



STICHTING BAYANIHAN

Philippine Women's Centre in the Netherlands

Issue 3 December 2010

Address: Australielaan 6, 3526 AB Utrecht, Netherlands

Email: bayanihan.nl@planet.nl

website: www.bayanihan.nl

NEWSLETTER



SINGING BAYANIHAN LADIES

by Rochita Loenen-Ruiz

“Wat heb ik zulke mooie muziek bij jou gehoord.”

My neighbor met me with this comment on the morning after one of the evening rehearsals which we had held together at my home. Since October 15, Bayanihan's ladies have been working hard, singing and practicing together for the upcoming Christmas season which marks the first time that Bayanihan will have a singing group going out to carol friends and supporters of Stichting Bayanihan.

Finding the time to practice together often means a sacrifice of time and energy for most of the women work fulltime and lead busy lives as housewives and mothers. Practices mean surrendering a precious part of evenings or weekends which could otherwise be spent relaxing at home or going out doing other things.

But there is no weariness to be marked during the practice sessions which often start at around seven in the evening and go on until around nine. Coming from places as diverse and far as Ermelo and Rotterdam, the practices bear witness to the spirit and the tireless energy of these Bayanihan ladies.

This coming Christmas, it is our hope to bring our songs and the spirit of the true Filipino Christmas wherever we are invited to sing. In this way, we hope to continue to build bridges as well as feed the flame of friendship between us and the community who continues to offer us their unrelenting support.

Proceeds from the caroling will go towards funding Bayanihan's activities and projects in 2011.

Should you wish for the Bayanihan carolers to come visit you, either this Christmas or next Christmas, please feel free to get in touch with our caroling coordinator, Salome Panoy at salpanoy@gmail.com or through the following number: 0622068701.

You may also get in touch with our musical trainer and conductor, Rochita Loenen-Ruiz at rcloenenruiz@gmail.com. Please put Bayanihan Carolers in the subject line.

2010 IN THE BALANCE

2010 has proven to be a year full of continued challenge. Without financial subsidy from the government, Stichting Bayanihan has had to launch out using creative means to raise funds to support ongoing projects, lobbying efforts and interventions.

On the front page, you see the smiling faces of Bayanihan's Singing Ladies. This fundraising effort is only one of the many efforts that Stichting Bayanihan will engage in as she continues to seek out new means of raising the needed funds for the Stichting's work to continue.

2010 saw the Bayanihan's new working Board in action. Pursuing the vision of professionalization, training on team development was given to the board by Senior trainer Jan Moes.

This year, Bayanihan gave trainings to Bayanihan's Network of Vertrouwenspersonen. Duska Sabljic Sarovic, preventie medewerker, Advies Steunpunt Huiselijk Geweld (ASHG)Utrecht was Bayanihan's workshop trainer on Domestic Violence.

And perhaps one of the jewels in this year's efforts is the recent Information Session and Workshop for Filipina Au Pairs which was given in partnership with The Philippine Embassy in The Hague.

As the year draws to a close, Stichting Bayanihan continues to look to you for support as she continues her work to help the members the Filipino community to find a place in the Dutch society



SERENADED FROM THE HEART

Last Saturday, 11th of December, we had the honour to be serenaded by the Bayanihan choir in our house. They performed a beautiful repertoire of classic Christmas carols. It turned out that the hardworking volunteers do not only have large amounts of energy to give to the Bayanihan Foundation and to all the Philippine women who are helped and inspired by them; but also the voices of professional Christmas carol singers.

We, together with our other guests could not take our eyes off them as they performed with smiles. Truly, they sang and even danced with all their hearts.

It was a delight to have our house (or probably even our street) filled with their music and songs. Indeed, Bayanihan ladies are package of smart, enthusiastic, strong and dedicated women with pretty faces and voices. A big applause for the Bayanihan singers: Dyanne, Veronica, Rose, Tess, Jack, Zurin, Chie and Salome! Mabuhay po kayo!

- Erwin en Debbie, Rotterdam



Bayanihan Ladies in Action

STICHTING BAYANIHAN'S TEAM DEVELOPMENT TRAINING



Current Board with Jan Moes



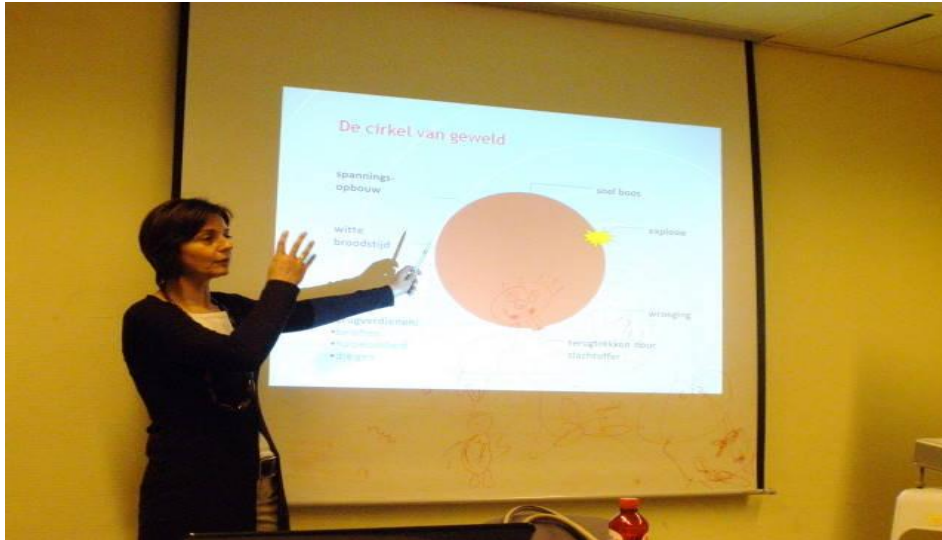
From left to right: Veronica Balbuena, Cora Alarcon, Salome Panoy, Tess de Man-Selibio, Jan Moes, Rose Sloterma-Haboc, Ching Lansang, Jaclyn Misagal and Diana Oosterbeek-

In connection with Bayanihan's vision for professionalization, a workshop in team development for Bayanihan's bestuur was held on the 18th of September 2010.

Present at the training were Veronica Balbuena (Bayanihan's current chairwoman), Cora Alarcon (Former chairperson of the Board & now Adviser), Salome Panoy (Bayanihan's Secretary), Tess de Man-Selibio (Vice Chair), Rose Slotema-Haboc (Treasurer), Ching Lansang (Adviser), Jaclyn Misagal (Board Trainee), and Diana Oosterbeek-Latoza (Board Member and Bayanihan's Coordinator and Social Cultural Worker).

Mr. Jan Moes (center) provided a workshop training on Team Development. Jan Moes is one of Stichting Bayanihan's external advisors and is an expert in the field of team development. He is a senior trainer of PRC (Project & Process Management Research Consultancy).

Stichting Bayanihan's current board is a working board comprised of women who share the vision of empowering Filipinas in The Netherlands. These women have dedicated themselves to the task of lobbying for the rights of Filipinas in The Netherlands, of providing information where it is needed, of intervening and mediating where necessary.



Duska Sabljic Sarovic, Preventie Medewerker, Advies Steunpunt Huiselijk Geweld (ASHG) explaining the Circle of Violence to the Bayanihan Vertrouwenspersonen in training.

TRAINING FOR BAYANIHAN'S VERTROUWENSPERSONEN

By Rochita Loenen-Ruiz

On Saturday, November 6, 2010, fifteen Bayanihan women were awarded certificates in recognition of their completion of the training in "Hulpverlening". The training, which consisted of two workshops, one on the 15th of September, the second on the 15th of October and an /organizational meeting on the 6th of November, was directed at developing the expertise of Sticting Bayanihan's volunteers as "vertrouwenspersonen".

Duska Sabljic Sarovic, preventie medewerker, Advies Steunpunt Huiselijk Geweld (ASHG)Utrecht was the trainer for workshop sessions on domestic violence. During the workshop sessions, subjects such as what it means to be a "vertrouwenspersoon", the expectations of a client, and what the vertrouwenspersoon brings with her to the table were dealt with. Along with being able to recognize the signs of domestic violence, the women were given tips on how to listen to and what to listen for.

While we tend to be quick to offer our solutions, what the client often needs is a listening ear and the knowledge that there is someone whom they can trust to tell their stories to.

One of the subjects that captured the most attention was the Circle of Violence as well as the Dynamics of Violence. These subjects gave birth to lively discussions and openhearted sharing wherein the women felt safe enough to share their own experiences as hulpverleners as well as the insights obtained from the workshop.

For many of us, the workshop provided us with more than enough food for thought.



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Another subject that proved to be of intense interest was that of "Ouderen Geweld". In connection with this subject, Duska presented several theoretical cases wherein the women were made to decide which case they found the worst and why. This thought-provoking exercise helped the women to see how in the subject of violence, both victim as well as perpetrator are in need of help.



Bayanihan's Vertrouwenspersonen pay close attention to Duska Sabljic Sarovic as she talks about the signals of Domestic Violence.



Stichting Bayanihan's Vertrouwenspersonen from left to right: Salome aan den Toorn - Panoy, Rose Slotema-Haboc, Genibe Molabin, Rochita Loenen-Ruiz, Veronica Balbuena, Tess de Man-Selibio, Debbie Villafuerte, Nora Van der Does-Gonzales, Diana Oosterbeek-Latoza (trainer), Jaclyn Misagal, Lana Kristine Flores-Jelenjev, Joy Felter.

That Bayanihan is more than a collection of people coming together was proven through the warmhearted conversations and the familial feeling after the workshop. As Duska Sabljic Sarovic said: *"This is the most open group I have encountered in my time of giving trainings on this subject."* She expressed her appreciation for the openness and the warmth of the Filipinas who attended the training."

The last part of the training which was held on November 6 and facilitated by Diana Oosterbeek-Latoza, Bayanihan coordinator and social cultural worker focused more on the organizational aspect. The volunteers were made aware of their valuable role within Bayanihan and their specific tasks. They also learn how to do the intake and the steps how to handle cases.

Indeed, Stichting Bayanihan is more than just a vrijwilligers organization. She works to achieve the goal of empowering and strengthening the Filipina, providing support where it is needed, and striving for more professionalism in her volunteer work.

These trainings are made possible through the financial support of the Diaconie of the Gereformeerde Kerk in Bodegraven.



Empowering Filipina Au Pairs through Information and Training

By Rochita Loenen-Ruiz & Diana Oosterbeek-Latoza

What is an au pair? What does it mean to be empowered? Why choose the Netherlands? What are your rights and obligations as an au pair? And what should you know if you choose to become romantically involved with a Dutchman?

These were some of the hot topics discussed during the Information Session and Workshop on Empowering Filipina Au Pairs. The Information Session and workshop for Filipina au pairs which is a joint project of The Philippine Embassy and Stichting Bayanihan, Centrum voor Filipijnse Vrouwen in Nederland was held at the Philippine Embassy in Copes Laan van Cattenburch, Den Haag on December 11, 2010, was well-attended by around fifty participants including seventeen enthusiastic au pairs, representatives from au pair agencies, the Philippine Embassy staff, Munting Nayon's Eddie and Orchid Flores, and Stichting Bayanihan's board members and volunteers.

Each of the attending au pairs was given an information packet. After the pre-session registration and greetings, the participants were invited to turn their attention to the programme itself.



Au pairs arriving at the embassy are invited to register first.



Diana Oosterbeek Latoza (Bayanihan's Coordinator and Social Cultural worker) with Vice Consul Cynthia Pelayo.

Vice Consul Cynthia Pelayo gave a quick introduction to the Gender and Development Projects. She acknowledged the financial support given to this project by the Department of Foreign Affairs under the Philippine Government as part of the Millennium policy of the United Nations to combat poverty, as well as Bayanihan's role in recommending this au pair project for Filipina au pairs in the Netherlands and in putting together the workshop for the au pairs.

"This workshop is a first for us," Vice Consul Cynthia Pelayo said. In his welcome remarks, Charge d' Affaires Frank R. Cimafranca thanked Vice Consul Pelayo for her efforts and for submitting the proposal that provided funding for this project. He welcomed the Filipina au pairs and the participants to the workshop restating the importance of this workshop and speaking out his wish that this activity will continue in the years to come.

He said that: *"the priority given to the au pairs stems from the work to lift the ban on the deployment of au pairs."*



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

Following Charge d'Affaires' welcome speech, Consul Maria Anna Lilia L. De Vera told the participants how lifting the ban on au pairs to the Netherlands is a point of concern, not only for herself, but also for consuls who had previously occupied her position. Like those who have gone before her, Consul De Vera's concern is to present the wishes of the Philippine Government to the Dutch Government, specifically, that the Philippine Government wishes for assurance from the Dutch Government that all Filipina Au pairs coming to the Netherlands will be ensured of their safety and security.



The participants intently listening to the presentation of Vice-Consul Cynthia Pelayo.

Following these informative welcome speeches, Veronica Balbuena, current chairwoman of Stichting Bayanihan's board, presented the vision and purpose of Stichting Bayanihan and how part of Bayanihan's work is the consistent lobbying for the rights and protection of Filipinas in The Netherlands.

Veronica says that "*Stichting Bayanihan is no newbie to the au pair issue. Indeed, the plight of Filipina au pairs has been one of its major concerns since 1993.*" Bayanihan's extensive and vast experience in assisting and working directly with Filipina Au Pairs in the Netherlands has led them to serious lobby and to do advocacy work on this issue. Bayanihan believes that the exploitation of au pairs and other problems that arise from it can only be addressed through concerted efforts of the various stakeholders and actors. Most important of these actors are the Philippine and Dutch governments through their respective policies concerning the au pairs and the au pair programme.

After these inspiring series of welcomes, Diana Oosterbeek-Latoza, who is the Coordinator & Social Cultural Worker of Stichting Bayanihan and the facilitator of the day of this activity introduced the content and the relevance of the workshops for au pairs and also the trainer of the two workshops, Maya Butalid.



The lively discussion during the course of the afternoon.

Why did I choose to become an au pair? Why in the Netherlands? What do I expect to achieve during my stay as au pair in the Netherlands? What am I good in? What are my strengths? Which opportunities do I have at the moment? Which difficulties and problems do I face at the moment? How do I intend to address these difficulties and problems?

These are some of the questions raised during the first workshop session which was led by Maya Butalid. Maya Butalid who also served as councilwoman for seven years in the City of Tilburg, is a Child, Youth and Cross Cultural psychologist and trainer and coach at EmPact (Empowered to take Action), a training and coaching bureau. She was Bayanihan's previous chairperson and has been given trainings for Bayanihan on intercultural communication and upbringing of children.



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

She invited the au pairs to interact with her in the workshop by first asking them what they thought of when they heard or saw the word Empowerment.

Their responses were crucial to the discussion as without a proper understanding of Empowerment, it would be hard to move on to a point where one is able to make crucial decisions that will broaden the choices available to us.

For the au pairs, it was necessary to examine their reasons for choosing to become an au pair, as well to honestly face themselves with regards to what it was they wished to achieve by coming to The Netherlands.

To be able to reach a point where they are able to conduct a dialogue with their host families and assert their own rights, the Filipina au pair needs to see what it is that she expects from her au pair experience as well as what it is that she expects from her host family.

From the exchange between Maya and the participating au pairs, a picture could be formed of what the au pairs expected from their stay as au pairs, as well as a picture of what cultural exchange had already taken place.

As one of the Filipina au pairs present said: *"One of the most shocking things for me was to hear children answering back to their parents. This is something that is not allowed in The Philippines."*

This statement led to a discussion of the cultural differences between Dutch and Filipino culture and how au pairs are not simply in The Netherlands to learn about Dutch culture, but they are also here to share and impart the good things about Filipino culture to the Dutch. It was encouraging to hear testimonies of how Dutch host families appreciated the input of the Filipina au pair. A Dutch woman present at the session said, "I think Asian culture is very valuable because it has a lot of important values. One of those things is the value of respect."

Those Filipina au pairs are valued not only for their values but also because they are honest and hardworking was one of the things that emerged from this discussion. However, it also remains true that Filipina au pairs are often exploited because of their culture and because of the stereotype of the Filipina au pair being easy to intimidate.

In conclusion, Maya said that the reality is far more complex than we can imagine. But being able to see her strengths will empower the Filipina au pair.

Everywhere she goes the Filipina au pair is very much desired because of her hardworking nature and because of the drive to do her job well. Filipina au pairs are known for their responsibility, their honesty, their being organized, and for their rich culture. Added to these things, is the fact that most Filipina au pairs are highly educated professionals who desire to experience a culture that is not their own.

Maya encouraged the au pairs to learn as much as they can. *"Be curious about the culture,"* Maya said. *"When your perspective is broadened, it is enriching. Embrace your environment and learn from it."*



Au Pair Workshop trainers Diana Oosterbeek Latoza and Maya Butalid kept the session informative and entertaining.



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

What is an au pair? What are the laws? Which laws can Filipinas use to protect their rights? What are their rights? What are the obligations of the Phil Govt towards you and what are the obligations of the Dutch gov't towards you?

"I want to know what you know." With these questions and with this statement, Diana Oosterbeek-Latoza, Coordinator of Stichting Bayanihan, opened the second session which dealt with the Rights and Obligations of Au Pairs. *

While there is a legal definition of what an au pair is, many Filipina au pairs are unaware of that legal definition and if you were to ask a random Filipina in the Philippines, it is quite likely that they would say that an au pair is a domestic worker or a nanny or a helper. This confusion influences the way the au pair interacts with the host family and being uncertain as to what being an au pair entails can result in the exploitation of the au pair. It exactly happened in this workshop when one au pair asked mentioned that an au pair is a domestic worker. But another au pair clearly defined what a real au pair is.

After hearing the responses from the au pairs, Diana Oosterbeek-Latoza distributed the Bayanihan brochure with Tips and Information for the au pairs. The brochure defines the au pair as someone who comes to the Netherlands for a limited period to live with a host family (which may be a single-parent family) and learn about the Dutch language and culture. In exchange for room and board, the family may expect the au pair to do light household work.



The participants reading the hand-outs on au pair rights.

A lighthearted point during the discussion came from a question about what light household work entails and whether an au pair should walk the dog or not. (The conclusion being: the au pair may walk the dog if she wishes to do so, but it is not something she is required to do. If she doesn't wish to, then she mustn't be made to do so.)

One of the important points from the folder is: *"An au pair can do work which can be taken over during her absence by other members of the family, a babysitter or housekeeper. An au pair is not completely responsible for the household chores. An au pair actually stays with the host family on an equal basis"*

As Maya Butalid said: *"It is not an employer-employee relationship. The au pair joins the host family as part of the family. It is a cultural exchange."*

The Philippine Embassy presented the side of the government when it comes to the au pair ban. What the POEA is concerned about is the financial burden that is put on the au pairs as well as the various groups that take advantage of them.

Agencies present confirmed that there is indeed a high cost attached to entering the au pair programme, but it is hoped that the government will be able to come up with better solutions that will relieve the au pairs of this financial burden. Vice-consul Pelayo explained the stand of the POEA based from the information sent to her by Labour Attache, Rustico de la Fuente.



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

Diana stressed the recent information regarding au pair policies. Under the Modern Migratiebeleid, host families who would like to get au pairs in the Netherlands should do this through an IND recognized Au pair agency. There are 23 Au Pair Agencies that are recognized by IND. This is a sort of an experiment policy by the Dutch government to gradually ensure that au pairs will be protected by giving the responsibility to the au pair agencies to do their tasks.

This second session had already given rise to a lot of information that needed to be digested, so participants were invited to partake of a short break before proceeding on to the next workshop.

Compared to the two previous sessions, a workshop on Interpersonal and Intimate Relationships seems quite lighthearted. However, as Maya Butalid puts it, it is natural to have this discussion as most au pairs are between the ages of eighteen and twenty-six years old which are the ages when most women encounter their partners for life.



Maya Butalid explains the differences between Filipino and Dutch dating culture

Maya says, *“the reality is that most Filipinos want to go out of the country, not because of poverty, but because they want to broaden their possibilities. Finding a partner can be part of the dream and for a young girl living in The Netherlands; it is inevitable that she will meet with Dutch guys, Filipino guys or guys from other cultures.”*

For the purpose of the workshop, Maya proceeds from the standpoint of a prospective relationship with a Dutch guy and how the differences in culture affect or influence such a relationship. One major difference stems from the Dutch culture being a verbal culture where Filipino culture is more intuitive. So where a Filipino person would be likely to feel what the other means, a Dutch person would need to hear it in words.

There is also a great difference when it comes to relationships as Filipino girls tend to look at relationships with an eye towards the long-term. Dutch persons, on the other hand, see things as dating and going out as being all part of the process. Even physical intimacy is viewed by the Dutch as simply being part of the process whereas for the Filipino, physical intimacy indicates a deeper commitment. With these points in mind, Maya cautioned young Filipinas to consider themselves first before making any decisions regarding physical intimacy.

“Take into consideration the difference in culture,” Maya said. *“And take advantage of the openness to talk about it. No is no, and they will respect that.”* In the end, the choice lies with the Filipina. She must be able to determine for herself whether a relationship is something she is happy with or not. If physical intimacy is not what she wants, then she should not allow herself to be pressured into something she is not happy with.

Maya: ***“Our topic is empowerment. When you go into a relationship, it is important to keep on asking: What do I get out of this relationship? Is this relationship helping me to continue to grow? Is this relationship putting me down? Is it a positive thing? Many Filipinas consider the relationship as being one wherein they serve their partners, but they should also consider that the relationship should also be one where the partner serves us.”***

After a short break, there was a short open forum wherein questions from the participants were entertained and answered by The Philippine Embassy and Stichting Bayanihan.



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

In response to a request from the au pairs for an overnight workshop, Vice Consul Cynthia Pelayo announced that they are depending on the results of this workshop for future funding from the Department of Foreign Affairs. On the side of Bayanihan, she is determined and committed to go on with the proposed sessions even with limited funds. The next session will be done during the International Women's Day on March 2011.

It is to be hoped that the dialogue between the Philippine Government and the Dutch Government will be fruitful and that the ban on au pairs will soon be lifted as the Dutch government complies with the Philippine Government's request for the au pairs to be guaranteed safe treatment and security and for the burden of finance to be taken off of the shoulders of the au pair as government intercedes and takes action on their behalf.

* Diana Oosterbeek-Latoza is the moving spirit behind Bayanihan's Au Pair Programme since 1993. She was a member of the Begeleidingscommissie (Advice Commission). Her study report paper on Filipina Au Pairs in the NL, Au Pairs en hun gastgezinnen in Nederland, "Evaluatie au pair regeling" done by the Ministry of Justice in 2003. Her study report paper on Filipina Au Pairs in the Netherlands was published in "In De Olde Worlde, Views of Filipino Migrants in Europe" edited by Filomenita Mongaya Hogsholm in 2007 and used as background paper by the Dutch and Filipino authorities.

* For more information visit www.ind.nl

For more information about the Filipina Au Pair workshop last December 11, 2010, please visit Bayanihan's website: www.bayanihan.nl or call:

Tuesday -10.30-16.30 -030-2400878;
0622947759

Wednesday- 10.30 -16.30 - 0622947759



The au pair participants with their certificates together with Chargé d'Affaires Frank R. Cimafranca, Vice-Consul Maria Cynthia Pelayo, Bayanihan Chairwoman Veronica Balbuena, Bayanihan Coordinator & Social Cultural Worker Diana Oosterbeek-Latoza, & Trainer Maya Butalid.



Group of enthusiastic participants together with Chargé d'Affaires Frank R. Cimafranca, Bayanihan Chairwoman Veronica Balbuena, Bayanihan Coordinator & Social Cultural Worker Diana Oosterbeek-Latoza, & Trainer Maya Butalid.

Colofon:

Newsletter Editor in-chief:
Diana Oosterbeek-Latoza

Editorial Team:
Rochita Loenen-Ruiz
Lana Kristine Flores-Jelenjev

Photographer:
Salome Panoy