

DIWATA - stands for Determined Independent Women in Action for Total Advancement. It is network of Philippine migrant women in Greece with the aim of promoting empowerment of migrant women living and working in Greece. Aside from its core activities advocating for the rights and welfare of Filipino migrant domestic workers, Diwata is currently running a Micro Credit Cooperative. Working together to provide alternative solution to cash flow problem that migrant women are facing on a daily basis. The cooperative is now on its 19th year of operation with committed members contributing their time and skills in sustaining the organization. Cooperative Management Trainings were continuously conducted participated by all members, equipping DIWATA members with basic management, accounting skills and basic computer skills enabling them to efficiently manage a cooperative. Moreover, members have also undergone Leadership and Team building seminars to develop shared responsibility, build trust, understanding and cooperation, values that cooperative must uphold and practice. Through these group experiences Philippine migrant women in Greece have established mutually empowering relationships thereby achieve a deeper understanding of their issues and concerns. In the process, they have developed useful strategies that are life affirming, just and truthful, a firm commitment to identify common issues and to work together to find and learn alternative actions which they can apply in DIWATA as a community to achieve fundamental change in their lives.

Now, DIWATA has enough revolving fund to meet its needs with active women members. It has responded to numerous economic emergency needs of members from financing education, hospitalization of family members, setting up small scale entrepreneurial activities, home mortgage, emergency home visit, land and property acquisition etc. The co-op has also paid membership its yearly dividend which is now on its 18th year doing so. It was also decided collectively to make an investment to a community based entrepreneurial activity providing jobs to promote local community development back home in the Philippines, thereby providing jobs to family members.

Sustaining our Co-op's Viability and Growth -

DIWATA has also set aside part of the income for organizational use which has enabled the organization self-reliant supporting its own activities, workshops and seminars. One could see the satisfaction of each and every member knowing they have succeeded knowing they have contributed significantly in gaining financial independence and making difference in each others lives. We have learned how to work as a team though with problems, we women are willing to meet the challenges.

Setting up a cooperative is indeed a lengthy and somewhat arduous process. It also proved to be very rewarding to see the fruits of your labor turn into economic and social benefits for migrant women's empowerment. The credit cooperative has created an empowering environment whereby migrant women's imagination, aspirations and skills were further honed to achieve empowerment on their own terms. We strongly believe that empowerment can only happen to the extent that women themselves determine what they want and need and then initiate the actions that will lead them to acquiring those things.

Diwata women can say that the success of any undertaking depends on our passion to pursue our vision, by believing on our collective efforts, improving our skills, and maximizing our potentials as total human persons. We have also realized we need to enjoy what we are doing and that every little successes that we have achieved deserved to be celebrated , we want to have fun, laughter, we love to eat and dance together, sisterhood and solidarity ! Indeed this is women's spirit and creativity to the fullest.