

WOMEN'S MOVEMENT BUILDING IN THE PHILIPPINES:

A Journey of Meeting Challenges, Drawing Lessons and Strengthening Resolve to Advance Women's Emancipation and Empowerment

(JASS PHILIPPINES DOCUMENTATION)



Judy M. Taguiwalo, PhD
Editor

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with support from



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11.11.11 – for believing that a documentation of women activism in the Philippines will be a valuable contribution to movement building,

Just Associates (JASS) – for supporting this idea of printing a book of experiences, lessons, and analysis of Filipino experts and activists. We would like to thank especially the JASS Southeast Asia Secretariat, Kunthea, Osang, Sophorn, and Elin, and Dinah Fuentesfina, for facilitating the grant for the book's publication.

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Finally, we thank the network members and the women who continuously fight with the rest of our people in working for a Philippine society which is just and equitable. We salute you!

Jojo Guan

JASS Network Philippines

Member, JASS SEA Regional Coordinating Group



JASS NETWORK PHILIPPINES
National Workshop of Filipino Women
November 10-13, 2009
Robbinsdale Hotel, Quezon City Philippines

Organizations in JASS Network Philippines

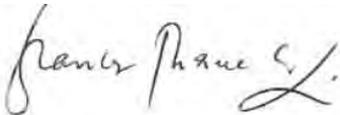
Babaye Ugma ug Karon-Agusan-Surigao (BUKAS)
Batis Center for Women
Center for Women's Resources (CWR)
Cordillera Women's Education Action Research Center (CWEARC)
General Assembly Binding Women for Reforms, Integrity, Equality,
Leadership, and Action (GABRIELA)
ILAW Inc.
Iloilo Women Center, Inc.
Innabuyog
Kababaihang Asawa ng mga Mangingisda (KAWANGIS)
Lesbians for National Democracy (Lesbond)-Cordillera
National Network of Agrarian Reform Advocates-Youth Sector (NNARA-
Youth)
Pambansang Koalisyon ng Kababaihan sa Kanayunan (PKKK)
Piglas Kababaihan
Samahan ng mga Maralitang Kababaihang Nagkakaisa (SAMAKANA)
Suara Bangsamoro
Sugarworkers' Solidarity- Negros
Talikala
Union of Journalist in the Philippines-UP Diliman
WELGA ng Kababaihan National
WomanHealth Philippines
Women Development Center-Bohol
Women's Education Development Productivity and Research Organization
(WEDPRO)
Women's Legal and Human Rights Bureau (WLB)
Women's Media Circle
Women's Studies and Resource Centre (WSRC) - Davao
Worker's Assistance Center

Message of Solidarity and Felicitation

11.11.11 congratulates Just Associates (JASS) and members of JASS Network - Philippines for the publication of this timely book on the women's movement in the Philippines. As a long-time partner of social movements in the Philippines, 11.11.11 believes that the women's movement has contributed and continues to strengthen the work on economic, ecological, and social justice. We, therefore, see the book **WOMEN'S MOVEMENT BUILDING IN THE PHILIPPINES: A Journey of Meeting Challenges, Drawing Lessons, and Strengthening Resolve to Advance Women's Emancipation and Empowerment** as a concrete contribution in the overall documentation of the work of movements in the Philippines. By documenting the experiences, conversations, and knowledge of women activists in the different sectors they work in/ with, students, researchers, scholars, and activists alike can benefit from the literature, and hopefully, build on it. We hope that this can serve as an inspiration to budding women activists, and generate support and action from other sectors of Philippine society.

We are one with you in your work in building a stronger women's movement toward an equitable and just Philippines.

In solidarity and with our kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Frances T.C. Lo". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Frances T.C. Lo

Regional Coordinator, 11.11.11 Asia

Foreword

Just Associates* (JASS) is excited to introduce this rich publication created by the JASS Network in the Philippines. The book includes a collection of analysis pieces on the issues and context driving inequality, poverty and injustice in the Philippines written from the perspective of women and feminist activists who are at the heart of social justice movements.

The compilation is a product of the movement building workshop and the quarterly “feminist discussions” facilitated by JASS from 2009 through 2013, which provided the space for women activists and their organizations to share experiences and knowledge and surfaced insights on the challenges, lessons and possibilities for movement-building and women’s rights. The 47 women from diverse backgrounds – grassroots activists, NGO workers, various social movements – brought tremendous expertise from the frontlines of the national women’s movement, some of which had been politically active for almost four decades.

What was special about these convenings is how they served to bring together activists across deep political divides in the Philippine women’s movement, which had been fragmented since the mid 1990s. JASS came into the picture at a moment when the internal political debate among activists in the Philippines had finally drawn the line. Confident in their political grounding, key Filipino women activists welcomed JASS Southeast Asia in 2009 as a regional ally that could use its identity as an “honest broker” to bridge individuals and groups who otherwise would never work together. Deep discussions on issues like militarization, landlessness, globalization, sexuality, reproductive health, and ICTs were made possible through safe and participatory processes that unpacked and addressed conflict and nurtured

relationships of trust around a shared analysis. Over time, a national JASS network emerged, anchored by the Center for Women’s Resources (CWR) and Women’s Legal and Human Rights Bureau (WLB), which was able to carry out joint efforts at some key pivotal moments.

Through the years, with regular JASS-sponsored activities like the Feminist Conversations, several issues concerning women have been discussed and resolutions have been made. For instance, one of the resolutions made out of these conversations was a joint letter to President Benigno Simeon Aquino III, signed by prominent women’s rights activists and 22 partner organizations, articulating key economic, social and political demands on behalf of Filipino women.

Today, JASS’ work in the Philippines is anchored by the Center for Women’s Resources (CWR) and the *Pambansang Koalisyon ng Kababaihan mula sa Kanayunan* (PKKK or National Rural Women’s Coalition) with a local core group composed of Women’s Legal and Human Rights Bureau (WLB), GABRIELA, WomanHealth Philippines and *Samahan ng Maralitang Kababaihang Nagkakaisa* (SAMAKANA or Organization of United Urban Poor Women). They act as the focal point organizations of the Network, which has 26 member-organizations.

Therefore, this book, **WOMEN’S MOVEMENT BUILDING IN THE PHILIPPINES: A Journey of Meeting Challenges, Drawing Lessons and Strengthening Resolve to Advance Women’s Emancipation and Empowerment**, compiled by JASS Network Philippines is groundbreaking. It is a documentation of best practices of the key elements in movement-building in the country for the past 40 years. The key elements of movement-building that JASS Network Philippines identified include: education, organizing, political participation,

intervention work or service provision, and mobilizations/ campaigns or advocacy work.

With all the challenges that the women’s sector face now – in the Philippines, in Southeast Asia, and elsewhere in the developing world – the foremost and starkest realization is that any women’s organization must remain rooted in the struggles of the grassroots, the majority of the women and the people. In this line, the experiences of the various women’s organizations in the Philippines need to be consolidated so as to know the strengths and weaknesses in the four decades of endeavor.

Students, researchers, scholars, community organizers, and activists can benefit from reading this book. Every page contains useful insights and analysis of the socio-political economic situation of the Philippines and the accompanying women’s struggles. In this book, one will also get to know how Filipino women activists are bridging generations of women activists as the women’s movement moves forward.

The book will be a valuable literature especially on the struggles and gains of movement building, which is a core function of JASS. In Southeast Asia, JASS trains and supports women activists working within diverse social movements—including LGBT (lesbian-gay-bisexual-trans) rights, reproductive health, labor and economic rights, and ending corruption and violence against women. Since 2007, JASS Southeast Asia, the regional network of JASS, has provided ongoing training, mentoring and accompaniment to more than 500 women in Indonesia, Cambodia, Malaysia, Timor-Leste, Myanmar, Thailand and the Philippines.

JASS Network Philippines' position within JASS Southeast Asia and the global JASS network has proven essential—helping to amplify women's cause and providing opportunities for knowledge and strategy exchanges. One of the most significant contributions of JASS Network Philippines is this book where we will all learn from the lessons of the Philippine women's movement.

**JASS is an international feminist organization driven by the partners and initiatives of its regional networks in Mesoamerica, Southern Africa and Southeast Asia. Working with women and diverse organizations and social movements in 27 countries, JASS trains and supports activist leadership and grassroots organizing and builds and mobilizes alliances amplified by creative media strategies to change institutions, policies and beliefs.*

Introduction

In a historic gathering in 2009, Filipino women activists and feminists of various political persuasions came together through the facilitation of feminist organization Just Associates (JASS) in Southeast Asia.

Just Associates or JASS is a global community of feminists and social justice activists, scholars and popular educators in 13 countries worldwide. JASS takes interest in movement building initiatives to promote “the voice, visibility, and collective organizing power of women”. As JASS explains, its “core mission is to build, strengthen and galvanize women’s collective power for a just and sustainable world – for all. By ‘collective power’ we mean the ability to create change that comes through grassroots organizing, alliance-building among diverse constituencies and galvanizing networks of allies around shared vision and agendas. In other words – movements. JASS puts movement building at the heart of our work, believing that the change women want comes from the movements they build. History teaches us that change in institutions, social attitudes, policies and decision-making, as well as in our everyday lives, especially for women, is made possible through the sustained demands and organized action of movements.”¹

JASS believes that supporting the initiatives of women’s organizing and participation in the different regions, particularly in Southern Africa, Mesoamerica, and Southeast Asia, will strengthen the collective voice of women. Such action aims to influence the ideas, policies, norms, and institutions that perpetuate women’s inequality and injustice. One of its strategies is knowledge building on political leadership and analysis. In this regard, JASS encourages its partner organizations in the different regions to

¹ <http://www.justassociates.org/en/feminist-movement-building>

document, consolidate, and share its experiences, tools, and knowledge on movement building. It is in this context that it fully supports the initiative by the JASS Network Philippines in consolidating its various experiences and strategies in putting the women's issues forward.

In the Philippines, everything started in 2009. It was a year after JASS Southeast Asia invited the Center for Women's Resources (CWR) to participate in the first JASS-organized regional gathering of young women in Jakarta, Indonesia to discuss about movement building. Each participating country in that activity was encouraged to commence a similar workshop in their localities.

Thus, CWR held a national workshop entitled "Liberating Filipino Women through the Years: A Sharing of Experiences in Movement Building (A National Workshop of Filipino Women)." It was a national workshop that captured the four decades of women's activism in the country, reviewing its strong beginning, its internal debate, its continuing challenges and gains. The workshop aimed to (a) strengthen women's leadership for movement-building and consolidation through sharing of best practices, reflection and visioning towards an action plan; (b) bridge gaps between generations, between rural and urban areas, among the women's organizations and other social movements; (c) strengthen links with regional formations, build ties, and initiate exchanges with JASS formations in other regions; (d) develop a common reading of the current situation of the Philippine women's movement—gains, challenges, and identification of next steps; and (e) strengthen women's alliance work and coalition-building efforts.

The said workshop created a loose network called JASS Network Philippines that would continue JASS-inspired activities in the country. A core team, led

by CWR and Women's Legal Bureau (WLB)², was chosen to set in motion the objectives of JASS in the local setting. Concrete materialization of such endeavor was the creation of Feminist Conversations, a quarterly discussion among women from all sectors and from different political persuasions.

Filipino women's resistance and militancy earn them the reputation of enjoying empowerment, supposedly unlike the rest of their Asian sisters. Such status can be credited to more than four decades of asserting their rights that an oppressive and repressive society could not contain. For more than four decades, Filipino women have decided to cross the line. Such status is also reflected in the Philippines' ranking 5th out of 136 countries in the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2013. It is also the only Asian country to enter in the top ten since 2006.³

But statistical figures such as those used by World Economic Forum do not capture the continuing problems Filipino women face, especially grassroots women. They are still very much like their Asian sisters, who still raise their voices against the continuing dominating power, both apparent and hidden, within and outside their homes or communities.

Similar to other Asian women, Filipino women face marginalization in the economic and political spheres and are vulnerable to violence. Hence assertion of women's rights as human rights is a continuing project of the women's movement in the country.

This publication puts together the presentations of Filipino women activists, feminists and other resource persons in the first workshop on movement building in 2009 and in the succeeding Feminist Conversations. JASS Network-

² Editor's note: WLB has later been replaced by Pambansang Koalisyon ng Kababaihan sa Kanayunan (PKKK)

³ <http://www.pcw.gov.ph/statistics/201405/philippines-global-arena>

Philippines believes that through this book, the history, challenges, diversity and dynamism of women's movement building in the Philippines can be shared with a bigger audience. The Philippine network also believes that the issues raised six years ago remain valid up to now. Indeed, the journey to women's empowerment and social justice in the Philippines is a continuing one.

Since some of the speakers make use of visual presentations, this book retains them so as to let the readers directly look into the actual efforts of the organizations or communities being shared about. The Network hopes that anyone who reads this book would appreciate the Filipino women's journey to empowerment and would learn from the lessons as much as we have learned from them.

Section 1:

An Overview of the Philippine Women's Movement: Testimonials from Women of an Earlier Generation

This section tackles the historical experiences of women's movement as well as serves as a blueprint on how to view the contemporary issues of women. The two inputs were made on November 10, 2009 during the first JASS workshop on movement building in the Philippines, entitled **National Workshop of Filipino Women, "Liberating Filipino Women through the Years: A Sharing of Women's Experiences in Movement Building"**. It presents two views and experiences from women activists of the 70s and it helps us understand the current situation of and debates in the women's movement in the country.



THE PHILIPPINE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT: CURRENT GAINS, CHALLENGES, AND NEXT STEPS

Judy M. Taguiwalo, Ph.D.

Judy Taguiwalo started as a student activist and was part of the First Quarter Storm of 1970 which marked a high point in the history of contemporary political activism in the country.

She was a student leader and writer during her college days. She helped organize Makabayang Kilusan ng Bagong Kababaihan (MAKIBAKA, nationalist movement of new women), the women's organization that advocates women's emancipation by advancing the people's national and democratic aspiration. She spent three years and seven months in the two times she was imprisoned during martial law. She escaped from prison during her first incarceration and rejoined the resistance to the Marcos dictatorship. She was pregnant when she was arrested for the second time and gave birth in prison. After detention she took on various tasks to continue advocating for national democracy. She helped organize AMIHAN, National Federation of Peasant Women, and served as its first Secretary General. She was also for a time the Executive Director of the Center for Women's Resources (CWR). In recognition of her advocacy for women's rights, she was awarded by the University of the Philippines (UP) Alumni Association the 2009 Distinguished Alumni Award for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality.

She served as faculty member of the Department of Women and Development Studies of the College of Social Work and Community Development of the University of the Philippines Diliman. She was the founding president of the union of faculty and researchers of the university and was elected Faculty Regent to the UP Board of Regents.

Recently retired from government service upon reaching 65, the compulsory retirement age in the country, she remains active in movement building in the country as Chair of the Women's Committee of the Alliance of Concerned Teachers and as a convener of Pagbabago, People's Movement for Change.

Introduction

I was 18 years old when I started to be aware of the need to act against social injustices and inequalities. I am now 59 years old, about to attain dual citizenship when I turn 60 early next year: as a Filipino citizen and as a senior citizen. While I do not now possess the vitality and the freshness of young women like you, I would like to believe that I have retained the passion which made me decide to embark on a life of social activism and to continue the collective quest for social justice in spite of menopause and arthritis.

I am glad to have this opportunity to share with and learn from a new generation of feminists and social activists.

I shall start my presentation with a review of who are the Filipino women and a brief look at our history.

Who are the Filipino women?

We comprise half of the population.

We are daughters, single women, women with partners not necessarily male, mothers, widows, grandmothers.

We are students, out of school youth, farmers, workers, professionals, government employees, managers, entrepreneurs, migrant workers, indigenous.

But majority of us are poor and powerless.

We live in a country that is largely agricultural, with pockets of urban centers.

We have a long history of colonialism: what one woman writer described as "300 years in the convent and 50 years in Hollywood" referring to the Spanish and American colonial rule in the country.

This history of colonialism continues to shape the economic, political, social and cultural landscape of the country.

The class composition of our society remains as it was during the early part of the 20th century: one percent of the population with vast amount of land, capital and power, a thin middle class and a majority comprising of poor farmers, workers and unemployed. Our economic, political and military policies are tied to those of multilateral institutions such as the World Bank, the IMF and Asian Development Bank and to those of rich countries, primarily the United States and Japan.

Culturally, a colonial, individualist and feudal-patriarchal culture exists with all the paradoxes and dilemma created by the co-existence and overlapping of the so-called modern and traditional ideas, beliefs and practices. This has resulted in the predominance of a culture of subservience with strong Catholic Church influence on mores and behavior especially involving women's role in society, marriage and reproductive rights existing side by side with American consumerist and individualist culture.

As women, we are vulnerable to violence, our rights to our bodies and our reproductive rights are often violated. We cannot get out of a violent and unhappy marriage except through a costly and time consuming annulment as the Philippines and Malta are the only countries in the world without a divorce law.

As farmers, we toil on land usually not our own; we are hardly recognized as productive workers and we are exposed to chemical and pesticides without adequate protection. Seasonally, we go through periods of hunger, *tiempos de los muertos*, when our harvest has ran out and/or there is no paid work in the fields. We take on various irregular work which pay as low as \$1 a day so that our families would have food.

As workers, more than one million of us are unemployed. Those of us who are employed are found predominantly in stereotypically women's jobs: in export processing zones requiring nimble fingers ; in service work especially in malls and retail stores; as informal workers in the streets and in the markets or as homeworkers doing both paid and unpaid work at home. We suffer from labor contractualization, low pay, poor working conditions, the absence of social protection and vulnerability to sexual harassment in the workplace. The phenomenon of "lie-down or lay off" is not unknown.

As migrant workers, we are part of the 3,772, the average number of Filipinos who left the country daily in 2008. In the past eight years, we women comprised 87% of domestic workers, 76% of professional/technical workers and 27% of production workers employed abroad. Many of these jobs are unregulated (excluded from labor and social legislation) and are in private residences making us vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.

As part of the country's youth, aged 13-35, we belong to the 20 million enrolled in schools and to the 10 million who are out-of school. Out of 100 Filipino students who enter school, only 12 will graduate from college and only one will find employment. No wonder that one out of 3 Filipinos aged 18-25 want to leave the country in search of jobs abroad.

While public elementary and high school education is free and compulsory, inadequate budget allocation for basic education has resulted in classroom and teacher shortages and the general lowering of the quality of education. Tertiary education is dominated by the private sector which charges high tuition and even state universities and colleges have continually raised school fees partly accounting for the high dropout incidence in the college level. "Prosti-tuition" or the phenomenon of female students engaging in paid sex to raise tuition money prior to school opening and the practice of "cuarto or

cuatro" (having sex with a teacher or getting a conditional grade of 4 if you refuse) have been documented.

Our maternal health situation is appalling. UNICEF in its 2009 report stated that 11 women die everyday or 4,500 every year due to pregnancy-related and child-birth complications. Of all pregnant women aged 15 to 49, only 88% have consulted at least once with a doctor or nurse while 60% are attended to by a skilled medical personnel when giving birth. Abortion is illegal in the Philippines. But, the International Planned Parenthood Federation estimates that induced abortions in the country ranges from 155,000 to 750,000 per year.

According to one report, thirty per cent of all births belong to the 15-24 year old age group. And by the age of 20, 25% of the youth are already mothers. Another source states that every year at least 64, 000 teenagers have abortions.⁴ A recent news article places the figure as seven out of 10 pregnant women are teenagers, many of them younger than 19 years old.⁵

Our women's movement: history and gains

Our women's movement has always been political. It asserts that women's struggles cannot be divorced from the struggle for national independence and genuine democracy. Hence, historically, our women's movement has always been a part of the broader social movement which engages the state and advocates for women's equality and liberation. We have a long history of

⁴"Teenage pregnancy"

<http://www.philippinestoday.net/index.php?module=article&view=1294>

⁵ Christine Ong. "Teenage pregnancy on the rise in Philippines". Channel News Asia.

Posted: 21 May 2009

<http://www.channelnewsasia.com/stories/southeastasia/view/430635/1/.html>

women's active participation in the struggle for social change and in asserting women's rights and welfare.

We participated in all major struggles in the country, the anti-colonial movements against Spanish and American colonialism, the armed resistance against Japanese Aggression during World War 2, the movement to resist and to end the Marcos dictatorship, the opposition against the US military bases which led to their closure in 1991.

We continue to be an active and vital part of the ongoing broad people's opposition against corruption, plunder, election fraud, human rights violations and the sale of our sovereignty being perpetrated by the current Philippine government.

We have launched specific women's campaigns: the campaign for women's right to vote which we won in 1937, the closure of the Bataan Nuclear power plant and the opposition to a huge dam project which would have destroyed agricultural and ancestral lands of our indigenous peoples in the North during the Marcos years.

Our women's movement is against patriarchy embedded in social institutions and in state policies and programs. We have conceptualized and launched creative campaigns to expose violence against women including domestic violence. We have sustained our campaign against the new forms of foreign military presence in the country which have resulted in the rape and violation of our women and which has violated our sovereignty as a nation.

Our women's movement is an organized, national movement with the majority of the women, the grassroots women as its backbone. We have formed various women's organizations: national organizations, organizations of women workers, peasant women, women youth, indigenous women, professional women, prostituted women. We have set up women's research

centers, women's crisis centers, women's legal offices and other offices providing services to women's organizations. And women's committees have been established in mixed gender organizations such as those for government employees, teachers, migrants, workers and farmers.

Our women's movement includes academic and legislative arenas as sites of advocacy to support and advance the practical struggles of women for equality and social change. We have mainstreamed women's studies in various universities and colleges in the country and have been insistent that women's studies is both scholarship and advocacy. That as an academic discipline, women's studies can only be dynamic and relevant so long as it links itself with the practical women's movement and contributes to strengthening this movement.

We have advanced women's legal rights and position with the passage of a number of pro-women and anti-violence against women legislation including the Women in Nation-Building Act (1992) , the Anti-Rape Law (1997) , the Anti-Sexual Harassment Law (1995) , The Rape-Victim Assistance and Protection Act (1998), the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act (2003), the Anti-Violence Against Women and their Children Act (2004) and the Magna Carta of Women, which was signed into law only last August. Several city governments have passed women's ordinances which spell out the rights and privileges that should be afforded women in the localities. We have organized a women's sectoral party which has won two seats in the lower house of our Congress and which has advocated for the passage of a divorce bill and a reproductive health bill.

Our women's movement has built international solidarity linkages. Our issues as women are shared by women around the world. Common opposition to neo-liberal policies, political repression, non-recognition of women's rights as human rights, the pervasiveness of violence against women, among others are

the shared platform of women, whether in the Philippines or in other parts of the world. We have formed international solidarity as reflected in the regular holding of the Women's International Solidarity Affair in the Philippines (WISAP), in our participation in regional formations such as the Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development or the Asian Peasant Women's Network or the Asian Student Association and in international campaigns against WTO and the World Bank.

Our women's movement has brought forth the blossoming of women's consciousness and ability as we participate in advancing comprehensive social change and the attainment of gender justice in the country.

There is Carmen Deunida, popularly known as Ka Mameng⁶. A frail woman, who is 71 years old, Ka Mameng is an icon of the protest movement in the country. Poverty prevented her from finishing her secondary schooling and she does laundry to earn her living. At age 50 years old, she became a member of a youth organization who held meetings in her hut. She participated in the struggle to end the Marcos dictatorship and helped found an organization of urban poor women, SAMAKANA. She led her community in resisting demolition teams. Her involvement in women's organization and in the people's movement helped her emancipate herself from a womanizing, drinking and violence-prone husband. She led her community in defending their right to their small parcels of land from demolition teams who tried to evict them from their homes. Recently, when given recognition in the 25th anniversary celebration of GABRIELA, the militant Filipino women's coalition, Ka Mameng firmly stated that she will stop her activism only when she is inside her coffin.

⁶ "Carmen Deunida", <http://pcij.org/i-report/edsa20/nanay-mameng.html>

There is Cathy of Negros Occidental, a 22-year old “promo girl” who was raped by a Philippine Army soldier stationed in Bago, Cathy’s hometown. Cathy brought her case to a local radio station whose announcer referred her to Gabriela-Negros. The women’s organization provided her with shelter for 13 months (the first eight months in a women’s shelter and the last five months in one of the community chapters of the organization where she stayed in the homes of the members). The women’s organization facilitated the filing of the case, supported her delivery of a baby girl and facilitated the reintegration of Cathy with her family and community after a dialogue with the military obtained the commitment of the latter for the safety of Cathy. But the story doesn’t end there. Cathy is now an organizer of GABRIELA in her hometown and is highly committed to assisting women who are victims of violence.

And let me tell you about a former student of mine at the University. Her involvement in student organizations allowed her the opportunity to learn and work with farmers’ and workers’ organizations leading her to decide on full time organizing work instead of employment in an office. But that is not all. In the process of her transformation, she has built a loving relationship with another woman activist and overcame the initial objections of her family, especially that of her mother, a devout Catholic believer.

Challenges

While I am proud to say that the women’s movement in our country has gone a long way in placing in the agenda of social transformation women’s issues and concerns and in achieving concrete gains, I am well aware that our movement continues to face many challenges.

Poverty is widespread. The demand for nationalist industrialization and genuine land reform which are the two main economic programs that would ensure economic self-sufficiency and job generation remains unheeded. Instead, the neo-liberal economic policies adopted by all Philippine administration since the end of the Marcos dictatorship has emphasized an export-oriented, import-dependent and debt-driven development thrust which has aggravated the impoverishment of the people, has reduced the budget for social services so badly needed by women and the poor and has further deepened foreign control of our economy.

Twenty three years after the first Philippine people power which brought an end to a dictatorship, corruption, electoral fraud and political repression still characterize various Philippine administrations particularly the present Macapagal-Arroyo administration.

Environmental degradation mainly brought about by the unbridled exploitation of our natural resources by foreign mining companies, by the destruction of marine and coastal resources for tourism purposes have further rendered our country and people vulnerable to disasters such as flooding, earthquakes and other natural disasters. Women suffer most during these disasters.

The culture of machismo and sexism is still strongly entrenched buttressed by the power of the Catholic Church.

We still have no divorce law and reproductive health law and the rights of lesbian, gays, bisexuals and transgender remain unrecognized.

The pro-women legislation we have won still have to be fully implemented in the absence of sufficient budget allocation for these programs and the lack of strong mechanisms for their implementation.

The political representation of young women and working-class women in key institutions of power is woefully inadequate.

What next?

In the next six months, we will be engaging ourselves in the election in May 10, 2010 which will choose the next President of the Philippines. The current President, while herself a woman, has brought so much grief to the women of the country. She has been implicated in corruption scandals, in electoral fraud, in massive human rights violation and has obstructed our efforts to promote women's reproductive health and rights. The election exercise will be an excellent opportunity to put an end to a corrupt and anti-women administration, to propagate and promote the women's agenda for social change and to elect officials, regardless of gender, with a track record of serving the people and of promoting women's rights.

Beyond the 2010 elections, the women's movement will continue to arouse, organize and mobilize the Filipino women in our millions to change ourselves and our situation and to shape a just and prosperous society where equality reigns. We have learned that the militancy, persistence, and sustainability of our women's movement is possible only if it is rooted in the midst of the struggles of the grassroots women, who comprise the majority of Filipino women, and if it is consciously a vital part of the broader social movement.

I am optimistic that our women's movement will continue to flourish as young women like you and elderly women like me learn from each other and work together in asserting with conviction and militancy that women's issues are issues of the people and people's issues are women's issues!

Abante babae, palaban militante!!(Onward, women! Assertive ! Militant!)



TO THE YOUNG WOMEN WALKING THE PATH OF FEMINISM

Ms. Aida Santos

Ms. Aida Santos is a Project Manager in the Women's Education Development Productivity and Research Organization or WEDPRO. She is a staunch advocate and a specialist on gender and development mainstreaming. She has worked with various multilateral and bilateral donors and international development institutions including the United Nations in various capacities – as researcher, trainer, modules developer, capacity building expert, and evaluator. She has also worked in various organizations and agencies, including government institutions, community-based groups, NGOs, media and legislative arena. She has been a gender advocate since the early 80s.

She is a member of international organizations like Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID) and a member of a national network of gender advocates like the Gender Resource Network (GRN). As a co-founder of SIBOL or Sama-samang Inisyatiba para sa Pagbabagong Batas at Lipunan, she had been an active participant of the core group that drafted and lobbied for the passage of laws on rape, violence against women, and anti-trafficking.

(NOTE: The following excerpt is the English translation of her extemporaneous talk in Pilipino during the Movement Building workshop)

Starting from my story

Judy started agreeably with a story. It helps us to understand the milieu (of the past). One of my roles today, which is a personal choice and a political one as well, is mentoring young women in my own way. For instance, I give writing workshops for them, where my friends also join to bond anew. In WEDPRO (Women's Education, Development, Productivity, and Research Organization), I get women who are not necessarily highly politicized. I think the

politicization process happens through actual experience. So these are the women I bring along during fieldwork.

Like Judy, I can be called – as how we called it during those days - a petibugoy (petty bourgeois). Meaning, we are not poor but we are also not rich.

We are 10 children. In our family, three of us became activists. My father became an activist towards his 50s. He was imprisoned like me. My older sibling, who was also an activist but stopped after marriage, forbade me to become one.

I grew up in a family where honesty is a deeply held value. My father used to tell us that evil deeds result to severe outcomes, that there's karma.

I joined UPSCA⁷ in 1968. 68-0154 was my student number in college. During my time, passing the entrance exam in UP was published so we know who topped. The topnotcher of our batch was no less than Gary Olivar, who is now a spokesperson of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

Gladly, my schoolmates in the Far Eastern University (FEU) highschool also entered UP, namely, Laurie Barros⁸, who was in the student council, Nick Atienza, Leoncio Co⁹, among others. It was in UP where we became acquainted.

⁷University of the Philippines Student Catholic Action

⁸Laurie or Lorena Barros was the founder of the women's group, MAKIBAKA (Makabayang Kilusan ng Bagong Kababaihan, nationalist movement of new women). At the height of martial law in early 70s, Laurie went underground and became a noted fighter of the New People's Army. MAKIBAKA has become an underground movement of women.

⁹Atienza and Co also became student activists who were arrested and tortured during martial law. When they were released, they worked as professors in UP.

1968 was the height of activism. Vietnam War. Anyone who entered UP during that time – unless one was so stupid or so phlegmatic – became inevitably an activist. So I entered UP where students did not live as “normal” or conventional scholars. I was 16 and I did not experience going to the discos. That’s why maybe, when I was in my 40s, I got wild with friends.

I wanted to serve but I did not know how. I did not join KM (Kabataang Makabayan) or SDK¹⁰. I joined the writers’ group instead, the Panulat para sa Karapatan ng Sambayanan or PAKSA. I was English major and the English department had this elitist image. There were few students and every one of them was speaking in English. It may be an elitist department but on the other hand it enhanced the critical thinking among students. Jose Maria Sison¹¹ was an English Major. So was Bobbie Malay.¹² And there were many other graduates who eventually became members of the Communist Party. They were known in the university and in the department as brilliant and militant. My batchmates, some a year older than my actual batch, became writers and artists. They include Lilia Quindoza-Santiago, Rosario “Charie” Lucero, Anton Juan and others I cannot recall in this senior moment. When I returned to UP after imprisonment as an activist during martial law years, I had as a classmate

¹⁰ KM and SDK were the two most militant youth organizations during that time. When martial law was declared, KM became an underground movement of the youth.

¹¹ Sison is a writer and a professor. He is the founder of Kabataang Makabayan (KM, National Youth) in 1964, the Marxist-Leninist-Maoist Communist Party of the Philippines in 1969, and the revolutionary group, New People’s Army. He is the most wanted person by the US-Philippine government that the Cory Aquino government had exiled him in the mid-80s. He is residing in the Netherlands at present.

¹² Her full name is Carolina Malay. She is a professor in the University of the Philippines. After she graduated from college, she worked as a journalist and at the height of martial law in the ‘70s, went underground as member of the revolutionary CPP-NPA. She was detained together with her husband.

Ricky Lee, Joel Lamangan, Charo Cabardo and other returning martial law activists.

We were not the usual classroom-type of students. The trend then was attending DGs (discussion groups) in the lobby steps of the College of Arts and Sciences. We wore mini skirts even during protest rallies so when the police beat us, the thighs were badly hit.

We called the political repression in 1971 as the practice run for martial law. So in 1972, when martial law was declared, I was already active in the underground movement. The first thing that we, activists, did after the declaration of martial law was to pack our bags and looked for our collective.

I was assigned in propaganda work as a writer. It was a political unit that seemed isolated. During my younger years, one of my tasks was to teach the workers how to write a manifesto, a skit, among others. So I was a propagandist, a cultural worker as well. I did not command rallies. That gave me a headache. I'd rather write.

So, that was my background, I was a propaganda and cultural worker for a long time.

My early revolutionary years

1972 was the height of political repression. It was the time when I just have my travelling bag with me, standing on a street corner with my husband, wondering where to spend the night. We could no longer stay with our families and friends because the military went to their houses.

1974. I gave birth to our first born. It was unplanned so I had a difficult time. I was reprimanded by my collective because of my unplanned pregnancy. For security reasons, I could not just go to the hospital for my pre-natal.

1976. This was the period of successive arbitrary arrests and detention. There was a dragnet-like systematic search and I was one of those arrested. I was tortured. My experience was traumatic and it was only lately that I could talk about it. My story was told in the newly launched television documentary hosted then by Ces Drilon.

Laurie Barros was part of my collective for a short period before she was transferred to another task; Maita Gomez¹³ was one of my first comrades in the collective. So, I gained many close friends even though our paths differed through the years.

Through the years, I realized that friends may have separated ideologically and politically but when the bond is rooted deeply, friendship remains. I think this is the meaning of sisterhood.

In 1977, I was released but my case was still under military commission trial until 1986. When my father was arrested, he was also tortured. Both of us were incarcerated, malas! (an unfortunate occurrence)

By 1979, my husband was still in detention. I had my second child. When I was released, all my relatives told me to discontinue (my activism). But I could not stop.

¹³ Maita Gomez was a socialite and beauty queen who became a revolutionary member of the New People's Army. Because of her social status, her decision to become a revolutionary fighter was newsworthy

I worked with Paula Malay or Ayi¹⁴ and founded KAPATID (roughly translated, sibling), the first organization of relatives of detainees. My task then, was to hop from one school to another to explain the plight of political detainees. Fely, now the wife of no less than (Senator) Joker Arroyo, facilitated my talks in the schools.

Was I afraid? Yes, I was afraid because I only had a temporary release order. Anytime, they can pick me up. But as what Judy had said earlier, it (activism) is difficult to remove from your system. It becomes like a second skin.

My coming out

By 1985, I came out as a lesbian. I was the first lesbian out of the Party. That was tough. I first told it to Princess Nemenzo, Mercy Fabros, and Flor Caagusan, who are my friends in Katipunan ng Kababaihan para sa Kalayaan (KALAYAAN), our feminist collective. I did not know what to do – I had a husband and two children.

My collective called it sexual opportunism or SO and I told them that such threat would spur a mass leave from the rest of the lesbians and gays in the movement. Many used to say that the change in my sexuality could have been a result of the trauma of my sexual torture in prison. I really don't know. All I know is that sexuality is fluid and one's choices can change through the years.

Those were difficult years for me. I only revealed ten years after, the torture that I experienced during detention. I defied many rules. And I think that period full of contradiction was a major part of my life. On one hand I can

¹⁴ Paula Malay or Ayi was the activist mother of Carolina “Bobbie” Malay who during that time was still in jail

speaking publicly about violence but I could not speak about my baggage, the violence that I had experienced.

My coming out became controversial within the movement. Let me turn a couple of years back. In 1983, I was one of the founders of KALAYAAN. We called ourselves feminists. What was our purpose? All of us in KALAYAAN were activists and all of us had political collective. We only wanted to have a space for a feminist discussion since we were not given space within the movement. That was a long story.

They (our collectives) disagreed with us. They told us that such initiative was not done in a proper process. What we did was to ask Joma (Jose Maria Sison), who was still in prison, for an address. Joma sent out a message from prison where he encouraged us, and found nothing wrong with our feminist-activist stance. His message was one of the documents that we want to put in the archives, together with other numerous original documents. We were also the first to establish the Feminist Foundation, which we described to pay tribute to feminists, in memory of Estrella Consolacion who was a friend and who died early in the struggle as well as in memory of Maria Lorena Barros. So that early, we already claimed to be feminists at the same time believers of national democracy. The movement found this complicated. They did not know how to handle us.

This posed as a problem. Whenever there was a political orientation among activists, we could not be placed in any political spectrum. We could not be considered as natdem (national democrats) and the socdem (social democrats) could not also accept us. Whenever the socdems heard that we were described as one of them, they would protest, "My God! KALAYAAN! No!"

We are feminists. Where did we launch (our organization)? At Pete Daroy's house in UP. I remembered, we were so anxious because we were already branded as 'nymphomaniacs', 'lesbians', 'western', 'bourgeois', 'anti-male', 'counter-revolutionary', 'revisionists'. We were aghast because all of us were collectivized. We were just asking for a space as women. So I think, that will tell you a lot about our struggle. It was difficult and complicated. I'm telling you.

The Debate

When I was released from detention, I had a dual personality of doing task above- and underground. I was allowed to join NGOs and become a "public" figure, so to speak. But at the same time, I had a collective. Some comrades had a hard time dealing with me when I was sent out to do some political work. They tried to "trace" my political collective and my "roots" in the movement, but that was a confidential information that they had a difficult time doing so. "She's a spy," they said. They could not trace my whereabouts. I had so many stories on how I handled such dilemmas and difficulties, especially with a unit like mine who were full of super machos. We were only two in the group and the other woman, Estrella, died early due to cancer. Many of my female friends and comrades died of cancer. I didn't know why, maybe because of the hardships that we experienced.

Beginning in the 80s, the Left was divided. Now we started to talk about this without remorse. My collective was in the center of the debate. I saw how the split devastated my comrades. I was in the midst of it. I saw them crying. When you offered your whole life to the movement then there would be division, it was painful, even for me.

It was around that time when I decided to have physical not political dissociation. This was because I could not bear to witness the violence that my personal friends and comrades got involved in.

It was in 1989 when WEDPRO was established. In KALAYAAN, we did not want to get grants. We encountered several hurdles. One story was about KALAYAAN's attendance in a human rights conference during the early 80s. KALAYAAN delegates started the slogan "women's rights are human rights." We were laughed at by the other delegates. It was not acceptable to say "women's rights are human rights" so as not to create a dichotomy.

We also started the research on women and militarization, the impact of martial law on women, especially on sexual torture, military rape. Such issue was not discussed during that time. We did the research voluntarily. So we had a dilemma whether to get funding or not. From a feminist collective, at that time we were socialist feminists, we believe that class, gender, or women issues can be fought together. So our slogan was "kalayaan ng kababaihan, kalayaan ng bayan, isabay nating ipaglaban" (freedom of women, freedom of the nation, let's fight for them synchronously).

Eventually, some of us decided (to get funding) to make our work more organized and more systematic. We were the first feminist group that was able to recruit from the socdem, natdem, gatdem, a play on terms that ended with 'dem.

The issue of trafficking was one of our concerns. We were also the women's organization that accepted prostituted women (as members). The challenges such as globalization, neoliberalism, and international solidarity work, continue.

The youth will face their own struggles; they will determine their own strategies precisely because of the internet. Technology develops. So the struggles are being determined how the way it will be fought. The internet is so powerful in advocacy. And it will still develop but not change in its real essence.

Sisterhood

Despite the Debate, our relationship remains. If you really love each other as sisters, as friends, you could surmount the political differences. We're not exactly just one strand. We have many strands.

When someone hosts a party or celebrates her birthday, inspite of being upset, we need to see each other. And I think that is important. Because movements, social movements, are built out of trust, respect, and love. Without these (elements), even if you are one in the struggle, it would be very complex. After all, social movements or any Party for that matter, are composed of individuals, human beings.

A cadre needs tempering to struggle. Such tempering requires internal processing. While it is a collective effort to change society, it is an individual choice whether you want to contribute. And there is no little or large contribution. There should be no judgment. What we should consider is if such contribution could change society and enlighten women.

Finally, my summing up about intergenerational is in a poem I wrote, "to the young women walking the path of feminism"

To the young women walking the path of feminism

*We begin by speaking directly
to the deaths and disappointments.
Here we begin to fill in the spaces
of silence between us. For it is between
these seemingly irreconcilable lines --
the class lines, the politically correct lines,
the daily lines we run down to each other
to keep difference and desire at a distance
-- that the truth of our connection lies.*

-- from **The Bridge Called My Back**

we begin to love each other

when we begin to make the connection between your empowerment and my disempowerment, we are sisters when we recognize and touch each other's pains like touching the glow of the moon when it seems so distant and impossible, when we cry because another woman cries, when we hold a grieving sister even when we feel the depths of our own wounding, when we laugh as the tears dry laughing with the going of sorrows, when we break our silences even when it is difficult to find the words that will describe the growing grief of loves lost and lost hopes, when we can paint the sunset in our hearts as we welcome the new day rising through the windows of our own lives, when we see the lives of loneliness and aging and aloneness as our own lives, when we catch each other's day as if it's the end of the world for mortality lies at our feet seeking deaths as its agenda for change and rebirth and the future, when we look at the wrinkling faces of our sisters now toiling the soil of their last years and we see our own faces etch in all the wrinkles that we now claim our own, when in the silencing of our voices the human

touch of warmth and candor remain like second skin like second voices in our heads like a song like a tune that does not leave our memory, when we touch and we know that the touch has grown eyes that flicker even in the darkest of our nights, when we as we grow and seek new skies, remember those that have gone ahead whether in death or disappointment, when we can claim that each sister's life is ours too when we become truly human and women, when we can see the shadow behind the smiles or the tears and the joys maybe ours too, when we become human and women

we begin to love each other

I think that is the real revolution, when you can embrace your sister who is suffering and asking for help. Maraming salamat po. (Thank you)

Section 2:

Issues and Challenges in Advancing Women's Empowerment in the Philippines

This section discusses the different concerns and challenges women activists and feminists confront, which have been presented during the movement building workshop and several feminist conversations. The presentations may be given in an earlier period but the issues remain relevant.



WOMEN'S ECONOMIC INSECURITY AND ACCESS TO SOCIAL SERVICES

Cham Perez

Presented on 14 September 2011 at a JASS Feminist Conversation titled "Conversations on Migration, Economic Insecurity, and Sexual Rights: Perspectives on Young Women and Movement Building".

Cham Perez is the research coordinator of the Center for Women's Resources. She excels in doing research work and in networking with other national and international organizations. She believes that research can only be relevant if it is appropriate to the needs of the majority and if it answers the writings on the wall.

Introduction

The government's adherence to the neoliberal framework of development fails to uplift women's condition. Despite the so-called growth reflected in various economic indicators such as the GDP and GNP (gross domestic product and gross national product), this growth remains merely a rhetoric as women and the rest of the people still suffer massive unemployment, low wages, and limited access to social services.

On economic insecurity

Economic growth hardly changed the country's high unemployment and underemployment rate, and women, especially young women, are the most affected sector by the economic insecurity. In its latest global employment monitoring, the International Labour Office (ILO) reported that "employment growth in the Philippines slowed considerably in the second quarter of 2010, despite the faster economic growth that was achieved in the first quarter."¹⁵

¹⁵ International Labour Organization (ILO). Global Employment Report 2011

The year-on-year unemployment rate increased by 1.3 per cent from January 2010 to January 2011. Segregating the data by gender and age group, BLES' 2009 report shows that younger population, those who are 15 to 34 years old post the highest unemployment rates. Young women's unemployment rate is also relatively higher than young men. This however is a low estimate as the government adopts a new definition of employment, in effect, reducing unemployment by redefining its definition. The numbers would therefore be higher if re-computed.

The highest unemployment rate of women is posted in National Capital Region (11.4%), considered as the center of urbanization in the country; followed by Southern Tagalog (9.3%) and Central Luzon (8.4%), which are the two regions nearest to NCR. Results of a 2010 CWR survey among 250 urban poor women in Manila, Caloocan City and Pasig City also show similar results where 41% of them do not have jobs or any source of income.

For those who are employed, it is also important to note that more than the lack of jobs itself (unemployment and underemployment), it is the quality of jobs available for women that causes economic insecurity. A lot of poor Filipinos, especially women, are among the so-called vulnerable workers. They work on low-paid jobs that hardly offer social security, health insurance, and other benefits. They are likewise classified as "vulnerable" because of the insecurity and irregularity of income, absence of safe working condition, and vulnerability to violence.

Almost 40 out of 100 of employed women in the country are laborers and unskilled workers while about 14 out of 100 are service workers. These two occupation groups receive the lowest average daily basic pay despite working longer hours. More than 1.5 million women are employed in private households as domestic workers.

**Employed Women by Major Occupation Group, Average Daily Basic Pay,
Average Number of Hours Worked Daily, 2009**

Major Occupation Group	Number	Percent Share	Average Daily Basic Pay (in peso)	Hours Worked Daily
ALL Occupation Groups	13,657	100.00	290.81	8.2
Officials of Government and Special Interest-Organizations, Corporate Executives, Managers, Managing Proprietors and Supervisors	2,520	18.45	705.51	7.8
Professionals	1,100	8.05	562.71	8.0
Technicians and Associate Professionals	484	3.54	394.49	7.4
Clerks	1,154	8.45	363.20	8.0
Service Workers and Shop and Market Sales Workers	1,864	13.65	194.45	8.4
Farmers, Forestry Workers and Fishermen	834	6.11	126.32	7.0
Craft and Related Trades Workers	564	4.13	218.20	8
Plant and Machine Operators and Assemblers	189	1.38	311.61	8.3
Laborers and Unskilled Workers	4,927	36.08	129.89	8.4
Special Occupations	22	0.16	299.91	7.5

Source: processed from NSCB, BLES Labor Force Survey

Instead of developing women's potential, more and more of them are hired in the service sector, in low skilled jobs, or work as unpaid labor. Women work as vendors, receptionists, tellers, or call center agents. A large number of them get jobs in the government as teachers, clerks, nurses, and midwives. For the past four years, the working conditions and location of women have not varied.

These conditions are further worsened by neoliberal labor practices such as contractualization and different forms of labor flexibilization. The government, while granting favors and concessions to foreign and local businesses, ignores the workers' call for higher wages and labor rights. Instead, it promotes policies that lead to more precarious work and curtails workers' rights to organize or join unions.

The limited job opportunities, especially for women, and the low minimum wage in the country result to low income of families. In the Philippines, 76.10% are receiving income lower than P250,000 for a year or P684.93 per day.

Number of Families and Family Income Group, 2009			
Total Income	income per day (in peso)	Number of Families Reported	% share of family income group
Under 40,000	109.59	759,000	4.11%
40,000 – 59,999	164.38	1,605,000	8.70%
60,000 – 99,999	273.97	4,107,000	22.26%
100,000 – 249,999	684.93	7,571,000	41.03%
250, 000 and over	-	4,409,000	23.90%

Source: NSO Family Income and Expenditure Survey, 2009

According to IBON Foundation, an established research institution, the estimated average family living wage (FLW) is at P988 (US\$23) in the National Capital Region (NCR) (as of March 2011). Thus, the daily minimum wage of P404 (US\$9.39) in NCR is just two-fifth (2/5) of the family living wage.

While many adults lost the opportunity to work, more children are hired by companies. Companies take advantage of the impoverished condition of the families and prefer to hire the younger members of the family for cheaper wage and to get more compliant workers than adults. Many girls work as

salegirls and househelp while many boys can be found in agriculture, fishing, and mining industries. Employment of working children aged 5-14 increased by 5.90% from 2008 to 2009 while employment of those 15-17 increased by 0.14%. Working children also face various forms of abuses in the workplace.

Working Children by Age Group and Major Occupation Group, Philippines: 2008 – 2009 (in thousands)			
Occupation Group	2008	2009	% increase
5-14 Years Old			
All Occupations	729	772	5.90
Service, Shop and Market Sales Workers	104	112	7.69
Farmers, Forestry Workers and Fishermen	40	37	-7.50
Trade and Related Workers	13	11	-15.38
Plant and Machine Operators, Assemblers	-	-	
Laborers and Unskilled Workers	564	604	7.09
Other Occupations	8	8	0.00
15-17 Years Old			
All Occupations	1,425	1,427	0.14
Service, Shop and Market Sales Workers	209	225	7.66
Farmers, Forestry Workers and Fishermen	71	61	-14.08
Trade and Related Workers	39	34	-12.82
Plant and Machine Operators, Assemblers	17	12	-29.41
Laborers and Unskilled Workers	1,057	1,072	1.42
Other Occupations	31	22	-29.03

Source: Bureau of Labor and Employment Statistics, 2010

In a country where majority live below poverty line, it is usual to see any able member of the family help find an income. As long as their parents have no opportunities to find regular jobs and decent wages, children will continue to help augment the parents' meager income.

Economic insecurity makes it more difficult for women to access basic social services.

Inaccessibility of Social Services to Women

On health

According to the Health Alliance for Democracy (HEAD), the health budget generally reveals Aquino's policy of neglect and commercialization of public health services instead of providing these as a basic social service.

While the Aquino administration brags about an increase of more than P10B in the DOH budget, the said additional funds are not allotted where they would matter more. The bigger chunk of the increase is allotted to PhilHealth, the health insurance being promoted by the government. With the inherent limitation in the benefits of the program, its members would still have to spend from their own pockets for their medical needs. The government also allots P3B as government equity or counterpart for public-private partnership in 25 regional hospitals.

According to HEAD, the government's health budget is a far cry from the World Health Organization's (WHO) recommendation of 5% of gross national product (GNP) allotment for health. This budget only results in more commercialization and privatization of public health care services.¹⁶

Jose Fabella Memorial Hospital, for more than three years now, has been reportedly up for privatization. It has also an insufficient government budget which has led to limited services that could hardly meet the maternal and childbirth requirements of poor women who are the hospital's main clientele.

According to the World Health Organization, "the Philippines is one of 55 countries accounting for 94% maternal death in the world". Many of the maternal deaths are caused by hemorrhage, hypertension, sepsis, obstructed

¹⁶ Health Alliance for Democracy. 2012 health budget reveals Aquino's policy of neglect and profiteering out of the ailing public. August 2011

labor, and problems related to induced abortion.¹⁷ These are treatable cases if only women and their families could afford to pay high-quality professional medical service. For every maternal death, there are 20 neonatal, infant and child death. Forty percent (40%) of neonatal deaths occur after 28 days of delivery.

A large chunk or 49% of the Filipinos pay from their own pockets during check-ups or hospitalization. This takes a heavy toll on the majority who could not afford to pay a professional and efficient medical worker. According to WHO data, the Philippine government allots a minimum budget for health expenditure and encourages the private sector to invest in the health industry instead.

Government expenditure on health vis-à-vis Private health expenditure	
Government expenditure on health as % of total expenditure on health	39.6
Government expenditure on health as % of total general government expenditure	6.4
External source of government health expenditure	8.33
Private health expenditure	60.4

Source: Western Pacific Region Health Databank, WHO, 2008

In privatizing the health service, there is much lesser room for women to have access to free or affordable service especially for treatment of serious diseases like cancer. In the Philippines, 51.33% of cancer patients are women and only a few of them can afford to pay for chemotherapy or radiation. So, even if the tumor is detected at its early stage, it becomes malignant because of the absence of a regular medication.

¹⁷ World Health Organization. Country Health Information Profiles – Philippines. 2010

On Education

Based on the P207.27 billion DepEd budget (2011) and the total number of school-age population (22.71 million, age 6-15), the government spending to basic education per student per day, in real value, is P24.97. Low budgets on education means insufficient number of classrooms, tables, chairs, textbooks in public schools, low salaries for teachers. The Philippine government spends less in education compared to its neighboring Asian countries.

Although basic education in public schools is free, families still need to spend for transportation expenses (especially if the school is far from communities), food and for school projects. With low income families, their poverty pushes children out of school.

In CWR's interview with 100 urban poor women in Manila and Malabon City (2011), 45% of the respondents reported that they have one or 2 children of schooling age who are no longer going to school due to financial constraints.

Due to high cost of educational expenses, a number of young women resort to "prosti-tuition" (engaging in paid sex to raise money for tuition) as a last resort just to finish their studies. In a study made by Gabriela-Youth in 2006, the number of students engaged in "prosti-tuition" increases during enrollment and exam periods, the time when college students need to pay their school fees. With the advent of the internet, a new form of commercial sex, cybersex services, has been utilized by young women to earn money.

Filipinos believe that education can be a way to improve their economic status so some poor young women would look for means just to get a university diploma. Sadly, the increasing cases of "prosti-tuition" show that education in the country is becoming more of a privilege than a right, making it inaccessible to low-income families.

On Housing

Securing women's right to decent housing is fundamental in improving her and her family's life. The constantly increasing number of informal settlers only shows the magnitude of poverty caused by lack of decent employment, low wages and the state's neglect for the poor families' basic need for shelter.

According to National Statistics Coordination Board (NSCB), there are 675,000 families considered informal settlers where most of them are in major urban centers like the National Capital Region or NCR (2004). In Quezon City alone, estimated 230,000 families do not have permanent houses. The number of houses that need to be constructed is already at 3.7 million according to HUDCC. Yet, the government gives the implementation of the housing project to the private sector.

The number of homeless families will continue to increase with the onslaught of disasters, demolitions, and evictions of urban communities. Notable demolitions in the urban setting include the violent demolition in Barangay Corazon de Jesus in San Juan where women and children are among those who scramble to avoid tear gas and water canon used by the demolition team.

Another threat of demolition is in North Triangle, Quezon City with planned construction of the Makati Central Business District (QC-CBD), supported by the World Bank. The project is already rolling the bidding process QC-CBD of big businesses and corporations for long-term lease. Among them are Sy (SM), Ayala (TriNoma), and Gokongwei. At the backdrop of this ambitious project is the displacement of evicted 25,000 families.

Our challenge and tasks

This is the situation of Filipino women and their families. The state's utter neglect of their basic rights to economic security and social services traps them in poverty. No amount of economic growth statistics can change the reality of the lives of the poor and the powerless as long as the government adheres to neoliberal path of development. Growth and the so-called inclusive growth will remain an empty rhetoric.

However, Filipino women do not accept their situation of misery and poverty. They know that through collective action, change is possible. The women's movement continues to enjoin the biggest number of women in the struggles and protests of the people. Women continue to fight for their rights and welfare. Empowered women help spread liberating education to other women so as to strengthen and expand the women's movement. Filipino women unite with women from different countries against neoliberal globalization and all forms of oppression and exploitation.

LANDLESSNESS AND RURAL WOMEN

Pambansang Koalisyon ng Kababaihan sa Kanayunan (PKKK)

Presented on 14 September 2011 at a JASS Feminist Conversation titled “Conversations on Migration, Economic Insecurity, and Sexual Rights: Perspectives on Young Women and Movement Building”.

PKKK is a coalition of rural women with a mission to advocate rural women's property rights, access and control, strengthen the members' capacity, facilitate development of its members, broaden the spirit of commitment, sharing and creativity and to provide analysis on the issues related to the rural women's agenda.

The distribution of land through CARPER

Reportedly, the government plans to distribute 1.5M hectares under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program Extension with Reforms (CARPER) or the Republic Act 9700. CARPER is an amendatory law signed on August 7, 2009 to extend the deadline of distributing agricultural lands to farmers for an additional five years since the original CARP was not able to fulfill its pledge of distribution.

The Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) plans to distribute 1.1 million hectares while the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) pledges to distribute 400,000 hectares for the 1.1 million agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs) in the next three years or 35 months.

Poverty and Landlessness

The table shows that those provinces with the highest land acquisition and distribution (LAD) backlog has also the highest poverty incidence:

ANG PAGPAPATUPAD NG PAMAMAHAGI NG LUPA SA CARPER

- 1.5M hectares na ipapamahagi
- 1.1 M hectares na ipapamahagi ng DAR at 400,000 hectares ng DENR
- Para sa 1.1 M Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries o ARBs
- Sa susunod na 35 buwan o kulang sa 3 taon.



Provinces	Remaining Lands for Distribution under CARP		Poverty (2009)	
	2008(b)	2011(c)	Magnitude (poor pop.)	Incidence (in percent)
Negros Occidental	147,888	144,861	915,157	32.2
Camarines Sur	54,433**	63,042	794,832	47
Masbate	57,007	33,156	441,688	54.2
Cotabato	60,186	40,703	344,421	33.3
Negros Oriental	34,892	24,027	485,080	41.9
Leyte	60,260	36,007	628,472	34.3
Albay	Not in the top 10	Not in the top 10	512,079	43.6
Northern Samar	Not in the top 10	Not in the top 10	292,874	51.2
Iloilo	Not in the top 10	25,019	569,097	21.8
Camarines Norte	Not in the top 10	Not in the top 10	232,685	42.3
Isabela	49,708**	57,730	283,068	21.2
Lanao del Sur	43,988**	39,567	363,340	44.8
Maguindanao	Not in the top 10	29,034	437,790	53.7
Sorsogon	32,967	Not in the top 10	374,183	41.3
Saranggani	30,161	18,450	249,410	51.8

According to the 2009 National Household Targeting Survey for Poverty Reduction of the Department of Social Work and Development (DSWD), there is a high poverty incidence among women in the province of Negros Occidental, Camarines Sur, Leyte, Iloilo, and Lanao del Sur. These are four of the provinces which have the highest land distribution backlog.

The Challenges in land distribution under CARPER or RA 9700

The challenges faced for the realization of land distribution are the following:

1. Ninety four per cent (94%) of the 1.1 million hectares planned for distribution are privately owned. These are huge lands – 24 hectares or more – that have been controlled by rich landlords for the last 23 years. Many of these lands are under the name of rich landowners such as the Arroyos and Cojuangcos in Negros Occidental and in Tarlac, coconut plantation of the Reyes family in Bondoc Peninsula, and the Floirendos in Mindanao.
2. Targets for distribution under LAD program are constantly changing.
3. There is a problem of the system in identifying who are the agrarian reform beneficiaries or ARBs.
4. There is a problem in the redistribution of forest lands by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources or DENR.
5. There is a problem among the implementers of CARPER, such as the Department of Agrarian Reform, or DAR and the DENR.

Lack of Commitment from the President

The commitment of the President is wanting especially in allocating a budget for land distribution. Instead of augmenting the funds for agrarian reform, the government even cut the budget in 2011 and transferred it to the conditional cash transfer (CCT) program. In particular, the 2011 budgets of the Department of Agrarian Reform, was cut from P20.8 billion in 2010 to P6.4 billion, and the Department of Agriculture, from P39.2 billion (2010) to P34.8 billion. In contrast the CCT budget was increased from P10 B in 2010 to P23 billion in 2011.

The government's lack of commitment can also be seen in its policy on food and fuel. The Philippines is one of the leading countries that committed its land for production of export crops and production of biofuels.

The glaring example of the government's seriousness about land distribution is the Hacienda Luisita case, where the distribution to the farmers and farm workers remain unfulfilled in spite of a Supreme Court decision awarding the land to the farmers. The implementation has been long wanting despite the Supreme Court's decision.

Women as agrarian reform beneficiaries ARBs

According to a 2008 Centro Saka's survey, 23% of the 1200 respondents were women ARBs. PKKK CEDAW local and sectoral application recorded 14% of women ARBs came from two communities in Quezon (FGD). Based on NSCB 2009 data, 537,320 women ARBs were able to get certificate of land ownership awards (CLOA) compared to 1,130,737 men ARBs.

Rural women lack access to support services. According to CSI Women in Agriculture Survey, less than 30% of rural women have access to support services where the large number (24%) of them work in irrigation had also the lowest (9%) access to capital.

Face of women in migration

The Philippines is the third topmost labor exporting country. At present, 10% of the population work abroad. In December 2007, there were 8.7 million Filipinos who work abroad, where 4.1 million were temporary workers and 0.9 million were undocumented. Everyday, around 3,000 women and men went out of the country to work. (CMA)

Challenges and opportunities for rural women

The issue of landlessness and the endless diaspora of rural women to urban centers or outside the country are grave and interconnected concern. Poverty, landlessness and migration are interconnected and women's vulnerability to violence and to powerlessness increases because of these three factor. Thus, concerning the rights of rural women on agrarian reform, PKKK recommends the following:

1. Speedy implementation of land distribution and the government should allot a budget for this program;
2. Strengthen the organizing work of women ARBs especially under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program Extension with Reforms (CARPER) Law or R.A. 9700;
3. Implement and monitor the administrative order (AO) on gender equality and agrarian reform;
4. Ensure and implement the representation of women in the various committees and councils set up to monitor and oversee land distribution such as BARC, PARC, PARCOM, and other matters concerning the policies and programs of agrarian reform.

For young rural women who also face particular issues that need to be address, we should focus on the following:

1. Organize and strengthen the organization of rural women;
2. Subsidy, support services, and work for rural women and not just CCT;
3. Provide venues and opportunities for the voices of rural women. Our capacities should be enhanced.

WOMEN AND MILITARISM

Carmi Espineda

Presented on 16 July 2010 at a JASS Feminist Conversation titled "Sexuality, Militarism, and Globalization: What Does the P-Noy Administration Have to Say?"

Carmi Espineda is the education and training coordinator of the Center for Women's Resources. She is adept in discussing women's democratic rights as part of her work in the capacity building program of CWR.

(Note: This article is based from CWR's paper. "As war and militarism escalate: the long road to women's empowerment" (2010). The Filipino women's concern on the increasing human rights violations and their demand to end impunity continue. Thus, the article remains relevant. The administration may have changed but human rights violations persist and have become more serious.)

INTRODUCTION

Militarism is defined as a belief that a nation should maintain a strong military capability and be prepared to use it aggressively to defend or promote national interests.¹⁸ The problem with this concept is that national interest is equated with the interest of those who possess state power. Thus, a state uses military might to preserve its authority.

The Philippine government exemplifies a country that embraces the culture of militarism so as to maintain the status quo. As the state is in command of its territory, armed forces, laws and taxation and most importantly its people, it has the power and the sole responsibility in maintaining order, providing social needs and protecting the property of its people. International agencies,

¹⁸ New Oxford American Dictionary, 2007



like the United Nations, and even the Philippine constitution have articulated such state responsibility. Thus, protecting human rights is a state function and people expect the state to satisfactorily perform such function. Otherwise, it is clearly a violation of human rights when the state instigates violence.

But the concept of state as protector of its people remains violated. In the Philippines, every regime that takes power creates its own militaristic plan which aims to end “insurgencies and “terrorism” without differentiating patriotic groups waging armed struggle for national liberation from bandit groups. Without addressing the economic and social roots of those who have chosen the path of armed resistance, the government unleashed war against its own citizens, armed and unarmed. As a result, human rights violations occur without let up.

THE CULTURE OF MILITARISM IN THE PHILIPPINES

Defense over social services

Aside from debt servicing, military expenditures gobble up most of the government budget. The Arroyo government approved a defense budget with a 13% increase in 2009, while a meager 25% of the total P1.6T budget was allotted to education, culture, labor development, health, social security, welfare, employment, housing, community development, land distribution, other social services, and subsidy to Local Government Units (LGU).

For example, in 2006, the state colleges and universities – numbering hundreds all over the country – got less than half of the budgetary allotments for two major military educational institutions, the Philippine Military Academy (PMA) and the National Defense College of the Philippines (NDCP). The PMA received a total of P572.24 million while the NDCP got P40.45 million – or a

total of P612.68 million. In contrast, the total allocation for state colleges and universities outside of the University of the Philippines was only P16.67 million.¹⁹

The difference in appropriation between the military schools and state colleges and universities is just a reflection of the over-all contrast between the allocations for defense and education. Although at first glance, budget for Education would be bigger than the budget for Defense, the funds for Education would be divided among thousands of public educational institutions, hundreds of thousands of teachers and would benefit millions of students all over the country. On the other hand, the budget for Defense would only be for one department with a record of human rights violations instead of fulfilling its pledge of protecting the people.

Militarism over people's legitimate demands

In a country where landlessness, unemployment and poverty remain the fundamental problems, the popular cry for socio-economic and political rights is a legitimate demand. However, instead of addressing these demands, the government describes those who assert as "subversive" or "communist" and uses its military to muffle the legitimate call.

The militarist stance is displayed through the Oplan Bantay Laya (OBL) program of the Arroyo government. In the guise of combating terrorists, the Arroyo administration launched the program where military operations resulted to numerous extra judicial killings of unarmed legal activists, including leaders of political parties and mass organizations, human rights workers,

¹⁹ State Colleges to Get Less than Half of Budget for Military Schools in 2006, bulatlat.com, October 16-22, 2005

pastors and priests, lawyers and journalists.²⁰ It also dislocated hundreds of thousands of peasant families and indigenous peoples.

Despite the notoriety of Oplan Bantay Laya (OBL), the newly installed Aquino government has no inclination to eradicate such program. Instead, it has continued the program and even announced that it will create a new scheme, which will be identified with his administration.

OBL is patterned after the US military strategy on its war on terror. The Arroyo government has received US\$4.6 billion in US military assistance for the armed forces, with an additional US\$ 30 million allotted for counter-terrorism trainings.²¹ The US has provided the aid to pave the way for a greater control and utilization of the country for its military, political, and economic intentions.

Filipino women and children are among the poorest sectors in the Philippines that makes them one of the most vulnerable victims of OBL. Majority of them are rural women who are landless, could not access financial and social assets, have fewer opportunities to improve their skills and knowledge, and are rarely able to access public decision-making processes. More so, this dismal condition of women has been aggravated by militarization in their communities.

Peasant women and children are the hardest hit by militarization in the countryside. Because of the military operations in the communities, women and their families are forced to leave their livelihoods behind because of fear. Disrupted livelihood would only mean additional burden for women, for traditionally, Filipino women are the primary caregivers who ensure that the family has food on the table.

²⁰ OplanBantayLaya is already a proven failure Arroyo regime is bluffing about its capabilities, Jose Maria Sison, June 20, 2006

²¹ OplanBantayLaya Primer, Ecumenical Movement for Justice and Peace, 2006

Evacuation and displacement also bears considerably on the health of women and their children. Lack of food, clean water, clothes, dirty toilets and bathing facilities were among the problems that women and children have to face in the evacuation centers.

From 2001 to 2009, women and children were among the victims of 1,133,360 threat, harassment and intimidation, forcible evacuation and displacement, hamletting, and food and economic blockades of OBL.

Violations by the Gloria-Macapagal Arroyo Government January 21, 2001 to December 31, 2009	
Type of Violation	No. of Victims
Extrajudicial, summary and arbitrary execution	1,188
Frustrated killing	367
Enforced or involuntary disappearance	205
Torture	1,028
Illegal arrest	1,963
Physical assault and injuries	30,002
Threat, harassment and intimidation	81,248
Indiscriminate firing	538,017
Illegal search and seizure	53,810
Forcible evacuation and displacement	873,482
Hamletting	38,616
Violation of domicile	28,782
Food and other economic blockades	84,626
Use of school, medical, religious and other public places for military purposes	55,388

Source: Karapatan

As women become more assertive in fighting for their rights, they also become more vulnerable to violence committed by state forces. Activists and human rights advocates are directly considered by the military as “communists” and therefore enemies who can be humiliated, tortured, and even eliminated with the blessings of their superiors.

Well-known cases of human rights violations perpetrated by the past Arroyo regime against women activists include the illegal arrest and torture of 65-year old Angie Ipong, the disappearance of UP students Karen Empeno and Shirley Cadapan, the arrest of 43 health workers where 26 of them were women, and the illegal arrest of Myrna Cruz-Abraham.

The military systematically use sexual abuse or maltreatment to intimidate, humiliate and extract information from arrested women activists.

As of March 31 2010, there are 344 political prisoners all over the country; of whom 317 were arrested under Arroyo regime, 59 of whom are women and six are minors.²²

VFA, Balikatan and the US “War on Terror”

Under the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA), the Philippine government allows the US troops to enter the country in the guise of combat training, called Balikatan exercises. The exercises supposedly contribute in building a sustainable peace in the Philippines, specifically Mindanao, where the fight for the “terrorists” persists. The exercises purportedly provide training, equipment, and intelligence information assistance to the AFP in their combat operations against “terrorists” like Abu Sayyaf.

²² Karapatan Monitor, January- March 2010

Alarming though, reports indicate that US forces have joined in the actual combat operations of the armed forces of the Philippines to pursue the New People's Army (NPA) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

Though there is a movement for the abrogation of the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) because of its apparent subservience to the US, the Philippine government maintains its stand that the pact cannot be abrogated because of the Mutual Defense Treaty (MDT), which is the reference since 1951.

With OBL coupled with Balikatan exercises, women and their families were forced to abandon their livelihoods. Many of them flock to urban centers. And because of the lack of opportunity being offered to them, they are vulnerable to sexual exploitation. Some end up engaging in "survival sex", "transactional sex" or the "palit system" to obtain food.

The presence of US troops spawns and aggravates prostitution. Prostituted persons, according to a 1998 International Labor Organization study in 1998, numbered about 400,000 to 500,000. It is known that prostitution flourish whenever there is a military facility in an area. Notorious red light districts are established just beside US military facilities like Clarkfield in Angeles City, Sangley Point in Cavite and Zamboanga City, among others.

Talikala, a local organization for prostituted women in Mindanao, estimates that 2,000 women are caught up in prostitution in Zamboanga City alone. Zamboanga City is home to the permanent US military facility in the country.

In 2009, Lieutenant Senior Grade Nancy Gadian, a whistleblower and liaison officer for Balikatan 2002, testified that prostitution is indeed part of the US military's rest and recreation (R&R) program. She cited the re-emergence of prostitution to "service" American GIs on R & R in Zamboanga City. In her affidavit she wrote: *"I saw an increase in the number of establishments in*

*Zamboanga City catering to US servicemen, and many of these are obviously involved in prostitution. I witnessed how officers and enlisted personnel of the US military pick-up women prostitutes and how women prostitutes go to their hotel rooms. I also received reports of many "sexual activities" of US troops in all sorts of places during their "R&R". The R&R (called "Liberty" by the Americans) of the US troops is included in the planning of the Balikatan exercises. In the Balikatan exercises where I was involved, the specific areas where they could go were pre-determined. This was not disclosed to the media. In 2002-1, the R&R places were Angeles, Subic and Cebu.*²³

Women, under the VFA, are more prone to abuses and exploitation because it gives the American troops special privileges such as exemption from Philippine regulations and criminal jurisdictions. The Subic rape case or the "Nicole" case against US soldier Daniel Smith exemplifies the power of VFA over Philippine laws and judicial processes. Even though rape case is a heinous and non-bailable crime in the country, the convicted Smith was set free because of VFA.

AQUINO ADMINISTRATION: WHAT TO HOPE FOR?

As the newly installed president of the Philippines, Benigno Aquino III promises sweeping reforms to the bankrupt, poverty-stricken country. He assures the people that he would take no other path but the righteous one, "*daang matuwid*"(straight path) as he describes it.

In this light, the Center for Women's Resources (CWR), dares the new administration to take on concrete measures to reverse the nine years of

²³ Affidavit of Philippine Navy Lt. SG Nancy Gadian on the direct involvement of U.S. military forces in combat operations in Mindanao, August 26, 2009

devastation, corruption, scandals, and political repression and killings under Arroyo. CWR challenges President Benigno Aquino III to make good on his promises of “daang matuwid” and implement the following:

1. Prosecute Arroyo and her cohorts for the numerous extrajudicial killings, forced disappearances and political repression against Filipino women and their families as well as stop the militarization and related violations of civil and political rights of women;
2. As a sign of good will measure, CWR urges Aquino to free the women and all political prisoners unjustly detained, charged and treated like common criminals;
3. Repeal the Mutual Defense Treaty so as to end the one-sided US-RP Visiting Forces Agreement;
4. Stop creating and implementing military operation plan (Oplan) that legitimizes the militarization of rural and urban communities,
5. Prioritize social services in the government’s budget, and reduce appropriations for military and defense.

CWR believes that only when the Aquino administration immediately execute the above steps can Filipino women obtain economic and social relief under his government.

WOMEN'S HEALTH: NOT JUST A POPULATION ISSUE

Gene Alzona Nisperos, MD

Presented on 3 May 2011 at a JASS Feminist Conversation titled "Advocacy Forum and Workshop of Filipino Women for the RH Bill".

Dr. Gene Nisperos is a medical doctor and the vice chairperson of the Health Alliance for Democracy, the national organization of health professionals, health workers, and health sciences students. He is a faculty of the College of Medicine of the University of the Philippines. He is also a co-convenor of RESIST! (Resistance and Solidarity against Agrochemical TNCs).

Let us familiarize ourselves with the basic health indicators in the country:

- Average life expectancy at birth (LEB): 70 years
- Infant mortality rate: 25 per 1000 live births
- Maternal mortality ratio (MMR): 221 per 100,000 live births (DOH, 2011)

Compared to other Asian countries, the Philippines has one of the highest maternal mortality ratios.

Comparison of Maternal Mortality Ratio Among Selected Asian Countries, 2005 (per 100,000 livebirths)	
Japan	6
South Korea	14
Malaysia	62
Thailand	110
Philippines	230

Source: World Health Statistics 2009, WHO



Based on the report of Field Health Service Information System (FHSIS) in 2007, the top 10 provinces with the highest MMR are Compostela Valley, Eastern Samar, Basilan, Tawi-tawi, Apayao, Sorsogon, Palawan, Surigao del Norte, Zamboanga Sibugay, and Davao del Norte. The average MMR of the top 10 provinces with highest MMR is about 15 times greater than that of top 10 provinces with lowest MMR.

Poverty magnifies the inequality in maternal health care. Only 25% of poor women give birth with professional attendance compared to 92% of women in the upper economic quintiles. Of great concern is the increase in MMR, from 162 in 2008 to 221 in 2011, which coincides with the push by the Department of Health for “facility-based delivery”, manifested as the “no home birthing” policy.

Although the infant mortality rate in the country has reportedly declined through the years, it is still alarmingly high compared to those of other Asian countries.

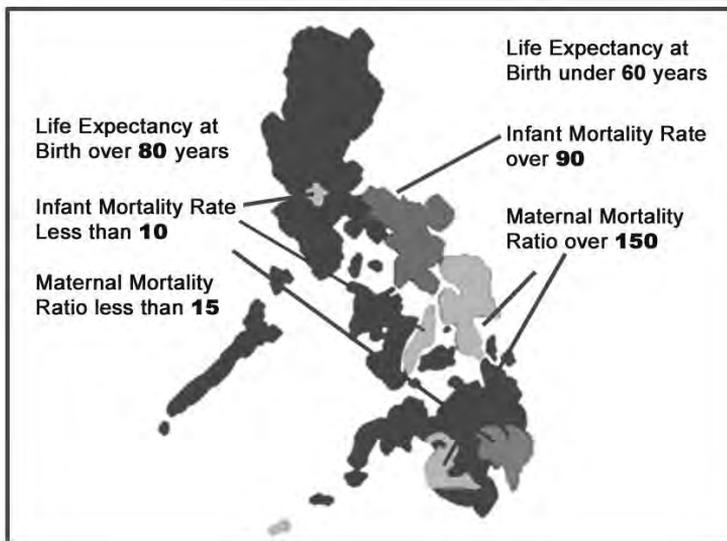
Comparison of Infant Mortality Ratio Among Selected Asian Countries, 2005			
Country	1990	2000	2007
Japan	5	3	3
South Korea	8	5	4
Thailand	26	11	6
Malaysia	16	11	10
Philippines	43	29	23

Source: World Health Statistics 2009, WHO

Based on the same study of FHSIS, the top 10 provinces with the highest infant mortality rate (IMR) are Batanes, Marinduque, Compostella Valley, Davao del

Norte, Camarines Norte, Surigao del Sur, Kalinga, Camiguin, Biliran, and Eastern Samar. (2007) The report also reveals that the average IMR of top 10 provinces with highest IMR is about 10 times greater than that of top 10 provinces with lowest IMR. Only 50% of children from the lowest quintiles receive EPI vaccines while 83% of children from top socio-economic quintile receive these vaccinations.

Within the Philippines, the role of poverty on the health of women and children becomes very clear when comparing the basic health indicators between urban, high-income areas (i.e., Metro Manila, Metro Cebu, and Metro Davao) and rural, low-income regions (i.e., Bicol region, Eastern Visayas region, and the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao). Those in urban, high-income areas live 20 years longer than those living in rural, low-income regions. On the other hand, maternal and infant deaths are almost 10 times higher in rural, low-income regions than those of urban, high-income areas.



Rich women on the average have only two children while poor women or those at the bottom quintile of income groups have six or seven children during their reproductive years. The World Health Organization reveals that 36% of young women conceived before marriage and 45% of all pregnancies are unwanted or mistimed [WHO, 2007].

The main causes of maternal post-partum mortality are hemorrhage (18%), normal delivery (38%), pregnancy with abortive outcome (9%), hypertension (27%), and hemorrhage related to pregnancy (8%). Curiously, it is in the course of normal delivery that produces the highest number of mortalities.

Pregnancy at a young age can pose a threat to a woman's health. The Philippines is one of the countries in Asia with the highest number of adolescents (15-19 years old) giving birth by age 20. Again, the WHO lists the following percentage of adolescent sexual and reproductive health in selected Asian countries: Japan (2%), China (8%), Vietnam (19%), Philippines (21%), and Mongolia (22%) [WHO, 2007].

In 2008, the WHO declared that in India and the Philippines, the wealthiest groups were three times more likely to receive care than the poorest. Inequalities are particularly high for maternal and neonatal care. Thus, pregnancy and childbirth are still dangerous for most women.

Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. It is a fundamental human right (WHO Alma Ata Declaration, 1978) and is guaranteed by the Philippine Constitution. In Article II, Section 15 of the 1987 Constitution, "The State shall protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them."

Given that perspective, health is a matter of right and a state responsibility. Ensuring the people's overall well-being - economic, political, social, and

cultural - is a paramount obligation of government. Health therefore should be a public service, not a business or trade investment. It should be taken in the framework of equity and not just equality. Health for all should be taken in the context of a truly independent and democratic society.

As Prof. Mahmoud Fathalla (1997) observes, "The scandal of our time, Women are not dying because of diseases we cannot treat. They are dying because societies have yet to make the decision that their lives are worth saving."

HEAL.
STRUGGLE.
LIBERATE.

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS

Clara Rita A. Padilla, JD

Presented at the National Workshop of Filipino Women, "Liberating Filipino Women through the Years: A Sharing of Women's Experiences in Movement Building", November 11 to 13, 2009

Clara Rita "Claire" A. Padilla is the founder and Executive Director of EnGendeRights, Inc. She is a widely published feminist lawyer and women's rights activist. She has worked in the Philippines and in New York as an International Visiting Legal Fellow at the Center for Reproductive Rights from July 2002 through July 2003. She holds a Juris Doctor degree from the Ateneo de Manila University and has been practicing law for over 15 years working in the fields of gender, gender-based violence, sexual and reproductive health and rights, and sexual orientation, gender identity and expression. She has extensive experience in policy advocacy, litigation, research, writing, and training. After graduating from law school, she has dedicated her life in changing laws, policies, and practices that are discriminatory against women. Her work has brought her to urban poor communities and far-flung barrios in the Philippines at the same time she has raised women's concerns to the international level especially the United Nations mechanisms. She spearheaded the submission of the request for inquiry on Manila EO 003 (Series of 2000) to the CEDAW Committee in 2008 which was a collaborative effort of the Philippine-based Task Force CEDAW Inquiry, the New York-based Center for Reproductive Rights, and the Malaysia-based International Women's Rights Action Watch-Asia Pacific (IWRAP-AP). She has made oral interventions before the CEDAW Committee in New York and before the Human Rights Council in Geneva. She advocated for the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic Social Cultural Rights (OP ICESCR) which was finally adopted in December 2008.

The situation is changing. There are laws that uphold women's reproductive health and rights but there are also ordinances and executive orders that continue to restrict these same rights.

Good governance demands that government officials are not concerned with winning the next elections. At the same time, there is the strong stance of



progressive groups to respect the right to informed choice of the citizens, to maintain a clear separation of church and state, to get real programs with corresponding budget.

But the delay in the passage of the RH bill into law and the lack of political will of the administration of President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo to pass the RH Bill prompted others to comment, “mahina ang women’s movement” (the women’s movement is weak). This only shows that the women’s movement has a lot of work to do.

Policies like Executive Order 003 (EO 003) enacted by then Manila Mayor Lito Atienza in 2000 should be revoked. Under EO 003, responsible parenthood means promoting only natural family planning methods effectively leading to the denial of access to pills, condoms, IUDs and ligation in Manila City-run hospitals and clinics.

Policies restricting access to sexual and reproductive health information, supplies and services gravely impact the prevailing lack of sexual and reproductive health information, misconceptions on contraception and lack of appreciation of reproductive rights. In addition, the religious right propagates misinformation contributing to the continued lack of access to reproductive health information and services, taking a toll among poor women in the communities where:

- Many women do not use modern contraceptive methods during their first sexual encounter
- Many women and adolescent girls give birth every year
- Many women have risky pregnancies having children at age 35 or older

Many poor women simply do not practice modern contraceptive methods. Many have misconceptions about pills, IUDs, injectables and ligation. Most do not undergo pap smear. Many got married because they were pregnant. Many others have way surpassed the number of children that they want and do not want to have any more children.

Manila City

Some of the women I met in Manila are Nena²⁴, a 21-year old woman with six children, and Josefa²⁵, who dropped out of school because of the demands of early childbearing. There are many Nenas and Josefás who started childbearing at the age of 14-18 and had multiple consecutive pregnancies and childbirths afterwards.

One of the reasons for this multiple consecutive pregnancies is the refusal of spouses or partners to avail of modern family planning methods. In one joint free ligation services where 30 women initially registered to undergo ligation, 20 husbands and male partners threatened to leave their wives and female partners if they went through with availing of the ligation. Sexism and patriarchy are factors for such resistance. The misconceptions on ligation, lack of information dissemination on ligation and even vasectomy has much to do about the resistance as well.

For the less-educated, poor, adolescents, rural and indigenous woman, and women from the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) access to reproductive health information and services is very much wanting. It is common to have frequent childbirths, closely-spaced pregnancies, and deaths related to pregnancy and childbirth.

²⁴Not her real name.

²⁵Not her real name.

About half of all pregnancies in the Philippines are unintended (approximately 1.43 million pregnancies).²⁶ Filipino women on average have one child more than they want (DOH AO No. 50-A s. 2001). In Tondo, many women have 8-10 children more than they desired. The national average of actual fertility is 3-4 but in Tondo, it is common to have 6 to 10 children.

Indicators from UNFPA (State of the World Population: Philippines, 2008) reveal that 230 women die out of every 100,000 live births or 11 women die every day while giving birth.

Maternal deaths are preventable. No woman should die due to pregnancy and childbirth. While we have government officials who say that there is nothing wrong with spending 2 million pesos for three dinners, the maternal mortality ratio has remained constant for three years from 2005-2007, which reveal 200 maternal deaths for every 100,000 live births (UNFPA SWPR 2005, 2006, 2007).

The maternal mortality ratio in the Philippines of 230 women who die per 100,000 live births is alarmingly high compared with 11 in US (with modern method contraceptive prevalence rate of 68%), 7 in Canada, 4 in Spain (with modern method contraceptive prevalence rate of 62%), 3 in Italy, 6 in Japan, 14 in South Korea, 14 in Singapore (with modern method contraceptive prevalence rate of 53%). Across Europe, with the exception of Albania, Romania, and Estonia, the maternal mortality ratio is below 15.

There is a 51% contraceptive prevalence rate for married women between ages 15-49 with only 36% using modern methods. It is also alarming that there are 47 adolescent women and girls who give birth out of every 1,000

²⁶Singh S et al., *Unintended Pregnancy and Induced Abortion in the Philippines: Causes and Consequences*, New York: Guttmacher Institute, 2006

women aged 15-19 and there are 23 infants who die out of every 1,000 live births.

On Abortion

One-third of unintended pregnancies end in abortion where 27 out of every 1,000 women induce abortion and 18 induced abortion per 100 pregnancies. Almost 500,000 women induce abortion every year, almost 80,000 suffer complications, and about 800 women die every year or two women die every day due to complications from unsafe abortion.

Philippine law does not provide clear exceptions in declaring abortion as legal even in cases of rape, fetal impairment incompatible with life outside the uterus, or danger to health and life of the woman. There is a need to campaign for access to safe and legal abortion. In its 2006 Concluding Comments on the Philippines, the CEDAW Committee²⁷ has recommended for the Philippines "to review the laws relating to abortion with a view to removing punitive provisions imposed on women who have abortions, provide access to quality services for the management of complications arising from unsafe abortions and to reduce women's maternal mortality rates."

Unlike the Philippines, there are predominantly Catholic countries that allow abortion. Spain permits abortion on grounds of rape and fetal impairment. Belgium, France and Italy permit abortion upon a woman's request. Hungary's constitution protects life from conception but permits abortion up to 12 weeks of gestation. Mexico City legalized abortion in the first trimester without restriction (April 24, 2007). Portugal allows abortion up to 10 weeks of pregnancy but with a mandatory three-day "reflection period". Poland allows abortion to protect a woman's life and physical health, rape, incest and fetal

²⁷ The CEDAW Committee is the committee tasked to monitor a state's compliance with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

impairment. Colombia now permits abortion where the woman's life or health is in danger, when the pregnancy is the result of rape, or when the fetus has malformation incompatible with life outside the uterus.

Reproductive Rights and Gender-based Violence

There is a need to campaign for safe pregnancy and childbirth especially access to modern contraceptive methods, pre-natal care, emergency obstetric care, and skilled birth attendants. There is also a need to call for prevention and treatment of reproductive tract infections (RTIs), sexually transmitted infections (STIs), HIV, and female-related cancers. Furthermore, there is a need to prevent and prosecute rape, domestic violence, abuse in intimate relationships. To protect rape victims, there is a need to legalize the use of emergency contraceptives (e.g. specifically dedicated emergency contraceptive pills such as levonorgestrel).

The CEDAW Committee issued Concluding Comments on six of the main areas of concern stated in the 2006 EnGendeRights collaborative Shadow Report, which are the following: access to the full range contraceptive methods (including emergency contraception), access to safe and legal abortion, sexuality education for adolescents, skills and education for women in prostitution, legalization of divorce, and repeal of discriminatory Muslim Code provisions. Although there was no mention on lesbian rights in the 2006 Concluding Comments on the Philippines, there was a constructive dialogue by the CEDAW Committee on lesbian rights in August 2007. In the context of the Philippines where the population is predominantly Catholic, it is important to note that Spain is the third country to recognize same-sex marriage.

There are several venues in the United Nations where women can advocate for reproductive health and rights such as the periodic review by CEDAW

Committee, the complaints and inquiry procedure before the CEDAW Committee and urgent appeals before the UN Special Rapporteurs.

Sexual and reproductive rights are fundamental to human rights. Providing access to information and services on sexual and reproductive rights is one way towards achieving women's equality and empowerment.

In the RH Bill, some elements of Reproductive Health Care include:

- (1) Maternal, infant and child health and nutrition;
- (2) Promotion of breastfeeding;
- (3) Family planning information and services;
- (4) Prevention of abortion and management of post-abortion complications;
- (5) Adolescent and youth health;
- (6) Prevention and management of RTIs, HIV/AIDS and other STIs;
- (7) Elimination of violence against women;
- (8) Education and counseling on sexuality and sexual and reproductive health;
- (9) Treatment of breast and reproductive tract cancers and other gynecological conditions;
- (10) Male involvement and participation in reproductive health;
- (11) Prevention and treatment of infertility and sexual dysfunction
- (12) Reproductive health education for the youth

It should also add health care for lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and transgenders (LGBT) and the elderly.

According to the Magna Carta of Women, there should be equal treatment before the Law (Sec. 12): "The State shall take steps to review and, when necessary, amend and/or repeal existing laws that are discriminatory to women within three years from the effectivity of RA 9710." Another provision in the Magna Carta is the prohibition against discrimination of pregnant

teachers and students outside of marriage (Sec. 13, par. c): "Expulsion and non-readmission of women faculty due to pregnancy outside of marriage shall be outlawed. No school shall turn out or refuse admission to a female student solely on the account of her having contracted pregnancy outside of marriage during her term in school." There is also an emphasis on women's right to health, (Sec. 17): "The State shall provide for...health services and programs covering all stages of a woman's life cycle and which addresses the major causes of women's mortality and morbidity. Access to the following services shall be ensured: maternal care to include pre- and post-natal services to address pregnancy and infant health and nutrition; responsible, (ethical, legal), safe, and effective methods of family planning, family and State collaboration in youth sexuality education and health services without prejudice to the primary right and duty of parents to educate their children, prevention and management of RTIs, infections, including STDs, HIV, and AIDS, prevention of abortion and management of pregnancy-related complications."

In cases of violence against women and children (VAWC), women and children victims and survivors shall be provided with comprehensive health services that include psychosocial, therapeutic, medical, and legal interventions. The situation is changing. And women are at the forefront of changing laws, policies, and practices on reproductive health and rights.



THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS AND ACCESS POINTS FOR ADVOCACY

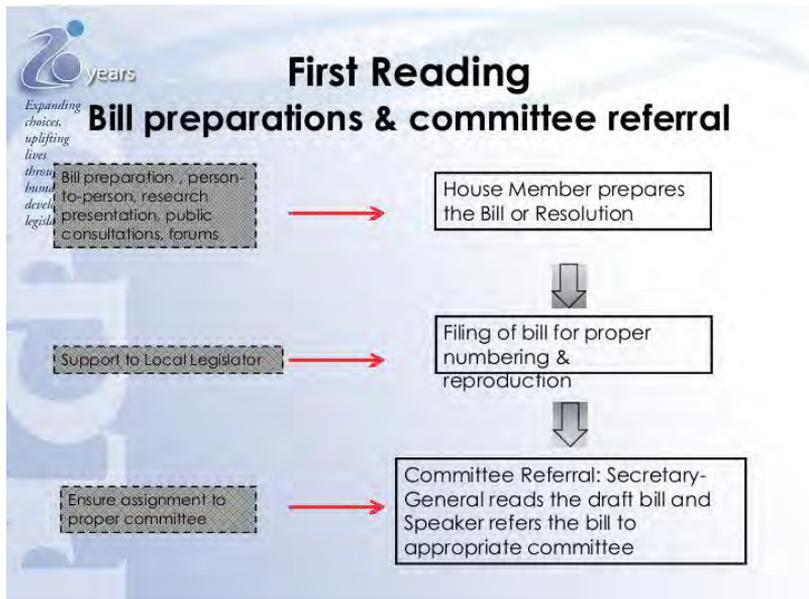
Ernesto M. Almocera, Jr.

Presented on 3 May 2011 at a JASS Feminist Conversation titled "Advocacy Forum and Workshop of Filipino Women for the RH Bill".

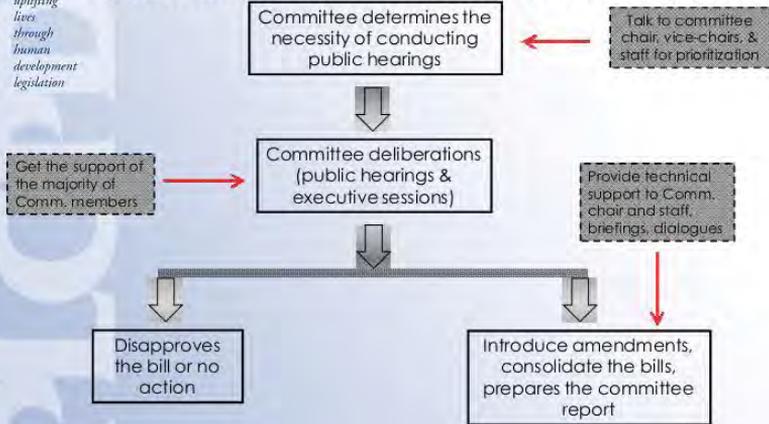
Mr. Ernesto Almocera is the Program Manager of Center for Advocacy and Policy Development of the Philippine Legislators' Committee on Population and Development Foundation, Inc. (PLCPD).

Editor's Note: Below are slides from the powerpoint presentation of Mr. Almocera which provided JASS Philippines network an overview of how bills become laws in the Philippine legislative bodies

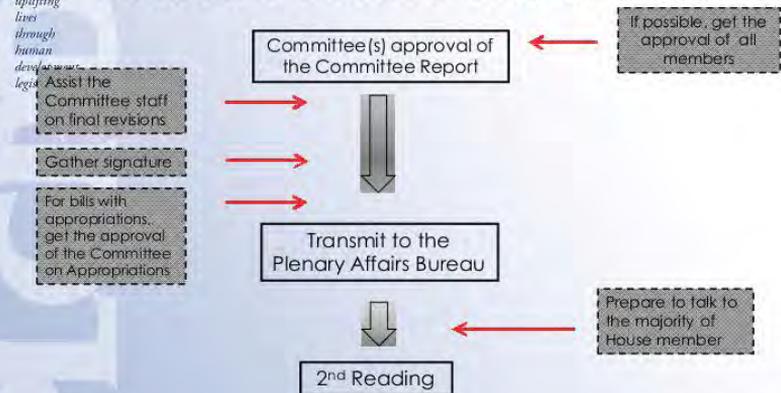
Process of Filing a Bill and its Approval



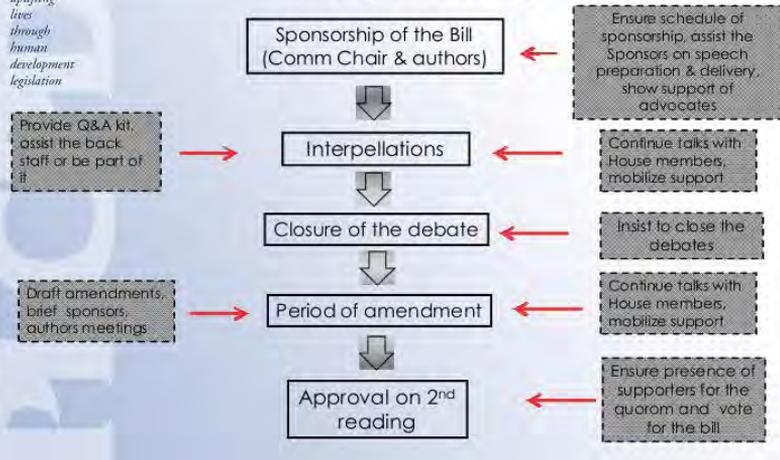
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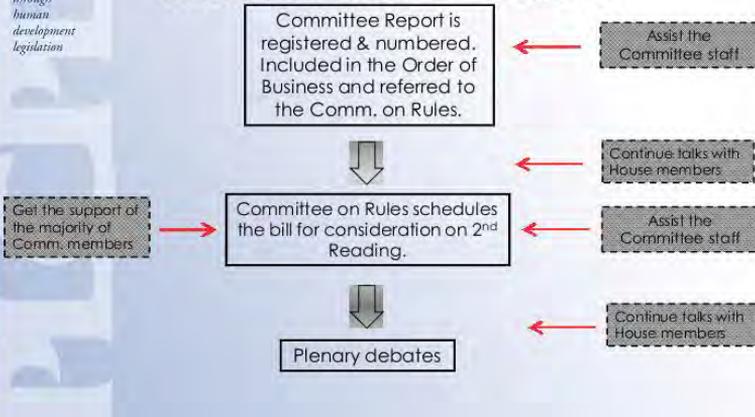
First Reading Committee consideration/action (2)

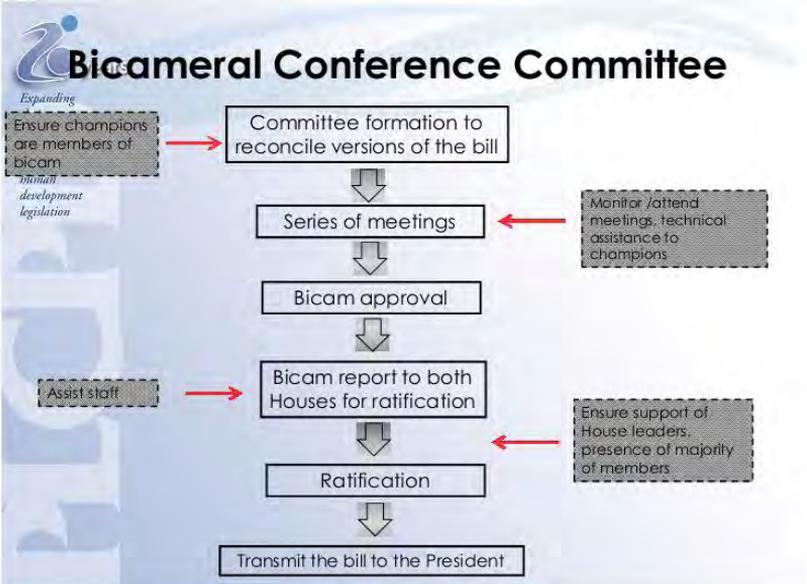
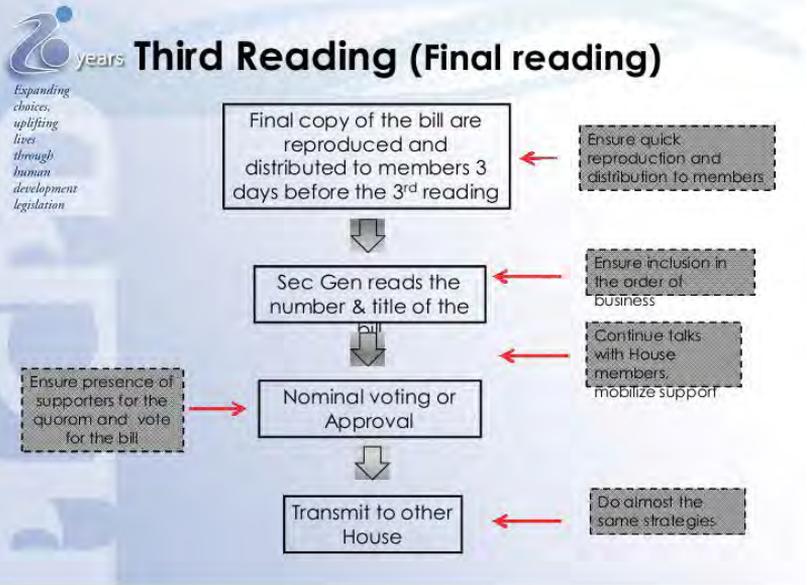


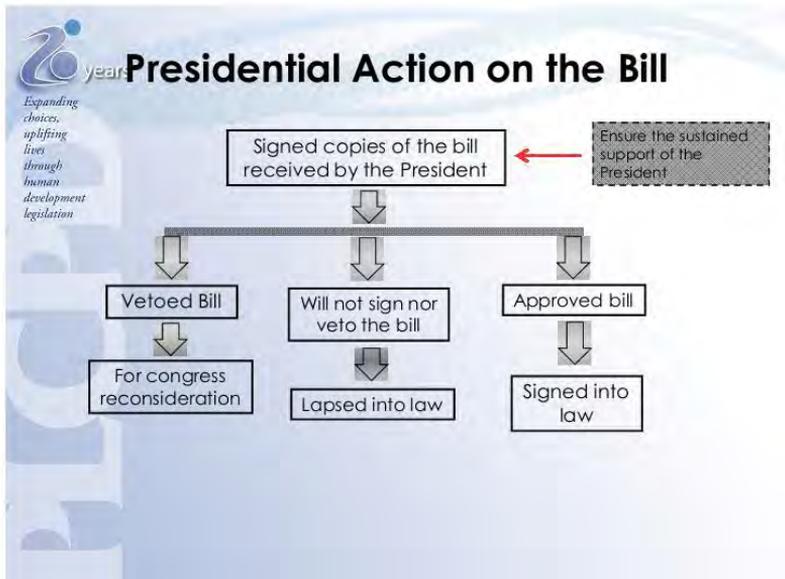
Second Reading Plenary debates



Second Reading Committee Report registration & inclusion in the calendar of business







Lessons & Recommendations:

On bill preparations

1. Draft proposed legislative measure in its proper form and in accordance with your objectives.
2. Have a firm grasp of the issues and situation in the field. Conduct in-depth research and broad consultations.
3. Monitor other bills filed (Legislative Tracking)
4. Prepare short but concise briefs/executive summary of your proposed legislative measure

Congress rules and procedures

1. Master the Rules.
2. Pay attention to Procedures.

3. Be familiar with the unwritten rules. Sometimes, if not most of the times, these are the turning points and most critical.

Develop your legislator-champions

1. Conduct briefings for prospective author(s) and technical staff/secretariat
2. Assist the authors and sponsors including their staff and committee secretariat in all phases of the legislative mill.
3. Search for, develop and mobilize champions. Your friend-legislator may not necessarily be the ideal principal sponsor of your bill. Some factors to consider:
 - knowledge of the issue(s) and capacity to defend the bill
 - credibility/integrity
 - party affiliation
 - business interests
 - parochial concerns (constituency)
4. Sharpen your political intelligence. Determine who are for and against your bill and why (Do political mapping). Determine also other important actors e.g. key secretariat or technical staff
5. Get the support of other crucial stakeholders (government agencies, academe, other affected groups).
6. Get yourself invited as resource persons and other groups too who are supportive of your cause.
7. Never attend committee meetings or public hearings unprepared.
8. Communicate and get support of the Committee Staff
9. Provide technical support to the authors and the Committee staff
10. Join the Technical Working Groups (TWGs)

11. Get the support of majority of committee members. Groundwork is very crucial.
12. Create strong public opinion and mobilize support. Build broad coalitions/lobby group. (But sometimes media exposure does not always work out fine. It may even further antagonize legislators.)
13. Identify which issues/provisions in the proposed legislative measure are negotiable and which are not
14. Watch out for the printed word of the final version; solicit signatures for committee report

Summary:

1. Be knowledgeable of the legislative arena (legislative mill and processes)
2. Sharpen your political intelligence. Know your friends and win more friends.
3. Groundwork is critical in all stages of the legislative mill
4. Assist the legislators and secretariat in all phases of the legislative mill. Be indispensable
5. Simultaneously conduct advocacy/lobby work
6. Build public opinion/public support
7. Keep an overall strategy that remains as inclusive as possible. Build broad coalitions and networks

Legislation is a bargaining process and policy is a compromise. Legislation and policy advocacy is a continuing process. It does not end in the enactment of a law.

Section 3:

Responses, Strategies and Struggles in Strengthening Movement Building in the Philippines

This section tackles how women activists and feminists deal with challenges, defy conventions, and cross the line to advance the call for women empowerment and emancipation.

YOUNG WOMEN AND MOVEMENT BUILDING

Women's Legal and Human Rights Bureau

Presented on 14 September 2011 at a JASS Feminist Conversation titled "Conversations on Migration, Economic Insecurity, and Sexual Rights: Perspectives on Young Women and Movement Building".

The Women's Legal and Human Rights Bureau (WLB) is a feminist legal non-government organization promoting women's empowerment through the use of and engagement with the law and its institutions. WLB works with women's organizations, NGOs, people's organizations, communities and social movement networks to promote women's human rights and improve women's access to justice.

Editor's Note: The following is a brief presentation on the meanings and elements of movements and a view of some young women on feminism and movement building culled from various sources on the internet.

Definitions of Movements

Movements stress qualities like collective and innovative behavior, and multi-centeredness. There are shifting and fluid boundaries of movement membership, and the willingness of members to disrupt order a little or a lot (Gerlach and Hine 1970).

Social movements are generally seen as phenomena of the modern era and industrialized society (Hobsbawm 1959; Tilly 1986).

What is a movement?

Luther P. Gerlach and Virginia H. Hine in their *People, Power, Change: Movements of Social Transformation* identified five key factors which are



Feminist Conversations
CLASS
Against Building

PAGLILINAW

- Dito sa Pilipinas, sino ba para sa inyo ang 'young women'? Meron ba talaga tayo tinatawag na young women sa ating mga kilusan/samahan/gawain?
- Ano ang movement building para sa inyo? Ano ang bahaging ginagampanan ng 'young women' sa ibang mga kilusan?
- Sa tingin ninyo ano ang kahalagahan ng movement building para sa isyu ginagatawa ninyo?

operationally significant and which we believe must be present and interacting before a collectivity of whatever size becomes a true movement. These five key factors are:

It is a segmented, usually polycephalous²⁸, cellular organization composed of units reticulated by various personal, structural, and ideological ties.

It can be a face-to-face recruitment by committed individuals. It is a personal commitment generated by an actor or an experience, identifies him with a new set of values, and commits him to changed patterns of behavior.

It is an ideology which codifies values and goals, provides a conceptual framework by which all experiences or events relative to these goals may be interpreted, and forms the basis for conceptual unification of a segmented network of groups.

There are real or perceived opposition from a society at large or from that segment of the established order within which the movement has arisen.²⁹

Feminist and Women's Movement

The feminist and women's movement building in Southern Africa (by Shamillah Wilson) emphasized a common political agenda, continuity, unity and coordination.

Movement building involves processes that build the collective power of an organized constituency of excluded, marginalized, oppressed or invisible

²⁸ Polycephalous meaning "Having many heads."

http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american_english/polycephalous

²⁹ Luther P. Gerlach and Virginia H. Hine. *People, Power, Change: Movements of Social Transformation*. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1970, pp. xvi-xvii cited in

<http://womhist.alexanderstreet.com/socm/definitions.htm>

people around a change agenda that enables them to access rights and resources, challenge dominant ideologies and transform social power relations.

Movement building frameworks and models:

voice and visibility to transform power relations;

movement building around political participation and legal reform;

movement building to give voice and visibility to particular agendas.

What is a movement?

Clusters of NGOs do not make movements. A movement has a political vision and broad agenda. It has broad membership & active constituency base. It has some degree of organization, formal and informal linkages. It has proactive and reactive joint actions in pursuit of common goals. It has continuity over time adjusting to moment/ context. It conducts activities that combine extra-institutional (marches, protests, organizing, gatherings) and institutional (advocacy & lobbying) forms.

What is movement building?

It is organizing and nurturing the collective power of people united across many differences by a common cause for social and political change. Movement linkages require a common vision and core principles with mechanisms for internal negotiation, political agility and accountability. Multiracial, multi-class, cross generational and multi-country alliances place the voices and leadership of the most affected by injustice (the majority) at the heart of the movement.

Feminist moments are modes of feminist activity linked to certain segments of history (Julia Kristeva, Women's Time).

Young Feminists to Older Feminists: If You Can't Find Us, It's Because We're Online

Whether we tweet feminism or blog about it, young feminists use the Internet to expand and explore what it means to be involved in the feminist movement. We usually do it in addition to other feminist work, using the Internet to launch campaigns, reach new audiences with our message, and create a sense of feminist community.

Young women often use their nuanced understanding of social media to strengthen the Internet presence of established feminist organizations. Young feminists are having these conversations online and offline, often working to dismantle the myth that feminism isn't necessary or that "feminist" is a bad word.

Young women aren't absent from today's feminist movement. The activism of young feminists speaks for itself. We're out on the streets, we're starting our own online communities, and we're pioneering a feminist revolution on our own terms. There is no conclusive definition of young women (even from the UN).

Sources:

<http://womhist.alexanderstreet.com/socm/definitions.htm>, Luther P. Gerlach and Virginia H. Hine. *People, Power, Change: Movements of Social Transformation*. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1970, pp. xvi-xvii

Srilatha Batliwala, What is a movement?

http://www.justassociates.org/documents/frameworks/JASS_MBImethodology.pdf

<http://yfa.awid.org/2010/07/young-feminists-to-older-feminists-if-you-cant-find-us-its-because-were-online/>



Study on ICT, VAW and Sexuality: A Policy Advocacy

- The Study intended to comprehensively map the terrain of existing Philippine laws and jurisprudence and analyze the existing policy framework on information and communications technology or ICT, VAW and Sexuality.
- The study also aims to provide conceptual clarity on the phenomenon of VAW and expose the gaps and weaknesses in the laws.

ICT, VAW AND SEXUALITY: YOUNG WOMEN'S CLAIM FOR EMPOWERMENT

Women's Legal and Human Rights Bureau

Presented on 14 September 2011 at a JASS Feminist Conversation titled "Conversations on Migration, Economic Insecurity, and Sexual Rights: Perspectives on Young Women and Movement Building".

Editor's Note: "This article owes much from the policy paper of WLB entitled "Study on ICT, VAW and Sexuality: A Policy Advocacy"³⁰

Information and Communications Technology

People use technology and tools to share, distribute, and gather information; as well as to communicate with one another, one on one, or in groups. Information and communications technology (ICT) include computers, telecommunication technologies i.e., telephones, broadcasting of radio and television; networking technologies or the internet, which also extends to mobile phone technology, voice over internet protocols or VoIP, or satellite communications (FMA).

"Information and Communication System" is a system intended for and capable of generating, sending, receiving, storing or otherwise processing electronic data messages or electronic documents (Sec. 2, Republic Act No. 8792, Electronic Commerce Act of 2000).

³⁰ <https://womenslegalbureau.wordpress.com/publications/>. The Study intended to comprehensively map the terrain of existing Philippine laws and jurisprudence and analyze the existing policy framework on information and communications technology or ICT, VAW and Sexuality. The study also hoped to provide conceptual clarity of the phenomenon of ICT and VAW and expose the gaps and limitations of existing laws.

In the Philippines, there is a steady rise of internet penetration (users), see Figure 1:

Figure 1: Philippine internet users

- **Internet penetration (users): steady rise**

2000: 2.0M > 2.6% of 78M population (ITU)

2005: 7.8M > 9.3% of 84M pop (C.I. Almanac)

2008: 14.0M > 14.6% of 96M pop (Yahoo)

2009: 24.0M > 24.5% of 98M pop (Nielsen)

2010: 29.7M > of 99.9M pop (ITU via IWS) - #16 worldwide

- **Lower figures: internet subscribers** (5.8M; 7% of pop; 28% of Hholds – Budde, 2009); PC ownership

- **Intermittent users:** work, school, internet cafes, wifi hotspots

- 1.0M – 1.6M **broadband** subscribers (2008, ITU) – from 165K in 2005

The Philippines leads Asia Pacific in SNS engagement (90%), as shown in Figure 2:

Figure 2. Social Networking in the Philippines

SOCIAL NETWORKING:

PH leads Asia Pacific in SNS engagement: 90%

- Tops in social networking reach, average minutes per visitor, average visits per visitor

- 83% have created SN profiles (Universal/McCann)

- **Friendster:** 10.7 of 58M registered users (Jan08)

- **Facebook:**

- ∞ 15.28M users (#8 world; One of the fastest growing (9M in Jan to 15M in June); highest 12mo growth rate as of Dec09

- ∞ 64% of online population; (17% of actual pop)

- ∞ Mosy visited site in RP: 92.8% of online pop (comscore)

- **Twitter:** #12 population! (June 2009, sysomos)

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has transformed and revolutionized society is an understatement. It transcended public and private spaces. It drastically changed states, business sectors, and peoples on how to conduct their operations and interaction. It altered both time and space. It created a borderless arena, blurring borders and distances among states and nations. It transformed not only political and economic systems and social interactions, but as well as culture.

General context of the use of, access to and benefit from ICT

The issue of Digital divide between the rich and poor countries is still prevalent. Gender divide is also common where users are mostly young, university educated, affluent, urban-based and English-speaking Internet users who are also overwhelmingly males.

Women's access to and use of ICTs is much lower than men's around the world. Women continue to benefit less than men from the implementation of ICTs. Women experience low rates of access to information and communications technologies for a number of reasons, ranging from socio-cultural attitudes and preconceptions about women's interaction (or lack of) with technology to a lack of understanding of the resource and situational obstacles.

What is ICT-related VAW?

ICT is used as a medium, a mode, or a place of commission or activity to commit violence against women. It is a system unto itself.

Cyberviolence: ICT-related VAW

Cyberviolence or harm involves the violent impact of actions within cyberspace ranging from cyberstalking, hate speech to virtual rape. Although such activities do not require a direct physical expression, the victim nevertheless will feel the violence of the act and may bear long-term psychological scars as a consequence. There is also recognition that often “the virtual leeches through the porous boundaries of cyberspace” and cybercrime often has serious offline parallels.”

The emergence and phenomenon of ICT-related VAW such as cyberharassment (cyberstalking, blackmail, threats, trolling, flaming, monitoring and surveillance), cyberpornography/ cyberprostitution (cybersex dens, sex video scandals), and cybertrafficking have been apparent.

ICT can also be spaces for expression, sexual rights and freedoms. It provides space for political participation, advocacy, platforms (digital personhood). It easily gives access to information, education, support, online recreation. It tackles the issue of privacy, self-expression, agency, multiple personhood, invented identities, and anonymity (sexual fantasies).

As one May Ling Su displayed in her account: “I make porn because human sexuality is a study worth undertaking. My body and its pleasures is a frontier worth exploring... The main advantage to making my own porn at home versus being employed in legitimate shows is that I call the shots. I decide who I have sex with, when and how...I get to be a stay-at-home mom and raise my own child.”

The dilemmas and nuances of ICT are its intractability, borderlessness in nature, anonymity, and issue of privacy.

Yet ICT can be opportunities for Movement-Building. It cuts across class, generations and genders. There is a “Cybercommunity”. ICT fosters a “free for all” space (but it requires technical know-how). It is invented with multiple identities blurring class or status (challenges/ maintains cultural politics). It provides a platform for LGBT and sexual rights practitioners’ advocacy.

Awareness-raising, Mobilization and Involvement of broader stakeholders

ICT and online spaces should be seen as an avenue and a platform for new forms of activism. It provides answers for intergenerational concerns wherein the new technologies ushering young women’s participation, young women facilitating old generation’s participation in ICT. Even governments/ state actors have “facebook” and “twitter” accounts that could be opportunities for engagement.

The digital and gender divide must be addressed (computer literacy for marginalized women). We should transform ICT as an arena to empower women.

By far the most urgent feminist response is to see digital and online spaces as a different realm not confined to technology users, but an important site of power requiring feminist intervention.



ADDRESSING TRAFFICKING WOMEN : CATW-AP

Jean Enriquez

Presented at the National Workshop of Filipino Women, "Liberating Filipino Women through the Years: A Sharing of Women's Experiences in Movement Building", November 11 to 13, 2009

Jean Enriquez is the Executive Director of the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women - Asia-Pacific or CATWAP. CATWAP is an international network that is made up of feminist groups who are against the sexual exploitation of women and human trafficking globally. The CATWAP is against prostitution, pornography, sex tourism and bride selling.

Jean Enriquez has been involved in human rights work for three decades now, focusing on international women's human rights for more than 20 years. She was a delegate to the 49th Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women in 2005 held in New York. She has been accorded various recognitions for her advocacy and activism for women and women's rights. This recognition include the Top Ten Women of the world for 2007 by Marie Clare Magazine, Award of Excellence by the province of Quezon, and the Ten Outstanding Young Women in the Nation's Service or TOWNS in 2010.

CATW is an international network of feminist groups, organizations and individuals fighting the sexual exploitation of women globally. CATW-AP commits itself to promote women's human rights, to raise awareness and initiate action against global sexual exploitation, especially prostitution and trafficking.

Sex Trafficking is VIOLENCE! The supply side is the women and children who are bought. The demand side is the buyers (usually men for their sexual gratification) and business (composed of owners, pimps, etc. for monetary profit).

Policy Advocacy and Campaigns

CATW-AP has conducted the following advocacy and campaigns:

- Lobbied for the finalization of the UN Trafficking Protocol in 2000
- Co-drafted and lobbied for SAARC Convention, ASEAN Declaration
- Co-drafted and passed Anti-Trafficking Laws in the Philippines (May 2003), Korea (October 2004)

What is Trafficking?

Trafficking is...	By means of...	For the purpose of...
Recruitment	Threat	Prostitution
Transportation	Use of force	Other forms of sexual exploitation
Transfer	Other forms of Coercion	Forced labor or services
Harboring	Abduction	Slavery or practices similar to slavery
Receipt	Fraud Deception Abuse of Power and of Position Taking advantage of the Vulnerability of the person Giving or receiving payments or benefits	Involuntary servitude Removal of organs

Policy Advocacy

CATW-AP has accomplished the following activities for its policy advocacy:

- Drafts and continues to lobby for anti-prostitution/trafficking acts in countries in Asia to protect victims and punish the demand side
- Training with law enforcers & judiciary on implementation of laws to address demand & protect victims
- Radio program “Aksyon Kababaihan” to publicly discuss issues of sexual exploitation

Education & Training

Addressing the demand side, CATW-AP carries out the following:

- Conduct of summer camp with young men on “gender issues, sexuality/masculinity and prostitution”
- Reduce the vulnerability of young women to trafficking and sexual exploitation through sustained education and campaigns
- Conduct of Forums in Schools and Communities addressing young men
- Production of comic books on redefining masculinity and alternative magazines for young women
- Production of VCDs and other materials for media to address the demand side
- Bantay-Bugaw(Trafficker/Pimp-watch)
- Preventive education in high-risk communities addressing barangay officials, tanods, teachers and other community leaders

Particularly for BantayBugaw (Pimp-watch), it focuses on:

- Monitoring of illegal recruiters/traffickers in the community level and responding to cases, with the help of government agencies
- Monitoring of destination of out-migrating women and children

Research and Publication

For its research and publication work, CATW-AP has the following activities:

- Production of primers on the new anti-trafficking law in local languages (Bicolano, Waray, Cebuano, Chavacano, Tagalog)
- Conducts regional and country studies on trends of trafficking, pornography and related issues of women's health, migration, ethnicity as a vulnerability factor, the demand side, etc.

Research and Documentation

CATW-AP has also developed its documentation system through the following:

- Development of gender-responsive human rights documentation system
- Regional training on women's human rights documentation system
- Documentation of cases of VAW, trafficking and prostitution

Empowerment of Survivors

For the empowerment of survivors, CATW-AP evaluates cases for assistance by members of the Coalition. It helps heal and develops capacity of survivors for peer-counseling. It develops pilot projects to help address alternative livelihood needs of survivors. It supports organizing of trafficking/ prostitution survivors.

USING CREATIVE METHODS TO EDUCATE WOMEN: PETA-Women's Theater Program Experience

Sheryl Maala

Presented at the National Workshop of Filipino Women, "Liberating Filipino Women through the Years: A Sharing of Women's Experiences in Movement Building", November 11 to 13, 2009

Sheryl Maala is an events coordinator at the De La Salle University. She is a Senior Artist-Teacher/Member of the Philippine Educational Theater Association (PETA). She has been doing theater and cultural work since she was 14, and headed the PETA-Women's Theater Program from 2005-2008. She has performed in a number of plays for PETA and other groups, and also underwent the Intensive Actors' Training at Stella Adler Studio of Acting. Her expertise includes training and facilitation (Integrated Theater Arts, Trainers' Training, Gender Sensitivity and organizational development), events organizing and management, performance (theater, film, advertising), among others. She is also an advocate of women's rights and children's rights.

PETA or the Philippine Educational Theater Association was founded in 1967. It is an organization of creative and critical artist-teacher-cultural workers committed to artistic excellence and a people's culture that fosters both personal fulfillment and social transformations.

It roots its foundation in the use of theater that is distinctly Filipino as a tool for social change and development. The company has lived by this principle as it evolves with the changes that occurred within and around it. It continues to push first-rate quality theater while never taking for granted that the art it produces and teaches always serves a greater purpose.

Its purpose was clear: perform and educate.



Women's Theater Program (WTP)

The development of PETA's Women's Theater Program (WTP) started from the initial efforts by a few PETA women artists who have been involved in working with other progressive groups working specifically on women's issues and concerns.

The years 1994-1996 are considered the Women's Theater Program at its infancy. It was in 1994 when the Women's Theater Collective (WTC) was officially established as a desk.

WTP Making Herstory (Year 1997 - 2000)

The Women's Theater Collective was redefined as a Program. It did not only call for the inclusion of women's concerns/agenda, but worked for the institutionalization of the feminist perspectives in PETA's core programs and processes with the aim of PETA developing its own feminist aesthetics and pedagogy.

WTP is a theater for and by women. WTP is a theater that reflects the issues, problems, responses of women. It is our way by which we make the women visible in our society. WTP is a theater that creates a safer space for women artists to hone & develop their own artistry by process of "creation" (producing body of works). WTP is a theater that gears towards the development of a feminist aesthetics and pedagogy.

The New Millenium (Year 2000-onwards)

Performances (coined as Informance; advocacy performances) that tackle women's issues were held. Training manuals were developed. Partnership and relationships were been established with other organizations and networks.

Several training cum workshops were conducted namely: Gender Sensitivity Training; Trainers Training; Body Politics for Women; Creative Pedagogy for Women's Health Education; Integrating/Mainstreaming Gender in NGO Programs & Training Curriculum; Creative Pedagogy for Women's Education; Creative Pedagogy for Feminist Educators; Theater & Therapy, Women's Theater for Advocacy, among others.

CPFE: PETA's Benchmark in Women's Education Work

CPFE or Creative Pedagogy for Feminist Educators is an educational philosophy that uses creative activities and exercises in educating women about women. It is pedagogy for women initiated & pioneered by the PETA Women's Theater Program that is participatory, creative and sensitive to women's learning needs.

It consists of a teacher's training curriculum aiming to develop artists and non-artists skilled trainers-educators for women's education work. It is a course for women trainers-educators, women's human rights activists, and young feminist leaders engaged in women's education work that will offer and teach the use of creative techniques for feminist education. It contains a Resource-Manual for women trainers-educators, women's human rights activists, young feminist leaders that will serve as an alternative guide in conducting women's education work.

CPFE is the integration and/or the confluence of PETA's Creative Pedagogy and Feminist Pedagogy. This highlights the progressive teaching-learning philosophies, principles, and methodological processes of the two pedagogies that hopefully will result to a more advanced, culture-based, comprehensive, and holistic approach to women's education. It tries to find a common ground to be able to surface and identify how each pedagogy will inform the other and vice-versa. In hoping to come up with a newly evolved praxis, it

aims to further enhance women (and even men) trainers-educators' capability and to be able to engage them in creative feminist education work.

CPFE as a 14-day Course. Modules/topics are averagely broken down as follows:

- Module 1: 3 days, General introduction and attitude-setting including a crash course in BITAW
- Module 2: 2 days, Brief Module on Gender Sensitivity as a way to level off analysis of women situation
- Module 3: 3 days, Feminist Pedagogy Module concentrating on Women as Learners and Educators and creating a vision to empower women through education work
- Module 4: 2 days, Creative Pedagogy part discussing the basic tenets of the PETA Pedagogy. This module also leads to the confluence of CP (creative pedagogy) and FP (feminist pedagogy), it focuses on developing a framework on educating women using creative approaches
- Module 5: 4 days, Trainers' Training part, this is to establish the skills needed to be a good trainer-educator, that will conclude through an actual practicum



Pagiging 'no
at katangga
tanggap ng
karahasan s
kababaihan
(normalizing
VAW)

EDUCATION AS A TOOL TO LIBERATE WOMEN:

Sharing on CWR's education work for women

Marion Jimenez-Tan

Presented at the National Workshop of Filipino Women, "Liberating Filipino Women through the Years: A Sharing of Women's Experiences in Movement Building", November 11 to 13, 2009

Marion Jimenez-Tan is a professor in the Department of Community Development, College of Social Work and Community Development of the University of the Philippines Diliman. She is the current chairperson of the Board of Directors of the Center for Women's Resources. She was the Coordinator of the University of the Philippines Diliman Gender Office (UPDGO) and served as the UP Diliman Vice-Chancellor for Student Affairs in 2011 to 2013.

Walang mas matinding hamonsa isang mapanupil na sistema kaysa sa mga mulat at organisadong kababaihang nakikibaka! (There is no greater challenge to a repressive system than the enlightened and organized women who struggle).

The Center for Women's Resources was formed amidst the howls of protest of women and the people against the repressive Marcos dictatorship. Most of the women who actively participated in the protests were from the basic sectors, those who bear the brunt of the social crisis.

It then became the mission of CWR to help raise Filipino women's political consciousness and promote the full participation of Filipino women in the genuine development of the Philippine society.

Since its inception, CWR has maintained its close link with grassroots women's organizations, and other organizations of the basic sectors. Poor women comprise the majority of Filipino women. From its establishment up to the present, CWR has given the highest priority to marginalized or poor women in the center's provision of education, training and other capacity building initiatives, research, and publications.

Poverty has a woman's face. According to NSCB, the biggest number of the poor can be found among women and children. They are mired in decades of landlessness and lack of economic security. If they ever find work, they are mainly hired in jobs that are extension of their gender roles or in the so-called "feminine" work. Women are hired in jobs that have the highest separation rate, those in the service sector such as wholesale and retail, private household; and in agriculture and industry (manufacturing). They are also victims of various labor flexibilization schemes.

The minimum wage in NCR stands at PhP362, while a family of six in NCR needs P806 to meet food and non-food requirements in one day. Lack of decent employment and very low wages force many to find jobs abroad. In 2008, women constituted 47% of the 267,453 new hires migrant workers. Many of them land jobs in Middle East and Asia.

Women are also affected by the government's neglect of their basic needs such as health care, education and shelter. Only a small percentage of the national budget is allocated to health facilities leading to the 12% reduction in the budget of 55 public hospitals. It is not surprising then that two to three women share a single bed in public maternity hospital such as the Dr. Jose Fabella Memorial Hospital in Manila. Nor is it surprising that 10 mothers die daily due to pregnancy and birth-related complications which could have been prevented if maternal health care is accessible to poor women.

The ever increasing cases of violence against women and children are indicators of worsening poverty experienced by the majority of women. Based on 2008 data, one woman is raped every seven hours, while a child is victimized every two hours. Cases of domestic violence and sexual harassment are also increasing.

This situation led CWR to work in the service of marginalized women, and continuously pursue educational activities that would raise their awareness and contribute to their struggle for genuine social transformation.

Guiding Principles in CWR's Education Work

1.) Education work is an integral component in organizing. Thus, CWR's education program serves the women's cause for social change. How do we ensure this? The research and education agenda is discussed and collectively decided by the Board of Directors composed of women representatives from different sectors and regions. CWR's education and training modules are results of a research process conducted by CWR staff and grassroots women's organizations. These modules undergo pre-testing and critiquing from women leaders before they are used in training sessions. CWR ensures that educators and instructors are familiar with the situation of the women in the community; thus community integration and participation in direct organizing are integral part of the staff's work. CWR's education modules and curricula have three basic components:

1. Presentation of issue or situation, usually with the use of facts and statistics, complemented with life stories of women
2. Analysis of the structural roots of the problem
3. What women can do to solve the problem or change the situation.

At the end of the education activity, there is always a planning session to help the women translate into action whatever it is they learned from the education activity.

2) Because CWR's objective is to support grassroots women's organizing work, all of CWR's educational activities are focused on collective analysis of women's standpoint, viewpoint, and vision. It also helps in training women leaders who can facilitate in organizational discussions. All educational activities end with developing a workplan.

3) Education work for the emancipation of women should lead to collective action.

4) Education work should address practical needs and strategic interests of women.

5) Education work should forward critical consciousness that would help in forming nationalist, scientific and pro-people culture, a culture promoting gender sensitivity. It challenges the culture perpetuated by neoliberal education and mass media that accepts VAW as normal (normalizing VAW), of consumerism, 'instant' gratification, instant success vs hard, protracted struggle for strategic gains, among others.

What are our strategies and methods?

CWR incorporates formal discussion with popular, creative and indigenous methods of education work. The experiential approach is an important component where we link actual experiences or practice with theories.

CWR has established the Paaralang Liza Balando ³¹(PLB) or CWR's School for Women. It also conducts education festivals, fora, symposiums, round table discussions, and informal study sessions. It brings education work to the community through School on Wheels, and a mobile library. It also forms a network of support groups in the community to sustain the School on Wheels and PLB. It networks with local government units (LGUs) and other women's organizations.

Our gains

- Continuous education work for marginalized women in urban and rural poor communities.
- Literacy-numeracy program for indigenous women
- Instructor's training for women leaders and formation of Instructors' Pool in a number of communities in Metro Manila and Rizal
- Development and distribution of multi-media tools for education (video presentations, visual aids), discussion guides and primers. In the last three years, CWR has supported 36 communities, 12 local mass organizations and 8 schools in Metro Manila and Rizal with these materials.
- As a women's resource center, CWR's Ulat Lila and Data Alerts are cited by media as references.
- Due to CWR's program on awareness raising, more and more women participate in mass actions, in lobbying for laws that promote women's rights and development, and in repealing laws that promote discrimination such as labor contractualization scheme.
- CWR has contributed in mobilizing women to join actions on sectoral and national issues. It recognizes the integral relationship of the

³¹ Liza Balando was the president of a trade union of garments workers who was shot to death in a demonstration in Manila on May 1, 1970

women's movement to the struggle of the broader masses for genuine social change.

Challenges

The Center for Women's Resources has achieved much in its mission of providing education, training, research, and publications to Filipino women, especially grassroots women. It has also proven its sustainability as it has been in existence for decades since its founding in 1982.

However, CWR is very much aware that the work of empowering woman remains formidable.

There is a need to coordinate with other traditional CSOs, church, schools, and foundations to sustain and expand the reach of the programs. There is also a need to continuously develop the capacity of leaders, instructors and educators in communities and local mass organizations. Creative ways need to be constantly developed to encourage women, especially mothers, to participate in the educational discussions crafting shorter modules (2-3 hours) or discussions that can be done in a staggered manner.

It is also important to encourage not only the grassroots women but their husbands and other members of the family to participate in the discussions as well as develop shared household responsibilities to enable the wives or mothers to participate in community affairs. Related to this, child-care services and children's activity within CWR's educational programs have to be enhanced.

Although the journey to women's liberation is a long and complex process, we will persevere as we know that every woman should struggle to break the chains of poverty and repression!

Women's Intervention as a Weapon against Violence: The GABRIELA³² experience

Emmi de Jesus

Presented at the National Workshop of Filipino Women, "Liberating Filipino Women through the Years: A Sharing of Women's Experiences in Movement Building", November 11 to 13, 2009

At present, Emmi de Jesus is one of the two representatives of the Gabriela Women's Partylist in the House of Representatives (HOR), the lower house of the Philippine Congress. She has been an advocate for women's rights and the emancipation of the Filipino people from exploitation and oppression for over three decades now. She delivered this input on VAW in 2009 when she was the Secretary General of GABRIELA. She first took her seat in the HOR in July 2010 and is now in her second term as a representative.

The intensifying economic and political crisis in the Philippines has resulted in the worsening of violence against women in its different forms. Everyday, one gets to read at least three incidents of violence against women and children in a local tabloid. These are not only individual cases of violence but some involve group violence such as the case of sex trafficking and prostitution. For this reason, GABRIELA has considered the issue of violence against women as one of its core gender-based campaigns in its 25 years of existence.

³² GABRIELA National Alliance of Women is a grassroots-based alliance of more than 200 organizations, institutions, desks and programs of women all over the Philippines seeking to wage a struggle for the liberation of all oppressed Filipino women and the rest of our people. It has now also chapters in the United States, Hong Kong, Canada and a number of Middle East countries.



As GABRIELA celebrates its 25th year, it has drawn its decisive role in promoting the rights and welfare of women and children. It recognizes that the status of women in society is determined by the existing political, economic, and cultural structures. GABRIELA makes use of its various programs to campaign against VAW such as education and public information, mobilizing women, forming alliances with other groups and individuals, international linkages, and providing services to victims of violence.

We have come up with seven deadly sins against women to outline the different forms of violence that women usually encounter. Let me enumerate them and give you some of our gains in our campaigns.

1. Sex trafficking and prostitution

Our very first VAW campaign centered on sex trafficking and the mail order bride business. In 1985, a handful of GABRIELA members staged a picket in front of the Las Palmas and Silahis hotels to "welcome" Norwegians who arrived for a sex tour in the Philippines. Their trip was facilitated by a Norway-based mail order bride agency that specializes in Filipino women who, as its brochure said, "are pliant, submissive, and domesticated, and despite their poverty, willingly bestow their faithful friendship for free."

In this campaign, we demanded for the regulation and monitoring of foreign and local marriage bureaus as well as introductory and penpal clubs. While we are not against inter-marriages, our objective was to protect women who only wanted to improve their lives by marrying foreigners but usually end up as sex slaves or are sold in brothels and other prostitution rings.

Our international solidarity work with women and church organizations in Norway proved to be valuable, as the protest actions were not concentrated only in the Philippines but in Norway as well. Several other cases of sex trafficking have followed, the more distinct of which is the case of Liza Mamac,

a victim of sex trafficking in the Netherlands. As a result of our campaign, the Dutch trafficker involved was deported and the Dutch government was forced to pass a law against sex trafficking in their country.

Our successes in these campaigns encouraged us to come up with the Purple Rose campaign against sex trafficking of Filipino women and their children that we launched in 1999. A clear gain of our almost 10 years of campaign is the passage of the Anti-trafficking in Persons Act of 2003. Though still imperfect, we now have a law to hold the government accountable for its neglect. But our experience tells us that we do face insurmountable odds and there is no better way to consolidate our gains than becoming even more militant and relying on women's growing strength to fight for our own rights and dignity.

2. Domestic Violence

Abuse of women in intimate relationships, particularly domestic violence, is a matter that concerns us because it is the most prevalent form of VAW especially in a very macho society like ours. In 2003, a total of 4,296 women were battered last year or one woman battered every one hour and 24 minutes (CWR 2003 data). These cases usually ended up ignored by authorities because they are "personal" and part of "family matters" that can be settled between the husband and wife. As a result, hundreds of women suffer silently every day.

One case that we campaigned for was against a politician, a local official, who was accused of battering his famous actress wife. The actress was subjected to kicks and punches for every small reason. She approached GABRIELA and other women's groups to seek assistance only to retract her statement, after reportedly being threatened with death by her husband. Several years after, the woman lost her mind and committed suicide.

The recent passage of the anti-Violence Against Women and their Children Act of 2004 on March 8, is a testament to the culmination of our long battle, done through persistent mass campaigns and patient parliamentary struggle, for the protection of women against abuse. The fight has not ended and battles will become even more defined.

3. Rape, Incest, and Sexual Abuse

Another matter of concern regarding VAW is the prevalence of rape and sexual abuse. In the late '80s, statistics show that four women were raped everyday or one rape incident every six hours. In 2003, our data indicate that 14 women are raped everyday or one incident every 120 minutes. That is more than 200% increase in more than 10 years. Data also show that in most cases, perpetrators are usually known by the victims. Children and minors are not spared.

Rosario Baluyot was barely in her teens when she died. She suffered from acute infection when a vibrator stuck by the foreign pedophile on her vagina broke and caused her bleeding. The case created uproar especially since the incident happened in Angeles City at a time when the US bases was still present. While seeking justice for Rosario, GABRIELA also reiterated the call for the removal of the US bases that encouraged the exploitation of women through the rampant prostitution activities in the areas near the US facilities.

Stories of sexual abuse of Filipinas abroad are also a cause of alarm for women and migrant groups. We could never forget Maricris Sioson, an entertainer in Japan who was brutally killed by suspected members of the Japanese Yakuza gang. Her death became a big issue when the Philippine government accepted Japanese authority's findings that she died as a result of hepatitis while her autopsy revealed that a sharp object, like a sword, was used to lacerate her vagina and caused internal hemorrhage. Her family

sought the help of GABRIELA in seeking justice for Maricris. We launched a campaign to urge the government to reinvestigate the case. The campaign became a venue for the education of the general public on the plight of Filipina entertainers in Japan.

4. Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment highlights the unequal relationship of men and women. It can happen inside the classroom, in the office, in the factory. It occurs when men use power over women to incur sexual favors in return for something.

GABRIELA has thrown support to many sexual harassment cases in the school and offices. Recognizing the defects of the provisions of the Anti-Sexual Harassment Law that indicates that sexual harassment can only occur when the perpetrator is in a position of favor over the woman, we have drafted several amendments to the law that we plan to give to Congress.

5. Violence as a result of political repression

During the time of the Marcos dictatorship, violence against women was used to torture women-political prisoners. Women, who were detained as suspected members of the revolutionary group New People's Army, were sexually molested and/ or raped by military men as a form of torture and punishment, sometimes in front of their husbands. The military used sexual harassment or abuses to extract information from women on the whereabouts of the revolutionaries or to shame them for being "supporters" of the group.

Women now also become direct targets of political violence through summary executions. In 2009, four women, two of whom were GABRIELA members, had been victims of summary executions by suspected military men or their assets.

For 25 years, we have denounced political repression in all its appearance as a form of violence against women. We have also demanded for justice and compensation for women victims of the Marcos dictatorship. But up to now, the government has dilly-dallied in implementing the ruling that will provide compensation to all victims of the Marcos dictatorship. We continue to struggle against fascism and militarist tendencies of the Armed Forces of the Philippines that lead to violence, especially against women.

6. Sexual discrimination and exploitation

Even as more women are becoming members of the labor force in the rural and urban areas, sexual discrimination and exploitation remain rampant. There are cases wherein virginity tests and pregnancy tests are conducted as part of the screening process in factories because single women are preferred over married ones. For the capitalists, married women are more inclined to get pregnant and avail of benefits such as maternity leave or sick leave.

One of our campaigns in the '90s led by the Kilusan ng Manggagawang Kababaihan (Women Workers Movement) was for an increased number of days for maternity leave. This resulted to the enactment of a law allowing for a 60-day maternity leave for normal delivery and 78 days for caesarean. Struggles in local union resulted to the establishment of day care centers in some factories.

Women continue to be viewed as commodities and sex objects. One case that Gabriela chapter in Panay campaigned was against the car wash service with bikini-clad women. The untiring picket of Gabriela Panay forced the establishment to close down. Another was the liquor advertisement with a subliminal message of "tasting a 15-year old". GABRIELA and the GABRIELA Women's Partylist together with other concerned citizens as well as politicians wasted no time in protesting against the company through the Advertising

Board of the Philippines, a regulatory agency of the advertising industry. The campaign resulted in the removal of the radio commercial and the removal of the large billboards located in different strategic areas in Metro Manila.

7. Limited or no access to reproductive health care

We consider women's limited or no access to reproductive health care as a form of violence. The increasing trend of maternal deaths resulting from childbirth (maternal mortality: 240 per 1,000) unattended by medical personnel is fast becoming a growing concern. In most cases, there are only 21 professional midwife per 100,000 population based at the 'nearest' health center located several kilometers from the most remote residences. Some of these maternal deaths are result of infections following induced abortions done by fly-by-night abortionists who make money out of business. Women risk going to these dubious abortionists because in our country, abortion is considered as a criminal offense.

A comprehensive reproductive health care program is being proposed by GABRIELA to provide women with accessible reproductive health services. This has been the subject of our campaign since the Cairo Conference and continues to be pushed by GABRIELA up to this time.

VOW vs. VAW

Our campaigns, both mass campaign and parliamentary struggle, are complemented with services for women-survivors of violence towards organizing them. The rapid increase in the number of women seeking help could be attributed to the yearlong campaign "VOW versus VAW" (voices of women versus violence against women) in 2002 and our "blow a whistle" campaign. The "blow a whistle" campaign aims to encourage women to come out with their experience of violence.

We provided counseling services and legal referrals to 568 women-survivors of various forms of violence. We have provided them with personal, political, and organizational strength to face their battles, legal or otherwise; by helping them analyze and contextualize their experience of violence.

We know that we will never see an end to sex-trafficking and prostitution, domestic violence, rape, incest and sexual abuse, and a host of other forms of violence against women unless radical changes occur in the economic and political life of society.

In the case of our country, the Philippines, the subjugation of women could not be separated from centuries and years of abuse engendered by colonial and semi-colonial rule on our people. At the same time, a semi-feudal economy that has kept most of our people in bondage and poverty has been most unbearable on our women and children, depriving them of life, rights, and liberties.

Our fight against VAW aims to reach out and organize more women, to raise their awareness about violence, and to underscore the importance of collective action to gain victory and justice for the victims of violence.



Ms. VERNIE YOCAGAN-DIANO
Chairperson

THE POWER OF ORGANIZING: The Experience of Indigenous Women in the Cordillera Region

Vernie Yocogan-Diano

Presented on 13 November 2009 at the National Workshop of Filipino Women, "Liberating Filipino Women through the Years: A Sharing of Women's Experiences in Movement Building"

When she made this presentation in 2009, Vernie Yocogan-Diano was the chairperson of INNABUYOG, an alliance of indigenous women's organizations in the Cordillera region, northern part of the Philippines. She is now the Executive Director of the Cordillera Women's Education, Action and Resource Center (CWEARC) a grassroots-oriented, not-for-profit and non-government development organization providing support to various Cordillera women's formations, particularly indigenous women's organizations in organizing, education, advocacy and direct social and economic services.

My organization is indeed honored to have been invited in this event to present our experience on the power of organizing for indigenous women. I would say that this power for women is not achieved through organizing alone. Organizing must be complemented and properly combined with arousing or educating and mobilizing women. These key elements of arousing-educating, organizing and mobilizing are founded on a thorough and continuing research or social investigation on the conditions of women, their issues, their interests and aspirations and how they want these done.

The founding of Innabuyog in March 1990 is a realization of the need for women in the Cordillera to have a political center that will represent their

voices, their needs, their actions and themselves. Prior to Innabuyog's founding, there were clear political actions of indigenous women in the Cordillera which were mostly linked to the defense of land, life and resources. These included the Mainit women's protest against Benguet Consolidated Inc., a mining firm which attempted to enter their territory in the early 70s, the active participation of women from the Kalinga and Bontok tribes against the World Bank-funded Chico dams in the 70s to 1980 and the Tingguian and Kankanaey women's actions against the Cellophil Resource Corporation in the same period of the Chico dam struggle. In their anger, the Mainit and Kalinga women bared their breast to drive the corporate and state agents of the mining and dam projects.

The women of Cordillera did not hesitate to collectively and bravely protest against aggressors who do not pay any respect to the positions of people claiming ownership and control of a distinct territory and who regard the land and its resources, as commodities that are for sale or for profit. The women's protests began as spontaneous actions until these were consolidated as part of the actions or struggles of their communities, tribes and eventually as people's organizations within the ambit of the Cordillera People's Alliance when this was established in 1984.

While CPA provided a multi-sectoral umbrella of various people's organizations, the different women's organizations at the town level strongly believed that distinct women's organizations at regional and provincial levels should be established to raise the level of visibility as well as the leadership of women leaders and organizations. This women's organization should however be integrated in the wider people's organization or movement for the defense of land, life and resources and for self-determination which is the distinct struggle of the indigenous peoples in the Cordillera region.

Due recognition is given to the Cordillera Women's Education and Resource Center (CWERC and now Cordillera Women's Education Action Research Center or CWEARC), a service NGO for women, for its vital role in facilitating the setting up of Innabuyog and assisting in developing the capacity of Innabuyog to lead its membership, be in the forefront of the women's movement in the Cordillera region and the indigenous women's initiatives in the Philippines through BAI, a national network of indigenous women's organizations in the Philippines.

CWERC was set up arising from an assembly of women from different sectors in March 1987 with a mandate of providing the needed services to support organizing, awareness-raising, production of knowledge materials and mobilizing for social and economic benefits. Since Innabuyog's inception, CWERC designed the center's program to support the leadership development of Innabuyog, organizing of its chapters, building solidarity linkages and launching of various forms of mobilization where women, particularly indigenous women, demonstrated their power. Aside from program support, CWERC also provided staff support to Innabuyog until the mid-2000.

Innabuyog started with a few progressive women's organizations. With its small number of 20 organizations in the beginning, it reached out to traditional women's organizations established by government and church institutions. In the early 1990's it was CWERC and then Innabuyog which raised the issues of women's rights, empowerment and development. On record, government agencies, as well as the church and the academe paid respect and availed of the research and educational materials of CWERC and Innabuyog at that time as they developed their own women or gender and development programs.

Provincial chapters were later established in the provinces of Kalinga, Mountain Province and Abra in the early years of the 90s. These were alongside the building or revival of sectoral women's formations among women mining communities, workers, urban poor, professionals, youth-students and lesbians. A municipal chapter of women in the mining communities of Itogon, Benguet called Begnas was also among the first chapter of Innabuyog that was set up. The sectoral formations in Baguio were then consolidated to become the Innabuyog Metro Baguio chapter in 1997. In more recent years, two municipal chapters were born out of their struggles against mining, in Mankayan that is hosting the huge Lepanto mining company and in Conner, Apayao where British and Australian giant mining companies plan to operate.

Presently, Innabuyog has a membership of 130 women's organizations all over the region—largely organizations of indigenous peasant women. Membership also covers women from the urban poor, workers, migrants, youth-students, professionals and lesbians.

One factor that facilitates organizing of women in the region is development aggression or the violation of the people's collective rights to land, life and resources. Women's participation and actions are strong in this decade when mining operations and expansion plans have intensified. This is but an indication of how valuable land, life and resources of collective ownership are to women. This is also an indication of the value indigenous women give to the children and of future generations.

The attack on human rights, both individual and collective rights, has not spared women leaders and their organizations in the Cordillera. The violations often stem from the twin operation of development aggression and militarization or state repression. These conditions contribute or inflict a

distinct violence against indigenous women. While women's organizations have met this violence with stronger mobilizations, sustained militarization and state repression has paralyzed some women's organizations and terrorized some Innabuyog leaders. Hence, there is a need for a stepped-up campaign to generate public opinion and support. This is also where networks that Innabuyog has built linkage with regionally, nationally, and overseas impart their solidarity support through various forms.

It has not been an easy journey for Innabuyog as it encounters and continues to encounter several challenges in its aim of organizing and mobilizing the indigenous women of the Cordillera. One challenge is state terrorism. Another is the challenge posed by the deepening economic crisis when women and their families are forced to migrate seasonally or permanently for better economic opportunities. Both create lag in organizational development. Self-sufficiency is also greatly affected by the economic crisis which is exacerbated by sustained militarization and now the climate crisis.

What these challenges are telling us is to persevere and further expand our organizing work and improve our methods of work to mitigate the negative impact and confront the challenges from external pressures.

For as long as we continue to believe in indigenous women's commitment to self-determination and national democracy that work against all forms of discrimination against women, then there is always hope to build on women's power through sustained work of arousing, organizing and mobilizing women.

This book puts together the history, challenges, diversity, and dynamism of women's movement building in the Philippines. It compiles the various standpoint and viewpoint of women activists and feminists who were invited as resource persons by JASS Network Philippines in the first workshop of movement building in 2009 and in the succeeding Feminist Conversations.