

Empowering Returned Filipino Women Migrants and their Children: The Batis Center for Women Experience*

Andrea Luisa C. Anolin and Lara Salud C. Javier

EXPOSURE TO INSTITUTIONALIZED LABOR and sexual exploitation in Japan's adult entertainment industry shaped the experience of a significant number of the Filipino women who worked as entertainers during the past three decades since late 1970s. These women found themselves confronting daunting problems. They were at the losing end of the economic, cultural, and social changes at the individual, family and community levels brought by working in Japan.

The Batis Center for Women (Batis) was established in 1988 in response to the growing number of Filipino women migrant workers coming home from Japan in distressed conditions. Since then, Batis has extended assistance to more than two thousand women returnees from Japan, and other members of their family including children. The women sought the assistance of Batis for the problems encountered while they were working in Japan as entertainers such as illegal recruitment, labor contract violations, trafficking, and sexual abuse and exploitation. They also sought assistance for problems (such as domestic violence and abandonment) that arose when they became partners or wives of the Japanese men they met in their work.

In the early years of its existence, Batis provided immediate psychosocial and welfare services (such as counseling, airport assistance when they come home, provision of temporary shelter, and medical and legal assistance through the Social Case Management program) to the women. The work of Batis evolved to include women's empowerment through organizing, education and training, social enterprise development, and advocacy under its Women Empowerment Program.

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Batis Center for Women

These Filipino women sought Batis because of their negative migration experiences and Batis' mission to "respond to the needs of distressed women migrant workers and their families including Japanese-Filipino Children (JFC) to enable them to rebuild/regain their sense of dignity and self-worth."

In the course of extending support, Batis was able to understand the experiences of the Filipino women in Japan. Initially, the women shared only such experiences that were needed by Batis to manage their cases. But as the "helping relationships" evolved, the women gradually shared their life experiences with people in Batis who empathized, withheld judgment, and offered a lifeline of assistance and support services. The women told stories that revealed their fear, regret, failure, disappointment, sense of uncertainty, inability to cope with problems, and continuing struggle. But the stories also revealed the women's courage, desires, strengths, resolve, sense of responsibility, and passion. Sharing experiences was not easy but it paved the way for the women to come to terms with them. This was the first yet reluctant step towards healing.

As the earlier generation of women clients came to accept and learn from their experiences (either willingly or reluctantly, and at their own pace and readiness), Batis joined them in rebuilding their lives through continued individual and group interventions.

Batis fostered the idea of a shared identity as survivors among the women to enable them to see the links among their experiences. In order to facilitate the transformation of their status from victims to empowered individuals, Batis helped raise the awareness of the women about migration and women, and other related issues; acquire, build and strengthen the skills and opportunities in helping and providing support to one another, in getting the messages of their shared experiences across to others, and in building a collective identity in order to address, and work for the transformation of, social conditions that perpetuate the continued migration of Filipinos for overseas work and the increasing feminization of Philippine labor migration.

Japanese-Filipino Children

Among the thousands of Filipino women working in Japan, many had relationship with Japanese men, mostly their customers, and bore Japanese-Filipino children. Unfortunately, some of these Japanese men had families of their own while others were unwilling to commit themselves to their Filipino women partners and their children. Some of the Filipino-Japanese marriages ended in divorce, while some Japanese husbands abandoned their Filipino wives and children.

The women sought Batis assistance in getting legal recognition and support for their children from their Japanese fathers. Thus, in 1992, Batis formally started its JAPINO (short for Japanese-Filipino) Program to focus on the increasing number of women returning with their children – with most of the children being born with absent fathers. Most of the mothers were poor and uneducated, and the children suffering from malnutrition and sickness.

Under the JAPINO Program, the children received assistance in the form of food, shelter, clothing, medical assistance and referrals to charitable institutions. Batis also provided “search” services, counseling and legal assistance to the women. Government institutions and non-governmental networks of organizations in Japan facilitated the search for the Japanese fathers or both parents (for children abandoned by both mothers and fathers). Private individuals and institutions helped provide whatever educational assistance was needed. Social workers monitored the cases along with continuous campaign advocating for the rights and welfare of the children and their mothers.

Most of the children clients under the JAPINO Program at that time were still very young, thus the great need for assistance. They were left to the care of their Filipino mothers who were unemployed single parents, or to their aging grandparents who barely had enough to support their basic needs.

While most of the children were inquisitive and sensitive especially towards other children, some were alienated and insecure about their personal identity.

Many JFC in the Philippines were adversely affected by the gap between the reality of their poverty and the public perception of the Japanese as rich people. JFC living in the Philippines also faced discrimination and ridicule stemming from the public’s negative perception of their mothers’ work

in Japan and their different physical features from other children. The JFC questioned their identity while growing up faced with so many challenges, but began to search for their own identity as they became adolescents.

Many of the JFC are now entering the workforce and sharing the responsibility of supporting their family needs. Some have to give up their education in order to work and help their families. Under this situation, legal recognition from their Japanese fathers becomes important either to obtain Japanese citizenship, or get the visa needed to work in Japan.

In a society that puts premium on a “complete” family (wife, husband, and children), it is not surprising for some JFC to see as self-fulfillment the chance to meet their Japanese fathers or visit Japan despite the love and affection of their mothers and relatives. This longing to meet their Japanese fathers and the need to financially support their families are reasons why would they want to leave for Japan.

In a workshop among JFC who visited Japan, the JFC expressed in a poem their collective thoughts and views about their identity:

Who Am I?

Who am I? Who am I really?
I am Yuri, I am Shig
I am Mikas, I am Yuki

In the Philippines, I'm different.
In Japan, even more different.
Even though this is what we encounter
we have never even once thought
that life is worthless.

I don't try to become like the others.
I accepted who I am
Even when I get mocked in school,
by other people. I am who I am.

Though they laugh at my name
Or mock me because of my race.
I am myself who is fighting the world
for my rights and showing my abilities.

Even though my father and mother's races are different.
I am like this when I was born.

Sometimes confused as to where I belong.
“I am both, that’s how I was raised.”

I am Yuri, I am Shig
I am Mikas, I am Yuki
I am Ai, I am Yumi
Filipino, Japanese, I am both.

Empowering the Women and the Children

From an institution that initially offered direct welfare assistance, Batis evolved an empowerment program for the former women migrant workers and their families using a rights-based framework (“Self Help, Help Others, Help Community/Society”).

This empowerment program resulted in the establishment of Batis AWARE Women’s Association (the self-help organization of Filipino women returnees from Japan) in 1996 and Batis-YOGHI (composed of children of the women returnees) in 2000. The two associations provide the women and their children with means to support to one another as well as to address the issues confronting them as migrant workers and as children of migrant workers respectively.

In 1995, Batis established the Women Empowerment Program (WEP), to continue the interventions of the Social Case Management program (SCM) albeit beyond the personal and individual levels, and to work with the women collectively and later on with their children through the Children and Youth Development Program (CYDP). WEP considers women clients as partners for the promotion of human welfare and development instead of just recipients of programs and services. They are in the best position to advance their rights, and to improve or change their situation.

1996 was a watershed year for Batis as it marked a shift in the thrust of the institution’s service delivery. It redefined its role “beyond merely providing welfare services to the women to being an active facilitator of genuine women’s empowerment through its framework, using a holistic and sustainable strategy and approach.”

Batis organized a core group of women to develop their capabilities as peer counselors, public speakers, writers, advocates, project managers, among others. This paved the way for the establishment of Batis – AWARE in 1996. Having their own organization apart from Batis served as their venue

to help and support each other, foster cooperation, and build teamwork, trust, and confidence.

Batis focused on helping Batis-AWARE women to gradually run their organization by themselves through knowledge enhancement, skills and capability-building activities, and provision of support to their livelihood pursuits.

After several years of providing support to the women as they work towards empowerment, Batis grew more confident in transforming their close, at times interdependent, relations with Batis-AWARE to provide more space and opportunities for the women to gain full control of their organization. The conscious step towards transformation was Batis' response to the expressed interest of Batis-AWARE to become an independent organization.

Empowerment: From the Point of View of Women¹

In a 2005 review of a decade of Batis work on women's empowerment, the partnership with Batis-AWARE was a major highlight. There was also a sense that Batis was coming full circle in providing services and support to the earlier generation clients. An internal assessment of Batis' work surfaced the earlier generation clients' views and experiences on empowerment in the context of their involvement and engagement in various Batis activities.

Views on Empowerment

The women said that empowerment helped them deal with pain and problems towards healing and coming to terms from their hurting experiences as women migrants from Japan. They also said that Batis

- provided "a safe, comfortable space for women." Batis thus served as a refuge for women victims of violence.
- existed to help women empower themselves because there was deep trauma in each of them.
- helped develop women's capacities. Respondents shared that Batis helped women see alternatives from their own experience, showing them the way to develop on their own as women.
- helped women rebuild their lives. What is important to note here is that the starting point for the women in this response is no lon-

ger the pain of their experience as former migrant workers, but the control of their lives.

- helped women help other women. WEP does this through its theater advocacy work, where the women actors of Teatro Batis are able to share their experiences with prospective women migrant workers to enable them to know the real situation of migration (through guided group discussions after the performances). WEP also teaches the women to help other women, like family and friends, through personal advocacy.

Definition of Empowerment

What then is the earlier generation women clients' organic concepts and practice of empowerment? For the women, empowerment involved having a set of values, a framework, perspectives, and knowledge. For women to be empowered, they have to be aware of their social situation and their rights, especially knowing how to fight for them.

The earlier generation women clients of Batis underscored their experience of empowerment as a process. For them, empowerment is developmental, a course of action toward achieving results incrementally. This translated to the individual or group deciding how to make their empowerment progress from one point to the next, depending on their definition of the next stage of empowerment.

"How to's" of becoming empowered

For the women, seminars and trainings facilitated empowerment. They helped the women view difficulties with proper attitude, taught them not to blame themselves, and encouraged them to reclaim the power that was taken away from them by their negative experience as migrants returning from Japan. They helped raise the women's awareness or understanding of their own situation, guiding the women in coping with the situation they found themselves in. They facilitated deeper understanding of the Philippine situation, and provided a forum to share their learnings with other women, without breaking down in tears.

Some of the seminars and trainings held over the years included gender sensitivity training, discussion on violence against women and women's rights, peer counseling, and various life skills trainings.

A favorite Batis activity was theater advocacy. Sharing their experiences as former migrant workers through the performing arts enabled the women to show the people watching the performances that they were able to move on despite their heartbreaking experience in Japan. These performances helped them stand on their feet and face other people, without the shame.

The members of Batis AWARE organized a theater group called Teatro Batis in 2000. As part of theater advocacy, the group performed for secondary school students in several provinces (Pampanga, Laguna, Samar, and Davao), and for women in various communities in Dagupan City, Pangasinan. They also performed for policymakers in the Department of Foreign Affairs, the Department of Social Welfare and Development, and the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration. Teatro Batis likewise mounted performances in various places in Japan (Chiba, Tokyo, Hyogo, Kyoto and Yamagata).

One of the women said that dealing with different kinds of people from various sectors and sections of society, even policymakers from the Philippine Congress (national legislative body), was empowering because the women proved that they could confidently carry themselves and talk about their analysis and position about migration issues. She added that if one did not have the guts, one could not face others. Batis helped embolden the women.

Batis and Batis AWARE, as members of the Alliance of Migrant Workers and Advocates to Amend Republic Act 8042 or the Migrant Workers Act of 1995 (AMEND), actively participated in legislative advocacy to repeal the deregulation provision in the law.² Deregulating the Philippine labor export industry means doing away with government regulation of the deployment of Filipino workers for overseas work, a necessary layer of protection, and leaving the matter of sending Filipinos for overseas work in the hands of the private sector whose objective of gaining profit from the business of sending workers overseas will take precedence over the protection of the rights of overseas Filipino workers

The officers of Batis AWARE served as resource persons during the legislative hearings in early 2005 on the proposed policy change of the Japanese government on requirements for people who want to apply for entertainers visa.

The women said that Batis activities were not the only means that facilitated their empowerment. For some, it was also about the people who

helped them. Thus, the Batis staff played a big role. The Batis staff knew how to carry out the activities and services, how to relate to the women in various levels of distress, recovery and empowerment, and how to listen to the women when they needed someone to talk to. The attitudes and behaviors of the staff also enhanced the empowering character of the institution.

Manifestation of Empowerment

With the experience so far of empowering women, Batis describes empowerment in the following terms.

Empowerment has to take root in oneself. An empowered person develops inner strength. She comes to terms with her traumatic experience. She faces the challenges in her life with the help of support groups like Batis. She survives all her problems, and is able to take care of herself. She makes decisions for herself, as well as do things now that she was not able to do before. She runs her own life and lives life on her own terms. An empowered woman stands on her own. She is responsible for herself, for her action and its consequences. She can control her own action, especially if it does not do good to her and to others.

An empowered woman also exhibits certain skills and acquires more knowledge. She expresses herself, dialogues and connects with others. She knows how to deal with or interact with people, and shows the world her evolved self. She is not shy or embarrassed anymore, even in the presence of those who may seem to have “more” than her (money, education, knowledge, etc.). As a mother, she has the confidence to raise her child by herself, and stands on her own.

An empowered woman gains organizational skills. She knows what to do when women come together for collective action. She has skills in handling the women, and is not always dependent on others. Yet, she also knows that she cannot do everything by herself. She is part of a community, where she lives, and participates in community life.

One feature of empowerment, according to the women, is being able to use their empowerment to help others. An empowered woman helps other women see their potentials and values in life in the midst of challenges.

At present, the officers and members of Batis AWARE work as peer counselors to the recent generation clients of Batis. They accompany the clients for their medical check-ups, help them in their reintegration activities (either through enterprise development or enrollment in formal or non-

formal education), as well as assist their involvement in advocacy activities (such as March 8 International Women's Day rallies).

Aye! Aye! To Empowerment

The earlier generation women clients agreed that Batis' empowerment work was good for them. With space and opportunities to express their concerns, the women became more aware of their rights, their involvement and engagement in the activities of Batis. These also helped boost their self-esteem and strengthen their self-confidence, which ultimately enabled them to heal from their negative migration experiences.

The women said that Batis' work on empowerment was about alternatives. The continuing challenge is to create, widen or expand these options for the women; equipping them with the resources to make decisions, and creating the safe space and setting up the support system for the decisions they make, especially non-traditional and unpopular ones.

Learning the lessons of the past, Batis started to take on new challenges of effectively providing assistance, services and support to a new generation of returned distressed women migrant workers from Japan and beyond.

Empowering the Japanese-Filipino Children

As a first step in empowering the Japanese-Filipino children, Batis started to refer to them as JFC instead of JAPINO. In a survey done by Batis of clients and partner organizations, majority indicated that the term JAPINO might be discriminatory, causing stigma and offensive. It put the children in a special category and could easily be attributed to children born to Filipino entertainers and Japanese men. The term JFC is more general, referring to children born to Filipino and Japanese parents. This is way better than the term that was originally used to describe them, "hinomaru babies" or children who were born due to economic needs.

The JAPINO Program of Batis Center for Women then evolved to become the Children and Youth Development Program (CYDP). The CYDP aims to promote the development of total self by making the children and youth enjoy human rights, and strengthen self-awareness, self-confidence and sense of responsibility through workshops on migration and other socio-economic-cultural issues in the Philippines and Japan, summer camps,

exposure trips, sports festivals, youth meetings, and scholarship and educational assistance.

While the cases for legal recognition and child support from their Japanese fathers were ongoing, the CYDP provided venues and opportunities for the JFC to discuss and come to terms with the issues they face as children of migrant workers, learn about their rights, and involve themselves in self-development activities. More importantly, the CYDP organized the children to provide support to one another and address the issues confronting them as JFC and youth in general.

In 2000, with the encouragement and initiative of the program, the children and youth then formed Batis-YOGHI or Youth Organization that Gives Hope and Inspiration. The name sums up what the organization desires to do—to give hope and inspiration to fellow JFC. That same year, they elected their own set of officers, drafted their constitution and by laws and designed their organization's logo.

Batis envisioned an organization where all JFC are empowered—ready to face and overcome the challenges of growing up, and actively participate in addressing issues that affect them.

From Children to Young Adults

The establishment of Batis-YOGHI came at a very opportune time when majority of the JFC clients were transitioning from kids to young adults and their needs and issues were changing. By supporting them in their decision to form an organization, Batis helped them create a collective identity and sense of unity. Batis provided opportunities for individual and collective development in the form of workshops, trainings, educational discussions, interactions, and the like.

From the art workshops and mother-and-child sessions that the JFC joined when they were small, Batis saw the need to develop a more mature and age-appropriate educational sessions for them to foster their social, psychological, physical and intellectual well-being.

Activities for Empowerment³

Batis-YOGHI holds a number of activities such as the following:⁴

- Peer Counseling Training
- Production of Batis-YOGHI Publicity and Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials
- Young Leader's Mentoring Program
- Educational Sessions.

Since young adults face a lot of challenges (friendship concerns, uncertainty about their future, lack of resources to pursue education, sexuality issues, media's influence on young people, among others), they more often than not turn to their friends and peers for information and support. With this in mind, Batis-YOGHI initiated the Peer Support and Counseling Training to develop the peer support and counseling skills of a select number of JFC to enable them to reach out to the members of Batis-YOGHI who face problems. Batis-YOGHI helps members strengthen themselves when encountering problems and challenges that may be too difficult for them to face on their own.

Such support structure in Batis-YOGHI helps JFC adjust to their new status as young adults who bear increasing personal and familial responsibilities, and offers a positive image of JFC who are working to overcome personal problems. This allows Batis-YOGHI to provide JFC with wider options in life despite difficulties relating to the circumstances of their birth.

The Young Leaders' Mentoring Program serves as a semi-structured learning experience for the JFC by getting them involved in project implementation. They lead small group discussions, organize monthly meetings, undertake administrative and logistical work, etc. The CYDP Coordinator acts as a mentor who ensures smooth project implementation, while the JFC develop their potentials that would enable them to effectively manage Batis-YOGHI by themselves in the future.

Batis-YOGHI members also hold short discussion sessions on various issues that are of interest to young people in general. They include the Career Orientation and Planning Session and the Adolescent Sexuality Seminar.

The 2008 decisions of the Japanese Supreme Court granting Japanese citizenship to ten children with Filipino mothers (but unmarried to their

Japanese fathers) triggered the JFC's interest on Japanese nationality and its relevance to their own status. The Japanese Supreme Court ruled that Article 3(1)⁵ of the Nationality Law of Japan (that required marriage in case one parent was non-Japanese in order that Japanese nationality could be acquired by their children) discriminated against children who were born out of wedlock yet acknowledged by their Japanese parents after birth, and violated the equality provision (Article 14-1)⁶ of the Constitution of Japan.

Thus Batis-YOGHI held a "Nationality Discussion" session that aimed at

- Understanding the concepts of identity
- Defining the meaning of JFC
- Becoming aware of the issues faced by other JFC
- Understanding basic concepts of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and its relation to the issue of nationality;
- Differentiating citizenship from nationality, and
- Being informed of the recent developments on the issue of citizenship in Japan.

Batis-YOGHI tries to inform the public of its existence and services through the production of publicity and IEC materials such as brochure, website, and newsletter. It aims to help other JFC who are not assisted by NGOs get the support they need.

Batis and Batis-YOGHI are continuing the development of activities and new strategies to address the growing issues and concerns of JFC.

To quote Batis-YOGHI President Mikas Matsuzawa, the activities⁷

address the needs of the members of our organization in a timely way focusing not only on our unique situation as JFC but also on our needs as we grow up. Here, we are given space to showcase our talents, learn new things and be creative. Here, a venue is offered for us children and youth to step out of the box and fully enjoy learning and participate in issues that concern us. From the mother-child relationship and child rights workshop up to the gender sensitivity and adolescent sexuality discussion, training activities were arranged in consideration of the need to strengthen and empower Batis-YOGHI members, from just being beneficiaries into independent and brilliant young leaders.

The JFC see empowerment as a process that they undergo at different paces. They acknowledge too that empowerment can be facilitated by sup-

portive individuals, family members and groups, opportunities for self-development activities and exposure to JFC issues, constant self-reflection and culling out of lessons from the challenges they experience in life.

They do not claim to have acquired all the qualities of an empowered JFC. But their definition of an empowered JFC serves as a guide as they undergo the process of becoming an ideal JFC.

The JFC leaders express their concept of empowerment by answering a number of questions including: Who is an empowered JFC? How is empowerment manifested by a JFC? What would help JFC achieve empowerment? Their answers are as follows:

An empowered JFC is someone who “owns” the issues that affect her/him and puts a stake on JFC causes. This empowered JFC does not only have a say on her/his personal issues but claims other JFC issues as her/his personal issues as well.

An empowered JFC is responsible for her/himself emotionally, physically, spiritually and financially. S/he knows how to make decisions for her/himself and can stand the consequences of her/his actions. An empowered JFC is a responsible member of her/his family and society.

An empowered JFC is conscious that the search for one’s true identity is a long, tedious and painful process. But s/he never tires of seeking answers and completing this process. A raised consciousness that the empowered JFC shares with other JFC is the product of the long process of knowing one’s identity.

An empowered JFC seeks dialogue to find answers regarding questions on identity. S/he knows how to forgive and let go of her/his past. S/he can forgive her/his parents for their shortcomings and can look at her/his past with confidence. S/he draws strength and inspiration from the hurts and sufferings s/he suffered before—this strength serves as a foundation that other JFC can lean on.

An empowered JFC does not have a victim mentality. S/he takes on the challenges confronting her/him. S/he may have been a victim of circumstance but s/he looks beyond that. S/he lives for the present and prepares for the future.

Education is very important for the empowerment of JFC. Formal education, a privilege rather than a right for some JFC, prepares them for their life ahead, opens more opportunities for them, and helps them veer away from the path their mothers treaded before.

JFC leaders consider the CYDP and Batis-YOGHI activities as helpful in getting empowered. Through these activities, they recognize the importance of each JFC's contribution in advancing their cause. Youth-centered and -oriented training activities catch their attention and sustain their interest on the JFC issue. Cultural exchanges and study tours allow them to know both their own world and the realities and ways of life of other people. Regular team building activities also help strengthen their bond and share experiences with other JFC.

Another manifestation of empowered JFC is the establishment of their own organization. Their organization facilitates their own personal development while benefiting the entire JFC community at the same time. It provides them a good training for their work on their own issues, and a basis for future work of reaching out to other interracial children.

Lessons Learned

Batis' engagement with children and young adults stemmed from its commitment to helping returned distressed women and their families. Batis helps the JFC develop their full capacity by providing them with the knowledge and proper information needed by young people like them in making informed choices in life—something their mothers did not have before.

The 2009 award to Batis-YOGHI as one of the ten accomplished youth organizations in the Philippines reassured Batis that its work with the JFC was on the right track. (See Annex for details of the award) This award was a reason for celebration among all JFC not just the members of Batis-YOGHI.

Instead of being a target group or beneficiaries, Batis-YOGHI plays an important role in finding solutions to their own concerns. Instead of being passive recipients who rely on adults, the Batis-YOGHI members become active participants, "own" their issues, and find ways of working towards their empowerment. Providing them with opportunities to articulate their needs in participatory process allows them to make decisions and to play important roles in their own organization. They become genuine partners in the work of Batis. These JFC bring with them optimism and dynamism which they easily pass on to fellow JFC and even to adults. This is one thing adults should learn from them.

The ideas and creativity of the Batis-YOGHI members make other JFC, the general public and other stakeholders know their issues.

Partnership with like-minded organizations and individuals in the Philippines and Japan who help advance their cause is essential to the work that Batis does with the JFC. Without their help Batis would not have gone far with the JFC.

Most importantly, the realization of their rights as JFC and human beings—right to nationality, right to education, right to basic needs, right to participate in matters that affect them—are most crucial in attaining empowerment.

Batis exists to facilitate the empowerment of the JFC. The JFC can empower their own selves provided they have an enabling environment. As long as they are provided with opportunities to empower themselves, the JFC will continue to create better future not just for themselves but also for other JFC and the society in general.

Going Beyond Full Circle

In 2009, Batis celebrated its 20th year anniversary. The institution considered it a bittersweet moment in the continuing “herstory” of Batis Center for Women. It came at a time when an ever-increasing number of Filipino women and men found themselves working overseas; when policies in countries of destination presented challenges to migrant workers due to stricter border controls and labor market realities; when employment opportunities for low-skilled work attracted the next generation of vulnerable migrants; and when threats and vulnerabilities were ever present especially for women migrants and low-skilled, temporary migrant workers.

Considering this global migration landscape, Batis is pleased to see how it has evolved as an institution, how its programs and services have responded to the changing needs of its beneficiaries. Utilizing to the fullest the opportunities to innovate, try out new approaches and explore new directions, Batis tries to make its services more accessible, relevant, efficient, effective, and heartfelt. It is reminded of the strength and resilience of women and the children as it works together with Batis AWARE and Batis-YOGHI in protecting and promoting the rights and welfare of women migrant workers and the children.

Batis looks forward to meeting the challenges of providing direct services, working for women and children’s empowerment, and in transforming individuals, groups, communities and societies in the next decade of its existence.

Endnotes

1. The discussion in this section is based on Joe Takeda and Marilyn T. Erpelo, editors, *Behind the Drama of Filipina Entertainers in Japan* (Quezon city: Batis Center for Women, 2008).

2. The Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995 has the following deregulation provision:

“VII. DEREGULATION AND PHASE-OUT

SEC. 29. COMPREHENSIVE DEREGULATION PLAN ON RECRUITMENT ACTIVITIES. - Pursuant to a progressive policy of deregulation whereby the migration of workers becomes strictly a matter between the worker and his foreign employer, the DOLE within one (1) year from the effectivity of this Act, is hereby mandated to formulate a five-year comprehensive deregulation plan on recruitment activities taking into account labor market trends, economic conditions of the country and emergency circumstances which may affect the welfare of migrant workers.” Text from www.poea.gov.ph/rules/ra8042.html.

3. The discussion in this section is based on Marilyn T. Erpelo, editor, *A Sneak Peek at Batis-YOGHI Development: A Handbook on the Learning Experiences of Japanese-Filipino Children* (Quezon city: Batis Center for Women, 2009).

4. Through Batis, Batis-YOGHI obtained in 2008 funding for its project “Strengthening the Organization of Japanese-Filipino Children and Youth” from the Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects of the Japanese Embassy in the Philippines. The project was meant to develop and strengthen Batis-YOGHI activities.

5. A quote from the website of the Supreme Court of Japan on the case provides the provision of Article 3 paragraph 1 of the Nationality Act:

“A child who has acquired\ the status of a child born in wedlock as a result of the marriage of the parents and the acknowledgment by either parent and who is aged under 20 (excluding those who have been Japanese citizens) may acquire Japanese nationality by making a notification to the Minister of Justice, if the father or mother who has acknowledged the child was a Japanese citizen at the time of the child’s birth, and such father or mother is currently a Japanese citizen or was a Japanese citizen at the time of his/her death.” See www.courts.go.jp/english/judgments/text/2008.06.04-2006.-Gyo-Tsu-.No..135-111255.html

6. Article 14 (1) of the Constitution of Japan states:

“All of the people are equal under the law and there shall be no discrimination in political, economic or social relations because of race, creed, sex, social status or family origin.”

7. Erpelo, *op. cit.*, Introductory Note.

Annex

Batis-YOGHI: 7th TAYO Awardee

Batis-YOGHI was one of the ten Philippine youth organizations that received the 7th Ten Accomplished Youth Organizations (TAYO) Award in 2009. Batis-YOGHI submitted the YOGHI Manga project for the TAYO Award. YOGHI Manga is a comic book on the experiences of Japanese-Filipino children. These experiences are told in three stories that deal with issues of discrimination and prejudice, right to informed choice, right to choose nationality, right to participate in issues concerning the youth, the right to recognition of Japanese fathers, and the right to cultural heritage.

The TAYO award recognizes youth organizations across the Philippines that, through their projects, have helped their communities. This award encourages young people to

get out of their comfort zones and take part in society by making a positive difference through innovative initiatives.

Organizations are judged on the basis of the following: Impact of Project Entry on Stakeholders; Harnessing the Spirit of Volunteerism and Citizenship; Creativity and Innovation; Sustainability and Effective Use of Resources. All organizations, clubs, societies, groups, the *Sanggunian Kabataan* (Student Council), or even *barkadas* (groups) can join the search as long as the membership and leadership are composed of at least fifteen (15) members who are 15 to 30 years old.



Text based on Mikas Matsuzawa, "YOGHI wins Prestigious 7th TAYO (Ten Accomplished Youth Organizations) Award," available at http://batisyoghi.multiply.com/journal/item/17/YOGHI_Awarded_with_Prestigious_7th_TAYO_Ten_Accomplished_Youth_Organizations