



DAWN Condoles with Japan



DAWN Executive Director Carmelita Nuqui joined Rep. Walden Bello in expressing their sympathies with the Japanese people through Minister Hitoshi Ozawa.

Not since World War II has Japan experienced such devastation and loss of lives! On March 11, Japan experienced a magnitude 8.9 earthquake north of Tokyo, followed by a tsunami with waves that reached 33 feet.

Together with the rest of the world, the Philippines joins in expressing its sympathies with the people of Japan in the wake of the recent calamity.

On March 15, the Development Action for Women Network (DAWN) joined Rep. Walden Bello and other groups like Akbayan and the Center for Migrant Advocacy in expressing its

heartfelt sympathies and condolences to the people of Japan. The group was met by Minister Hitoshi Ozawa and Mr. Hirotaka Ono.

The group offered flowers and lighted candles in front of the Japan Embassy to express their solidarity with the people of Japan.

“We are deeply saddened by the recent events in Japan. Our prayers are with the Japanese people and our fellow Filipinos residing in Japan in this difficult time,” said Carmelita Nuqui, the Executive Director of DAWN.

“We believe though that Japan will be able to rise above all these challenges,” Nuqui added.

For many years now, DAWN has been working and collaborating with the Japan Embassy in the implementation of programs for returned Filipino women migrants from Japan and their Japanese-Filipino children. In 2010, DAWN received a grant through the Grassroots Human Security project of the Embassy for the purchase of sewing and weaving machines, as well as the conduct of skills training for women. The grant also covered workshops for the women and children, including the publication of a book on Japanese-Filipino children.

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EDITORIAL

100 Years of International Women's Day

This year, on March 8, 2011, women from all ages and all sectors of Philippine society and all over the world celebrated the 100th year celebration of International Women's Day. It is an important day to commemorate the many triumphs and gains of women. At the same time, it is a day to renew our commitment to continue women's fight to resist abuses and discrimination, inequality and marginalization.

The Development Action for Women Network (DAWN) joined many other organizations and marched to the streets on March 8. The march was a show of women's strength and solidarity with other sectors. Men were also present to support women's issues and causes.

In spite of the many gains, women continue to struggle daily, as we are beset with issues and challenges that affect our rights as individuals and as women. As advocates of the rights of women migrants and members of their families, DAWN has been continuously advocating and lobbying for better protection and opportunities for women.

For four decades now, the Philippines has continued its labor export policy. We are concerned about the continuing feminization of migration as more and more Filipino women

are forced to migrate independently to find work in other countries. Filipino women continue to leave the country in droves and half-blindly compromise their dignity and rights in exchange for paid work. They endure harsh working conditions and allow themselves to be exploited thinking that they would be able to fulfil their dreams. Mothers leave their children in the care of other people to take care of other women's children in order to provide for the needs of their own children.

According to the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration, in 2009, 52% of all deployed OFWs were women. 21 percent of all deployed women for that year were employed as domestic workers, a work that is very vulnerable to abuse and exploitation.

The recent turmoil in Libya that led to the mass evacuation of migrants has once again reminded us of the vulnerability of women and the risks they face abroad. Many of our women OFWs in Libya work in government hospitals or as domestic workers. There are still some who have remained in Libya and are in precarious situations. Yet such situations will persist because Filipinos will continue to go abroad for lack of the necessary support that they need to live decently.



Let us not wait for another 100 years to find something to celebrate. Now is the time to act! We call on this government to fulfil its obligations to the people and not just offer lip service to the needs and many demands of the Filipinos. We challenge the State to remain true to its commitment to honor its rights and duties to the people -- for more work and gainful employment in the country so that mothers do not have to leave their children; for the promotion of women's rights and a stop to abuse and violence of women; for our right to health, including maternal and reproductive health.

Quality of Life of Migrant Workers

In 2008, the CARAM Asia Task Force on Migration, Globalization and Development started a research focusing on the quality of life of migrant workers. The research focused on three areas: labor migration within the Asian region, gender and migration, and migration in the Middle East.

DAWN was part of the research team that looked into the quality of life of migrant workers and members of their families from the Philippines, India and Pakistan. Desk research, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were held with government officials, migrant organizations, migrant workers and members of their families in the three countries, as well as in the United Arab Emirates.

Following is the summary of report findings by CARAM-Asia.

Quality of Life of Migrant Workers

Migrant workers in destination countries were routinely found to be trapped by the host country's oppressive migration systems that limited the rights and basic freedoms of migrant workers at every step. Under the current corporate paradigm of migration, destination countries increasingly rely on short term contracts that reduce the risk of responsibility and thus reduce the risk of economic vulnerability to their own nation's economic stability. Within this context migrant workers face difficult, dangerous and often de-humanizing conditions in destination countries. The migrants interviewed commonly experienced contract violation and exploitation. Contract violation inevitably resulted in lower than expected wages and reduced working conditions for migrants who had signed contracts prior to migration only to find that these contracts were commonly dishonored by employers and agents in destination countries. In addition, in

Malaysia, Thailand and U.A.E the use of national legislation by host countries allowed employers the right to terminate and cancel work permits while limiting the ability of migrant workers to change their employer. Essentially under these conditions the workers were forced to accept the reduced working entitlements or risk becoming illegal and facing deportation. A common practice identified by workers was the with-holding of migrant workers' formal documentation such as passports and work permits, by employers, which vastly restricted the ability for travel and movement of migrant workers. There was also a common experience of debt bondage found, whereby the system of loans implemented via recruiting agents and employers prior to migration, resulted in reduced wages or sometimes no wage at all when they commenced work in the destination countries - until such time they had paid off the loan and its interest.

High levels of abuse, maltreatment and violence were experienced by migrant workers in all destination countries in the study with documented cases of rape, assault and deaths of migrant workers. Abuse was commonly perpetrated by employers and authorities such as police, migration officials and recruiting agents. A general climate of racism, discrimination and xenophobia was common with cases of violence against migrant workers at times perpetrated by citizens within destination countries. There was a severe lack of access to justice in all countries for migrant workers which meant that the perpetrators of violence continued to escape any form of prosecution for human, employment, and sexual rights violations against migrant workers.

Migrant workers in the study reported high levels of stress, including physical and mental health issues, and a common

experience of maintaining limited social activities and having minimal opportunities for rest and relaxation. For many, there was a loss of personal freedom and movement, and a deep sense of fear and anxiety felt within their everyday lives in destination country communities. Being migrants, they had lesser protection and social services than locals in the destination country, with access to health care being limited. For workers in Thailand there was access to an affordable health care system for migrant workers however undocumented migrants had particular difficulties accessing health services due to their illegal status.

Living conditions for migrant workers in the study were varied. There were common concerns of overcrowded and unsanitary living conditions for migrants in the U.A.E. and Malaysia. Migrant workers in all countries were often forced to share inadequate accommodation with others from within the migrant community due to the high costs of accommodation.

The research demonstrates that gender variables related to migration impacted at all levels of the migration process. In terms of macro level factors in the countries within the study – there was evidence of gender discrimination in national migration policies which impacted on the numbers and proportions of women migrating. There was also clear evidence of the feminization of labor in countries within the study, which saw a trend of women migrating from sending countries, to work in feminized labor sectors, primarily as informal domestic labor.

The research showed that both male and female workers in certain occupations suffered extreme exploitation;

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namely female domestic workers in all destination countries, and male laborers in the U.A.E. Male workers in the U.A.E. working in labor camps faced comparatively worse living and working conditions than other workers in the U.A.E and there was an identified lack of crisis support services for male Filipino workers compared to female workers in the U.A.E. Female migrant workers across all countries in the study were particularly vulnerable to the lack of protection and decreased standard of employment due to their over-representation in informal and unregulated sectors. Female migrants working as domestic workers in all destination countries lived and worked in slave like conditions where they were subject to exploitation, restricted mobility, restricted communication with others in the community and with family members at home, and high levels of violence including gender based violations with limited opportunity for redress. Domestic workers and workers in the sex industry were commonly not included in the labor laws of the three destination countries giving them less access to labor and human rights protections than other workers.

Female migrants also identified discrimination in relation to reproductive health rights, which included incidents of forced contraceptive treatment prior to migration for women in Sri Lanka, a lack of access to reproductive health services for migrant women in Malaysia and U.A.E. who were commonly deported if they became pregnant, whilst in Thailand those who were pregnant often lost their employment. Sexual assault and harassment perpetrated by employers and authorities was a common concern for many of the female migrant workers interviewed in the study.

There was little evidence of long term changes to the status of women – either as migrant workers or within the families

of migrant workers. For some families of female migrant workers there were changes in the household division of labor with males participating in child rearing activities. However these changes were not sustainable post migration with female migrant workers inevitably reverting back to traditional gender roles within their households and families upon return from abroad. There was little evidence of any increase in women's participation in decision making, political participation, business ventures or other indicators of empowerment related to development.

Quality of Life for Families of Migrant Workers

The findings of the research show different impacts on families of migrant workers depending on the economic success of the migration experience. Increased poverty and loss of land and resources in order to cover the costs of departure and recruitments however is common to the experiences of families in all sending countries. When actual household income decreases the result is migrant families are often reduced to subsistent living, particularly over the times when there is no remittance sent from family members abroad. This increased poverty means greater social impact on the lives of the community. As noted above the benefit of remittances for families of migrant workers depended largely on whether they were able to pay back the original migration debt. For many families this was not possible and in these circumstances family members faced greater poverty, were forced to rely on other community and family members for their economic survival and faced continued harassment by lenders and stigma within the community due to their inability to pay the outstanding debts.

Apart from the economic impact of migration however families identified numerous positive and negative effects of migration. Positive impacts

invariably were related to the cases where remittances were able to meet household needs and the migration debt was able to be paid off sufficiently. In these cases migrant workers identified a sense of satisfaction and pride at their achievements and increased status within their home communities and families. However there were also numerous social costs related to the migration experience that is not commonly considered within the remittance and migration paradigm.

The emotional and psychological impact on family members of migrant sending households was significant. For most participants in the study the migration period spanned over 1-5 years; a significant time-frame in terms of maintaining long-distance relationships with family members. The two main areas of impact on families of migrant workers were seen in marital relations and child-rearing. The issues identified which caused stress within marital relations were varied. The levels of loneliness and anxiety suffered by spouses – both those working overseas and those remaining at home, was significant. While most respondents were able to keep regular communication with families over the migration period there were notable exceptions for domestic workers who had limited capacity to communicate with families at home. This caused high levels of anxiety for family members and spouses as to the well being of the migrant worker, particularly given that the exploitation and abuse suffered by domestic workers was widely known in many source country communities.

Relationships of spouses within the study were affected with some spouses separating, while others entered into another relationship or had other sexual relations whilst abroad, and some cases revealed problematic issues such as alcoholism, domestic violence and gambling. Some relations between family and spouses had deteriorated

due to the high expectations from the family in terms of income and remittances, which were realized due to the labor exploitation in the destination country. The focus on the migrant workers role as an income earner and the pressure to send money home had caused stress within the relationships of some spouses. Spousal conflict was also increased due to the migration debts that were sometimes to be paid off by family members in the country of origin, upon the expected receipt of remittances. Migrant workers who were not able to pay up their debts caused shame and problems for their families that were left behind.

For some migrant workers, being away from the family for an extended time, caused a communication breakdown between family members and led to problems and conflict. Not being able to support the home family at significant times was also an issue which was particularly devastating in instances where there had been deaths of members of their extended family at home, and the workers were unable to return to participate in funerals and

support their families. Additionally working abroad for the sake of one's family entailed a lot of sacrifices. The homesickness, separation from their families and friends, and adaptation to a new environment were often extremely challenging for migrant workers to cope with.

The impact of migration on children in the study was found to be both positive and negative. For some families migration led to improvements in educational opportunities for children. In addition some families identified improved child care practices from returned migrants who were able to provide for better health care and social activities for their children. An increase in single parent families is another characteristic trait of migration and the negative impacts identified by participants in this study were related to the challenge of child rearing given the loss of one parent who worked overseas for long periods of time. Parents who worked overseas often missed out on many important occasions in the life of their children, such as birthdays and graduations. Many respondents had

concerns over the effect of the migration on their children left behind and were greatly concerned that the separation was depriving them of the opportunity to be a part of their children's lives to help them not only with their education but also to instill moral values. They were also concerned that the limited remittances they were able to send home were not enough to support their children's education.

The increased burden of care of children was an issue for families in both male and female sending households. In female sending families, this extra burden of care was often taken up by grandparents, sometimes siblings and fathers / spouses who were often also working to earn an income in the source country. The issue of single parenting was also identified by many women in male-sending households as a concern. Some respondents were concerned about the absence of their husbands who would ordinarily be a major decision maker in the family and a symbol of protection for the family. The burden of single parenting added

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Filipino migrant workers at the St. Mary's Church in Dubai

DAWN at 15: Looking Back, Moving Forward

On February 5, the Development Action for Women Network (DAWN) celebrated its 15th anniversary. It was a simple activity prepared by the members and staff to gather past and present members, friends and partners. It was also a thanksgiving for the continuing blessings for DAWN and its members.

The day started with the holding of a program. After the prayer offered by the members, staff and volunteers, Mel Nuqui, DAWN's Executive Director, welcomed all those present and recalled memories of DAWN in the early years. She acknowledged the presence of JFC who were with DAWN during its early years of operation.

Rev. Ding Morada, Ms. Pearl Domingo-Flores and Prof. Corazon Arboleda, Board members of DAWN, also gave inspirational messages. Profs. Corazon Mabagos and Zandro Estella from the Polytechnic University of the Philippines, who have been rendering volunteer services to DAWN since

2007, were also present and greeted everyone on the occasion of its 15th founding anniversary.

Special song and dance numbers were prepared by the women and JFC members, as well as the staff. Fun games were also prepared and the participants were given a token to mark the anniversary.

A special video presentation was prepared by the staff highlighting memorable events for the past 15 years. Upon seeing old photos, the members present reminisced on what has changed in them. It was amazing to see how the JFC have grown from toddlers to teens.

In the afternoon, the Waku-Waku magic group from Fukuoka came and regaled everyone with their performance. This is the group's second straight year of coming to DAWN to share their talent, wit and magic with us. The adults and children alike enjoyed watching the tricks performed.



Tita Mel with JFC members who joined DAWN at a young age



JFC members presenting a special song number



DAWN members and staff with the Waku Waku Magic group



A special magic number

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additional pressures in practical care giving activities and parental decision-making. In some cases the children of migrant workers grew up with one or both parents absent for long periods, with some growing up hardly knowing their parents. Children were sometimes left in the care of relatives, if both parents were working overseas, as was the case for some families in the Philippines.

Community expectations of migrant workers and their families revealed further pressures for migrant workers and their families. In some communities, returned workers faced stigma and discrimination. In some of the sending communities there was a common and false perception amongst community members that female domestic workers were sexually promiscuous and morally corrupt and returned workers or their families were discriminated against. Returned migrant workers noted a common trend whereby members of source country communities expected them to be rich. In many cases this was a false assumption given the issues faced by workers in destination countries however community members and neighbors had many expectations from returned workers resulting in pressure for migrant families to provide gifts and loans to others in the community. For migrant workers who returned home early or with less than expected earnings there was a struggle for survival and a difficulty to reintegrate back to into the source country community.

The Cycle of Re-Migration

Despite an increase in remittances for sending countries and a subsequent rise in their overall GDP, many developing countries still fail to invest and develop their own infrastructure. This is especially noticeable when it comes to the issue of job creation and the quality of health and education services. The lack of re-integration programs was a concern for migrants interviewed in

the majority of sending countries in the study. This appeared to be due to both a lack of state policy and a lack of resources for programs to support migrant workers post migration in their home countries. For those migrants who returned home there was commonly a lack of effective options to support them with issues related to the migration experience including the management of debts incurred through corrupt and illegal exploitation; access to justice for violations committed abroad, and access to compensation and adequate health care.

A common issue for returned workers was the lack of employment in their country of origin after they returned from migration. Some workers found the employment opportunities even worse than when they left for work overseas and so were forced to consider the option of re-migration. The main factors pushing re-migration included the lack of employment and low wages in source countries, as well as the outstanding migration debt and the ongoing need to support their family's livelihood. In addition, workers who were able to bring home sufficient remittance earnings for investment found limited business opportunities within their home communities that could lead to sustainable employment in the longer term.

A notable difference in the pattern of return and re-migration was found in migrants from Burma who were impacted both by extreme poverty and unemployment in Burma as well as the political factors related to the military dictatorship in Burma. This situation meant that many migrant workers considered migration as a recurring cycle with no fixed end-point until the situation within Burma changes. In addition workers from Burma often migrated with other family members and the movement of undocumented workers across the borders between Thailand and Burma was known to be

a fluid pattern of migration, return and re-migration.

CONCLUSION

Clearly there are significant concerns regarding the quality of life for migrant workers and their families arising from this research. The severe exploitation, violence and abuse, the daily struggle and overwhelming isolation and loneliness for migrants working overseas, coupled with severe, unrestrained labor rights violations that continue with impunity – begs the question – is it worth it?

Families in home countries, have scraped, saved and sold their lands and livestock to send their family member abroad in the hope of increased income to feed their children, to fix their houses, and pay for school-books. Parents, children and spouses also suffer the deep loneliness, increased poverty and insecurity of struggling to survive whilst awaiting the promised remittances – often to find that the remittances are in fact inadequate. The added burden of debt, the shame and the increased poverty as a result of migration leaves one to wonder – is it worth it?

Migrant workers and their families had different opinions on the risks and gamble of migration. Whilst many of the workers in the research noted that they would not again choose migration as a way to support their families, others noted that they had no choice but to re-migrate to cover their living costs and debts, whilst still others noted they would be pleased to migrate should they have the chance again. Whilst for many the outcomes for migration are clearly not worth their while – however each day thousands of workers in the region will continue to leave with the promise of a dream – the chance for employment, the chance to improve their lives, travel and support their families. For these workers there needs to be something better.

SSP Updates

By Christina A. Lopez and Mila I. Rollinas

DAWN Orientation for New Members

For the first quarter of 2011, three orientation seminars were held wherein 12 women, 6 Japanese-Filipino children and one guardian attended the said activity. Most of them were referred by the Embassy of Japan in Manila, friends, the Department of Social Welfare and Development, and through the DAWN website. They sought the assistance of DAWN for possible interventions in locating the whereabouts of the Japanese fathers, financial assistance for the education and medical needs of the Japanese-Filipino children, and for the acquisition of Japanese nationality.

Some issues and concerns were addressed during the orientation, such as getting a copy of the family registry, adoption procedures, divorce, financial support, dealing with the fathers for financial support and recognition.

100th anniversary of International Women's Day

There are always festive holidays going all over the world at least once a year and one of these celebrations is the International Women's day. Held every 8th day of March, the celebration recognizes the worth of women, their achievements, advancement and empowerment amidst challenges.

In celebration of women's month, DAWN staff together with members Maria Dolores Alnas, Evangeline Cerezo, Anna Liza Yambao, Mary Jane Kuraoka and Gina Andrade joined

in the women's march that was organized through the effort of various groups led by the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women Asia-Pacific (CATW-AP) on March 8, 2011.

During the women's march, the participants which included women, youth, children and men were vocal about their support to equal rights and opportunities for women. A number of women's groups called for action to stop violence against women and discrimination, as well as voiced their stand on the Reproductive Health bill.

DAWN members witnessed that bravery and outspokenness of women in expressing their thoughts and feelings. Anna Liza Yambao, a 40-year old solo parent said, "It was a great opportunity to join the rally. There are lots of women who were confident in advocating their rights!"

Dolores Alnas, another member of DAWN, shared that it was a tiring day for all who participated but a meaningful one. She also believes that through DAWN's participation in the march, the nation will be glad that women, including the returnees from Japan, are now empowered.

Mary Jane Kuraoka, a young mother said that women's month is a special event of our life. "It teaches us how to value ourselves, at the same time be proud of our achievements despite the many challenges in our lives," she added.



Evangeline, mother of 14-year old Japanese-Filipino child, was very proud to be part of the event. She was pleased to see herself walking alongside other women, standing up for their rights, and resisting all forms of violence.

Gina Andrade, mother of four, shared that her experience in joining the march was a pleasure because she learned of the different issues of different sectors who joined the march.

International women's day is a celebration of gains and triumphs as women. At the same time, March 8 reminds of all the inequalities and imbalances that need to be addressed, and of the rights that still need to be fought for and won.

Happy Women's Month to all!

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Last March 24-25, 2011 together with DAWN Executive Director Carmelita Nuqui, we visited the Organization for Industrial, Spiritual & Culture Advancement (OISCA) –Bago Training Center (OBTC). The center is one of the suppliers of silk cocoon in the country. Mr. Shigemi & Mrs. Thelma Watanabe accommodated us and gave us a warm welcome. The purpose of the visit is for DAWN to buy silk thread for hand-woven scarves and shawls and to discuss other areas of cooperation. Upon arrival at the center, Mr. Watanabe gave us a tour of the center. He showed and explained to us what sericulture is all about. OISCA also has a showroom with very nice displays of different products made of silk. They also use natural dye for their silk. That got me interested to learn the process of natural dyeing.

Aside from cocoon production, OISCA offers training in agriculture, and has programs for day care, reforestation, and women training, as well as an exchange program with OISCA Japan. OISCA likewise has tie-up programs with government and other non-government organizations to facilitate their different goodwill missions and activities. The center also provides Nihongo lessons. There are 24 nurses currently learning the language.

At the center, Tita Mel was asked to give a lecture on DAWN's work. It was a fruitful discussion with the nurses. Some were amazed especially at our JFC members who, despite their situations, diligently continue with their studies. Some asked how they can contribute to our advocacy work. They also asked for advices if and when they decide to work in Japan. The meeting with Mr. Shigemi & Mrs. Thelma Watanabe was indeed fruitful and marks the beginning of a fruitful partnership.

Welcome Tita Mila !

DAWN warmly welcomes Milagros Ibarra-Rollinas as the latest addition to its family! Mila, as she is fondly called by her family and friends, is a licensed social worker. A graduate of the Philippine Christian University, she has been practicing her profession for the past 19 years. Her field of expertise is handling cases of violence against women and children. Mila has worked for different institutions in the field of development work such as child protection, case management, organizing, training and education, and project development. As a Social Worker, she is very determined to continue to fight for the rights of abused children and women by rendering holistic social services and interventions.

Mila is also a loving wife and mother. Her husband is an OFW in Qatar and she has a 12-year old son who will soon graduate in elementary. Despite her workload and hectic schedule in attending to the issues and concerns of every client, Mila never fails to attend to the needs of her family.



ALP Corner

By Mary Joy E. Barcelona

DAWN wishes to congratulate its Board Member Pearl Domingo-Flores for successfully finishing her training in Massage Therapy and Reflexology conducted by the Manila Manpower Development Center under Ms. Isabel Paquiz. Tita Pearl also passed the National Certification II in Massage Therapy certified by the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) on January 22, 2011. Congratulations Tita Pearl!

On February 16-18, I represented DAWN in the Accredited Co-Partners (ACP) Summit conducted by Department of Labor and Employment- National Capital Region (DOLE NCR) at the Hotel Supreme in Baguio City. The said event aimed to strengthen partnership and provide updates on the policies and guidelines for the DOLE Integrated

Livelihood Program (DILP). The new procedure for acquiring accreditation, submission of proposals, and liquidation of reports were some of the items discussed during the summit. A representative from the Commission on Audit also explained the liquidation of grants. The participants also had the chance to share their experiences that can help improve the partnership with DOLE. The summit was also an avenue to know how all accredited co-partners can be supported in their different activities.

Last March 2, 2011, the Salt Foundation held a bazaar at the Filipino Japanese Friendship Foundation Office in Makati City. Different NGOs participated in the said event. DAWN participated to sell its Sikhay products. Rosie Verano joined DAWN in selling Sikhay items as well as some JARR

Novelty items.

On March 5, members of the DAWN Multi-Purpose Cooperative (DAWN-MPC) attended the Go Negosyo Fair held at the World Trade Center. Our participation in the event gave us the opportunity to know what is “in” in the market and how we can improve our strategies to make the DAWN-MPC successful. We also registered the DAWN-MPC with Sundance, FX Fashion, and Ever Bilena. The Officers and members of the cooperative led by Dolores Alnas, Vangie Cerezo, Gina Andrade, Rosie Verano, Anna Yambao, Rosalie Akase, Mary Jane Kuraoka and myself attended the Fair.

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Mr. Shigemi Watanabe of OISCA - Bago Training Center showing us the silk cocoon



SINAG (akebono or yoake in Japanese) means dawn or daybreak.

It is the quarterly publication of the Development Action for Women Network (DAWN), a non-government organization devoted to issues concerning migrant women and their Japanese-Filipino children.

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People, Places, Events



Philippine Ambassador to the UAE Grace Princesa in a discussion with DAWN members Rosalie Akase and Mary Jane Kuraoka



Vangie Cerezo, Rosie Verano and Anna Liza Carimpong working on the poster entry on trafficking in persons



An excerpt from the play "iba't-Ibang Mukha ni Misty" being presented by the women during the Commitment to Combat Trafficking in Persons Week held at the Museo Pambata on March 16



Women members of DAWN attended the Go Negosyo Summit on March 5

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Commitment to Combat Trafficking in Persons

With reports from Mila Rollinas, Christina Lopez and Mary Joy Barcelona

In March, the Visayan Forum conducted an activity called “Commitment Week Against Trafficking in Persons,” as part of the celebration of women’s month. DAWN participated during the March 16 Survivors’ Fun Day activity held at the Museo Pambata with the theme “Araw Namin ‘to! Pagdiriwang ng mga kwento ng Tagumpay.”

A day before the event, the women members of DAWN prepared a poster for submission as entry to the poster making contest for trafficking survivors. Analisa Carimpong, Anna Liza Yambao, Mary Jane Kuraoka, Rosalie Akase, Rosie Verano and Evangeline Cerezo all helped in making the poster. We started the activity by listening to the sound track of “Iba’t-ibang Mukha ni Misty.” The women were asked how they would describe themselves as survivors. Each one was asked to draw her experience and share it with the group. Since the theme of the poster is “Celebrating Stories of Success and Hope of Trafficking Survivors,” what we did was put together our common ideas and experiences. The output of the activity was a collage that shows our individual challenges, why we became victims, how we survived all

the obstacles and challenges, and our journey to become empowered women and advocates. We also emphasized the special place of JFC in our lives, especially with regards to our present and future. The poster we submitted during the Survivor Fun Day was given a special award.

Aside from our poster entry, the women members of DAWN presented an excerpt of their musical play “Iba’t-Ibang Mukha ni Misty.” Other survivor groups from Center of Hope and PREDA also presented special numbers. It was indeed a day to celebrate because we got the chance

to see and meet other survivors like us. US Ambassador Harry Thomas and noted balladeer Christian Bautista were guests in the event. Each gave an inspirational message for the survivors. Christian Bautista also rendered a special number for the audience.

One of the highlights of the day’s activity is “Soaring High.” The participants were each given a balloon where they were asked to write their wishes and dreams. The balloons were then released at the same time. It was such a sight to look up in the sky and see the balloons soaring high, bearing all our wishes, our dreams, and aspirations.



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