

## **Courses on dollars and sense for maids.**

STIMES0020040611e06c0000n

330 Words

12 June 2004

Straits Times

English

(c) 2004 Singapore Press Holdings Limited

Filipinos to learn how to fend off kin seeking to milk them  
JUST say no. Nicely.

A non-profit group here is hoping to teach maids how to fend off relatives and friends back home who see these overseas workers as goldmines to be tapped. The Singapore chapter of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (Unifem) wants to teach them to save and manage their own money, and plan for what to do when they return home.

It will start three courses for Filipino maids next month on budgeting and 'managing family and cultural issues'.

A focus group conducted by Unifem Singapore found that Filipino maids tend to send most of their salaries home.

Some end up supporting not only their immediate families, but also their relatives, and even neighbours, said Ms Jane Gray, chairman of the Migrant Workers Project. 'Many maids go home, after years of working in Singapore, to the same situation that they left behind or to one even worse than before.

'Most go home with no savings, no plans and no future,' said Ms Gray.

Unifem Singapore hopes to offer courses for Sri Lankan and Indonesian maids in the future.

To be held on Sundays, the courses are free.

One maid who thinks she can benefit is Ms Theresa Nebarro, who has not planned what to do when she returns to the Philippines. But she has savings, set aside for her by her employer.

Said Ms Nebarro, 30: 'Many maids return to Singapore to work again after they go home, when they realise that they have no money.'

Last month, UOB Asset Management relaunched its United Global Unifem Singapore Fund, first set up in 1999. The fund invests in firms 'committed to the empowerment of women in areas that include gender equality at work, women-friendly health programmes and on-site or subsidised child-care programmes', it said.

Part of its management fees are donated to Unifem Singapore.