
"He felt that he was degraded because of his inability to speak English and he was upset about that," Zikuski said.
David Ackley, who had worked with him at a local vacuum cleaner factory, said Wong would often say on Mondays that he had spent the weekend on the firing range, and once joked about

shooting politicians.
Without uttering a word, Wong shot the center's two receptionists, killing one and sending DeLucia under her desk, where she dialed 911 on a cell phone.
Then Wong entered the nearest classroom and resumed shooting.
Lubomyr Zobniw was still waiting Saturday, April 4, to hear information about his wife, Maria, who came to the United States from Ukraine as a child and was a part-time caseworker at the Civic Association.
"I'm still hoping for a miracle or something," he said.
No terrorist link
President Barack Obama, speaking in Strasbourg on the sidelines of a NATO summit, said: "I am heartbroken for the families who survived this tragedy."
"It just underscores the degree to which in each of our countries, we have to guard against the kind of senseless violence that tragedy represents."
The carnage is the latest incident to rock small-town America, where many fiercely defend the legal right to bear firearms, but which is also being hit by the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression.
A US official said on condition of anonymity that the FBI had uncovered no evidence linking the gunman in the New York attack to terrorists. (Inquirer.net)

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