

**“The Trafficking of Filipino Women in Japan and the
Development Action for Women Network (DAWN)”
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ABSTRACT

Trafficking in persons, of late, has become a major issue of concern. It has gained the attention of governments because of its magnitude, prevalence, gravity, and the damage it has brought upon people, especially women and children.

For quite some time, non-government organisations have been concerned and working on the issue of trafficking in persons. As early as the 1980's, NGOs in the Philippines and in Japan have been reporting on the increasing cases of trafficking of Filipino, Thai, East European and Latin American women in Japan.

Non-government organisations play a vital role in the fight against human trafficking. Their work with victims of trafficking and with other networks and organisations concerned with the same issue has resulted in making people aware of the issue. NGOs are also active in consciousness-building, information dissemination, education and training, providing data and information, providing direct services to victims, as well as lobbying for the passage of laws. Likewise, NGOs are critical allies and partners of government in the fight against this modern day form of slavery.

The Development Action for Women Network (DAWN) is one of the more active Philippine NGOs that have been involved in the issue of trafficking of Filipino women for years. For ten years now, DAWN has provided direct services to distressed Filipino women migrants in Japan and the returnees, as well as their Japanese-Filipino children (JFC). Its programmes and services have made a difference in the lives of its members. The package of services for its members is holistic – from counseling, legal and para-legal assistance, and health and educational assistance, to workshops and seminars on values and issues pertaining to women, to alternative livelihood, to research and advocacy.

The impact of the work of DAWN, on how effective it has been, will be gauged by feedbacks from its members, as well as from individuals and organisations who have dealt with DAWN. The preceding pages will show how DAWN's work has made a difference in the lives of people it has helped and how it has relentlessly worked in the fight against trafficking in persons.

INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE

Trafficking in persons, as defined in the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, is the “recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons...” by improper means such as by force, abduction, fraud or coercion, for an improper purpose, like forced or coerced labour, servitude, slavery or sexual exploitation.

International sex trafficking remains the third largest source of profit for organized crime after narcotics and weapons. According to the United Nations, the number of trafficked persons globally has risen to 2.4 million per year. Of this figure, about 600,000 to 800,000 persons, according to US Trafficking in Persons Report, are trafficked across international borders. Trafficking in women for prostitution purposes is a gender-specific crime. Most victims of trafficking are female and the overwhelming majority of the perpetrators are male. The International Labor Organization (ILO) reports that women and children from Southeast Asian countries like Burma, Cambodia and the Philippines are being trafficked abroad and end up working as prostitutes, beggars or labourers in rich countries.

The 2005 Trafficking in Persons Report of the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons of the U.S. State Department cites that “a significant number of the 71,084 Philippine women who entered Japan as overseas performing artists in 2004 are believed to have been women trafficked into the sex trade.”

This paper is a descriptive discussion and analysis of trafficking of Filipino women outside the Philippine borders. It will attest to the fact that indeed trafficking of Filipino women abroad exists. And since trafficking of Filipino women occurs, proper measures should be taken to prevent its occurrence. It takes into consideration the role that non-government organisations play in combating trafficking in persons.

It will discuss the work of DAWN and how it made a dent in the lives of its women and children members and its participation in the lobbying and advocacy in the fight against trafficking in persons.

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

This paper will look into the issue of trafficking as an international crime and some of the efforts being done to combat it, in particular, the role that non-government organisations play.

While trafficking also occurs in the domestic scene, the focus of this paper will be on trafficking of Filipino women that transpires outside the boundaries of the Philippines. In particular, it will look at the trafficking of Filipino women who work or worked in Japan as “overseas performing artists.”

There are a handful of NGOs that provide direct services to trafficked victims in the Philippines. This paper will only focus on the work of one NGO, the Development Action for Women Network (DAWN), an NGO based in Manila whose work is focused on Filipino migrant women and returnees from Japan, including the issue of their Japanese-Filipino children. DAWN is being assisted since 1998 in its work in Japan by DAWN-Japan which is composed of around 20 volunteers. It will look into how this particular NGO has responded to the issue of trafficking of women and how its work has made an impact on the lives of trafficked victims and their families.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Several studies have attested to the fact that indeed, many women who work in Japan as entertainers ended up as victims of trafficking.

Ballescás (1996) contextualized the OPA phenomenon in relation to the “3 Ds theory” (difficult, dangerous, dirty) regarding migrant labour. She added other Ds to describe the plight of Filipino women in Japan. She said that their migration to Japan is their Decision, brought about by a Drive to uplift their poverty-stricken conditions.

The Development Action for Women Network (DAWN) in partnership with the International Movement Against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism (IMADR), Tokyo, Japan in 2001, did a research in connection with the Toyota Project on Trilateral Comparison of Gender Security and Human Rights. Several Filipino women working in Japan were interviewed to look into the protection of the rights and welfare of these women. The findings of the study revealed the abusive working conditions of these women, and the lack of protective measures for Filipino women migrant workers.

In 2003, DAWN did a research on the overseas performing artists, from their pre-departure to their reintegration process (Pains & Gains, 2003). The study looked into the profile of women OPAs and the reasons for their migration. The study also looked into what the women have to go through before landing a job in Japan, and the nature of their work and work conditions, and the accompanying problems. The reintegration process of the women returnees were also looked into – how they coped with problems, the kind of life they led after their return from Japan.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) released a report in 1999 which says that Japan’s sex industry hosts about 150,000 foreign workers today, and the International Labor Organization (ILO) Japan reports that Philippines, Columbia and Thailand are the top source countries, although the number of women from Russia, Korea and China has gone up.

In 2005, the U.S. State Department Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons released a report which states that “the Philippines is a source, transit and destination country for men, women and children trafficked for the purposes of sexual exploitation and forced labour.” The same report likewise said that “a significant number of the 71,084 Philippine women who entered Japan as overseas performing artists in 2004 are believed to have been women trafficked

into the sex trade.” The 2005 report, as well as the 2004 report, has placed the Philippines in the Tier 2 Watch List¹.

¹ Tier 2 Watch List is a classification given by the U.S. State Department for countries whose governments do not fully comply with the Act minimum standards but are making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance with those standards, and (1) the absolute number of victims of severe forms of trafficking is very significant or is significantly increasing; or (2) there is a failure to provide evidence of increasing efforts to combat severe forms of trafficking in persons from the previous year; or (3) the determination that a country is making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance with minimum standards was based on commitments by the country to take additional future steps over the next year.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

When looking at the issue of trafficking of Filipino women abroad, it would greatly help by having a perspective of the historical development of the migration process and how Filipino women eventually got involved in this process. The labour policy of this country, particularly its overseas labour migration policy would partially explain why people leave the country to work abroad. The economic situation of the Philippines, as well as the laws and other measures and mechanisms to protect Filipinos overseas would also have to be looked into. These factors would help in having a better understanding of why women become victims of trafficking. At the same time, these can serve as inputs and guides in crafting ways and measures and interventions for women victims and would be victims of trafficking.

OVERSEAS LABOUR MIGRATION

The Philippines has a long history of overseas labour migration. From the 15 farm workers who left the Philippines to work in sugarcane fields in Hawaii in 1906, there are now almost 8 million Filipinos scattered in 192 countries all over the globe. DOLE Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas reported that more than 1 million overseas employment contracts were processed in 2005. Global deployment of OFWs reached 981,677 or 5.2% higher compared to 933,588 deployed in 2004.²

From the United States, the market for Filipino migrant workers expanded to the Middle East in the 1970's. The 1980's marked further market expansion, with a heavy demand for semi-skilled and unskilled workers. Entertainers were hired by Japan, medical practitioners were recruited by Canada and the United Kingdom, domestic workers were in demand in Europe, Hong Kong and Singapore.

Up to the mid-1980s, the vast majority of migrant workers from the Philippines were men, but by the late 1980s, when the demand for service grew in the international arena, more women workers started to join the migrant work force. This era marked the feminization of migration.

Feminization of Migration

In 1975, women only comprised 12% of workers who left for abroad, or some 2,275 women. In 1987, this figure increased to 47.2%, climbed to 69% in 2002, to a high of 75% in

² www.dole.gov.ph

2004³. POEA statistics from 1997 to 2001 indicate a consistent increase in the deployment of women, outnumbering the men by 3 to 1 in 2001.

In 2002, 69% of those who left to work abroad were women. This figure reached a high of 74% in 2004. An ADB study in 2003 indicated that there were more female than male OFWs in age groups 15-34 years. The same study shows that domestically, the unemployment rates for women in the same age groups were higher for women. Female OFWs tend to be younger than male OFWs. About 64% of female OFWs are aged 15-34 years. The 5% growth in the number of OFWs in 2001 was largely fueled by the surge of female employment overseas.

The POEA Annual report of 2004 says that the number of newly hired service workers such as domestic workers, household workers, caretakers, waiters, bartenders, etc. expanded, and 90% of those hired were females. There was also an increase in the demand for professional and technical workers. The proportion of service and professional/technical workers still continued to comprise the greater bulk of the total deployment of newly hired OFWs. “It must be noted that workers belonging to these categories were women migrant workers, a significant portion of whom were medical workers (nurse and health care assistants), teachers and performing artists,” said the report.

PHILIPPINE OVERSEAS LABOUR POLICY

Philippine labour policy is clearly defined in the 1987 Constitution. Article XIII states that “The State shall afford full protection to labour, local and overseas, organized and unorganized, and promote full employment and equality of employment opportunities for all.”

The signing of the Labor Code of the Philippines into law on May 1, 1974 signaled earnest government involvement with overseas employment. Prior to its signing into law, there was minimal government participation and control in the overseas employment industry since the number of Filipinos going abroad to work was not that significant.

The 1974 Labor Code institutionalized government participation in overseas employment. It created the Overseas Employment Development Board (OEDB) and the National Seaman Board (NSB) to undertake a systematic programme for overseas employment. The OEDB and the NSB were mandated to be the responsible agencies for market development, recruitment and placement for Filipino workers.

³ POEA

In 1982, President Marcos signed Executive Order No. 797 creating the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA), which took over the functions of the OEDB and the NSB. It was also given jurisdiction over cases involving contract workers.

Letter of Instruction No. 537 was signed on May 1, 1977, creating the Welfare Fund for Overseas Workers (Welfare Fund). The Welfare Fund was established to provide social and welfare services to Filipino overseas workers, to provide skills and career development services to Filipino overseas workers, to undertake studies and researches for enhancement of their social, economic and cultural well-being, and to develop, support and finance specific projects for the benefit of Filipino overseas workers.

During the term of President Corazon C. Aquino, overseas Filipino workers were hailed as the country's new heroes (*Bagong Bayani*). In recognition of their vital role, President Aquino signed Proclamation No. 276 on June 21, 1988 and proclaimed December as "the month of overseas Filipinos."

On January 30, 1987, President Aquino signed Executive Order No. 126, which restructured the Welfare Fund and renamed it as the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA).

During the Ramos Administration, Republic Act No. 8042 otherwise known as the Migrant Workers' Act was enacted. Republic Act No. 8042 is the enabling act which serves as the legislative framework on overseas deployment policy.

Article I Section 1 (c) of RA 8042 states that "While recognizing the significant contribution of Filipino migrant workers to the national economy through their foreign exchange remittances, the State does not promote overseas employment as a means to sustain economic growth and achieve national development. The existence of the overseas employment programme rests solely on the assurance that the dignity and fundamental human rights and freedoms of the Filipino citizen shall not, at any time, be compromised or violated. The State, therefore, shall continuously create local employment opportunities and promote the equitable distribution of wealth and the benefits of development."

While RA 8042 says that "the State does not promote overseas employment as a means to sustain economic growth and achieve national development," the actions of the Arroyo Administration say otherwise. The Department of Labor and Employment announced in 2005 that it targets one million overseas jobs. It has entered into agreements with other countries to

provide labour and at the same time it provides incentives to foreign employers hiring Filipinos. Under the Arroyo government overseas employment has become a tacit state policy because it badly needs foreign revenues and it could not provide enough jobs for the increasing workforce. It also badly needs the foreign currency from remittances in order to pay for its huge foreign debt. In fact when the Japanese government started to implement its new immigration policy⁴ on March 15, 2005, which affected the entry of foreign entertainers to Japan, the Philippine Government immediately asked for a moratorium on its implementation. Initially, it asked for a moratorium of five years saying it will affect the families of OPAs. Then it asked for a 2-year moratorium, which it later lowered to a 6-month moratorium. It even sent emissaries to Japan to negotiate on the said moratorium. As the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines say, this act of the government is "like begging for the continuation of this illegality."⁵

The flow of remittances enhanced the desirability of overseas migration. As more Filipinos were deployed abroad more opportunities surfaced, but at the same time more problems surfaced, too. Emerging issues such as illegal recruitment, welfare and protection of OFWs, welfare of the families of OFWs, plight of undocumented workers, vulnerabilities of women migrant workers, rights of migrant workers, to name a few, came into focus.

TRAFFICKING IN THE PHILIPPINES

Republic Act 9208 otherwise known as the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003 defines trafficking in persons as "the recruitment, transportation, transfer or harboring, or receipt of persons with or without the victim's consent or knowledge, within or across national borders by means of threat or use of force, or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power or position, taking advantage of the vulnerability of the person, or, giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person for the purpose of exploitation which includes at a minimum, the exploitation or the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery, servitude or the removal or sale of organs." As used in the Act, trafficking in persons also include "the recruitment, transportation, harboring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation."

⁴ The new immigration policy which took effect on March 15, 2005 required foreign entertainers who wish to work in Japan to have at least two years work experience as an entertainer outside Japan, and/or two years of formal schooling in relation to singing or dancing.

⁵ CBCP statement, 2005.

Trafficking in the Philippines does not only take place within the context of international labour migration, but also for the purpose of marriage, the local sex industry, and for commercial adoption or sexual exploitation of women and children.

One major daily reported that in the Philippines, “at least 50 women and children everyday fall victim to human traffickers.”⁶ Young women are recruited from the provinces with promises of high paying jobs in cities here and abroad, but most end up in bars in the provinces, as training supposedly, to help them adjust as entertainers abroad. These young women are even forced to have sex with patrons.

According to one NGO based in the Philippines, there were 400,000 women in prostitution in 1998. This figure excludes the unregistered ones, the seasonal prostitutes, overseas entertainers and victims of external trafficking.⁷ One fourth of them are children. Out of the 200,000 or so street children, some 60,000 sell their bodies. While up to 600,000 women and children are trafficked through the Internet in at least 50,000 websites⁸.

The victims of sex trafficking are usually poor and uneducated women and children who go abroad because they cannot make a living or achieve job security in the Philippines. While some women go abroad to work or marry, others work as "entertainers," a euphemism for prostitutes.

Within the context of international migration, trafficking has flourished through the internet, through mail-order brides, through illegal recruitment, and through the deployment of overseas performing artists (OPAs), to name a few.

DEPLOYMENT OF FILIPINO OVERSEAS PERFORMING ARTISTS (OPAs)

Filipino entertainers abroad are called overseas performing artists (OPAs) by the Philippine government. This classification includes the composers, musicians and singers, choreographers and dancers, actors and stage directors, circus performers. The 2004 figures of the POEA indicated that 71,480 OPAs left the country to work abroad. Of this figure, 70,619 or 98% left for Japan and the rest were deployed in other countries.

As women and migrants, Filipina OPAs in Japan and also in Korea, since there is now an increasing number of Filipino women entertainers in Korea working in establishments that cater

⁶ See “Trafficking in Women and Children,” by Justice Flerida Ruth Romero published in Philippine Daily Inquirer, May 22, 2005

⁷ See "RP Has 400,000 Prostitutes," *TODAY*, 25 February 1998

⁸ Sources: Gabriela, Institute for Social Studies and Action

to American military personnel, are much vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. As workers in the entertainment industry, they are exposed to the risks of harassment and of being trafficked. They also face the danger of acquiring HIV / AIDS and other sexually-transmitted diseases.

More so, Filipina entertainers in Japan are also subjected to numerous work violations such as long hours of club work, no day-off or leave even when sick, no health insurance or regular medical check-up and erratic payment of salary. According to the contracts signed by the OPAs in the Philippines, they should receive a salary of about US\$2,000 or Y200,000 a month, but most of them receive only from US\$300 to US\$700 a month (Y30,000 to Y70,000). Their passports and other documents are also confiscated by the club owner/promoter upon their arrival in Japan. They get paid at the airport prior to their flight back to Manila after their six months contract. Many are also forced to go out with customers on *dohan* and are transferred from one club to another, thus furthering their risks of sexual harassment.

The various tales of abuse and maltreatment abroad as told by the entertainers themselves should be a cause for alarm for a sending country like the Philippines. Cultural presentations, which were usually shown in the 70s and mid 80s by “real Filipino artists” in Japan have already changed in the passing of time.

METHODOLOGY

This paper utilized secondary materials such as published books, and articles from periodicals and journals. Reports from various agencies were also used, as well as papers presented in conferences and meetings.

Vital inputs to the study was provided by staff members of the Development Action for Women Network (DAWN), who were interviewed. A few women members of DAWN were also interviewed to add to what the staff of DAWN have said and to substantiate the findings of the materials utilized in this paper. Researches conducted by the organisation were also utilized.

FINDINGS

TRAFFICKING OF FILIPINO WOMEN IN JAPAN

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) calculates that Japan's sex industry hosts about 150,000 foreign workers today, and the International Labor Organization (ILO) Japan reports that Philippines, Columbia and Thailand are the top source countries, although the number of women from Russia, Korea and China has gone up. Furthermore, the 2005 US report cited that a significant number of the 71,084 Filipino women who entered Japan as entertainers in 2004 ended up in sex trade trafficking.

Several researches conducted by NGOs and scholars have also documented the experiences of Filipino women entertainers in Japan and these studies attested to their persistent trafficking (DAWN, 1997, 2001, 2003; CATW, 2001; Ballescas, 1991; IOM, 2001; ILO, 2004).

Work Situation of OPAs in Japan

Prior to their departure, OPAs sign a contract, based on the model contract designed by the POEA with their prospective employer or the Japanese promotions agency. The contract specifies the duration and effectivity of the contract, place of performance, compensation, authorized deductions, hours of work, overtime and rest day, food and accommodation, life and medical insurance, repatriation of remains, transportation, termination of contract, settlement of disputes, and non-alteration of contract.

In actuality however, the terms and conditions of the contract signed by the OPA are not followed. An OPA is not paid monthly. She gets to collect her salary only upon completion of her contract, which is usually after 6 months. This is the usual practice of Japanese employers supposedly to make the OPA toe the line.

Upon arrival of an OPA in Japan, she is met at the airport by the club owner and/or promoter and her passport is confiscated. Such a practice is being done to make sure that the women do not escape. Deprived of their documents, the women are forced into physical confinement.

The skills training the women received prior to their departure are useless. In Japan, their performance is not gauged on how good they sing and dance but on how many customers they manage to lure into the club every night. Since the women sit down with customers and pour their drinks, they are forced to deal with drunk customers and the women also get drunk.

POEA Memorandum Circular No. 2, Series of 1997 states that OPAs are not allowed “to engage in *dohan* or other similar practice, do lewd shows, or perform other indecent acts and do menial jobs, such as waitressing, janitorial and other non-contract related work.”

To engage in *dohan*, in Japanese parlance, means to accompany or to go with, or pairing. The *dohan* system in nightclub jargon means a scenario whereby the hostesses or hosts before business hours, meet their customers and have dinner or go out for a drink, and then go to the club together.

As a club regulation, *dohan* requires a woman entertainer to meet a certain quota or minimum number of private dates a month, from once a week to daily.

Although the practice varies from club to club, *dohan* is the usual way by which women are able to lure more customers to become club regulars. This means more income for the club because a customer pays around 12,000 yen (about US\$100) for every date. Of this, only 20 to 30 percent goes to the talent or the woman. Women however can receive extra payment if they agree to render sex work.

In a study conducted by the Development Action for Women Network (DAWN) on Gender Security and Human Rights⁹ a number of women interviewed said that they practice *dohan* mainly for monetary compensation and the gifts they get from their customers. The practice, according to those interviewed, enables them to collect all items that they can send or bring home as presents for their families and friends when they return to the Philippines.

The need to send money back home has lured women entertainers to engage in *dohan*, a practice which puts them in risky situations such as exposure to possible sex trade and prostitution. There are customers who mistake the women’s consent to go out on *dohan* as an agreement to have sex.

Despite several measures put in place by the government, the practice of *dohan* persists as more women compete for limited customers and a substantial income they would otherwise not earn home.

Other violations of employment contract signed by the women include having ghost venues or non-existing performance venues, and the practice of flying booking. Deploying artists to a venue other than the one stipulated in the contract is called “flying booking” and is not allowed.

⁹ DAWN, Toyota Research on Gender Security and Human Rights, 2001.

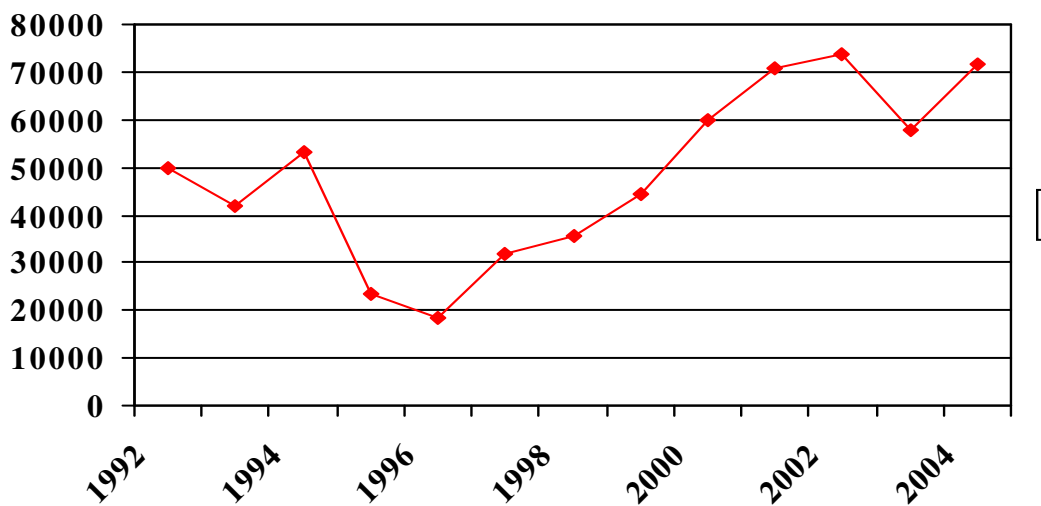
Trafficking of women and children in Japan has almost always been associated with the entertainment/sex industries which is heavily controlled by syndicates like the Yakuza. Given the nature of their job, the environment and the culture of the entertainment world, Filipina entertainers face the risks of sexual harassment and verbal and physical abuse from both their employers and customers.

DEVELOPMENT ACTION FOR WOMEN NETWORK (DAWN): INTERVENTIONS FOR TRAFFICKED FILIPINO WOMEN

The 1990’s to 2004 saw a huge increase in the number of Filipino women who were deployed abroad as OPAs. Although the figure declined in 1996 with the implementation of stricter rules after the celebrated case of Maricris Sioson in 1991 and the Flor Contemplacion case in 1995, 1997 saw an increase in the number of OPA deployment that reached a high of about 74,000 in 2003 and about 71,000 in 2004.

Figure 1. Deployment of OPAS, 1992-2004

(Source: POEA)



It has long been accepted that women constitute the more vulnerable sector among OFWs. Women entertainers, particularly those who work in Japan, due to the nature of their work, are more vulnerable to exploitation, health risks and problematic work conditions. The

deployment of OPAs to Japan has also brought to focus the increase in the number of Japanese-Filipino children (JFC).

Such a scenario brought about the birth of the Development Action for Women Network (DAWN), to address the growing number and concerns of distressed Filipino migrant women in Japan, as well as the growing number of Japanese-Filipino children abandoned by their Japanese fathers.

DAWN is one of the leading NGOs in the Philippines working on the issues of women and migration. Founded in February 1996, DAWN's vision is a society where men and women share equal opportunities for a just and humane living, creating empowered and self-reliant families in communities where each one cares for one another in the spirit of peace based on justice, and where migration is an option that is respected and protected. Its mission is to live hope with the Filipino people, especially with the returning distressed migrant women and Japanese-Filipino children through programmes and services that enable them and their families to regain and strengthen their sense of dignity and self-worth and to reclaim their wholeness; and to generate strong public support for the promotion of issues, rights and concerns of Filipino migrants and their families, as well as to provide possible alternatives to their families and to their situation.

DAWN focuses on assisting returning distressed migrant women from Japan and their Japanese-Filipino children (JFC). To do this, it has set the following goals:

- 1) ensure the immediate reintegration of returning distressed migrant women with their families and the larger Philippine society;
- 2) create alternative livelihood opportunities for returning migrant women as an option to migration;
- 3) generate a strong public opinion against all forms of violence and discrimination inflicted on migrant women and children;
- 4) build a wide network of support for distressed Filipino migrant women and their families; and
- 5) develop DAWN as a competent and self-sustaining support institution for distressed migrant women and their families.

DAWN provides a holistic approach in assisting its clients through its programmes: Social Services, Alternative Livelihood, Research, Education and Advocacy, Networking.

Conceptual Framework of Programmes

Consistent with its adopted strategies, DAWN undertakes an integrated set of programme packages to achieve its goals. For the year 2005, its programmes shall continue to address the immediate and short-term needs of its women clients, especially the victims of human rights violations, as well as their longer-term life-work concerns as former entertainers and now as single parents to their Japanese-Filipino children abandoned by Japanese fathers.

The conceptual framework of DAWN's programmes may be graphically presented as follows:

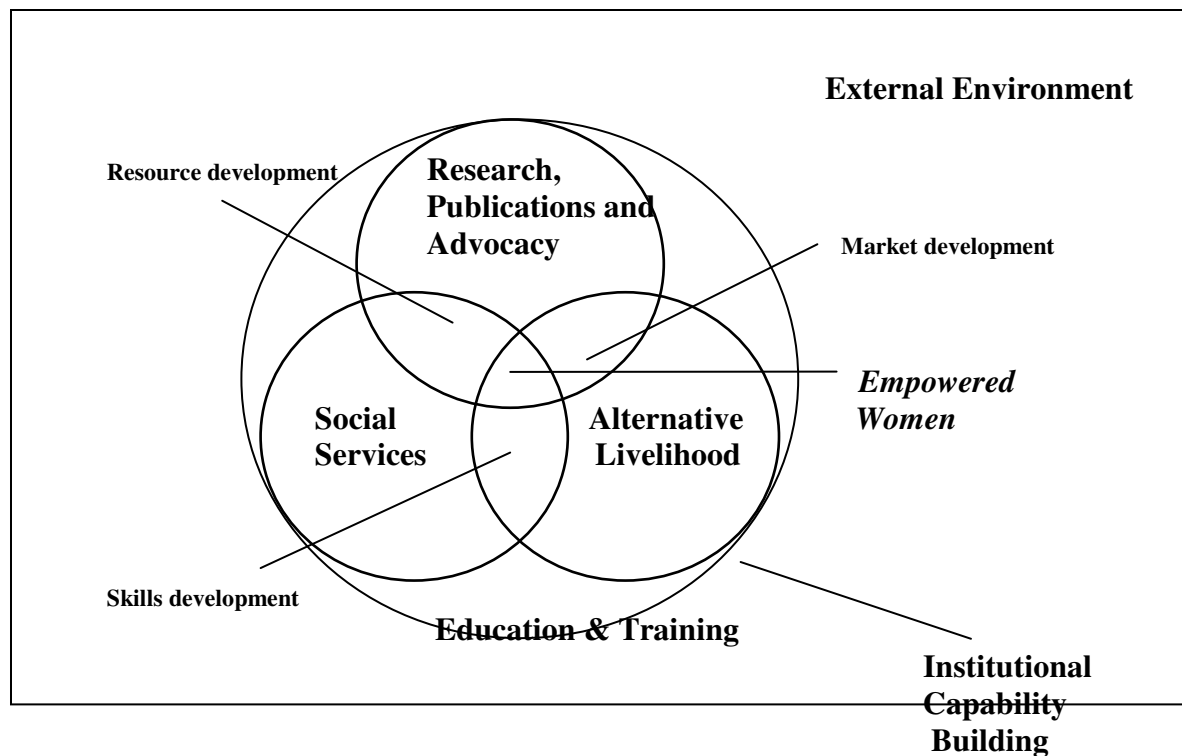


Figure 2. *Conceptual Framework of DAWN's Programme Packages*

At the core of DAWN's programmes (as shown in figure 2, what all the programmes represented by circles to denote dynamism, share in common) lies its resolve at women empowerment. Keenly aware of prevailing realities that could either facilitate or hinder the process, DAWN chooses to focus its resources on a three-pronged programme: Social Services; Alternative Livelihood; and Research, Publications and Advocacy. An education component undergirds all three. A fifth component, institutional capability building, pervades all the programme areas. This is meant to ensure the long-term sustainability of DAWN's total life and work.

Programme synergy is ensured through three (3) integrating processes (intersecting areas in the diagram). *Resource development* is a common concern between the Research, Publications and Advocacy and Social Services components. This includes expansion of resource base for social services. This translates into wider client reach, more specialized service to clients, and access of clients to a wider range of necessary and needed social services.

Research, Publications and Advocacy is likewise integrated with Alternative Livelihood component through *market development*. This covers, among others, identification and securing of buyers of clients' products (present and potential) or expansion of market share of present products, development of new products for potential markets, matching skills or qualifications of women clients with employment opportunities, negotiating employment.

On the other hand, *skills development* serves as the integration point between Social Services and Alternative Livelihood. This includes human relations, community building, decision-making, entrepreneurial, production and technical skills.

All the above processes and the three main programme areas are further integrated through the Education programme component (shown in figure 2 as circumscribing the three intersecting circles). It ensures the soundness of programme processes vis-à-vis the underlying empowerment agenda.

Finally, the Institutional Capability Building component focuses on the institutionalization (becoming a way of life for DAWN) of effective, efficient and healthy organisational processes, and appropriate organisational value systems. Moreover, it secures the organisation-based resources for long-term sustainability of DAWN's life and work.

Social Services Programme

The Social Services programme serves as the point of entry in reaching out to these distressed women migrants and their JFCs. Foremost among DAWN's direct services is the case management and para-legal assistance to women and JFC members.

DAWN started with only 30 women and 42 JFCs in 1996. As of 2005, it has handled about 293 cases of women and 372 Japanese-Filipino children. The number of women and children seeking assistance from DAWN increases everyday. It gets referrals from the Embassy of Japan in Manila, some Philippine government agencies, as well as those who have read about us in the papers and heard about DAWN from radio and on television programmes that have featured the organisation.

Among the cases DAWN assists are those concerning work contract violations, abuses and harassment in the work place, abandonment of Japanese husband and other marital concerns, JFC's right to paternal recognition and support, as well as the citizenship of the JFCs. DAWN also provides women and children with health care, educational assistance, counseling, airport/travel assistance, Manila-based DAWN Center for women returnees and their JFCs, lessons on Japanese culture and language, workshops and other get-together activities to further support their various social, mental, health, and emotional needs, among others.

Research and Advocacy Programme

Aside from direct services to women and children, DAWN also further establishes its role in the society through extensive information campaign, advocacy programmes and partnership building. Among the effective means it utilizes are: print and broadcast media, its quarterly newsletter (SINAG), research, conferences, fora and study tours for local and foreign visitors interested on migrant issues, DAWN web site, and lobby work in the Upper and Lower Houses for the passage of bills beneficial to women and migrants, among others, both in the Philippines and in Japan. DAWN-PMRW also lobbied before the Japanese government to intensify and strengthen its efforts to combat trafficking in persons. DAWN is in constant touch with various Philippine, Japanese and other international agencies that are involved in anti-trafficking.

DAWN is also an active member of the Philippine Migrants Rights Watch (PMRW), a civil society network that promotes the recognition, protection and fulfillment of the rights of Filipino migrants. It is also a member of the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women (CATW-AP) and the OFW Journalism Consortium. The DAWN, PMRW, and the CATW-AP were among the NGOs who actively lobbied for the passage of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act, which was signed into law in May 2003. In 2005, DAWN's Executive Director was invited by Vital Voices Global Partnership to be a member of its global advisory council. DAWN has since been actively coordinating with Vital Voices Global Partnership, a U.S based non-government organisation with Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton as Honorary Co-Chair.

One of its major advocacy programmes is *Teatro Akebono*, the theater group of DAWN women and children members that perform in the Philippines and in Japan. The stories especially written for the play depict the lives and personal experiences of DAWN members. The programme does not only tap the acting and singing potentials of the participants but it has also become their source of empowerment, healing and recovery as it paves the way towards their

discovery and development of skills. JFC members of Teatro Akebono also get the chance to discover and appreciate their paternal roots during their Japan tour and also look forward to meeting their Japanese fathers whom they have never seen or talked to or have lost touch in a long time.

Alternative Livelihood Programme

Bouncing back into society after a traumatic or distressing experience abroad is never easy. Thus, DAWN set up its own alternative livelihood programme called Sikap-Buhay or SIKHAY. SIKHAY means striving for a better life or self-empowerment. Set up on March 2, 1996, the project serves 1) as therapy for the women; 2) as training ground for entrepreneurial development and management; and 3) as a vehicle for advocacy for the continuing plight of migrant women. It has three project components: sewing, handloom weaving and tie-dye.

To date, DAWN has assisted 106 women in skills training in the different training centers after which they underwent in-house training at DAWN's SIKHAY. Apart from acquiring the skills, women are likewise trained to become efficient and responsible in handling tasks relevant to the programme to further prepare them in managing their own projects in the future. As a result, some of them have already found work outside the programme or have put up their own businesses.

From the 106 women trained, there are at present ten active Sikhay members, who produce quality items made of batik and other indigenous materials, tie-dyed shirts, as well as hand-woven items, which are marketed and sold in various local bazaars and in other countries especially in Japan through the support of our networks. This is the members' alternative source of income, which help provide for the needs of their families.

DAWN AND THE FIGHT AGAINST TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

Aside from providing direct intervention to its clients, DAWN also does research, advocacy work, and networking. It is actively involved in efforts to combat trafficking in persons, and works with local and international NGOs, governments and other institutions.

Awareness-Raising, Consciousness-Building, Information Dissemination

NGOs have brought into mainstream consciousness of people and society the issue of trafficking in persons. They work for the recognition of the problem, that it indeed exist, and create awareness and consciousness that human trafficking is a crime.

DAWN tries to reach out to as many people as it can to inform people of the issue, including the risks involved and their rights, as well. Every quarter, it comes out with a newsletter called *Sinag*, which reports on the activities of the organisation and the latest news in relation to women and migration. *Sinag* is distributed to DAWN's networks and subscribers. It is translated to Japanese and distributed to DAWN's Japanese network by DAWN-Japan.

Aside from the newsletter, DAWN has a website (www.dawnphil.org), which people from everywhere can access. It provides information on the work and activities of the organisation, and publishes materials that are related to trafficking.

The Executive Director of DAWN, as well as some of its women and JFC members have appeared and have been invited as guests in television and radio programmes. They have given interviews and discussed issues related to them.

DAWN also organizes forums, discussions and conferences in order to raise public awareness, for a deeper understanding of the issue at hand, and in order to avoid becoming victims of trafficking. It partners with other agencies and organisations to bring to fore the issues it advocates.

Recently, for its 10th anniversary, DAWN organized a conference on Migration and Trafficking in Persons. It was held in cooperation with Vital Voices Global Partnership, an international NGO based in the United States. The said conference gathered experts from various field and countries to share experiences and best practices in the fight against human trafficking.

Provide data and information

DAWN has conducted researches on the issue of trafficking of Filipino women in Japan. The results and findings of these researches have been published. It has also published a compilation of stories of some of its women members who came home distressed after working in Japan as OPAs, but who have survived their ordeal and have since moved on with the help of their families and DAWN. The data and information provided by these researches are helpful in crafting the necessary interventions for women in the same situation.

DAWN likewise maintains a resource center which is open to researchers. Students from various Metro Manila colleges and universities, as well as researches from other countries have availed of these resources.

Direct Services to Victims

As mentioned earlier, DAWN provides a variety of services to the victims of trafficking, which include social and psycho-social interventions such as counseling, legal and para-legal assistance, shelter, re-integration projects for women and their families.

Lobbying

DAWN is active in lobbying for the passage of laws or changes in policies that will benefit women migrants. Together with CATW-AP, and other women NGOs, and the Philippine Migrants Rights Watch (PMRW), DAWN lobbied for the passage of the anti-trafficking law. After eight years, their efforts paid off and the Republic Act 9208 or the Anti-Trafficking Law was finally passed in May 2003. DAWN and the PMRW were also active in lobbying for the passage of the Absentee Voting and Dual Citizenship laws. Both laws were also passed in 2003.

DAWN is also one of the NGOs that actively participate in the Consultative Council for OFWs, composed of government agencies and NGOs involved with migration. It also attends congressional hearings on issues related to women and migration.

Critical Ally and Partner of Government

The primary responsibility of protecting its own people lies with the government. But more and more, NGOs have provided direct and necessary services, which the state does not provide.

At times, the relationship between government and NGOs may be conflicting. While, on one hand, NGOs collaborate with governments to reach their objectives, they also criticize some state policies. Being autonomous, NGOs state their own opinions and views that reflect their experiences in dealing with the issue. But although NGOs and governments may have differences in policies, strategies or ideologies, they have a common goal, and that is to end trafficking.

There is a need for partnership between government and NGOs, and other institutions to strengthen enforcement of law, and for proper implementation of laws and policies. Only by collaborating at various levels – policy, legislation, direct service provision or a holistic re-integration - can there be comprehensive solutions to this nefarious human rights violation.

Cooperation, collaboration in the local, regional and international arena

Cooperation and collaboration among NGOs and other agencies within the local, regional and international arena are necessary to fight trafficking in persons.

Last year, with the implementation of the new immigration policy of Japan restricting the entry of entertainers called by the Philippine government as “overseas performing artists,” DAWN and other Philippine NGOs such as CATW-AP, Batis Center for Women, the Center for Migrant Advocacy, the CBCP-ECMI, Kanlungan Center Foundation, Philippine Migrants Rights Watch, the Scalabrini Migration Center, the Third World Movement Against the Exploitation of Women, and WomenLead came up with a unity statement supporting the new policy. While recognizing the loss of jobs and monetary rewards, the impact and consequences of the deployment of entertainers to Japan were looked into and considered.

At the regional and international levels, DAWN takes part in conferences and discussions on sharing of experiences and best practices, as well as measures and solutions to the problem of human trafficking.

IMPACT OF DAWN’S WORK

Ten years ago, DAWN embarked on its mission to help distressed Filipino women migrants. Ten years after, its work has gained notice and recognition of individuals and groups. Aside from the women and children whom DAWN has assisted in various ways, the people and organisations DAWN has worked with have also given their assessment of the kind of work that DAWN does.

During the celebration of its 10th year anniversary in February 2006, friends, partners and networks of DAWN expressed their appreciation of DAWN and its work for the past ten years.

Below are some of the remarks given by individuals and groups on the work that DAWN has done. They attest that indeed DAWN has made its mark and that its programmes and services have impacted on the lives of some people.

International Labor Organization (ILO) Deputy Director Keiko Niimi cited DAWN for including the ILO in its work “to chip away the human rights abuses against women.”¹⁰

¹⁰ Message delivered by ILO Deputy Director Keiko Niimi on the occasion of DAWN’s 10th year anniversary, February 10, 2006.

Mr. Bruce Reed, regional representative of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) congratulated and lauded DAWN for being a consistent advocate of best practices and a partner in numerous migration initiatives¹¹.

Ambassador John Miller, Director of the Office to Combat and Monitor Trafficking in Persons of the U.S. State Department sent a message to DAWN during the conference on Migration and Trafficking in Persons organized by DAWN. Ambassador Miller cited the need to form a strong coalition of diverse players ranging from non-governmental organisations to first responders including police officers to social workers who can aid victims, in order to successfully eradicate human trafficking.

“Since trafficking in persons is a global problem, it requires the close cooperation between governments and citizens around the world,” said Mr. Miller. “The United States and the American people look forward to the day when all people may be free from all forms of human servitude and exploitation”¹².

Ambassador Tony Hely of the Australian Embassy cited DAWN’s work in “fighting for international and national improvements in policies and practices” and has also been “actively helping to shape better lives for women and children through their livelihood and skills development projects.”¹³

Commissioner Wilhelm D. Soriano of the Commission on Human Rights cited the partnership of DAWN and the CHR in the promotion and protection of human rights, especially with regards to migrants’ rights and expressed hope for many more years of continuous partnership¹⁴.

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel, Jr. congratulated DAWN on its 10th anniversary and cited the vital role of DAWN in the passage of R.A. 9208 or the Anti-Trafficking Act of 2003¹⁵.

¹¹ Message delivered by IOM Regional Representative Bruce Reed on the occasion of DAWN’s 10th year anniversary, February 10,, 2006.

¹² Message sent by Amb. John Miller to DAWN on the occasion of its anniversary.

¹³ Message sent by Amb. Tony Hely of Australia to DAWN on the occasion of its 10th anniversary.

¹⁴ Message delivered by CHR Commissioner Wilhelm Soriano on the occasion of DAWN’s 10th year anniversary.

¹⁵ Message delivered by Sen. Aquilino Pimentel, Jr. on the occasion of DAWN’s 10th year anniversary.

U.S. Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton sent her best wishes and hopes for the success in the work that DAWN does. She said that its efforts “shine the bright light of public attention on these transgressions of fundamental human rights.”¹⁶

Secretary Alberto G. Romulo of the Department of Foreign Affairs commended DAWN for “its tireless and selfless dedication in assisting and promoting the welfare of Filipino women migrants and returnees from Japan, as well as Japanese-Filipino children” and expressed hope for a continuing partnership with the DFA “in the protection of our migrant workers, especially those in Japan.”¹⁷

Consul General Eiichi Oshima of the Embassy of Japan commended “the strong advocacy efforts which DAWN has exerted over the years to combat trafficking in persons.” He expressed hope that DAWN will “continue its active cooperation with the Philippine government and the Japanese government and international organisations to help effectively address trafficking in persons.”¹⁸

Ambassador Annika Markovic of the Swedish Embassy in Manila cited the partnership between DAWN and the Swedish Embassy in Manila. “Together we have explored different ways and means to promote and protect the welfare of Filipino migrants and their families.” Having seen for herself the work of DAWN, she said she was “impressed with the work that DAWN has done in promoting the rights of the Filipino women migrants to Japan and their Japanese-Filipino children.”¹⁹

The Philippine Migrants Rights Watch noted that DAWN “has been and will always be in the front line of advocacy and concrete action to provide an effective response” to the challenges brought about by globalization and neo-liberalistic economies.²⁰

The Commission on Filipinos Overseas through its Executive Director, Jose Z. Molano, Jr., as well as Rep. Edcel Lagman and Rep. Roseller Barinaga, congratulated DAWN on its 10th anniversary. DAWN’s partners, the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women – Asia Pacific, Sr. Mary John Mananzan, Prioress of the Missionary Benedictine Sisters and a member of DAWN’s Advisory Council, the Philippine Educational Theater Association (PETA), and Japanese

¹⁶ Message sent by Sen. Hillary Clinton to DAWN on the occasion of its 10th year anniversary.

¹⁷ Message sent by DFA Secretary Alberto Romulo on the occasion of DAWN’s 10th year anniversary.

¹⁸ Message sent by Consul Eiichi Oshima of the Embassy of Japan on the occasion of DAWN’s 10th year anniversary.

¹⁹ Message sent by Amb. Annika Markovic on the occasion of DAWN’s 10th anniversary.

²⁰ Message sent by Fr. Fabio Baggio, Vice-President of the Philippine Migrants Rights Watch on the occasion of DAWN’s 10th anniversary.

organisations such as the All-Japan Prefectural and Municipal Workers' Union (Jichiro), Peace Boat, and DAWN-Japan likewise lauded the work of DAWN in promoting the rights and welfare of Filipino women migrants.

Impact on the lives of women and Japanese-Filipino Children (JFC)

Following are three cases of women who worked as entertainers in Japan, as well as a case of a Japanese-Filipino child. The cases of the women attest to the fact that indeed, trafficking of entertainers in Japan is rampant. While the women involved worked in Japan at different given years, their experiences in the workplace are not much different from each other. These women sought the assistance of DAWN and various forms of interventions have been provided to each of them.

Mary Joy was only 21 years old when she left to work as an entertainer in Japan in 1995. At that time, one has to be 23 years old to qualify as an entertainer. Thus, she used an anomalous birth certificate and fake passport that were both fixed by her recruitment agency, which was licensed by the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA). Upon arrival, her passport and Artist Record Book²¹ were taken by the manager of the club, which is a clear violation of Article 23 of Japan's Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Law.

She worked in a club in Gunma instead of a hotel in Takasaki as stated in her contract. This is what they call the flying booking practice. She underwent rigorous training in the Philippines, including ballet and jazz dance, but was never asked to dance during her six-month contract in Japan. Instead, she wore sexy clothes and sat beside her customers who would make sexual advances at her. She was also forced to engage in *dohan*, which requires an entertainer to go out on date with their male customers to entice them to become club regulars. Mary Joy said most of their customers mistake their consent to *dohan* as a tacit agreement to have sex. Thus, many of them become more exposed to possible sex trade, prostitution, and even rape. It is because aside from shopping and dining in with their customers, some women are also brought to private places where customers expect sexual services.

²¹ The Artist Record Book (ARB) is a document issued to performing artists that attests to their competence for the job. It contains information such as the artist's name, birthday, thumb mark, color of eyes, height, weight and skills category. It also contains the picture of the artist and the record of his or her training, academic and skills tests, overseas employment and agency involved, and other relevant information that the Secretary of Labor may require. The ARB has been replaced by the Artist Accreditation Card (AAC) in 2004.

With all her documents taken from her by the promoter/club owner, women like Mary Joy have to comply with such practices in sheer desperation to earn and survive.

When she returned home to the Philippines after her six-month contract, her reintegration process turned out to be difficult. She was subjected to malicious rumor when her Japanese boyfriend came over and stayed with her and her family. She too became a victim of false promises by her partner who suddenly stopped communicating with her. Her few investments had also gone nowhere. Wanting to start anew, Mary Joy enrolled for a college degree but was looked down by her classmates and peers for being a former “Japayuki.”

Mary Joy joined DAWN in 1997. She became an active member a year later and joined the Sikhay programme. She also participated in several of the workshops and group discussions of DAWN. She sought expression of her feelings by becoming a part of Teatro Akebono.

At present, Mary Joy is an active member of DAWN and is the coordinator of the SIKAP BUHAY (Sikhay), DAWN’s alternative livelihood programme. She struggled and worked hard to overcome her problems. Although she has had a painful experience, she has moved on and is now an advocate of women’s rights. She is currently enrolled in a state university taking up Entrepreneurial Management, and will soon graduate.

Not all former entertainers are survivors like Mary Joy. Many of them have still yet to recover from the trauma of their Japan experience.

Mildred became psychologically disturbed after going through traumatic experiences which all started when she worked in Japan as entertainer in 1986. Coming from a poor family and the eldest in a brood of four, Mildred left for Japan to work as entertainer using a passport under a different name. She was only 17 years old then. She was supposed to work as a dancer in Osaka but was instead brought to a brothel in Nagoya where she was forced to give sexual services to her customers. When she was transferred to a club, Mildred thought that her agony would end. But she was wrong. With an expired visa, Mildred was again violated in her new work place. Apart from doing janitorial chores, she was forced to sit beside her customers and never performed on stage. One of her customers became her partner whom she chose to go out with on *dohan*. He got her pregnant twice but she had them both aborted. She also discovered that he was having an affair with another woman. Because of her traumatic experiences, Mildred became psychologically ill. On her third pregnancy, Mildred went back to the Philippines in

1994, already shattered and devastated. She was placed in a mental hospital for some time but that did not help her fully recover from the trauma.

Her agony likewise affected her Japanese-Filipino child who had to bear the negative impression made on his mother. This is not to mention the pain he has to endure just like the other JFCs for having absentee fathers, the ridicule and bullying from their peers for being products of mixed parentage with Japanese-sounding names and physical features that further set them apart from the other children.

Mildred is now doing fine. She is working in a municipal project in one of the towns of Metro Manila. But it took Mildred several years to recover from her traumatic experience. Mildred and her son continue to join the various activities of DAWN.

Gina got married at the age of 18. Her marriage though did not work out. After giving birth to her first child, things did not go along well for Gina and her husband. He used to hurt her because of his unreasonable jealousy and they often quarreled. This led to their separation.

Because she wanted to provide for the needs of her child, she decided to go with her friend to a promotions agency that hires entertainers for Japan. Gina passed the audition and was chosen by one Japanese promoter and at the age of 20, she left the Philippines to work in Japan.

Upon her arrival in Japan, her passport and other travel documents were immediately confiscated. Not knowing that this practice is not allowed, she easily gave in to the demands of her employer.

Like Mary Joy, Gina did not expect her workplace to teem with women entertainers getting intimate with their Japanese customers who kiss, fondle and embrace them. She was asked to wear sexy outfits in the club. And she never had the chance to dance and do performances, which she practiced in the Philippines. Also, part of the club policy was for the women to sit beside the customers, serve them, and drink with them. More bottles consumed each night meant more income for the club. The practice of dohan, or going out with customers on dates, was also encouraged.

Whenever entertainers like Gina get drunk, customers would make fun of them and would ask them to do things against their will. Once, Gina was asked to dance half-naked on stage. A fellow entertainer advised her to take “bron,” a cough syrup, which, she said, can delay toxicity to alcoholic drinks. Later on, she found herself getting addicted to the drug.

Although her first experience as an entertainer in Japan was not good, Gina still returned to Japan a second time to work again as an entertainer. She transferred to another promotions agency, thinking that this time around, things would be better. But she was wrong. The situation was the same. She experienced being harassed by her Japanese employer on their boat trip going to his club located in a far away prefecture. At the club, apart from entertaining the customers, she had to work seven days a week and did janitorial tasks. Like the other women entertainers, she was physically confined in the club. Her employer took all her documents and the room he provided her was just at the upper floor of the club.

During her sixth contract, she fell in love with a customer and this led to her pregnancy. Her Japanese partner promised to get in touch with her and marry her. But eventually, he stopped communicating with her and she was left with another child to take care of.

Three years after giving birth to her second child, Gina decided to go back to Japan. She had to earn a living for her two daughters.

At the club where she was working, her employer introduced her to an old friend of his. One night, her employer allowed his friend to sleep in their house. Gina was too drunk at that time and did not know what she was doing. Her employer's friend forced himself on Gina and being too drunk, she was unable to fend off his sexual advances. Gina got pregnant again. It was an unwanted pregnancy so she tried to have it aborted. But the abortion did not work and she gave birth to a baby girl in 1999. The father of her third child did not want to recognize paternity of her baby.

Gina has had a series of misfortunes in her life. But with the help of her family and DAWN, she has since moved on. Gina became a member of DAWN in May 2002 and joined the Sikhay livelihood project in August 2002. She has attended several workshops, retreats and seminars conducted by DAWN for its women members. Her children have likewise benefited from her membership at DAWN. One of her daughters has attended the theater workshops of DAWN and was privileged to have been chosen to join the Japan theater tour in 2004.

At present, Gina is in-charge of the quality control and finishing of Sikhay. She is also a member of DAWN's Teatro Akebono, DAWN's theater group. She has come to terms with her situation and is now focused on her children. She dreams of being able to provide for the education for her three daughters.

Junko is half-Filipino and half-Japanese. Her mother worked in Japan as an entertainer and that is how she met her future husband, a Japanese national.

Their family lived in the Philippines. Her father was working in Japan but he would visit them often. Things were fine with their family then, until her father never came back. That was in 1993, when her mother was pregnant with her third child.

In 1996, Junko's mother learned about DAWN and sought its assistance. They were among the first members of DAWN.

While DAWN was working on their case, Junko's mother underwent training in sewing and she became part of Sikhay. Junko and her siblings were active in the organisation's activities. In 1997, when DAWN organized its first summer theater workshop for children, Junko was one of the participants. She played the lead role in DAWN's first musical play called "Fujiwara Junko, JFC." It was performed for the visiting Peace Boat participants in the Philippines. The following year, she played the lead role in the play "*Sana ... Isang Kwento ng Pangarap,*" which was toured in several schools in Manila. For the first time, it was also performed in different prefectures in Japan.

It was during the theater tour in Japan in 1998 that she met her dad again, after one of the performances in Tokyo. One of DAWN's Japanese volunteers was able to contact Junko's dad and that paved the way for the reunion of father and daughter. It was also then that Junko found out why her dad never returned. His leg had to be amputated and he lost his job.

From then on, the communication between Junko and her father continued. Her father started sending them financial support. Although they are still living separately, Junko makes it a point to see her father whenever she gets the chance to join the Teatro Akebono tour in Japan. Her youngest sister, Ken has also been to Japan twice as part of the Akebono tour and met their father.

Junko admits that DAWN has been part of her life. She practically grew in it. It is her second family. Although the case brought by her mother has long been resolved, she and her sister continue to be active members. They participate in the various activities and workshops of DAWN for Japanese-Filipino children. Through her active participation in the theater workshops, she has honed her skills and two years ago was given the chance to direct the musical play.

Junko is now 17. She will soon graduate in high school. She plans to take up theater arts in college.

SUMMARY & CONCLUSION

The well-being of its citizenry is the responsibility of governments, whether they are within the country or abroad. At times though, government is unable to respond to all the many and various needs of its people. And this is where other institutions such as non-government organisations come in.

The emergence of DAWN as a non-government organisation in Philippine society came at a time when there was an increasing number of distressed Filipino women entertainers in Japan. With the increasing number of women entertainers in Japan, there was also a marked increase in the number of cases of distressed Filipino women migrants. DAWN filled the need for organisations that will address the issues and concerns of Filipino women entertainers in Japan.

Some former Filipino entertainers in Japan go to the Japanese Embassy, especially when seeking assistance in locating their Japanese spouses or partners, in seeking paternal recognition or financial support to their children. The Japanese Embassy treats such cases as personal ones and as such are beyond the scope of their duties and functions. They refer such cases to NGOs like DAWN, Batis, and Maligaya House.

Gender plays a significant role in deciding what kind of jobs can be found for migrant men and women, especially for the low skilled. The types of jobs where demand for women migrant workers exists often reflect traditional female roles and sex stereotypes. Demand is mainly increasing for nurses, cleaning services in hotels and restaurants, sex work, and domestic work. Domestic workers are often subject to contract violations regarding pay and working conditions.

Women migrants often face discrimination because of their status as women and as migrants. More often, they receive wages lower than their male counterparts. Women, particularly forced migrants, face risk of physical and sexual abuse during travel and at destination.

Most of the women who approached DAWN once worked in Japan as entertainers. In the course of their work, they experienced abuse and violation of their rights. Some women would not admit to this. But ask them about their work condition and the terms stipulated in their

contracts and they will start complaining. Based on the experience of DAWN, many women who left the country to work abroad were not prepared. Many of the Filipino women who left to work as overseas performing artists in Japan did not know the kind of work they will have. Many did not even read the terms in the contracts that they sign. It is sad that women, in their desperation to find work and to alleviate their economic status, succumb to abuses. A lot of women choose not to complain about the many violations committed against them for fear of losing their jobs. They surrender their fates to demeaning circumstances abroad rather than give up their financial gain, which, notably, also benefit the Philippine economy. Sad still is the fact that there are not enough laws and means to protect Filipino women when they leave for work abroad.

In fairness, the Philippine government has instituted policies and passed laws specifically for migrants, such as the Migrant Workers Act of 1995, and the Anti-Trafficking Act of 2003. Unfortunately, laws are only effective if and when they are properly implemented. We should also consider the fact that the laws of the Philippines may not be applicable to the country where our OFWs are working. In many instances, the Philippines does not have bilateral labour agreements with the receiving countries.

NGOs provide assistance to people and to the government in the delivery of services. There is a diversity of NGOs that operate in the Philippines, with different issues they are involved with, and with varying kinds of services they deliver. DAWN's field is in the issues of women and migration, particularly distressed Filipino women migrants in Japan. Its work has made dents and impact not only on the lives of the people it has helped, but also on other organisations. Its work can be cited in terms of best practices that could be shared with others and duplicated in many areas.

NGOs are vital in the fight against trafficking in persons. But they can only do so much. They operate on very limited and tight budget. NGOs like DAWN need the support, assistance, and long-term commitment of funding partners, government and other private institutions.

Trafficking in persons is not an issue for governments or NGOs alone. No country or region in the world is exempt from the scourge of trafficking. All of us are stakeholders in this issue. There is therefore the need for all of us to be concerned and to act on this problem. As trafficking syndicates are organized, so must governments, civil societies, and NGOs. There is a need for united and concerted efforts to fight trafficking in persons.

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