

# Gender Speak



## TWG on Gender among Visayas and Mindanao Partners held

By: Anthony L. Gutierrez  
CNGM - GQ Officer

Bread for the World partners from the Visayas and Mindanao (NIRD, NCPERD, AFRIM, MINCODE, SIMCARRD, SILDAP-SE and PAILIG Development Foundation) gathered in a conference last October 11-13, 2006 at the Malagos Garden Resort in Davao City as a "Technical Working Group" (TWG). The purpose of the three days activity is for partners to come up with an action plan that will enable and enhance their initiatives in promoting gender mainstreaming within their organization and programs, networking and in advocating gender equality and women's empowerment as a framework.

Highlights of the conference were the update on the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the presentation of Thematic Papers on Gender Mainstreaming, Focused Group Discussion on the Draft Tool Kit on Gender Mainstreaming (GM) and the drawing out of a guide for Plan of Action for the TWGs on GM. Women's



Participants preparing visuals for the synthesis of the 3-day TWG Confer-

Institute for Sustainable Economic Action, Inc. (WISE Act) with the assistance of Rev. John Mark Cajiuaat, Executive Director of Consulting Team, Inc. (CTI) convened and facilitated the activity.

The conference concluded with the Visayas and Mindanao partners committing themselves to pursue and advance GM work to a higher and broader extent within their organization, in their communities and in their respective region/island.



Send your contributions to  
[genderspeak@yahoo.com](mailto:genderspeak@yahoo.com)

Volume 2, Issue 4  
October 2006

### Inside This Issue

<i>Role of Women in Sustainable Development</i>	2
Parenting 101	3
<i>Abstract on Thematic Paper on I Ps</i>	4
<i>Abstract on Thematic Paper on Sus Ag</i>	4
PKKK Tool Launched	5
Crossing the Margins	6
<b>WISE NEWS</b> Rural Women's Day Celebration	8
CEDAW	8
World Food Day 06	8



## From the Executive Director

By Jocelyn F. Cajuat

# Role of Women in Sustainable Development of Rural Communities

### Sustainable development

- *Meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the needs of future generations.*
- *Creates long term impact on quantitative (measured by income) and qualitative (measured by quality of life) aspects as viewed from the perspective of poverty alleviation*
- *There can be no real development if gender inequities and inequalities exist.*

The continuing rural poverty is directly related to the non-sustainability of an agricultural system. The need to recognize the contribution of both women and men in sustaining farming systems has been a constant subject for policy makers and development workers. Equal access to resources, technologies, and use of indigenous knowledge to produce food and to generate income for the households are the key to sustainability.

Beyond the here and now and the immediate solutions to impoverishment and economic hardships of rural communities, the question of how far can initiatives like small scaled liveli-

hoods and micro-enterprises for women can go to break the cycle of poverty is critical. In rural-based enterprise development, the sales of agricultural and forest products realize very low net incomes for the producers but the processing of agricultural products may result in added value and would yield higher incomes for the producers. Women are substantially involved in various forms of agro-processing and agro-enterprises, i.e., as entrepreneurs, thus, skills and technology development would be beneficial for them.

Whatever their relationship to the market, direct or indirect, women have a good idea of the local market situation. What they are unlikely to have much knowledge about are distant market opportunities. In any case, that area is the preserve of traders, something that even men in poor, rural families are not likely to know much about.



Sustainable agriculture needs to involve women as possessors of technical indigenous knowledge, and their

collaboration with scientists and technologists. Training and extension also need to be targeted specifically at women, and not just at farmers. Agro-processing and related micro-enterprises have an important role to play in increasing the income realized from primary agricultural activities. By being organized as separate activities, rather than as extensions of home working, women will be able to pay full attention to the technical requirements and to upgrading their own skills. Access by women to formal credit, training and marketing institutions needs to be ensured. The importance of support in product innovation is more than by credit by itself. Successful product innovation and marketing over longer distances will make it possible for women to productively absorb credit and financial services.

In observance of the International Rural Women's Day October 15, we recognize and pay tribute to the contribution of the millions of rural women towards sustainability development and food security.





## Parenting 101

By: Vivian M. Galvez

### *Growing Up in a Rural Household*

Whenever I read about rural women, the first thing that comes into my mind is my childhood experiences in the farm. How much I wish that my children had similar joyful memories that I had working in a farm in a rural community.

I was born and grew up in Bon-gabon, Nueva Ecija, a town made famous by onions. We had a four-hectare farm. I remember that when I was ten years old, I would join my two other older sisters in working in the farm every Saturday to help our father. We help in planting during the planting season until the harvest season. During summer vacation, we would spend every day working in the farm. We would wake up at 5 a.m., take a quick breakfast, and proceed immediately into the farm. I learned how to plant the small seedlings, weed and water the plants regularly, harvest them in the correct manner, and then clean them up afterwards.

But we also had fun! The field was a big playground, enough for every conceivable game that children could think of. We raced with the carabaos. We then swam in the nearby river afterwards. Mud, carabao dung, and luscious sunlight were our con-

stant playmates.

Life in the countryside was hard but fun. Our mother would wake up early to prepare the breakfast and the food and water that we would bring when going to the field. Even if we were children, we did get paid on a weekly basis, depending on how many days we worked in the field. I would get very happy every Saturday because of our wages.

Most of those who work in the onion farms were women, who were more adept in weeding and in cleaning the onion bulbs without breaking the stems. Most men would rather work in the rice fields.

Losses in the farms can also be tremendous! The onions are planted in March and harvested in May. Unfortunately, the rainy season sometimes comes too early instead of the usual June season. When this happens, the plants get waterlogged and destroyed. All the investments for the seedling and labor costs for the planting and weeding go to waste. The farmer ends up neck-deep in debt. I was too young then to think of the low pay despite all the hardships in working in the farm under the sun. Child labor was never an issue. Children as young as eight years

old could work in the field as long as they know how to weed and clean the onions. The children come with their mothers who teach them what do to. It was much better than not having any money to pay for food or to waste time playing.

We learned the value of hard work early in life. For myself, the little amount of money I earned I kept as



Illustrations: IDRC

additional allowance when I go to school. For most of the other agricultural workers, the additional income was needed to support the typically big families of farmers. I myself had 11 siblings.

Most of the agricultural workers were elementary school graduates.

## Growing Up in A Rural Household From page 3

They have stopped going to secondary school because of the inability of their parents to sustain their daily school expenses. Although public schools required no tuition fees, going to the distant secondary schools required transportation fare, school supplies, shoes, not to mention school uniform. Most of them were also girls. Most parents believed that there was no need to send them for further schooling because they would get married anyway and will not be pursuing any profession.

Families that would have some means to send their children to college would almost always choose to send the boys rather than the girls. The girls' choices were also very limited. It was either to work as housemaids in Manila or to work as agricultural workers to augment the family income. I have realized early in my life that to grow up as a woman in a rural community would most often consign one to the drudgery of field work, unable to fulfil one's dreams or use one's talents and realize one's potentials.

Life in the farm was hard but could also be fun. Peasants as they are, they have very simple wants: rice and dried fish on the table three times a day, and a roof that is not blown away during typhoons. Once we are able to enjoy this, singing with friends at night under the stars are enough to bring smiles. Watching a soap opera at the neighbour's television is already too much luxury. But for me, I value my experiences working in the farm at a young age because it built my character. It taught me the very important lesson that there are times that one must work very hard to get something very little, like a small daily wage.

Especially if you are poor.



## PKKK Launches Food and Water Security Assessment, Planning and Monitoring Tool

To recognize the value women's contribution in food self sufficiency, the Pambansang Koalisyon ng Kababaihan sa Kanayunan or PKKK launched a food security assessment, planning and monitoring tool last October 16, 2006. The tool highlights the realization of rural women's role in food security, interconnectedness of women to her natural environment, and women's rights to development. With the presence of agricultural liberalization, there is a lack of access and control of rural women to productive resources. Women when given equal access, voice and opportunity increases the productivity of rural households, researches revealed. The tool will determine the roles of men and women in food and water security, the food and water security situation, gender analysis of food and water security situation, opportunities and threats, and possible action points to address these concerns. Moreover, the toll will help in finding out the food and water access, distribution and consumption, contribution of household members, control and decision-making over natural resource and food production, food sufficiency and sustainability.

*For inquiries write to: Ms. Daryl Leyesa or Ms.Amparo Miciano : ruralwomencongress\_ph @yahoo.com*



## ABSTRACT: THEMATIC PAPERS ON GENDER MAINSTREAMING

### Promoting Gender Mainstreaming In Development Organizations Working With Indigenous Peoples: Practical Approaches

What Challenges Do We Face?

By Ma. Teresa Guia- Padilla

The paper seeks to answer how to best support gender mainstreaming efforts in programs and projects of organizations working with indigenous peoples. The paper introduces who the indigenous peoples in the Philippines are. It highlights the role of culture in Gender and Development Work with IPs. The paper tells us that gender should be prioritized in working with IPs. Instruments such as the CEDAW and IPRA are cited as containing provisions recognizing women IPs rights. Introducing the word gender in IP communities should be taken with care. The paper presents several recommendations on how IP women's voice can be upheld in terms of participation and decision making, research with IP groups re gender relations for development planning, being very conscientious in identifying projects that may further gender stereotypes among IPs,

Furthermore, the paper challenges organizations working with IPs to:

1.) Strengthen IP women's spaces for expression and movement/mobility; 2.) Ensure that IP women have a meaningful role in community development planning that does not introduce nor reinforce gender stereotyping. ; 3.) Ascertain that development workers possess cultural-sensitivity in addition to gender-sensitivity.; 4.) Consolidate statistics and other data on IPs in general and IP women in particular; 5.) Assure IP women's projection in research; 6.) Pursue studies and projects on IP women's reproductive health concerns, and reproductive rights, sexuality

and violence against women; 7.) Encourage continuance of egalitarian practices in IP communities and ensure that these are not obliterated unintentionally by development interventions introduced.



### Integrating Gender in Sustainable Agriculture: A Concept Paper

By: Ma. Cecilia B. Alarcon

The paper highlights the difference between men and women's gender based roles in the household, farm and community. It is important to note that any project on sustainable agriculture, natural resource management and poverty alleviation should consider social processes such as gender based responsibilities (SEARCA). The concept paper states that men and women have different knowledge of, access to and control over natural resources, and different opportunities to participate in decision making processes.

Moreover, the paper discusses that more programs overlook that gender relations systematically differentiates poor women and men in processes of production and reproduction. Proposed actions in integrating gender in Sustainable Agriculture are enumerated in this concept paper. Gender mainstreaming calls for a positive action that requires commitment, capacities and resources. One recommendation is Creating a Gender Equitable Organization; Two: Engendering Programs and Processes and Three: Building Organizational Responsibilities to Mainstream Gender.



## Crossing the Margins

### Ma. Lisa T. Alano

*“Nalipay ko nga ang mga lalaki ug babaye nagkahiusa sa paglihok aron mapalambo ang among katilingban, apan nanginahanglan ampingan sa mga kababayan-an ang mga kaayohan nga among nakab-ot (I’m glad that men and women in our communities are working together to develop our livelihoods but the women should safeguard whatever gains we’ve earned in the process.)”- Manang Nora of HARBEMCO*

The celebration of women’s month early this year was made especially memorable for the women members of a number of people’s organizations in Davao del Norte, Davao Oriental, Compostela Valley, Davao del Sur, and Cotabato with the formation of the Rural Women’s Caucus.

The Rural Women’s Caucus was initiated by 16 women leaders from six partner people’s organizations of the Alternate Forum for Research in Mindanao (AFRIM). Core members include the Highlander Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Multipurpose Cooperative (HARBEMCO) in Monkayo, Compostela Valley, Taguibo Farmers Multipurpose Cooperative (TAFARMCO) in Mati, Davao Oriental, Ilomavis Balabag Apo Sandawa Manobo Ancestral Domain Claim (IBASMADC) in Mt. Apo, North Cotabato, Santa Maria Development Cooperative (SMDC) in Nabunturan, Compostela Valley, Balatik in Sta. Cruz, Davao del Sur, and First Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Multipurpose Cooperative (FIARBEMCO) in Panabo City, Davao del Norte.

AFRIM has been one of FIARBEMCO’s partners in its various advocacies related to agrarian reform in banana plantation where women members and leaders played key roles in their struggle for individual ownership of land as well as negotiations for better terms in their agribusiness venture contracts.

In the case of the five other people’s organizations and communities, their partnership with AFRIM began when the latter assisted them in

strategic plans for poverty alleviation.

Revealing were the study results that poverty has a woman’s face. Many women contribute their unpaid labor to production of various crops. They bring in additional income by



*Manang Nora of HARBEMCO presents the coop’s GAD plan during one of the meetings of the Rural Women’s Caucus*

growing vegetables and raising animals. More men have access to training given by government agencies. Even more males hold leadership positions in community organizations, particularly in the indigenous people’s communities of IBASMADC and Balatik. It did not take long for the women to realize that it was time to cross the margins.

In the course of the partnership, women’s committees and even separate women’s organization were formed by the women. Subsequently, the small formations decided to come together. Not that they wanted to become independent from their POs. The Women’s Caucus continues to work hand-in-hand

## Crossing the margins

hand with the Inter-PO Caucus, a network of the same people's organizations that focuses on larger community concerns. While the POs recognize the need for men and women to have equal participation in productive, reproductive, and community work, putting emphasis on women's needs, through the Women's Caucus, is a move which they feel is towards the right direction.

Coming from various ethnic background and sectors, diversity does not hinder the women's efforts to improve their household and community livelihoods. Beyond aiming at increasing their incomes, the Women's Caucus, which meets bimonthly, serves as the women's link to one another, support mechanism, and opportunity for capacity building as well as sharing of experiences. *"Nakahibalo na mi nga ang kahintang sa mga Manobo walay kalainan sa among kaugalingong mga problema (Now we realize that the situation of the Manobo is not different from that of our own problems)"*, echoed some of the women during one of the meetings.

Accessing the gender and development (GAD) budget at the barangay level and promotion of the adoption of sustainable agriculture practices are two of the major undertakings of the Women's Caucus members, the latter done in partnership with the Inter-PO Caucus. Initially, a review of gender concepts was given to the members. An input on HIV-AIDS was also conducted on their first meeting.

The second meeting focused on GAD budget accessing with each PO formulating its GAD plan including lobbying for VAWC monitoring at the barangay level, among others.. The women are seriously doing their work. All the inputs on HIV-AIDS, VAWC, gender concepts, and GAD budget were echoed to the male and female PO members, and in some, at the barangay level. A number has had successes in lobbying for the barangay GAD budget and accessing support services from government agencies.

SMDC already received commitment for mushroom production training. HARBEMCO received training from the DAR on food processing and packaging of virgin coconut oil. The GAD plans of the other organizations were already submitted to the barangay councils for consideration. Household cooperators show their farm that now produces 100 percent organic vegetables. Promotion and adoption of sustainable agriculture is a priority concern of the Rural Women's Caucus.

Adoption of sustainable agriculture practices is



likewise fast spreading among community members, men and women alike.

HARBEMCO for instance, generated a savings of some PHP100,000 by shifting to organic fertilizers, which they themselves produced, for its 3-hectare mangosteen plantation. This means additional income especially for the women. Many in other communities are likewise on their way to similar endeavors.

Together, the women's journey to empowerment has begun. As Bebie, a Manobo member of IBAS-MADC puts it, *"Daghan pa kaayo'y angay buhaton sa pag-asdang sa among katuyuan, pero maayo kay nakasugod ra gyud ta ug nag-uban kitang tanan (I know that there is still a long way to go in advancing our cause but what better way to start with than working with our fellow women)."*

Hope springs eternal.

## WISE NEWS

### WISE Act celebrates Rural Women's Day

“Pagkilala sa Ginagampanan ng Kababaihan sa Kanayunan sa Kaseguruhan sa Pagkain, Tubig at Pangkalusugan” is this year's team of the Batangas Rural Women's Day. 150 participants and seven doctors attended the said activity held at the Alitagtag Multi-Purpose Hall in Alitagtag, Batangas last October 27. The occasion is graced by Mayor Guillermo Reyes, Councilor Vicky Agbay, Brgy. Captain Dingdong Pongos and Rene Ilagan of Alitagtag, Batangas, PhilNet RDI staff,

Ms. Trinidad

Domingo, Chairperson of PPKK, Mr. Mike Orosco,

Manager of WRB and Emmy

Nacario, Secretary General of PATAMABA.

WISE Act launched “We Are Women with a Voice”, a documentary film by Mr. Nonoy Regalado. Red Cross gave a First Aid Training, and PATAMABA shared livelihood skills to rural women and PNLC



*Participants of the Batangas Rural Women's Day Celebration*

distributed vegetable seeds. Parallel to this activities is a medical mission headed by Dr. Mailene Gonzales of

Alitagtag, Batangas. etable

### CEDAW Discussion

Atty. Leo Batad, a feminist and child rights advocate shared her assessment of the of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women WISE Act staff last Sept. 11. The Country Report of the

Philippines as well as the Shadow Report, from various

women's groups, were also presented. Among the gains in CEDAW's 5th and 6th report are the passage of 4 women friendly laws such as the Anti VAWC Act or RA 9262, Anti-Trafficking Act or RA 9208, Anti-Rape Law or RA 8353 and the Anti-Sexual Harassment Law or RA 7877.

To know more about CEDAW, log on to <http://www.cedaw.org/>

Visit our website: <http://www.wiseact.org.ph/>



### World Food Day 2006

WISE Act Inc. participated in the World Food Day Activity of PNLC last October 16. PNLC or Philippine NGO Coalition on Food Sovereignty and Fair Trade advocates for the Seed of Hope Project i.e. Food Security for All, A Food Garden for Every Household. The strategy to attain food secu-

rity at the household level is to plant organic vegetables using recycled materials.



World Food Day 2006