

SINAG

VOL. 2 NO. 4

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE DEVELOPMENT ACTION FOR WOMEN NETWORK (DAWN)

OCTOBER-DECEMBER 1997

a fruitful year

So much accomplished in so short a time; thank God, thanks to the DAWN staff, volunteers, partners and friends



The Shimizus reunite in Japan: first row, from left, Sheryl, Monica, Cherry, Mr. Shimizu and Erika; back row, Japanese volunteer Yoko Nakazawa and DAWN Executive Director Mel Nuqui

CHERRY AQUINO, a Filipina who was working as an entertainer in Japan, was deported together with her daughters for overstaying in that country. For Cherry, that would have been the end of whatever hopes she had for her and her Japanese-Filipino children. But then she thought of seeking help from DAWN. After meeting with DAWN and its networks and contacts in Japan, the Japanese father of Cherry's daughter Erika decided to recognize his daughter. This was the turning point for Cherry's life. Last October 25, DAWN Executive Director Mel Nuqui and Treasurer Perlita Domingo-Flores accompanied Cherry and her daughters to Japan.

That is not the end of Cherry's story, for even now three lawyers are helping her and her daughters in their quest for a permanent reunion with Erika's father. The fact that Cherry's story went this far is achievement enough.

This is also not the end of the story for DAWN. In fact, Cherry's case is only one of the 43 cases its legal and paralegal service component is handling, involving 43 women and 52 Japanese-Filipino children, most of them seeking paternal recognition and support for the children. Of these cases, six have been resolved, 15 are being processed, while 22 are under review.

Cherry's case is only one of the many accomplishments of DAWN in 1997, and involving only one component of the range of services that DAWN extends to its clients.

Its airport assistance helped nine women and children either

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Well wishes from all over

OUR visit to your organization was very useful in helping us understand the problems Filipina migrants encounter. We will certainly share what we learned with our colleagues, and we look forward to keeping in touch with you in the future.

KUMIKO ISHIKAWA

KUMUSTA ka na? Thank you for accommodating us during our visit and training at PETA in August. I was quite amazed by your diverse work. I'm now in Vancouver, studying Inter cultural Communications. I hope to share my experiences upon my return to Manila in early December. All the best.

TAKAYAMA LISA

Ex-peace Boat staff, to be PETA intern

I'M very glad to see you [Mel Nuqui] and other members of DAWN, especially Atty. Corazon Fabros and the other lawyers. I'm very interested in and pay special regard to DAWN's activities. I'm very pleased to help in Mr. Shimizu and Cherry's case. Atty. Higashizawa and I are considering how to change Cherry and the children's visa. I'll report to you again after we decide on what to do.

Give my regards to all the members of DAWN.

ATTY. YUKARI HIDESHIMA

GREETINGS from Japan! Thank you very much for the hospitality extended to us when we visited you. We hope someday, the time comes when Filipino-Japanese children won't have so much trouble either here or there.

KIYO INAGAI

MERRY Christmas and a Happy New Year. God bless you and all the activities of DAWN. Soon we'll meet you in Japan.

THE REV. TOSHIFUMI ASO

Christmas Greetings from DAWN

CHRISTMAS is a time for sharing, love and fellowship.

We thank the many volunteers, networks, partners and friends who have stayed with us throughout the year. The time, effort and resources you offered enabled DAWN to accomplish its goals.

On behalf of the DAWN staff, board, Sikhay members, DAWN women and Japanese-Filipino children, may you never tire of committing yourselves to the concerns of migrant women and their children.

Have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



**DEVELOPMENT ACTION
FOR WOMEN NETWORK (DAWN)**

THANK you for the pretty card. I was very surprised and happy. Your "daya bag" is popular in my shop. I'm looking forward to more beautiful works. See you! Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

NORIAKI AND SACHIKO BITO

I'M really glad that I came to know you when I was in the Philippines last time. I wish I can contribute in my little way to your very good works.

Praying with you that the Japanese Filipino children you are with will wake up to a bright dawn.

FR. EDGAR C. GACUTAN,
Sakai

MERRY Christmas to you dear Mel to all at DAWN and SIKHAY. Thank you for your greetings. Hope to hear from you soon. Take your time. All the best for Jesus for the New Year.

SABINE FERNANDEZ

SEASON'S greetings and best wishes for the New Year.

ATTY. AKIYOSHI KAWABATA
President, Japan Federation of Migrant Women's Associations

SEASON'S greetings and best wishes for the New year.

ATTY. YASUSHI HIGASHIMURA

SEASON'S greetings and best wishes for the New Year.

YAYORI MURAKAMI

SEASON'S greetings and best wishes for the New Year.

*Selamat Hari Natal
dan Tahun Baru*

APRIL YOGYAKARTA, INDONESIA

HAVE a wonderful Christmas and a blessed New Year.

ATTY. KENSHI NAKAMURA

MALIGAYANG Pasko at Manigong Bagong Taon.

SEASON'S greetings and best wishes for the New Year.

ATTY. YUKARI HIDESHIMA

SINAG ("akebono" or "yoake" in Japanese),

which means dawn or daybreak, is a quarterly publication of the Development Action for Women Network, a non-government organization devoted to issues concerning migrant Filipino women and their Japanese-Filipino children.

EDITORIAL BOARD

Sr. Aurora R. Zambrano, Atty. Corazon Valdez-Fabros, Prof. Corazon Arboleda, Carmelita G. Nuqui

WRITER

Marbelyn S. Alar

CONTRIBUTOR

Sr. Sabine Fernandez



Japanese-Filipino children, assisted by Yoko, a volunteer, and Mirriam, a DAWN staff, make key chains made of sea shells as Christmas gifts for their parents and grandparents

FRUITFUL YEAR

FROM COVER PAGE

turn to the Philippines or go back to Japan to be reunited with their families. A mother and her three children who had no place to stay also benefitted from DAWN's temporary shelter when they arrived from Japan. Health care was extended to the 13 Japanese-Filipino children and 16 women clients and DAWN staff through a general medical and dental check-up. DAWN's educational assistance helped 10 Japanese-Filipino children with their school fees, books, school supplies and monthly allowances. Counseling services have helped guide DAWN's clients make their way to new lives.

But DAWN, to paraphrase an adage, is not only helping these women by giving them fish but also helping them catch fish. Among the organization's biggest accomplishments in 1997 was the continued expansion of its livelihood program.

Sikhay, or Sikap Buhay, is DAWN's alternative livelihood project, aimed at helping reintegrate returned migrant women to



Mel Nuqui and Pearl Domingo-Flores (foreground) update Senator Masako Owaki, member of Japan's House of Councilors, and Atty. Kenshi Nishida about the work of DAWN

Philippine society. It has served as therapy for the women, as well as training ground for entrepreneurial management and the launchpad for the advocacy of the cause of migrant women.

Sikhay's products include shirts, vests, pants, aprons, bags, letter holders, pen and pot holders and other novelty items made of batik and other indigenous woven materials.

After the initial birth pangs, Sikhay has finally gotten around to institutionalizing its systems and procedures, with daily and monthly production reports to

monitor the efficient functioning of the program.

An edging machine and another high-speed sewing machine were bought this year, besides a portable edging machine donated by a DAWN network from Japan.

Sikhay has since expanded its marketing and sales network. Aside from AWEF, HELP Niigata, CNJFC, Japan AALA and some shops and individuals in Japan have offered to help sell Sikhay products.

With an eye toward making the products more attractive to

buyers, DAWN has started to improve the packaging of Sikhay products with labels, plastic wrappers, paper bags, and even a catalogue of products, all expected to be finished in early 1998.

Among the most significant strides DAWN made in 1997 was in information and education. In the desire to improve people's knowledge of the issue of migration, DAWN took part in the celebration of International Human Rights Day, set up its own library, made itself available to the mainstream media, published a newsletter and a planner.

In the works are the setting up of DAWN's own Web site, as well as a poster intended to highlight the social costs of migration.

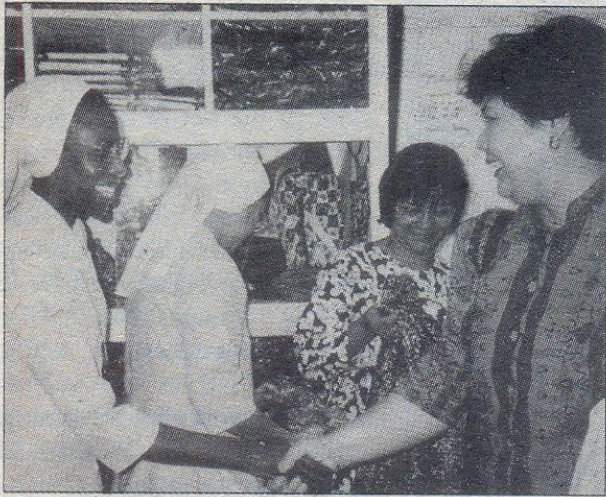
But perhaps the most enjoyable—and arguably most fulfilling—activity was the theater workshop organized for Japanese-Filipino children. The workshop was initially aimed at helping develop the self-confidence and self-expression of the children. The workshop culminated in the staging of the play *Fujiwara Junko: JFC*, which tackled the issue of discrimination against Japanese-Filipino children.

When the play was staged for the visiting Peace Boat participants in August, the play not only boosted the children's confidence, but also helped the audience realize the many problems Japanese-Filipino children face and how these can be addressed.

DAWN cannot thrive without its networks, which have provided both moral and material support for the many programs of the organization. In 1997, a total of 87 visitors from Japan, India, Sri Lanka, Hong Kong and Singapore dropped by DAWN's offices. All of them were introduced to DAWN's many activities and programs.

The Inter-Franciscan Asia-

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Mel Nuqui welcomes a Cannosian sister with a handshake, while Mirriam Orig, another DAWN staff, shows Sikhay products to another sister. The Cannosian sisters visited DAWN on December 20 and gave Christmas bags of groceries to DAWN members and beneficiaries

Mel Nuqui discusses DAWN programs with visitors from Shikoku Gakuin University, Kagawa, Japan, November 28

Noriko Makishita from the Society for Protection of Rights of Foreigners tries on a vest made by Sikhay, October 23

FRIENDS KEEP ON COMING



Mel Nuqui orients sisters of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary on the work of DAWN



ko Murata, a DAWN volunteer, together with Letty Meneses, shows her friends from
oto MAC how a batik cloth is patterned and cut, November 17

Yukari Hideshima (below),
a lawyer from Sapporo,
shares with Mel Nuqui and
Kumiko Anado-Sayo, a
Japanese volunteer, her
home visit with Cherry last
October 23.



yori Matsui shares with DAWN staff, volunteers and Sikhay
members the situation of migrant women in Japan, December 21



Fukuoka visitors, together with DAWN Executive
Director Mel Nuqui, watch a video on DAWN's
activities, October 11

By **SISTER SABINE**

THE Franciscan Missionaries of Mary all over the world seek to explore

how we can improve and consolidate our commitment to justice, peace and the integrity of creation. My search landed me in the Philippines where I was exposed to the realities of people grappling with poverty and injustice. Eight of us opted to see what Filipino migrant women are up against back in their homeland. So we were introduced to DAWN.

The name captured my imagination as the word "dawn" has all my life. It freed me, for a fleeting moment, from the qualms I felt about the exposure. Most of my life I have chased the dawn, rising early just to catch a glimpse of the reddening sky and grasp its rose-gold message for the day being born. The Sanskrit word *Usha* expresses more subtly the hushed stillness of dawn's moment, whispering its silent beauty, ushering a future into being.

In mid-October at the DAWN office, we met the organization's executive director, Ms. Carmelita Nuqui. She welcomed us with her cheerful smile and disarming manner. Much of our fears were dispersed as she gently briefed us on what DAWN is all about. We were introduced to our hosts, some of DAWN's women beneficiaries whose guests we were to be for the next couple of days. For them too, it was a first-time affair. I found myself trying to put them at ease during the lunch that followed.

Sister Mary and I were the guests of Arlene, and so we set off at about 3 p.m. that Sunday. Sister Mary and I had our first ride in Manila's famous jeepneys. Quietly, efficiently, Arlene led us from one jeepney to the next and helped us have the correct fare ready each time. The money, the language

New days dawning

These women can face life anew because of the strength and support of DAWN. Thanks to the burgeoning livelihood project, Sikhay, Arlene and other women beneficiaries can have a new dawn to look forward to.

(Tagalog) were all so new, so strange, but our missionary training helped us take it in stride. It was exciting.

Finally, we rode in a tricycle over a bumpy road to Taguig. Arlene eventually exclaimed with a timid smile, "Sisters, that's our house, it's small," pointing to a little brick building with its zinc roofing and creepers along its fence. We assured her it was nice and cozy, thanking her for her friendly welcome as we offered our *pasalubong*.

We met her Japanese-Filipino children: Junko, 10, Yoshi, 8, and Ken-ken, 4. They are lovely, bright children. Arlene's mother came in and greeted us with a warm smile. She cares for the three children and does the cooking.

Without much ado, we found ourselves slipping easily into the rhythm of the home as we helped wherever we could with the household chores. Fetching water and washing dishes gradually became part of Taguig's hum and bustle.

On the walls of the main room were photographs of the children in better times. Junko and Yoshi often ask about their Japanese father. Ken-ken does



Sister Sabine

not know him at all, as he has not returned since her birth. The two older ones go to school in the afternoon.

We went to market on Monday morning with Arlene and Ken-ken. Those two days in Taguig opened us up to a whole world so different from ours. It was more than we bargained for. We discovered something of the setbacks, challenges, dreams and hopes of women like Arlene.

They had recognized their own special talents in the bloom of youth. On the strength of those, they decided to venture out into the world, beyond their homeland into the Land of the Rising Sun. They were thrilled by the tremendous temptations of fame and

fortune that the entertainment and the dimly lit discos offered. For a time it was. Then came abandonment, rejection, and pain inflicted on a loved one. And the light went out of their lives. With any means, they struggled, living in dire hardship and poverty. Arlene, however, shows great spunk. She is strong, determined to attain a better life for herself and her children. Emotionally balanced but not beaten, Arlene has great courage. She shares with us some of her dreams and hopes.

What struck us most was the absence of bitterness or anger in these women against their Japanese husbands who left them high and dry. In her accounts of her spouse, Arlene showed no trace of anger or hatred, and only wondered why he has changed.

Now, we understand better the importance of DAWN in their lives. These women can face life anew because of the strength and support of DAWN. Thanks to the burgeoning livelihood project, Sikhay, Arlene and other women beneficiaries can have a new dawn to look forward to. For some, even a reunion with their spouses, recognition of their children, or at the least, financial help from them.

My exposure to Taguig sparked a mighty enthusiasm for DAWN and for all its activities. To those who have been to DAWN going, to Mel, Sister Aurora and others we have the joy of meeting, our wish is the realization of your hopes and dreams for the women migrants you serve with so much devotion.

Be assured that for the future of their children, a new dawn is breaking, as gold vistas of hope reach out to the black horizon, and hand in hand with DAWN the women can go forward, growing in confidence and self-worth, toward a new day.

Roundtable discussion on gender and development

A FUNDING agency devoted to social development gathered 27 of its NGO partners, including DAWN, to a roundtable discussion and consultation on December 4-5, 1997, at Innotech on integrating gender in development as a policy for the partner NGOs.

BILANCE is an agency that grew out of a merger between CEBEMO and the Dutch Bishops' Lenten Campaign. It supports initiatives in developing countries that combat poverty and help build democratic societies. It seeks a balance between North and South, equality between women and men, and a

symbiosis between people and the environment.

DAWN was represented at the roundtable discussion by Executive Director Mel Nuqui and Board President Sr. Aurora R. Zambrano, ICM. BILANCE is a major funding partner of DAWN in its rehabilitation and empowerment program for returning distressed Filipino migrant women from Japan.

Karina David of HASIK laid out the background for the discussions, and also shared the methodology of her organization's seminars for urban-poor women, men and adolescents.

Emmeline Versoza presented different approaches to development and also explained the different levels of gender equality and women empowerment. Vicky Narciso-Apuan elaborated on gender education, while Carol Sobrichea, president of the Women Studies Association of the Philippines, pushed for the promotion of gender education in the educational system.

The discussions confirmed DAWN's experience with regard to the difficulty of getting government funding because of the complicated requirements and tedious paperwork.

Council of experts

BECAUSE of the increasing workload, DAWN has set up an Advisory Council. The council is a pool of experts in fields relevant to the work of DAWN, and will help the Board of Directors give strategic direction to the programs of the organization.

The council is convened once a year, but members are periodically consulted about the concerns of the organization.

The council is composed of Sen. Masako Owaki of Japan, Philippine Rep. Bonifacio Gillego, Sr. Mary John Mananzan, Bishop Julio Xavier Labayan, Yayori Matsui and Atty. Kenshi Nishida.

Games, gifts and a much greater present

CHRISTMAS, came early to DAWN—on December 20, 1997, to be exact.

On that day, the organization held its Christmas party. The DAWN office was quickly filled with the staff, volunteers, board members, Sikhay beneficiaries, DAWN women, Japanese-Filipino children and friends. Everybody clearly came to have fun, anticipating a day of fellowship with family, friends and acquaintances.



Dancing to the tune of "Sha-la-la" during the Christmas party

Parlor games kept everybody pumped up, while a "Sha-la-la" dance number fueled the mirth. And of course there was the gift-giving which, apparently was not only enjoyed by the children.

But beyond the gaily wrapped packages was a deeper and much more meaningful present—the gift of friendship and family among DAWN's members, something that would last well beyond the Christmas party.

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E-mail: dawnphil@webquest.com

A FRUITFUL YEAR

FROM PAGE 3

Pacific Group requested DAWN to facilitate the exposure of eight nuns from the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary from various countries to four families of DAWN women clients.

But the visits were not all one way. In February last year, Sister Aurora Zambrano, Mel Nuqui and Kumiko Anada, all of DAWN, left for an eight-day visit to Japan and met with various organizations and individuals sympathetic or supportive of the cause that DAWN is advocating.

In October, Nuqui and Flores used the opportunity of accompanying Cherry Aquino and her daughters to Japan as a way of building more linkages there, meeting with various groups in Osaka, Kobe, Tokyo, Niigata and Chiba to reaffirm cooperative efforts between their groups and DAWN.

Back home, DAWN began to strengthen its administrative capabilities. Sikhay, which used to share an office with DAWN, moved a separate office. DAWN has also taken in a full-time researcher/writer, a social worker, and an administrative assistant. This workforce is supplemented by seven volunteers, five of them Japanese. Two CICM

seminarians also do pastoral work at DAWN.

Gearing itself for more responsibilities and tougher tasks ahead, DAWN has set up an advisory council. These include Japanese Senator Masako Owaki, Filipino Representative Bonifacio Gillego, Sr. Mary John Mananzan, Bishop Julio Xavier Labayen, OCD, Yayori Matsui and lawyer Kenshi Nishida.

DAWN, true to its commitment to delving and expanding knowledge on migration, is doing three research studies on: (1) the effectiveness of the so-called

Artist Record Book used by Filipino entertainers in Japan, (2) an assessment of the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995, and (3) the impact of the migration of Filipino women entertainers to Japan.

Barely a year old, DAWN has accomplished so much. Credit it to the much-appreciated support from networks overseas, the total commitment and perseverance of the staff and volunteers, and the tenacity and hope of the women clients and their children who see in DAWN the promise of a new and more dignified life.



DAWN women, children, staff and volunteers sing "Sampung Mga Karapatan" (Ten Human Rights) during the organization's International Human Rights Day Celebration. The participants also formed a "solidarity web" to symbolize the understanding of children's human rights

A day for migrant

DAWN and other concerned groups launched on December 18, 1997, "International Day of Solidarity with Migrants." United Nations local headquarters in Makati.

On that occasion, the organization joined other groups affiliated with the Philippine Migrant Workers Rights Watch (PMWRW) as well as the United Nations Development Program, the International Labor Organization, and the Asian Partnership on International Migration (APIM) in reviving the campaign for approval of the International Convention on the Protection of All Migrant Workers and Their Families.

The convention recognizes the need to protect the rights of migrant workers the world over. Migrants, who leave their countries due to factors of "economic globalization, poverty and unemployment," are often exposed to situations that violate basic human rights. Stories of Filipino migrants being beaten and abused by employers, not getting their salaries, and who come home in a box, certainly call for worldwide immediate solutions.

DEVELOPMENT ACTION FOR WOMEN NETWORK (DAWN)

Rm. 514 Don Santiago Building
1344 Taft Avenue, Ermita
1000 Manila, Philippines
Tel. (632) 526-9098, Fax (632) 526-9101
E-mail: dawnphil@webquest.com

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