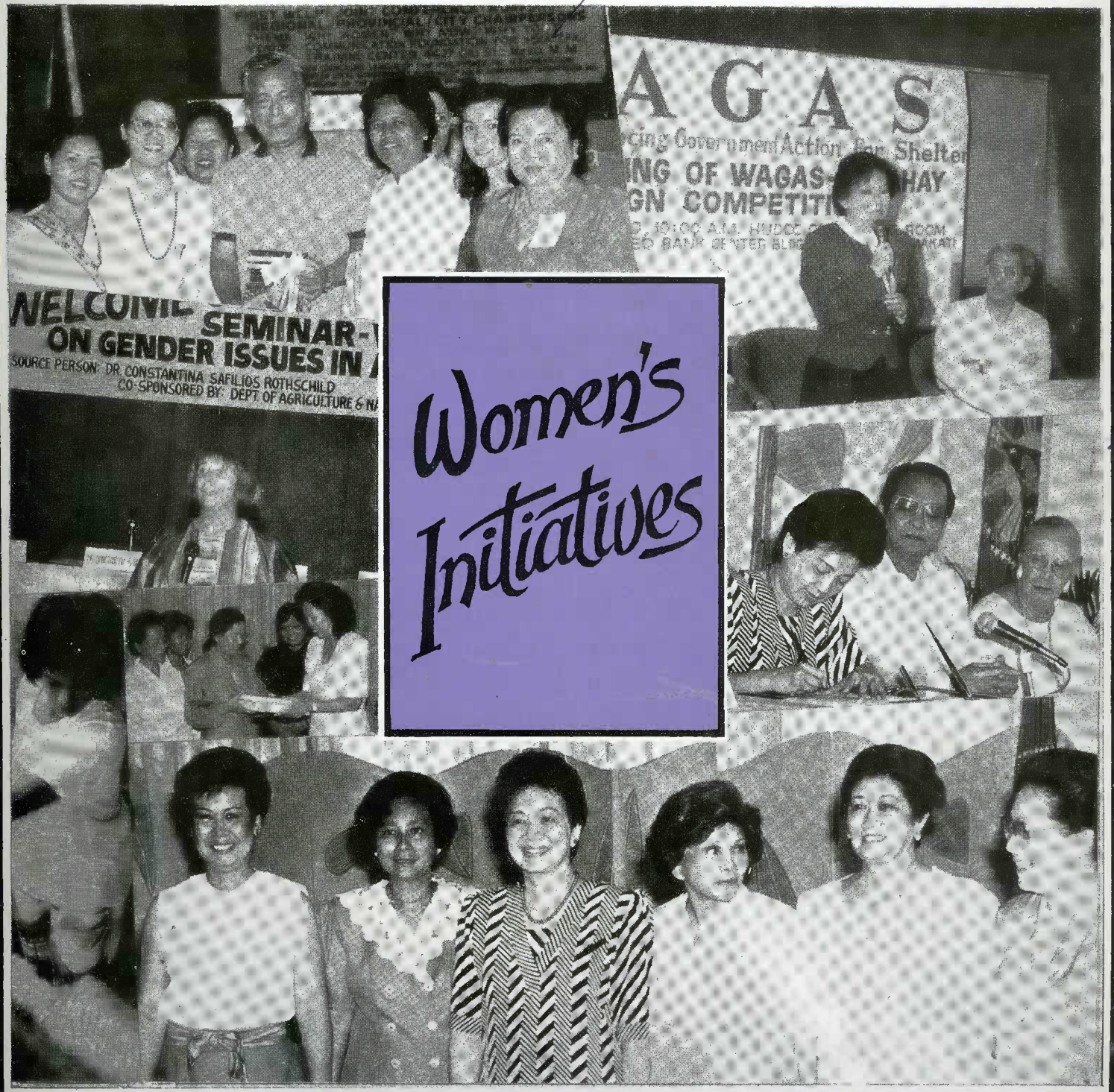


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editorial

In solidarity, hope...!

To celebrate Women's Month this year, we chose the theme "Kababaihan Para sa Kaunlaran, Sulong sa Dekada '90 (Women for Progress, Towards the Decade of the '90s)."

All was a-buzz in the women's front. There were programs, meetings, exhibits, sales, marches, congresses. Our women spoke, danced and sang. The men toasted them. All to focus the attention of the entire country and the world on the women — their realities, their aspirations, their hopes.

When the month ended, we were huff-puffing from the myriad activities we participated in. We were tired. But satisfied. Because we discovered there was synergy between and among women and their groups. Government women and those from the non-governmental organizations found themselves sharing minds and hearts in the GO-NGO Congress, the first ever. And we said we want to preserve that synergy. We want to continue the work we had begun.

And so, the whole year through, the meetings continued. There were plans for action. And some action did take place. Academe is now deeply involved in women's studies. Some schools have strengthened their academic offerings on women.

The women in the various line departments have organized to engage in activities benefitting themselves as woman employees and their constituencies, this time with an extra eye on the needs of women among them.

The women in the NGOs were right there where the action is — engaging in literacy classes among

the less-privileged in the depressed areas, guiding them in livelihood ventures, serving in feeding programs, all the time awakening the women to their self-value and dignity.

And the NCRFW went on with its tasks at consciousness-raising particularly in the government sector hoping to influence both the women and the men who chart the course of governance of all the land.

The sharing and the caring did not end within our shores. The women of the Philippines kept in touch with their sisters across the seas. There were visits from our counterparts in the Chinese Mainland, from India, Japan, Germany, the Netherlands, Czechoslovakia and our women were also invited to take part in their programs abroad.

Indeed, we have been about our business as women in development. At this, the closing of the first year of the Decade of the '90s, we honestly say, "We did our utmost. And we shall continue the endeavor."

This issue of 'Mare is devoted to women's initiatives, both individual and collective. The women show that when they have set their minds at certain objectives, they do get there.

We have taken up the challenge. We know we have not done enough. Each step we take may be small. Nay, even frail. But in the solidarity we are now building up, we have confidence.

We have articulated our cause: equality, development and peace.

We shall attain them yet.

Woman councilors hold joint conference-workshop

Forty six woman members of provincial and city councils from all over the country met for a five-day joint conference-workshop at the Communications Foundation for Asia during the second week of October, 1990. Revolving around the theme: "Why Women? Why Now? Why You?" the gathering was an activity conducted by the Women Councilors League of the Philippines (WCLPI) in coordination with the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW).

In attendance were the officers of the regional and provincial organizations within the WCLPI. They were inducted into office by Senator Santanina T. Rasul who congratulated them for working together in addressing women's issues. She encouraged them to submit a resolution to the Congressional Committee on Local Government requesting for two woman sectoral representatives in Congress.

Ms. Karina David gave the councilors an in-depth analysis of economic, social and political situations prevailing in the country today.

Mr. Gerard Rikken, Director of the Action Research Department of Econo-

mics of the Asian Social Institute (ASI), talked to the councilors about training opportunities which can be made available to them. Among these are summer courses in community development work which includes modules on community organizing, communication skills, regional management and human relations.

Atty. Judith Diaz of the Local Government Academy under the Department of Local Government told the participants that the DLG helps its accredited leagues by way of providing them with staff support, supplies, materials and minimal financial assistance for trainings. Courses available under its Capability-building Program are local government management, local legislation, development planning, values/attitudes formation and local fiscal administration.

Highlight of the conference-workshop was the lecture given by Senator Aquilino Pimentel on the provisions of the proposed Local Government Code which have implications on their role as woman councilors.

The Regional Seminar-Workshops on Effective Local Legislation (SWELL) were also discussed. Regions 1, 2 and 3

spearheaded the move by holding theirs on November 6 to 8 in Olongapo City followed by Region 7 on November 8 and 9 in Cebu City. The other regions will hold their SWELL during the month of November up to the first week of December.

Plans for the Second National Congress were finalized. The councilors intend to hold it at the Ninoy Aquino Stadium on March 6 to 8, 1991. Congress theme will echo "Why Women? Why Now? Why You?" Keynote speaker will be President Corazon C. Aquino and special guest will be Ms. Irene Natividad of the National Women Political Caucus based in Washington D.C.

To promote sisterhood among the members thus strengthening solidarity within the League, the participants firmed up their Local Cross-posting Program which enables them to visit their counterparts in other regions on study-observation trips.

Councilor Alice Herrera, WCLPI President, says this joint conference-workshop was one of the activities that the League has lined up under its Capability-building Program through which the members are given training and expertise so they may maximize their service to their respective constituencies.

With Senator Aquilino Pimentel are Councilors Pureza Ramos of Cagayan de Oro City, Erlinda Palmaria of Davao del Norte, Pureza Onate of Cebu City, Amparo Manginay of Siquijor, Marcelita Lucido of Koronadal, Paulina Apelado of Eastern Samar, Roberta Ranoy of Alaminos, Pangasinan and Teresa Almalbis of Roxas City.



Cebuano CE-DAW Primer off the press

The Cebuano adaptation of the Primer on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CESAW) is now available.

Originally written by Stephen Isaacs, Renee Holt and Andrea Irvin of the Development Law and Policy Program, Center for Population and Family Health, Columbia University, the Primer was published in cooperation with Arvonne Fraser and Marsha Freeman of the Women, Public Policy and Development Project of the University of Minnesota Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public

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SEXISM in Roundtable discussion

The University of the Philippines Center for Women's Studies (UCWS) in coordination with the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW) conducted a day-long roundtable discussion on "Sexism in Philippine Society" at the Philippine Social Science Center on October 23, 1990.

"Sexism and Its Manifestations" was the subject taken up during the morning session. Dr. Sylvia Guerrero, UCWS Director, opened her welcome address by calling the participants' attention to the fact that in 1975, the word "sexism" was not in that year's edition of the Webster's Collegiate Dictionary but in its 1987 edition, it was defined as "prejudice and discrimination against women." In 1985, however, Linda Phelps defined it in her Feminist Dictionary as "a social relationship in which males have authority over females." Dr. Guerrero expressed the hope that the discussion would lead to the writing of a position paper and the formulation of a more aggressive campaign for the promotion of women's rights and welfare.

Dr. Belinda Aquino, UP Vice President for Public Affairs, spoke of the fate of famous men who made light of the situation of women. She brought this up in the light of the "Manglapus Joke" that infamous quip purportedly made the Secretary of Foreign Affairs when shortly after the media came up with reports that Filipinas were being raped by Iraqi soldiers in Kuwait, he said that if rape is inevitable, then one should just sit back and enjoy it. Dr. Aquino lamented the fact that not one of the woman leaders now highly placed in government expressed outrage at that joke.

Dr. Aquino said that part of the challenge to the UCWS is to come up with a good document about what Filipino feminism is, what it entails and what it seeks to do.

Dr. Rita Estrada illustrated the non-sexist characteristic of Tagalog by bringing forth its wealth in androgynous terminology saying that our sexist terms come from our borrowing from other cultures with which we had had close relations such as those of China and Spain. She believes that speaking Pilipino

would liberate us from the sexism and colonialism that bind us.

In the afternoon, strategies to combat sexism in the Philippines were discussed.

Dr. Carmen Abubakar of the Institute of Islamic Studies discussed the complementarity of the women and men in Islamic religious teachings. She said that the economic constraints that now bear down heavily on society makes the male the more preferred person when it comes to education and division of inheritances because he is expected to be the family breadwinner. It is remarkable, however, that more and more Muslim women have become family heads lately. She said that a serious debate on the seeming contradictions in the Islamic system might bring about modifications to their legal traditions.

U.N. Volunteers Program seeks woman nominees

The United Nations Volunteers Program (UNV) is searching for more woman volunteers for its development activities. In a letter to Executive Director Remedios Rikken, Dr. Brenda McSweeney, Executive Coordinator of the UNV in Geneva requested NCRFW to inform women and women's groups of UNV's intention to increase the number of women in its corps of volunteers.

Set up by the UN General Assembly in 1970, UNV has since supplied the UN Development Programme with specialists in response to requests for technical expertise from developing countries. It is an agency that fosters equal employment opportunities for women and men who are specialists in development-related fields. It is presently campaigning for more woman volunteers because 80% of its actual personnel complement is made up of men. Woman applicants are needed particularly in projects which are aimed at integrating poor rural and urban women in the mainstream of development as primary beneficiaries.

Women-in-development specialists are needed in the following areas: employment, agriculture, health, education, community development and the environment. Volunteers either do operational work or training activities in such fields as income generation, cooperative activities, primary health, new technologies, rural development, community shops, credit support schemes, renewable energy sources, basic education, environmental

Dean Rene Ofreneo of the UP School of Labor and Industrial Relations observed that the inequities in the labor sphere stem from the fact that women do not know their rights as workers and they bear their oppression in silence. He recommended the awakening of their consciousness through the dissemination of komik-style literature. He also stressed the necessity of coming out with a model collective bargaining agreement (CBA) which would spell out women's issues. He suggested that the men be made aware of women's concerns by making them attend women's seminars as well.

Professor Rosario del Rosario of the Women and Development Program of the College of Social Work and Community Development broadened and redefined

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conservation and vocational training and training of trainers.

The Philippines is one developing country which, although itself a beneficiary of foreign volunteer programs, also sends volunteers to other developing countries. The Philippine National Volunteer Service Coordinating Agency (PNVSCA) assists UNV by acting as the initial screening arm for prospective volunteers.

Applicants are screened without distinction as to nationality, religion or ideological beliefs. Very important criteria besides good health are service to others, professional competence and language proficiency.

PNVSCA Director Virginia P. Davide says that there are two UNV programs which a volunteer may choose from. The Regular Program sends volunteers to Africa and the Pacific Regions. The Domestic Development Services (DDS) screens volunteers for appointments in the Asian Region. Although requirements are basically the same for both programs, an exception has been made for the DDS in that the volunteers need not be college graduates as long as they have the skill and the experience in community organizing.

Applicants must generally be college or university graduates, preferably single. Married applicants are considered on a case-to-case basis. They should have no more than two children below 18 years of

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Women in Shelter:

How WAGAS was born



Organizations have an uncanny way of being born. It took WAGAS a very short time to come to life. That was sometime ago. Or March 31, 1990, to be exact. But it wasn't that simple, this birthing.

Let us trace it to its roots.

Zorayda Amelia Capistrano Alonzo, Chief Executive Officer of Pag-IBIG Fund, has always held offices of responsibility. She is an economist by orientation and has been involved in financial management ever since she left her first job as an instructor in the college of commerce of the University of Santo Tomas in Manila.

While she was pursuing her career in the world of economics, Mel also took time to join women's groups. On top of her tasks as president of the Bayanihan Alumni International, Inc., she became very active in the Alliance of Women for Reform (AWARE) and was a convenor of Women in Nationbuilding (WIN) while engaging in activities with the other members of Women in Finance and Entrepreneurship (WIFE).

Mel thinks that she has been privileged all her life. She went to good schools and her family has always lived comfortably. She was a member of the Bayanihan Dance Troupe when she was in college. Her exposure to the art of the dance showed her the beauty of the other art forms as well because while she travelled with the Troupe, she saw the greatest artistic achievements of humanity in the various cities she visited.

When she married Ruperto Alonzo who is presently the Chairman of the School of Economics of the University of the Philippines, she decided she would live her life in the relative comfort that it afforded her.

As CEO of Pag-IBIG, however, she was tasked to attend the GO-NGO Congress for Women on March 31 this year. After the speeches delivered by Ms. Solita Monsod and the other guests, the 700 participants were divided into small groups where they could exchange ideas on how to address the concerns of their chosen sectors.

Naturally, Mel and her group chose the workshop on "Women and Housing" where, together with the participants from the non-government sector, they shared their ideas on how to alleviate the problem of poor housing in the country.

Sitting with the NGO women, however, had a strange effect on Mel. She had known about poverty because it was one of the more popular issues that has always been discussed in the meetings she

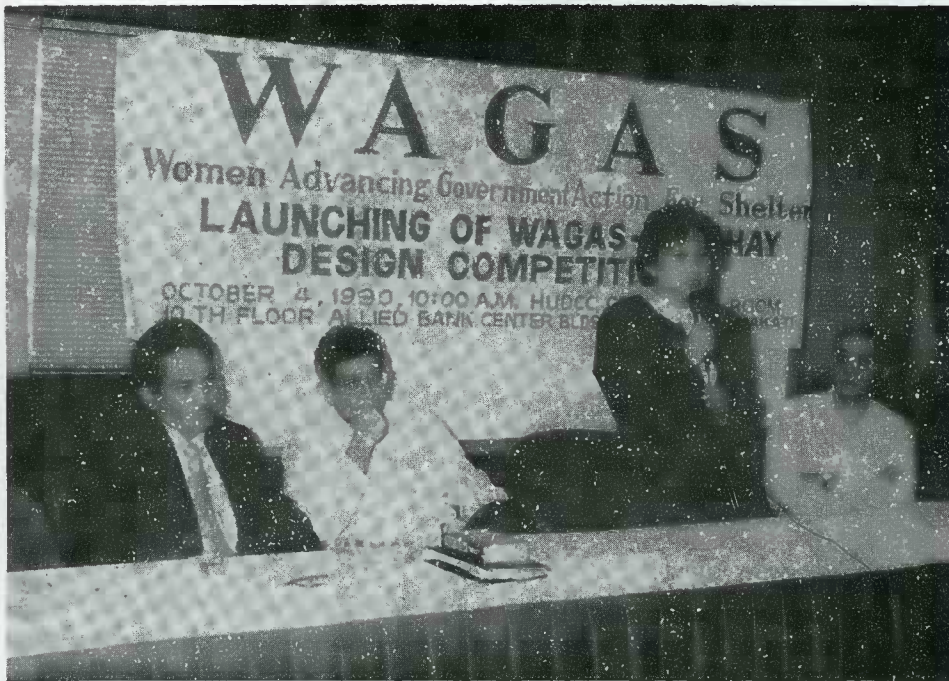
attended. She sees the plans actualize most of them. Being a member of the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council (HDCC), she has been instrumental in formulating policies that guide the shelter program of our government. She knew about the housing conditions of the poor. She presumed she knew about their difficulties.

But the reports of the women from the NGOs telling of the plight of their client-beneficiaries stirred her. She could not believe that some dwelling units in Leveriza have not known the touch of sunlight at all. She had heard of street children before, but she never heard of "street families." Whatever that feeling was that she had during the workshop, Mel can not still put a label to. All she knows is that it was strong enough to compel her to "do something."

When Mel went home that afternoon, she felt like she was looking at the world through a new pair of eyes. From the windows of her air conditioned car, she saw the poverty around the Cultural Center Complex. She saw the glazed look in the eyes of an old woman seated on the pavement at a streetcorner. All at once, she saw the dirt and the squalor and she could not imagine the suffering that surely was a companion to the men and women who pushed carts from one garbage heap to another, hoping to find anything that could be converted into cash. Before she got home, she had her mind made up. She would do her share at poverty alleviation.

When she got to her office the following week, she called up her woman friends in management positions in the other shelter agencies and told them about her insights. When they sat down formally during their first meeting on April 19, the unanimous reaction was that her initiative was a "God-send." The core group of nine confessed that each of them was affected by what they had gleaned from the NGO women and they all admitted that they were shamed by their inaction. That same morning, they decided to work in unison towards the organization of a women's desk which will serve as coordinator of activities by and for women in the shelter sector.

The weeks following that first meeting were spent in liaisoning among themselves. They wrote letters to their agency heads (who all happened to be male, except Mel herself) informing them of their decision to join the mainstream of activities of women in development in pursuance of Executive Order No. 348 and



With Pag-IBIG CEO Zorayda Amelia Alonzo are (from left) HIGC President and General Manager Carlos Doble, NHA General Manager Monico Jacob, and Presidential Adviser on Housing and HUDCC Chairman Teodoro Katigbak.

that because they were in the housing sector, they wanted to concentrate on activities that would lead to the advancement of the shelter industry.

Recognizing the importance of what the women were trying to do, HUDCC Chairman Teodor K. Katigbak appointed Mel chairperson of the women's desk and encouraged them with his pledge of support for the programs and projects they wished to undertake. The heads of the other shelter agencies, followed suit by assigning the organizers as official representatives of their respective offices.

The Board is composed of representatives from the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council (HUDCC) headed by Alma Recio who functions as Executive Director, the National Housing Authority (NHA) led by Zonia Galvez who is also over-all in-charge of the Pabahay Design Contest, the National Home Mortgage Finance Corporation (NHMFC) with Daisy Dulay as director, the Home Insurance Guaranty Corporation (HIGC) with Celia Kiram as director, the Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board (HLURB) which is represented in the Board by Mildred Aguilar as treasurer and the Pag-IBIG Fund which, besides Mel, is represented in the Board by Pura Nagrampa as director and Emily Abinoja as secretary.

The women have been greatly encouraged but they decided to go cautiously because they knew that there was more to the women's question than just recognition and organization. They held a ge-

neral assembly of government women in shelter to which they invited Civil Service Commission Chairperson Patricia Sto. Tomas and NCRFW Executive Director Remedios Rikken to speak to them on their mandate and the gender issues involved in the projects they wish to pursue. This assembly and their subsequent meetings were all meant to result in the raising of their consciousness as woman workers in the shelter sector.

By September, they had thought of a name for themselves — Women Advancing Government Action for Shelter, the acronym for which is WAGAS. The members are taking this acronym very seriously because it is Filipino for "true, faithful, loyal."

The women mean to be that — true, faithful and loyal to their two-pronged objective of upholding the role and strength of women for the advancement of the shelter industry and the furtherance of women's concerns in the formulation and implementation of programs and projects.

Their first project which they presented to the public on October 4, 1990 speaks of their spirit. In consultation with women in NGOs, they launched the WAGAS Pabahay Design Contest which is very significant because it underscores the importance of addressing women's needs in house planning and design, something that is often overlooked. Emphasis is put on the facade and the entertainment areas of the house by their

male planners.

Traditionally, women hold the family purse. Say some women from Tondo, "Pagkabay po sa amin ng suweldo ng aming mga asawa, kami na po ang bahala sa lahat. Pati na po sa lahat ng problema. Dahil pirmi naman pong kulang ang inaabot sa amin (After our husbands give us their salaries, we take care of everything. Including all the problems. Because what they give us is always not enough)." Of all the members of a family, therefore, it is the woman who would be conscious of frugality. If she were consulted during the planning and designing stages of the building of the house she would later occupy, so much could be saved in terms of materials and labor convenience when the family gets to live there.

Seldom is a woman asked as to where she wants the laundry area to be. Some houses do not even have places where the wash can be hung. Others have kitchens far away from the laundry because it has never occurred to the male designers that many women have to keep up with the washing while cooking lunch, trying to make the most of the bright sunlight of midday. Only a woman would double time so that the clothes would dry before sundown so they could be ironed after supper.

Safety is also one consideration that is often overlooked. Even in some relatively well-to-do houses, there is little or no provision at all for female house-help so that the girls have to sleep either in the living room or in the kitchen, making them easy prey for unscrupulous men. In low-cost housing areas, the safety of woman residents does not have to be a luxury. Gender-conscious planning and design would integrate it with every house built.

Many women want to tend plants — even if only in flower pots. If they had their way, they would have flower gardens in their front yards and vegetable plots in the back. No matter how limited the space, women would find a way for this because saving is one of their prime concerns.

Now that WAGAS has put the designing of low-cost housing units in the hands of woman architects, these needs and concerns will be thought of and considered.

It is heartwarming that the winning design will be adapted by the NHA in its low-cost housing program because it is a sign that government recognizes the response that WAGAS has made to the

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Micro-initiatives for Women:

The LABRADOR Experience

First they were only a gang — these five young men who chose Fr. Jaime Villanueva of the Society of the Divine World as their leader. It was 1984 and they called their set-up the Small Business Institute of the Divine Word University in Tacloban City.

The Kilusang Kabuhayan at Kaunlaran (KKK) was at the peak of its popularity and the young men helped would-be loaners write feasibility studies, project proposals, train for business management and other skills needed by small scale businessmen. They later called their organization the "Center for Small Industries." They were given initial funding by the University of Louvain and the Belgian Government.

It did not take long for their clientele to grow big. Even farmers from Samar went to them for consultation. They found a more appropriate name in "Leyte-Samar Rural Development Workers Association Inc."

LABRADOR, for short.

The group did quite well, judging from the number of projects it was able to push successfully. Early on in the project, the organizers saw that quite a sizeable number of their clients were women and seeing that this segment of their beneficiary population had its peculiar needs and concerns, the group thought that these needs should be addressed. But how to do it, they did not know. They decided to wait for the appropriate time.

In 1986, they felt the need to put up the Tacloban Urban Micro Entrepreneurs Assistance Program (TUMEAP) the membership of which was 80% women. They conducted the program just like any other program of its kind and they met with understandable success. One year later, however, the social development workers saw the interest and the effort that the women were putting into the project. So LABRADOR organized the

Leyte Women Entrepreneurs Development Program (LWEDP).

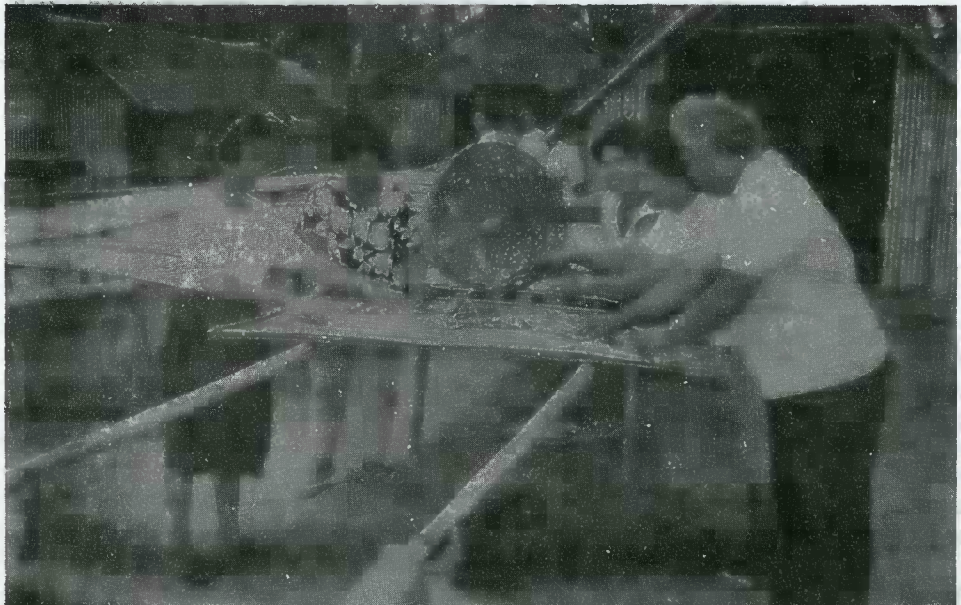
In this new set-up, the women underwent formation beginning with critical self-awareness and capability-building to enhance confidence; this latter, under the Enterprise Development Program.

The women had varied motivations for attending the formation seminars. Some went there at the instance of their friends. Others were quite skeptical of LABRADOR's intentions and therefore went there to prove themselves right. Some went to the sessions to seek mejo-ras benefits, for why should they waste their time in meetings that would not

bring them benefits? And by that, they meant material benefits.

Were the social development workers giving away rice? Or sardines? Or powdered milk? Will they be preparing for the distribution of land titles? This was a promise of the previous administration. Has the new president designated LABRADOR as the new arm for giving the poor what has been promised to them?

Basic to LABRADOR's problems was this attitude so deeply entrenched in the people in general. They expected tangible returns for every activity they engaged in and if material returns were long in coming, they soon lost their interest in



The Bislig Women's Organization with Mano Baludoy have made fish drying but a first step towards self-reliance (top photo). The fatteners in the lower photo soon found themselves in the market stall of Tacloban. But only after they had taught the Tolosa women the value of cooperation and consideration for other.

the activity.

The social development workers did not allow these and other obstacles to intimidate them. Patiently, they plodded along. They started by making the women look into themselves.

They underwent exercises which made them look into their attitudes, habits and values. It made them look into the various roles they play in their lives as women who are members of families, clans, communities.

The social development workers led them into more philosophical musings about why they have been placed in the small social groupings they were in.

Then there were sessions that induced the women to look into how they were performing the functions society has assigned to them. They had to make statements as to their expectations of themselves and how they were measuring up to such expectations. They had to examine their various relationships, starting with their relationship with themselves, their spouses, their children, their parents, etc.

They learned to criticize themselves. Most often, they laughed at their discoveries; for some, however, it was most difficult to recognize and admit their shortcomings. Many a time, tears were shed during the sessions. The women learned to open up to themselves and to their companions in the organization. Little did they know that these initial encounters would lead them to understanding one another better, therefore making for closer working relationships when they undertake projects afterwards.

The Enterprise Development Program came much later — when they were better organized. In this area of their formation, they learned group dynamics. They were exposed to situations and cases when they would have to make simple decisions, the better to prepare them for vital decision-making on their own when they shall have begun their small business ventures later on.

Organizing was done by area. LABRADOR did not intend to organize people in every barangay or municipality. Instead, they chose areas which allow for visibility of projects and activities so that if these same projects and activities succeed, those who see them or feel their impact, might want to undertake the same projects or activities or they might want to come up on their own.

Tolosa

With the help of the LABRADOR so-



Children are a regular participant in the meetings of the Palo Women's Association.

cial development workers, 21 women from Barangay Sta. Brigida organized themselves into the Tolosa Women's Association.

At first they thought they were getting aid from LABRADOR because somehow, that was the impression people had. When the social development workers started them on their initial inward examination, they were surprised. All the explanation that were given them somehow did not register well enough at first.

They underwent what is called Participatory Action Research in order to make them aware of the conditions prevailing in their communities. They were led into articulating their needs and the issues that confront them.

Foremost in the minds of these women was the fact that they were poor and they wanted to do something about it. At that point in their lives, however, they could not go beyond the peddling business which ended up in losses because eventually, their families ate up even their capital (which, sometimes, was borrowed at an exorbitant interest rate).

One common aspiration among them was sending their children to school. They believe that when their children are educated, the young ones have better chances of landing jobs thus ensuring their economic stability. This has been one of the motivations behind their organizing.

So they decided to get together in order to face their problems with collective strength. After much discussion and some arguments (a few of which were quite heated), they decided that they would be able to lessen their financial

difficulties if they put up a piggery as a group project.

Again they underwent seminars during which they formulated the rules and regulations that would govern their organization. Later, they elected their officers and divided themselves into committees. By this time, the women were telling one another that they did not realize that it was this difficult to put oneself into business. Although they were of this consensus, they persisted because they believed that since they were investing much of themselves into the undertaking, the effort might just amount to something later on, with just a little bit of luck.

Some of their sessions involved skills development such as project conceptualizing, documentation, facilitating, book-keeping, and of course, taking care of pigs. These were all intimidating to the women who insisted at first that these were beyond them, they being "elementary gad lamang" meaning, they reached only the elementary level of education. The social development workers kept up the training in spite of the women's arguments because the truth was that they were doing very well.

The next thing they did was to work on their capital build up (which they very confidently call their "CBU"). This was a bit difficult because it meant having to negotiate with their husbands for extra amounts since most of them were not making any money themselves. One woman laughingly recalled that she kidded her husband into giving her the cost of six glasses of "bahalina" (bitter coconut wine). He customarily takes two glasses of it each evening before retiring. When

she had done this three times, her husband began to get irritable so that she had to invent new ways of asking him for money again.

Those who had some earnings had to set the amount aside because usually, before they earned their money, it was as if they had already spent it because there were things to buy for the children especially those in the elementary and high schools. In fact, some of them earned only enough to pay debts. So they borrowed again to tide them over until the next paying time.

This time, they made sacrifices because they understood that the project was meant to bring about far-reaching effects. They visualized themselves as earning money without enragiating themselves with the loan sharks. They stretched their imagination to the distant future when they could improve their economic standing as a family since, with their husbands not earning enough, it seems like there is not much hope for them to improve their lot without their getting involved in the earning process.

Gradually, the social development workers gave the officers the responsibility of handling meetings. Eventually, the group had to manage its own affairs. Elizabeth Perez was shy about dispensing her duties as chairperson at first, but later on, when she got used to her duties, she even gained a sense of authority so that she earned the recognition even of non-members of the organization.

In May, 1989, they began negotiating for a loan. LABRADOR suggested the National Livelihood Support Fund (NLSF) which is administered by the Presidential Management Staff. They got further assistance from LABRADOR in the form of advice in the formulation of their project proposal and the actual presentation of their proposal to the NLSF.

The loan releases came on December 30, 1989. All 21 of them received P2000 each under the Diversified Daily Income Scheme. Jesusa Palana explains that this enabled them to engage in their personal business ventures such as selling vegetables, running little roadside stores, roasting pigs and selling them as lechon and even making candies for the local market.

As an association, however, they got a loan of P82,000. They bought 71 piglets for P32,000 which they housed in a common pigpen which their husbands helped construct. Francisca Bico, the piggery manager, says that her husband was over-all in charge of the building while the fencing of the whole area and

the building of their workshed was undertaken by the rest of the husbands. Still and all, the pigpen cost them P40,000 because they cemented the flooring to make it easier for them to maintain the cleanliness of the area.

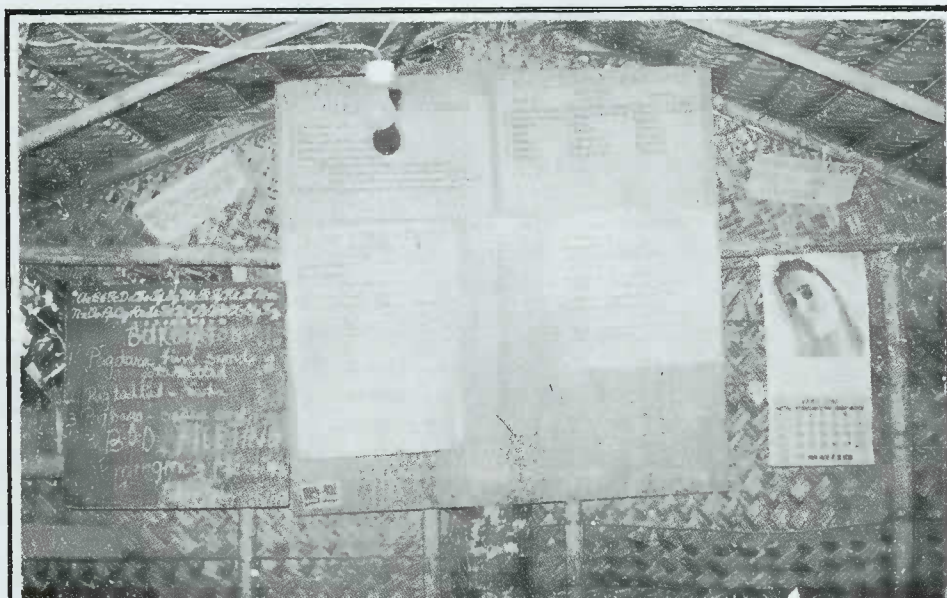
The money that went into the construction of the pigpen and the workshed came painfully from their own pockets, some of it borrowed and some involving "prenda" or the pawning of small pieces of jewelry. The rest of the loan went into the feed for fattening the pigs.

Probably, it was the novelty of a group of women trying to do something for themselves that made them quite interesting to the people. At the start of the project, they took turns at buying their feed from downtown Tacloban and transporting it to Tolosa by tricycle or by jeep. The animal nutritionist in the store found them such engaging customers that he volunteered to teach them how to mix their own feed. The recipe involved the basic growing and fattening mashes plus some

supplements which were all available at their store. He told them that ipil-ipil leaves make for a good vegetable component when mixed in the proper proportions with mash and fish meal.

Before they decided to mix their own feed, the women met. A decision had to be reached with everyone in attendance because they saw that the preparation entails more than ordinary commitment to the tasks involved. Dried fish will have to be chopped every day. The chore itself can be boring and they were afraid they would not persevere. Anyway, they discussed the processes involved and they decided to divide themselves into groups that would take eight-hour turns daily. Those who would not be able to do their duties must send replacements so that the feeding is not interrupted.

In the beginning, they were all enthusiastic. They divided the work among themselves and were always there on time. After a few weeks, however, some of them began complaining about the



This wall tells much of what the Tolosa women have done. One of the posters above contains their norms of conduct (below).

POLICY OF THE ORGANIZATION

1. Attendance is No. 1.
2. Punctuality
3. No drinking of liquor be-4 meeting.
4. No backfighting.
5. Respect every member of the organization.
6. Honesty and faithfulness in the organization.
7. Active participation in the organization.
8. Written excuse for every absence.
9. Avoid using vulgar words during every meeting.
10. Written memorandum for 2 consecutive absences.
11. Three consecutive absences will be automatically terminated.

callouses that were growing on their hands from chopping. Those who were assigned to gather ipil-ipil leaves had to go farther and farther because the leaves were getting scarcer. The pigs were growing so fast and eating so much that they had to produce more and more.

They also had to bathe and feed the pigs regularly. This is part of the routine. Sometimes, these tasks could be too taxing and boring. At times, they just wanted to stop.

No matter how much they tried, each of them had a failing somewhere. One day, one child gets sick; another time, it is a relative who comes to visit and has to be attended to, or although not one of them really would dare admit it, they were a bit lazy sometimes. Then there was this business of "hatud-hatud" – bits of gossip that crept from one mouth to another – eventually reaching the person concerned, resulting in much trouble and disunity among them. And so they had to meet again and again to iron out the rough edges, to make peace with one another.

They found the need to set rules on behavior which they hang on the wall of their workshed. When any rule is being violated, anybody can point to the rules as a reminder to the offender.

Looking back, they now realize how tedious the process of unifying the group had been, but they are grateful that they went through it. Their project could have failed if they had let their own pride get the better of them. Or if LABRADOR had abandoned them during the times when they were unruly. They learned their lessons the hard way, but the women think that everything that happened was for their own good.

Junie Ballesteros of LABRADOR believes that the women are entitled to the pride that they feel, even if they are still besieged by problems. The fiesta of Tacloban is celebrated in May yearly but as early as February this year, the pigs that the women were raising had all been spoken for. They kept their excitement to themselves because they were afraid "nga mabuyagan it amon nga project (an evil spell might befall our project)." On the week of the fiesta, their buyers went to their barangay to pick up their pigs – right from the pen. Were they happy!

This, however, was only their first venture. They had to buy a second batch of pigs from their proceeds. They got partial payments for their contributions for the building of the pigpen and the workshed. Norma Beltran and Salvacion



The women of Tolosa guard their feed formula like a priceless treasure (top photo). The Bislig Women's Organization (middle photo) has made entrepreneurs out of "ordinary" housewives. The piggery at Tolosa has become a model for other women's groups (bottom photo).

Suyo say that for the first time in their lives, they are looking forward to something with plenty of hope. Norma Verona and Elizabeth Pacala are happy that their group had experienced success.

The women are guarding their formula like a precious secret. People have tried to extricate it from them "through fair means and foul" but not one of them could be talked into giving it away. One naughty guest said that he would one day treat all of them to a bahalina session and when all of them are tipsy enough, he would coax the secret right out of their mouths. To this, they responded with sumptuous laughter while saying that he will have to try harder before he can way-lay them.

Some of the women say that the workshed has become a favorite spot for them. After they have done their chores for the day, they go to their duty at the workshed where talk is congenial and laughter is not a rarity. Sometimes they go there with their personal problems, but they have learned to confide in one another and they trust one another's advice.

They like having "sounds;" their transistor radio is on all day. Also, they have their favorite soap operas. It's not seldom that they quietly listen while their hands are busy chopping; sometimes, they shed tears along with their favorite heroines.

They have moved on to their second batch of fatteners, and they have new problems. Some of their members want to keep a sow so that they do not have to buy piglets. Others say that that would bring them more problems because they

will have to learn how to take care of a sow and the piglets. It needs a special kind of feed and it means that they will have to learn how to mix another formula since the one that they have already mastered is good only for fatteners. Still others say that they welcome learning something new, but not this time when there is a chance that they may get confused. They have not come to an agreement but Francisca says that eventually, they will. As long as they "quarrel" about it first.

And this issue is only one of the many things they will have to argue about. Prices have gone up and surely, this will have a great effect on their production. And consequently their repayments to LABRADOR. Their supply of ipil-ipil leaves has dwindled considerably. Whether they should plant ipil-ipil trees or not as a measure to economize is still to be discussed. These women know there are many questions still to be answered and many problems still to be solved. What they do is face each problem as it presents itself.

So far, their percentage of repayment is good but again, the women say they cannot hold on to this record for sure because when the storms come and their roofs are swept away by the strong winds, they will surely forego their loans and their pigs. They could only wish that Leyte were not visited by typhoons so often. That they would be able to pay attention to their livelihood projects all year round.

"Siyempre, unahun it pamilya! (Of course, the family comes first!) says Mar-

jorie Verona.

While the weather is fine, they do their utmost. Early in the morning, the women go out to do their candymaking, their peddling or their marketing. But the members of the Tolosa Women's Association look forward to joining their fellow-members when their turn comes to feed and bathe the pigs or to mix the feed at their workshed. There, while they engage in their lively chatter, they look to the future. This time, with hope.

Bislig

Mano Baludoy's real name is Felicesimo Adang. He has ten children by his wife Clarita and he has held a number of jobs to see to his family's upkeep. He has always had a job, but somehow, his earnings were never enough to meet their very basic needs. Mana Clarita ("Mana" is short for "Hermana" which is taken to mean "elder sister" in the Waray dialect which is spoken in the Samar-Leyte area) has always been a helpmate to Mano Baludoy. She has had her stint at peddling while managing their home.

Mano Baludoy and Mana Clarita never had enough money to be able to save. He says there were times when he also "made a killing" but the amount was just enough for expenses. Now that Mana Clarita is a member of the Bislig Women's Organization, she feels that although the money also runs out, at least, she is able to save a small amount besides contributing towards their CBU (capital build-up). Mano Baludoy shares her opinion.

The women of Bislig have chosen fish drying and marketing as their source of income. During the early days of their organization, they saw that because their husbands do not fish, a large part of their capital will go into buying of fish to be dried. They also toyed with the idea of asking their husbands to go fishing, but they felt that it was either too early or too late to ask their husbands to change their jobs just so the requirements of their organization could be met. Fishing equipment are expensive and it takes training, no matter how informal, and experience for one to succeed at using them.

So they decided to buy fish — from the local fisherfolk, from the trucks that pass by on their way to Tacloban, or from the Tacloban Shed House, the fishport that serves the entire Northern Leyte.

After their formation seminars, they elected their officers, choosing Edita

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Carmelita Liporada-Onida has learned frugality from LABRADOR.



Women in Non-traditional Trades

The Woman Paradistas of Cebu

The horse's get-up is not just decorative. Every bit of leather and metal serves a purpose.



The Club Filipino de Cebu green has been sold to the Ayalas and on it will rise one of the country's premiere commercial complexes. Along the city's eastern coast, SM City is fast taking shape while the Metrobank Plaza on Osmena Boulevard is attracting much attention because as the city's tallest building thus far, it has changed the Cebu skyline along with the other buildings that now stand as significant proofs of the economic boom that has come upon the Quezon City of the South.

Although modernization can no longer be bridled now, some parts of Cebu has managed to remain quaint — keeping much of the old ambience that once pervaded the entire island-province.

Take for example the old Taboan district. There where Tres de Abril and Sanciango Streets meet, traffic is slow especially on Mondays because it is market day. Even as cargo trucks and double cabs toot their horns impatiently, the lowly horse-drawn rig, the *parada* as the Cebuanos call it, manages to inch its way through the maze of merchandize-laden vehicles and unending flow of pedestrian traffic.

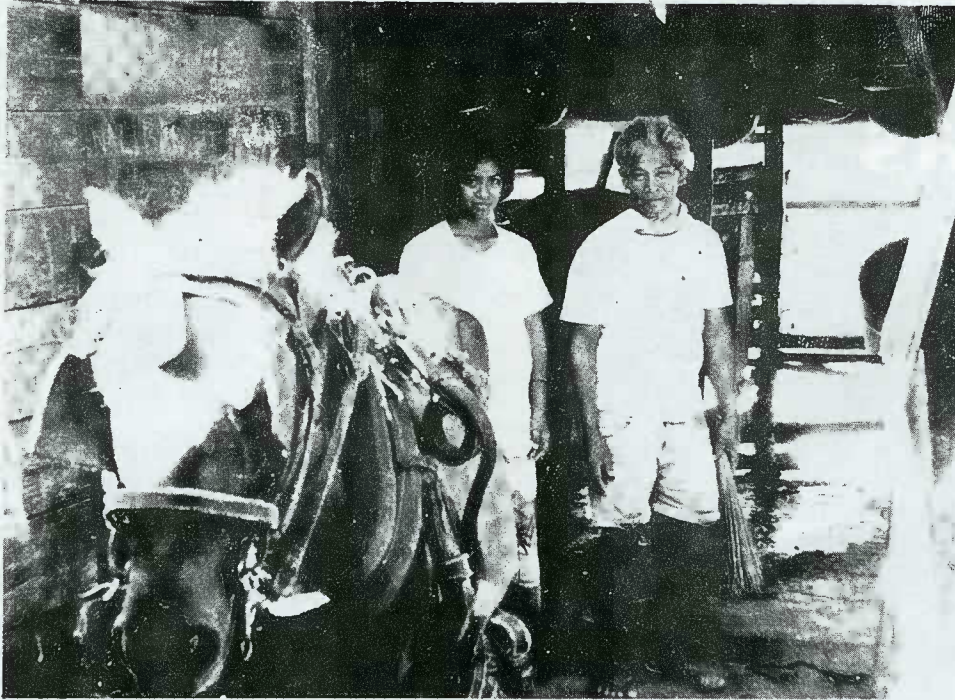
One hears the *paradistas* clucking continually at their horses, their lashes cracking the air intermittently to make their work animals move more quickly.

The Taboan-Pasil-Dulho areas are now the only places where *paradas* may ply their trade. The *paradistas* used to be all male. Not too long ago, however, Susan Mahinay, her sister Elizabeth and Elsa Gascon decided to take to the road in their own *paradas* and the *parada* business of Cebu was never the same since then.

In the beginning, people raised their eyebrows when they saw any of the three women on the road. Later, however, they got used to the sight of Susan — small, slim and short-haired — managing a horse many times heavier than she is, with four or five passengers in her *parada* to boot.

Susan's parents — Guillermo Mahinay and Julita Cosip — have seven children. He supports his family from the earnings of his *paradas* and Nang Julita helps him from the earnings of her lean-to where she sells cigarettes, candies and some condiments.

When she was only three, Tiny Susan liked to ride along with Noy Guillermo as he plied his route daily. In the beginning, she merely sat quietly with him, every so often saying, "Pa, paliti ko ana, Pa" meaning "Pa, buy me that, Pa" pointing to colorful knick knacks on peddlers' trays or goodies from the numerous



Noy Guillermo has always been Susan's best friend.

food stalls that line both sides of the busy streets.

When she got what she wanted, she kept quiet. For some time. After a while, she would point to another thing and Noy Guillermo knew better than say no to his doe-eyed daughter.

His regular passengers — Chinese matrons whose baskets were too bulky to warrant a place in a jeep, students trying to skimp on their allowances (when jeepney fares cost P1.00, a *parada* ride was only thirty centavos) or employees whose offices are not on the regular jeepney routes — accepted her as a necessary satellite to their “favorite *paradista*.” (Many people liked Noy Guillermo because he was specially mild-mannered and fatherly.)

At times, he would make her sit on his lap and hold the reins, teaching her how to cluck and coax the horse to move faster. When she was tired, she would fall asleep, making a pillow out of her father's lap. When she was sick and had to stay home, the customers asked after her. When they knew why, they said she was “absent.”

As she grew a bit older, she became her father's barker. She amused people with her tiny voice shouting, “Taboan! Taboan!” or “Carbon! Carbon! Nang, Carbon! Carbon! Nang, Carbon!” as the case may be.

When she began going to the elementary school, her father's customers missed her. But during weekends, there she was again, calling out to passengers for her

father, gew-gaws hanging around her neck, an ice cream cone in her hand.

Noy Guillermo has four horses. He drives one and the rest, he rents out to neighbors the way jeepney or taxicab owners rent their vehicles out. On days he cannot drive, Noy Guillermo makes a young *paradista* substitute for him.

On one such day when she was about 13 years old, Susan asked the substitute *paradista* to let her handle the rig. Of course, he refused. “*Gamay pa ka* (You are still small),” he urged. She retorted that she was big enough to handle a horse. He put forth many arguments but when he said that she should not even dare to driver a rig because she is only a woman, she got so mad that she challenged him to a fist fight.

The young man would not fight with “only a woman.” So he grudgingly gave her the reins with assurances that he would tell on her when her father got back.

That was her first try at driving. How she felt then? Just like a pilot on his first solo flight.

She had some explaining to do to her father that evening, but she must have convinced him as to her capability because on weekends, he allowed her to drive. She was in the high school then and her classmates found it a joy to ride with her at the front seat. Later on, she drove even on weekdays, after class hours.

Elizabeth, 23, Susan's elder sister, is of a fuller build. Susan set the example for her and she followed suit. She talked

her father into assigning one rig for her with the promise that she would share her earnings with the family. She was in school and she paid for her tuition fees, thus freeing her parents from worries come examination time.

Elizabeth got married in October, 1989, and she and her husband got themselves one horse soon afterwards. Her husband starts the day on the road while Elizabeth, who has to do housework, takes her own *parada* only after lunch. She says this is feasible now that she does not have a baby yet. They plan on soon as she learns that she is on the family way.

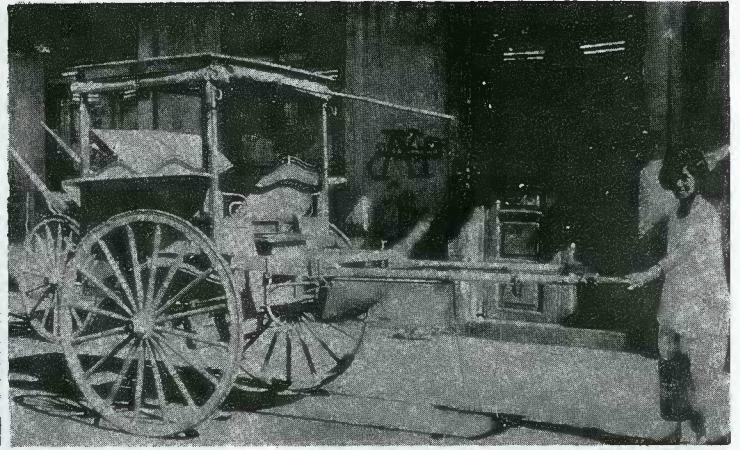
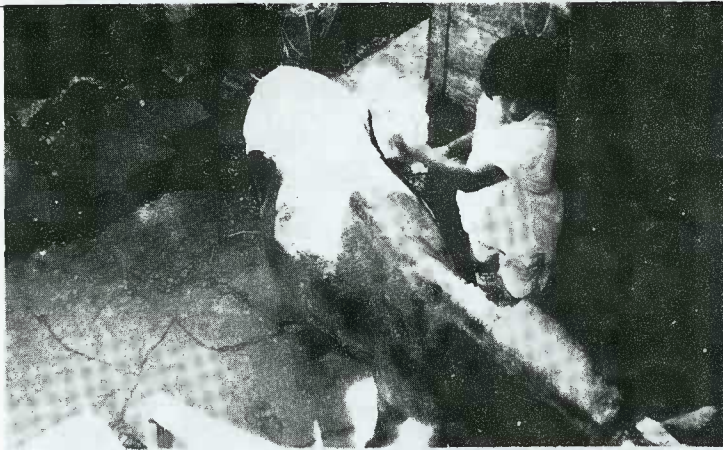
Elsa Gascon is now 26 years old. Her father owns a rig, too, but no one, not even she herself, suspected that she would one day take to the streets on it. She wanted to land a regular woman's job, but competition was so stiff that she just did not have a chance.

She tried applying in the big department stores in the city but she was always asked if she had a “backer.” She soon learned the meaning of the term. It was someone known to the owner or manager who would vouch for her. Coming from Dulho, a seaside district of Cebu City, she knew no one who could stand for her. Even if her former teachers were willing to write letters of recommendation for her, they were not known to the big names of Cebu and their kind words would not matter. Being small and unknown could have spelled doom to brave-hearted Elsa; but because she comes from a big family, she was forced to wrestle with fate. She saw her father growing older, his earnings getting smaller while she and her five siblings depended on him for all their expenses.

Coming from one of her unsuccessful attempts at joining the sales force of one of the newly-inaugurated stores in the city, she told her father that she wanted to try her hand at driving their *parada*. Her father was surprised. Nevertheless, he let her try it and before they both knew it, she had gone some distance. That day, her father took a respite, something he had not done in a long time. Several days later, she talked to him about quitting school and working full time. He was hesitant because like many parents in Dulho, he wanted a white-collar job for his daughter. Seeing her persistence, however, he could not help but accede.

She was 22 when she got her license but she was about her chosen trade long before that.

While they ply their route daily the three woman *paradistas* pass by the



schools they were once enrolled in. Elizabeth and Susan went to the Cebu Central Colleges, a private, non-sectarian school on Sanciangco Street while Elsa went to the Abellana National High School one block away. Where Elsa went, entrance is competitive and she is honored that she was accepted after only one crack at the difficult examination. All three of them say that if they had gone on studying, they would not have had the chance to earn as early in life as they did. When they took to the streets, they were able to help alleviate the financial problems that their families were perennially shouldering.

Elsa, because she actually tried to use her school credentials when applying for jobs in department stores, feels something is wrong with the entire social structure prevailing in the country. Why did management need somebody else's say-so about her before allowing her to try her hand at selling their wares? Why didn't they just believe her report card which attests to her being adept at numbers, a skill necessary to being a good salesclerk?

After she had been rejected for not being related to or at least knowing anyone who matters, she felt "gidaug-daog, aping-api (maltreated by Fate)" thus forcing her to decide to fend for herself in a corner of the world where she can make decisions for herself.

Looking back to her job-hunting days, Elsa is even grateful that she was not accepted at all. She has heard that saleswomen are not allowed to sit during duty hours and they are paid only one-half of what they are supposed to earn. She says she will feel sick in her stomach if she signs a payroll that is made up of two blank sheets which her employer will fill up when she is no longer looking.

Besides, she finds it too cumbersome to have to make up her face for work, wear a uniform and then earn a measly amount at the end of the month. She has seen entire sales forces go on strike (in Cebu, these have been frequent and bloody) and on such occasions, the women literally have to beg for their subsistence from pedestrians and passengers, — anyone who sympathizes with them.

Susan, Elizabeth and Elsa take care of their own horses. They fill their feeding troughs with grass and bran early in the morning. They also keep a pail of water nearby filled for their horses' drink. Horses eat slowly and they must not be disturbed while chewing. This is a dictum that stablekeepers respect. Susan says that her horse is on the road for about four or five hours daily so she must see to it that he is well-fed. A horse serves his master from ten to fifteen years and is therefore deserving of good care and treatment.

What if her horse gets sick? Susan says it is turned into meat immediately because a horse is cantankerous when sick, especially when it is dying. One of her father's horses landed on the market stalls late last year because it got very seriously ill and her father could not put up with its tantrums.

On a good day, a *paradista* nets from P80 to P120; on a bad one, P40 is all she or he would be able to take home. When Susan started driving, the cost per ride was only thirty centavos; it has now reached an all-time high of P1.00 per ride. Every so often a passenger would give them fare that is ten or twenty times more than what they regularly charge. "Tip," they would say. That is very gratifying, indeed.

A *paradista* must develop her/his own skills, Elizabeth thinks that like driving a car, driving a *parada* is very challenging. At times, however, it can be doubly taxing because a horse has a mind of its own and sometimes, that mind can be stubborn and rebellious.

A *paradista* must be good at calculation. While minding the horse, the *paradista* has to mind the other vehicles as well as the pedestrians who prove themselves unpredictable most of the time.

Driving a *parada* can be dangerous. All the three women have been in accidents.



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As Jesus and his disciples went on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha welcomed him in her home. She had a sister named Mary who sat down at the feet of the Lord and listened to his teaching. Martha was upset over all the work she had to do, so she came and said, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her to come and help me!"

The Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha! You are worried and troubled over so many things, but just one is needed. Mary has chosen the right thing, and it will not be taken away from her."

Luke 10:38-41

Revised Standard Version

The burden of gender:

MARTHA & MARY

by

JURGETTE HONCULADA
Commissioner
National Commission on the
Role of Filipino Women

Women are doubly cursed in the Bible (particularly the Old Testament): first, in the gender and subordination that marked the patriarchal culture of those times, recognizing women largely as extensions of male identity and occasionally condoning violence against them; and second, in the subjective recording of events by presumably male writers that consciously or unconsciously defames, if not defaces, them. This is the double bind confronting women who affirm both Christianity and feminism: yet it is both Christianity and feminism that provide redemption. More specifically, feminism has enabled women to cut through the patriarchal overlay of culture, tradition and language to reclaim the call to liberation at the heart of the gospel. Feminism has enabled us to draw hope from texts that once might have been our sources of deepest despair; or texts so seemingly innocuous, so artless, so abbreviated, we nearly miss their profound truths. The above passage is one such text.

This anecdote is among the most intriguing in the New Testament, highlighting the burdens and dilemmas women are heir to: the woman compelled to do housework, as most women are; and the woman who refuses to be tied to housework, as more and more women are wont to, out of choice, necessity or both.

It also underscores the relationship between housework — the effort to keep house that consumes the lives and energies of most women, unceasing, unchanging and increasingly unfulfilling — as enforced labor; and the activity freely chosen, calling forth one's creativity, one's passion, one's being, in this instance, hearing the word and the call to discipleship.

The brief narrative presents two remarkable women: Martha who heads (and owns) a household ("Mar" is Aramaic for lord or master and "tha" is its feminine ending); and her sister Mary who also crosses the gender line by choosing to sit at Jesus' feet instead of busying with housework. (Mary, or Miriam in Aramaic and Hebrew, signifies "rebel", calling to mind Miriam who in an earlier time rebels against Moses, along with brother Aaron.)

Martha and Mary defy convention in a culture characterized by rigid stratification, not least of which is a gender differentiation that accords primacy and dominance to the male and subordination and submission to the female. Did not a Jew daily intone in prayer "I thank God I was not born Gentile, poor or woman"? This was no empty utterance for the fe-

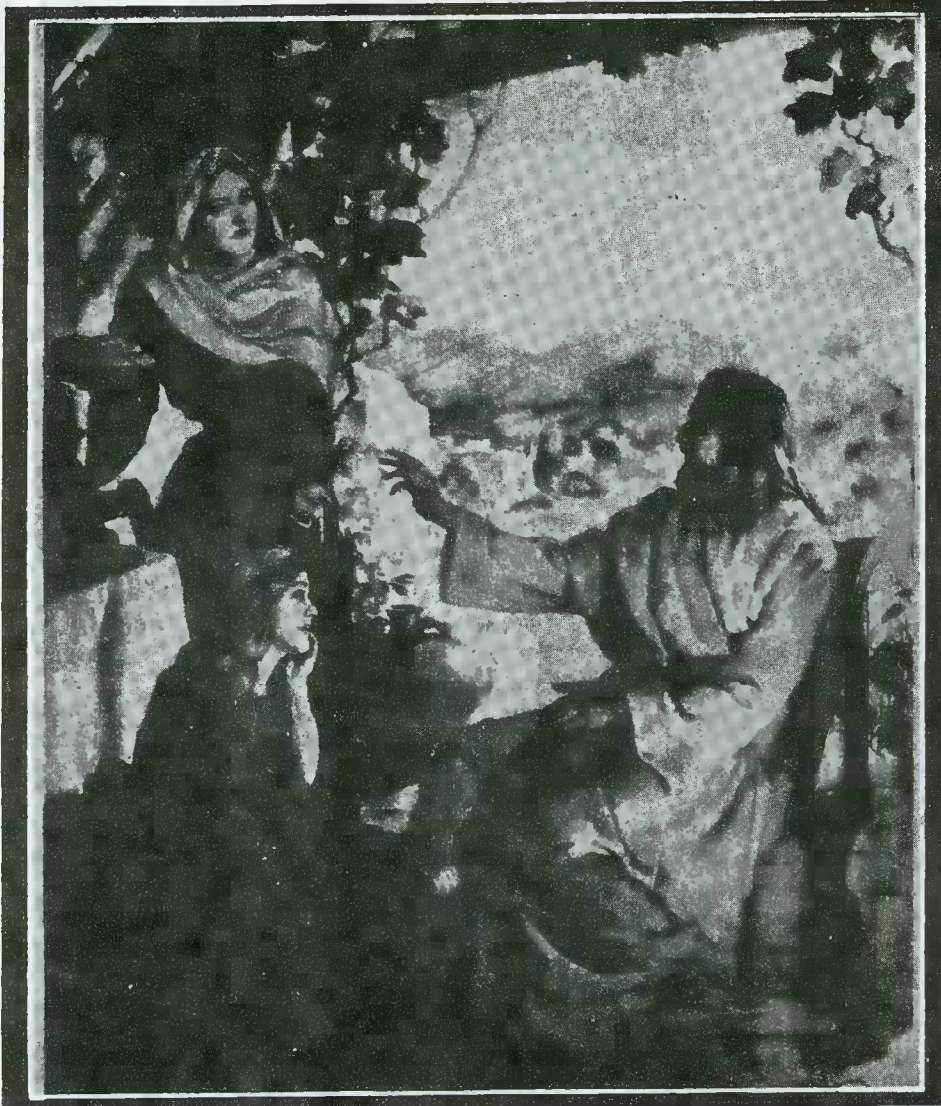
male condition was one of near-affliction: a woman without a man in her life — father, husband or son was a legal non-entity and by this token widows were among the most hapless of people.

But Mary refuses to be boxed in by gender, aspiring to follow Christ, hearing (and thus keeping) the word at a time when discipleship was thought to be man's domain. Where she should have stayed with the women (wealthy Jewish homes had segregated spaces for women), she becomes "one of the boys," engaging Christ in intellectual and spiritual exchange. So free is she in mind and spirit that she is not conscious, it seems, of this gender trespass. But Christ affirms Mary's claim to discipleship ("Mary has chosen the right thing") when Martha complains that Mary has not done her share of housework.

Martha must have been a disciple herself but she cuts a more traditional figure. She feels more responsible for housework, perhaps partly because she is a head of household, in itself out of the norm. (Consider this woman; no, two women, who apparently live in need of no man; an aberration, if not an anomaly in their time.) Yet Martha is weighed down by so many cares, maybe including the gossip that she feared might arise from Mary's sitting alone with Christ. He does not ask Martha to halt housework but gently rebukes her for being so preoccupied with "so many things," she misses out on the one important thing, hearing the word.

There are two remarkable things about Martha's complaint. The first is her temerity to cry out against the burdens of housework: a woman does not question her bounden duty as defined by patriarchal culture. But then, perhaps this is precisely because she regards herself less as passive housekeeper and more as autonomous head of household. Noteworthy as well is the fact that her complaint is recorded at all, indicative that Christ's message of radical equality has also sensitized the Lucan text writer to the question of gender. (Chances are that the writer was male.)

Christ's call to freedom and equality touches both Mary and Martha at the core of their being; Mary, the free spirit, quickly responds; Martha, more "housebound," intimates her response in her complaint. Two models of womanhood are posited here, one more imaginative, unfettered by domestic cares; the other more practical worried over "what we shall eat and what we shall drink." Christ



does not pit one against the other but takes them as they are. Spare as the Lucan text is, it gives a sense of the contrapuntal interplay among the three figures.

To speak of the burden of gender is to speak of housework: the sum total of activities that service the physical and emotional needs of a family, most especially children, and adults as well. This is done in endless (and often mindless) repetition, as anyone who has cooked, cleaned, laundered and baby sat ad infinitum can attest to. Martha's complaint about doing "all the housework by myself" and Christ's concern over Martha being "worried and troubled over so many things" both reflect the multifarious and burdensome character of housework.

Yet is housework simply a drudge, a burden?

Housework (and child care) are as essential to society's functioning as wage work. For they produce life itself: by replenishing the worker's strength (male

and also female) with hot meals, clean sheets and emotional wellbeing; and by reproducing the next generation through the cycle of pregnancy-child birth-child care and rearing which is largely played out within the home's four walls.

But these tasks, and the person discharging them, the housewife, have become privatized, invisible and thus devalued. A two-fold process of differentiation has transpired; the identification of domestic labor with women, and the demeaning of housework as not "real" work since it does not produce goods saleable in the market. Thus this labor commands no wage.

It was not always so and it need not remain so. In an earlier period, production for household consumption and exchange (goods bartered or sold) was integrated within the household with men, women and children taking their share of labor and its produce.

That unity between production and consumption has been sundered; goods and services are largely produced in or

dispensed through establishments outside the home. Such production is called wage work — socialized, visible and largely male-dominated. To women remain the tasks of housework and child care, labor that is largely privatized or unpaid. Domestic labor reproduces life but at such high cost: the self-hood and sanity of women who bear its burdens unalleviated throughout much of their lifetime.

Housewives are often content with the achievement of a clean home and happy family, sublimating their ambitions and energies into the careers and vocations of husbands and children. But when the children grow up and husband abandons family (or even if he does not), a woman realizes that there are limits to living for, through and in others. Being wife to a house does not encourage self-growth. (Note the phenomenon of "throw-away wives" who, having helped husbands through college or career, have themselves stagnated and are thus dispensable.)

Working wives and mothers face the problem from another end: professional excellence at the cost of personal relationships. Union leadership in exchange for home and family, job promotion at the expense of quality care of one's children. A woman must deny part of herself to affirm the other part. Middle class women often pass on housework to house-help, thus passing on the oppression to other women; but women of the lower class have no such private supports.

This is the burden, the curse of gender for women. Yet the call to freedom was at the same time a call to equality. For women and men to be free for full creativity, for equal and fulfilling relationships, and for stewardship over God's creation, housework must be recognized for its worth — as valuable and indispensable as paid work. Thus valued, housework and child care will no longer remain women's sole or primary responsibility. Child care should not remain identified with mothering, borne only by women, but must truly become parenting, shared by both women and men.

Domestic labor can be lighted by offering such socialized services as child care centers, community laundries, cafeterias; and by sharing the core of housework that remains among spouses and other family members. Thus freed, women can more singlemindedly venture into the "public" spheres of industry, community and political involvement, arts and literature, science.

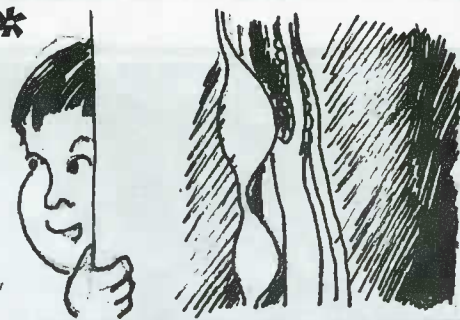
The prevailing reality is of course

To page 21

Are you a closet sexist?*

Are your actions conditioned by sexism? Despite the very best intentions, sexism undergirds many of our thoughts, words and deeds. Are you generous with fond embraces? Affectionate words? Presents galore? Don't be presumptuous. You can still be your hometown's all-time macho. Test yourself. Good luck!

* Adapted from *The New Internationalist* August, 1985



1. Someone tells a sexist joke. Do you

- a. laugh?
- b. challenge them?
- c. change the subject?

2. You are at a wedding reception and you see a woman who is very revealingly dressed. You think:

- a. Probably someone's fancy piece.
- b. Good for her. She must have a more exciting life than I do.
- c. Nothing: glamour does not affect what you think of a person.
- d. What an eyeeful!

3. You are in charge of putting a baby boy in his day clothes, but you can find only pink clothes in the basket. Do you

- a. leave him in his night clothes?
- b. put the pink clothes on him without a second thought?
- c. put shorts on him but not a shirt, or vice-versa?



4. How do you feel if you cry?

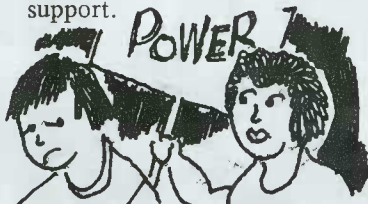
- a. Embarrassed and ashamed at all times.
- b. It made me feel better.
- c. In private, it does not matter; but in public, you felt you should not have lost control.

5. You are accused of sexism. Do you

- a. feel threatened - and laugh it off?
- b. feel threatened and reject the accusation?
- c. feel ashamed and apologize?
- d. not know what they are talking about?

6. What do you think of women-only groups, like the Katipunan ng Bagong Pilipina (KaBaPa) or the Catholic Women's League (CWL)?

- a. Divisive because they exclude men.
- b. Just an excuse to gossip.
- c. An important form of mutual support.



7. You are asked why girls choose science subjects less often than boys. You explain:

- a. The values behind science are so sick, girls do not want to join in.
- b. Girls are just not good at figures and logic.
- c. Teachers don't encourage girls to do science.

8. You phone up a couple of friends who have just had a baby. You want to go to a place where children are not welcome. Do you assume:

- a. the man will come and the woman will stay home with the baby?
- b. the woman will come and the man will stay home with the baby?
- c. they will both come, having made arrangements with a *yaya*?
- d. you would never suggest such an outing to a parent of young children?
- e. Instead, you take some food and drink over to their place.

9. You are describing the tennis star Martha Navratilova's style of play. You say she is a brilliant tennis player because

- a. her game is as tough and powerful as a man's.
- b. she is powerful, accurate and a good tactician.
- c. she looks nice.

10. A friend asks if you are a feminist. You reply:

- a. No. They're so shrill they damage their own cause.
- b. Yes. It has changed the way I think.
- c. Feminists' lime-green monkey boots and pink hair (or was lime-green hair and pink monkey-boots?) put me off?
- d. No. But I agree with some of the things they stand for.

11. You need to recruit someone for a job. A man and a woman - both of whom have children - are equally qualified. Do you

- a. opt for the man?
- b. recommend positive discrimination and employ the woman?
- c. give them both interviews and presume that this will reveal the best candidate?



12. Do you initiate sex with your partner?

- a. Always.
- b. Seldom.
- c. Often.
- d. What partner?

13. If you are planning or have had children, who chooses the timing?

- a. You
- b. Your partner
- c. You agree(d) on a right time.
- d. No one!

14. You are in charge of the baby for the day. While out, the baby needs changing, but there are no diapers. Do you

- a. curse yourself for forgetting to bring them?
- b. curse your partner for not providing them?
- c. grin and bear it?
- d. pretend you do not know the baby is wet?

15. You and your partner send joint Christmas cards to your mutual friends. Who does the writing?
- You.
 - Your partner
 - We take turns or we both write.
 - Never send them.

16. Do you have to write a list when your partner does the shopping?
- Always
 - Sometimes
 - Never



17. When you cut your toe nails, is it
- in the bathroom cleaning up the parings afterwards?
 - in the bedroom, picking up a few of the 'biggest parings'?
 - while watching TV in the living room, not mindful of what happens to the bits?

18. Who drives the car if you both go in it?
- You
 - Your partner
 - You take turns.

19. Your partner complains that you don't do a fair share of the household chores. Do you
- suggest you buy a dishwasher, or get a maid?
 - arrange to take over the running of the house for one-half of the week on a regular basis?
 - suggest that she/he tells you what to do and when to do it?
 - tell your partner they are lucky to have you?

20. You and your partner are at a restaurant. Do you
- expect your partner to do all the ordering and pay the bill?
 - expect your partner to do all the ordering but share the bill?
 - share both the ordering and the bill?
 - share the ordering but not the bill?
 - feel offended if your partner offers to pay?

Your New Internationalist rating

MEN

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 1 A:6/B:0/C:3 | 11 A:6/B:0/C:3 |
| 2 A:15/B:5/C:0/D:10 | 12 A:6/B:0/C:4/D:0 |
| 3 A:4/B:0/C:2 | 13 A:6/B:0/C:3/D:6 |
| 4 A:6/B:0/C:3 | 14 A:0/B:9/C:3/D:6 |
| 5 A:5/B:10/C:0/D:15 | 15 A:0/B:9/C:3/D:3 |
| 6 A:5/B:10/C:0 | 16 A:0/B:3/C:6 |
| 7 A:0/B:10/C:5 | 17 A:0/B:2/C:4 |
| 8 A:8/B:2/C:4/D:6/E:0 | 18 A:6/B:0/C:3 |
| 9 A:3/B:0/C:6 | 19 A:10/B:0/C:5/D:15 |
| 10 A:15/B:0/C:10/D:5 | 20 A:4/B:2/C:0/D:8/E:6 |

WOMEN

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 1 A:6/B:0/C:3 | 11 A:6/B:0/C:3 |
| 2 A:15/B:5/C:0/D:10 | 12 A:0/B:4/C:0/D:0 |
| 3 A:4/B:0/C:2 | 13 A:0/B:9/C:3/D:6 |
| 4 A:6/B:0/C:3 | 14 A:3/B:0/C:6/D:9 |
| 5 A:5/B:10/C:0/D:15 | 15 A:9/B:0/C:3/D:3 |
| 6 A:5/B:10/C:0 | 16 A:6/B:3/C:0 |
| 7 A:0/B:10/C:5 | 17 A:0/B:2/C:4 |
| 8 A:8/B:0/C:4/D:6/E:2 | 18 A:0/B:6/C:3 |
| 9 A:3/B:0/C:6 | 19 A:15/B:0/C:10/D:5 |
| 10 A:15/B:0/C:10/D:5 | 20 A:8/B:4/C:0/D:6/E:2 |



Under 45

Come off it! Add on at least twenty points – you are clearly fibbing. Telling little white lies for good of the Cause is just not good 'nuff. Only the strictest honesty is permitted by feminists so between ourselves bit less bluffing is needed from you. In fact you are so wonderfully non-sexist that it would only embarrass you to be told so in print. So we will not do it.

45 – 90

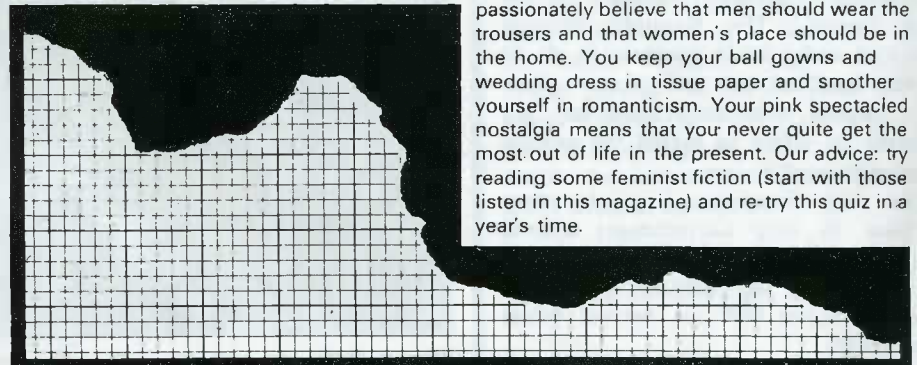
You are clearly trying – even if you wish you didn't have to be confronted over the dog-chewed, child graffitied breakfast table every other morning. Still, life as a committed non-sexist man is not too bad is it? Your children actually love you as much as Mum, and your work colleagues think you have gone crazy, so they do not ask you to all those boring cocktail parties anymore.

90 – 135

You make sporadic efforts to be anti-sexist – when you think you can pull more women that way. But some people have rumbled that one. But still – in the most secret niche of your heart of hearts – you want to settle down with a nice quiet girl, who will not be (you hope) terribly affected by the ideas that those feminists put about. Do not despair. It is time to sort out some of the contradictions in your life.

Over 135

You are the archetypal m.c.p. You are so unaware of your sexism that you make every mistake in the book and offer feminists a field day – pointing out when you suggest one of the 'girls' makes the coffee. You are so unspoiled as an it is really a pity to suggest you change – but there you are, life does stop without change doesn't it, so to stop the *rigor mortis* we suggest you read, learn and inwardly digest at least half of this magazine. That should kill or cure.



Under 45

Congratulations – not only have you survived sexism's slings and arrows but you have drawn on feminism to overcome them. You are probably that common but endangered species called (deep breath) a strong woman. Your main failing will be that you get irritated when people refer to you in this way. Keep up the good work.

45 – 90

You are well aware of the ways in which you are disadvantaged, so you are almost out of the closet feminist camp. However you are still hovering. You know that you can be successful at work without getting into that feminist routine, but, to be frank, you know that you'll be biting table-legs soon unless you partner bucks up and helps a bit more at home. Secretly, you dream of being strong and being . . . well, a feminist.

90 – 135

You are clearly one of those women who thinks that you can get by with feminine wiles and the flutter of eyelashes, and that you don't need feminism. Slinking through the world accompanied by the patter of tiny stilettos, you are too busy trapping your man to be bothered about all this women's liberation nonsense. Rushing to the exercise gym (fighting that flab) and to the solarium (sucker for the natural suntan) and dashing back to the health-food shop for your special vitamin supplements to match your vitamin-less diet is about all that you can manage in a hard day's night. But beware the little black dress syndrome: women's power behind the throne is distinctly limited since most men are not kings.

Over 135

You have made sure to be as little aware of the women's movement as you possibly can be. You believe that every word that falls from Barbara Cartland's lips is gospel truth. And you passionately believe that men should wear the trousers and that women's place should be in the home. You keep your ball gowns and wedding dress in tissue paper and smother yourself in romanticism. Your pink spectacled nostalgia means that you never quite get the most out of life in the present. Our advice: try reading some feminist fiction (start with those listed in this magazine) and re-try this quiz in a year's time.

No more Mail- order Brides

"Most of the time their victims are young women from our remote barangays whom they lure through sweet talk and grandiose promises."

Speech delivered by President Corazon C. Aquino on the occasion of the signing of RA 6955 The Anti-Mail-Order-Bride Law at the Guest House, Malacanang on June 13, 1990.

Today I affix my signature to a measure prohibiting the commerce of women in the guise of legitimate marriage. I welcome this opportunity to be of service to our countrywomen in these trying times.

The "mail-order bride" is a relatively new phenomenon in our society, but its perpetrators are many. There have proliferated among us the marriage brokers, the pen pal clubs, the introduction bureaus, escort services and the seemingly-innocent initiators of sister-city arrangements. They are able to carry out their execrable trade through the use of media - those most powerful disseminators of information and ideas - for personal profit. They use all means fair and foul, even our postal system, to further their singular motive - economic gain.

Most of the time, their victims are young women from our remote barangays whom they lure through sweet talk and grandiose promises. Although we come by success stories every so often, most of the feedback is devastating not only to individual persons and families but also to our national honor and pride.

Today, therefore, we make real a measure to protect Filipino women from exploitation "in utter disregard of human dignity." Our Republic declares the mail order bride business in all its forms, ramifications and guises unlawful. Anyone who undertakes any act towards its effect be meted the punishment stipulated by law.

As your President, I enjoin every Filipino to help Government uphold the value of our women with the view of maintaining our national pride, our sense of honor and our deepest values as a people.



Senators Aquilino Pimentel, Jovito Salonga, Ernesto Maceda and Secretary Mita Pardo de Tavera witness the signing of the Anti-mail-order Bride Law by President Corazon C. Aquino.



Woman leaders who were among those who worked for the passage of the law pose with the President. To her left is NCRFW Commissioner Esther Vibal.

WATCH YOUR LANGUAGE!

Some languages are inherently sexist. Fortunately, Pilipino is not one of them, as Dr. Rita Estrada of the University of the Philippines Center for Women's Studies (UCWS) very ably proved in the roundtable discussion on sexism held at the Philippine Social Science Center on October 23, 1990.

In Pilipino, all words that indicate relations are gender-free such as "kapatid" to mean "sibling," "anak" for "offspring," "asawa" for "spouse," and the like. She went on to prove that even our cuss words are non-sexist. And so is our mythology.

Dr. Estrada says, therefore, that to liberate our nation, we must begin to use Pilipino thereby wresting our minds from the sexist and the colonial binds.

It is our borrowed terminology that abounds in male-female distinctions. For example, we borrowed "kuya," "diko," "ditche" and "sane" from the Chinese. These forms of addressing elder siblings are specifically male for the first two and female for the latter two. Our borrowings from Spanish are worse because even a table has to be feminine (la mesa) while poetry is necessarily masculine (el poema). And English? Well, you and I know that it is English that complicates matters more with its notion of the neuter "it."

To fare well in this world where the trend is towards egalitarianism, watch your language, lest you incur the ire of one-half of its total population. You know what that can mean. Here are a few tips that might help preserve both life and limb for you, thanks to a hand-out that we found in our predecessor's file.

On the Use of "Man"

The word "man" is ordinarily used to refer to the male human being. Sometimes its use includes the female human being as well. In the second instance, the word "man" is used in a *generic* sense. Using the word generically is confusing; besides, it makes women invisible. Now

this is not fair.

Feminists would rather have "humans," "human race," "women and men," "people(s)," "human species," "humanity," "humankind," "individuals" or "persons" used.

"Man" also occurs as a prefix in some compound words. Here are some alternatives:

- man eater - human eater
- man hours - labor hours; work hours; working hours
- manpower - human resources; labor; labor force personnel; staff

Here are some alternatives for words that have "man" as a suffix.

- bushman - person from the bush; bush person
- caveman - cave dweller; cave man; cave woman
- churchman - church goer; church member; church person
- layman - layperson; non-expert; non-professional; non-specialist
- kinsman - kin; relation; relative
- middleman - intermediary; wholesaler
- spokesman - advocate; official representative; speaker; spokesperson; spokeswoman
- sportsman - athlete; player; sports competitor; woman and/or man in sports
- gentlemanly- fair; just; refined
- anchorman - anchorperson; host; presenter; anchorwoman/anchorman

Our vocabulary will have to be refurbished if not necessarily overhauled if we wish to be gender-fair. We promise to help our readers with more alternative terms next issue. These few words we have listed here can serve as your first step in that big leap that you might want to take towards that great ideal: a gender-conscious, gender-sensitive, gender-fair society.

Ms. Jean Edades, a Filipino expert on the English Language, says: "Woman," when used as an adjective, should be singular in number. It is the noun modified that should express plurality. For example:

woman doctors
woman farmers
woman engineers

WAGAS...

challenge it has chosen to meet.

Emily Abinoja has announced that the last day for the registration of participants to the Pabahay Design Contest is December 14, 1990. The last day for the submission of entries will be on February 6 and the screening will be held on February 11 and 12, 1991. The final judging will be held on February 13 and the awarding of prizes will be held the next day, February 14.

When the nation celebrates Women's Day on March 8 next year, WAGAS will announce its invitation for contractors to bid for the construction of the winning design.

As an organization, WAGAS is in its infancy but even before its first project is completed, it has come up with a second one. On December 14 when Pag-IBIG celebrates its foundation day, it will inaugurate its first Child-minding Center in Cavite City. The Center is located in the Pag-IBIG - NHA Teachers' Housing Project. President Corazon C. Aquino has confirmed her attendance during the opening ceremonies.

With this project, WAGAS responds to the need of mothers to leave their toddlers in safety while they go off to work or while they mind their houses during the day. WAGAS has exerted efforts at incorporating a child-minding center in all Pag-IBIG - NHA projects beginning this year.

For Mel Alonzo and the other officers of WAGAS, there is no time to sit back. They are still looking into ways by which women could be helped lessen the hardships they encounter with regard housing.

There are now 150 women who have formally signed up for membership in WAGAS, all of them ready to do their share at addressing the problems of their sector. For while our population swells, housing the Filipino millions will always remain a problem, especially for our women. The answer to it, however, lies in the hands of both women and men. While waiting for its projects to bear fruit, WAGAS is busy working at consciousness raising of its members, the better to address the issues that confront them as women daily.



LABRADOR...

Cagara-Gatdula chairperson. Among the first things they examined was their method of drying fish. They tried finding out whether they could speed up their work, but after several trials, they found their own method of opening up the fish and leaving its scales on quite satisfactory.

Daisy Gulibao, their secretary, cannot remember whether they had to learn their trade or not. She says that they just knew how to dry fish. She thinks that there is no more need to improve on their methods because they are all working very well.

Editha recalls that it was really the people from Bunga, a nearby town, who somewhat influenced them into the business. When they moved to Bislig, the Bungahanons spread their fish out on the seashore. Not long afterwards, the native Bisliganons were also drying fish with them.

Organized in September, 1989, the women put up P150 each as their counterpart for their capital build-up and each of them was given a loan of P1000 by LABRADOR. They put their money to work right away, buying basins of fish from the nearest and the cheapest sources, preparing them for salting as soon as possible.

A problem reared its ugly head immediately. Salt, a prime necessity for the Bislig women, is available only in Tacloban. When they started their enterprise in 1989, it cost only P60.00 per sack. By March this year, it had gone up to P100. The women put their heads together once again and decided to look for cheaper sources of salt. No immediate solution could be found because Tacloban, being the center of commercial activity, is the place nearest Bislig where salt is sold wholesale. Editha said she would ask Imelda Abenio, the LABRADOR person who is very keen on developing women in cooperatives, to help create linkages between them and the saltmakers so that they could lessen their capital inputs. Besides being expensive, salt is difficult to transport because jeepneys that come from Tacloban are almost always full of people and cargo, to the rooftops, literally.

Editha thinks that their biggest problem is marketing. When there is an oversupply of dried fish in Tacloban, their principal outlet, they have to take their dried fish — baskets and baskets of them — back to Bislig. To put up storage in Tacloban is not quite

practical because they do not produce enough to warrant renting a place for their stocks. She referred the problem to Junie Ballesteros and Imelda Abenio who told them that in nearby Tolosa, the women need a continuous supply of fish to be chopped into meal. The women agreed to meet with their counterparts in Tolosa to talk to them about marketing tie-ups.

The women have also considered putting up their own stockroom in

Paradistas...

Susan figured in one recently because a red-colored beetle backed up on her, forcing her horse to back up and kick. The Chinese-looking driver must have thought he could put one over her because he looked belligerent when he got out of his car. She tried to reason out with him in the beginning but when he could not be calmed down, she challenged him to go to the police. He did not pursue the idea. He left in a huff.

Elsa once hit a car because it was not properly parked and traffic was really heavy. Elizabeth hit a woman who was clearly at fault; she walked away quietly. Of course Elizabeth was very sorry for her and has driven very carefully after that.

Would they want to try their hands at other jobs now that they have been in the trade for a good number of years?

Susan and Elizabeth shake their heads. They would rather remain in it. Elsa, on the other hand, says that her days in the street are numbered because she is engaged to be married and her fiance does not want her to drive when they are married. He wants her to continue the buy-and-sell business that she began one year ago. She trades in anything — rice, RTW, dried fish, what have you. She has discussed finances with him. Even when they are married, she will share her earnings with her family because she is the oldest in their family of six children and just now, three of the younger ones are in school and her family's money situation necessitates her contributing to it.

What the three women relish most about their chosen occupation is the sense of independence that it has given them. They say there's nothing like having ready cash in one's pockets everyday. They don't have to wait for the weekend or the end of the month to realize their earnings. Susan, particularly, wants to be able to give her nephews some money when they ask for some. She

Tacloban but they found out it is premature to do that. They do not have the financial capability to put up even a small room because land rental alone would be too high for them to meet. The cost of materials is forever on the upswing so that they have resigned themselves to the fact that storage would remain a problem for them.

The women will have to study their market better. They should have a feel for the rise and fall of supply and de-

says she pities the children and does not want them to be hungry at all.

All three of them say they like the idea of not having any bosses. They need no backers here. And they are not discriminated against — either by their passengers or by their male counterparts. In fact, for the three women, especially for Susan, the banter they share with the male paradistas during the slack hours is something to look forward to.

Even as they don their pants or culottes for work, there is no trace of manishness in any of them. When they wear their Sunday best, they are their charming selves.

On the whole, the three women say they like their occupation immensely. Being busy going through the entire length of their routes gives them the same high that people in other occupations must also feel when they do well. As Susan-sums it up, "Enjoy ako!"

Her one wish is that when she gets herself a boyfriend, he would not ask her to quit driving her father's parada. She has a crush on someone who seems not to mind her occupation. The guy likes talking to her but she would not venture saying that he, too, has an infatuation on her. If he comes forward with a proposition, Susan says his chances are big. But if he asks her to change her calling, she says that would be a big problem because right now, she feels very much attached to her job and she thinks she is not ready to part with it for the sake even of marriage.

Have they heard of the equestriennes in the exclusive horse clubs of Manila? "Kadtong mga anak sa dato (The children of the rich)?" say Susan. "Their kind of horseback riding is 'sosyal'. Ours is the real thing. It's for a living."

Do they feel apart from the rest of their sisters in womandom because of their chosen occupation? Not at all. In fact, they feel good because in a way, they have blazed a trail for the rest of the sisterhood.

mand. Probably, they will have to look into diversification. Or they might want to expand their market horizons beyond those of Tacloban. They are looking into alternatives.

The women are grateful that they get ample support from their husbands. Manuel Gatdula, for example, does the buying of the fish for his wife. He left the Philippine Army after the EDSA Revolution and decided to go into business. He has done some buying and selling on his own and for a while, he was earning quite well. When Edita joined the women's organization, he looked at it as a chance for them to work together as partners. He knows how prices of commodities rise because of his exposure to the market.

"*Panay ho ang taas ng bilihan. Pakiramdam ko mahihirapan tayong umahon sa kahirapan.* (The prices of things are always going up. I feel that we shall find it difficult to rise from our poverty)," he laments. But he does not allow this feeling to get the better of him. Like Mano Baludoy and a few of the other husbands, he attends meetings regularly and participates in them actively.

The women are proud of their membership in the Bislig Women's Organization. They like discipline that they have imposed on themselves. At first they thought that this organization would be just like the others they had attempted to join before. They had gotten so used to associations dying after the town fiesta that they took everything lightly at first. But the continued follow-up of their social development workers got them engrossed in their training. They planned for an entire year ahead. They worked on their activities slowly, all the time keeping in close touch with LABRADOR to make sure they were on the right path.

They are strict about their division of labor. Sometimes, serious matters take them away from their commitments with the organization. For example, illness in the family, seeing after their daughters' costumes for a field demonstration in school, and the like. They have agreed that absences from duties are not excusable; they must send someone to do the work for them. Very often, it is their husbands who take their places.

Asked whether the menfolk complain, the women unanimously said no. Their husbands have always been understanding of what they try to do.

Absences from meetings are punishable with a fine of P10. Probably because they themselves were the ones who set

Martha

unfree labor: housework by women compelled by culture and tradition; and for most workers male and female, debilitating, deadening, repetitive work compelled by the need for a daily wage. It has been said that for men and women alike, unfree labor must become free labor to be truly creative. As feminist Claudia von Werlhof put it:

An alternative is possible only if we all, women and men, succeed in recapturing, once and for all, not simply the wage, but more than that — the means of our production: our bodies and land, our knowledge and creativity, and the results of our labor.

Unless Martha opens up her will and imagination to the unexpected, to Christ's call, she will remain trapped in the endless cycle of housework. Unless Mary takes her share of house chores, she helps prolong Martha's domestication. The brief narrative bears no peans for housework probably because the entire culture affirmed it, especially as woman's calling. Christ affirmed life and that affirmation surely must have directly defined, in this instance, hearing the word and the tasks of discipleship as domestic.

Christ spoke of a new order that freed those enslaved by class, creed race and gender. Christ sought to include all those excluded by these barriers — the beggar, the outcast, the sinner, the prostitute, the leper, the widow, the countless men and women existing on the fringes of Jewish

the rule, they have been afraid to violate it.

"Their loan repayment record is excellent," Junie says. "they do not want to break the good relationship that they have established with LABRADOR. Of course, there are times when they are unable to hand in the cash, but they see to it that they see us ahead of time to explain."

Ethel Daquisoy, their auditor, has ventured into something else besides dried fish. She learned to make "tableya" from roasted cacao seeds which are later ground and shaped into either balls or tablets about one-fourth of an inch thick. When boiled and whisked, the resulting beverage is called "sikwate," the native version of the Spanish "chocolate" which, of course, is a delight to the palate no matter what time of day it is taken.

Ethel calls her tableya business her

society.

The Lucan text is particularly sensitive to gender —, in its account of the story of not one, but three, widows; of the unclean woman who anoints Christ's feet with ointment; of the woman with a hemorrhage; in its celebration of Mary, Christ's mother, as the first disciple (the first to hear and do God's word); in telling of Mary of Magdala and other women as the first apostles who encounter the risen Lord. Christ was himself the first fruit of this new creation, free to relate to women in various stations of life, free to call them to a life of new meaning and new relationships.

Women here and the world over must not choose between Martha and Mary for we are both. On the one hand we are life-giving not simply by biology but by conscious choice, caring for children, family and others with feeling and intelligence, as an act of will. On the other hand, creation is more than procreation and reproductive labor. Compelled by the word, we must fully develop our artistic, political, organizational and other faculties. Only then can we, as men's equals, transform values, build communities, create and recreate the world.

Liberation theology has enabled the poor to reclaim the biblical narrative as their story, the gospel promise as theirs. Feminism has in like manner enable women to confront the burden of gender, to affirm themselves in a culture that denies them, and to come alive to the call of freedom as they are, where they are, Mary and Martha together.

"sideline," but because it is always in demand, she says sometimes, it becomes her "mainline."

Just like the other women's groups under LABRADOR, the Bislig Women's Organization has its savings plan. Edita says that in the beginning, even when only two pesos was required of them, they found it very difficult to spare the amount. It took them a year to develop the habit of keeping something aside for the proverbial rainy day.

"Dito ho sa amin sa Leyte, maraming 'rainy days.' Nasa 'typhoon belt' ho kasi kami. Kailangan, lagi kaming nakahanda (Here in Tacloban, there are many 'rainy days' because we are in the typhoon belt. We must always be prepared)," says Delia Bulan, their vice-chairperson.

There are women who, though they are non-members, help promote their products by referring some buyers to the Or-

ganization when their own products run out. The members have taken this to mean recognition from their neighbors. They have tried to make the women form their own organization but it is clear their neighbors are not ready for organizing. They say will wait for the right time for their fellow Bisliganons to get together.

PALO

Over at Palo, a mere 15 minutes away from Tacloban City by tricycle, Digna Lagada, the LABRADOR community organizer, led the vendors into membership in the Leyte Women Vendors Development Project (LWVDP). Prior to their organizing, these same women were willing victims of the loan sharks that infested the Palo market. The group of 20 decided they should contribute P250 each to their capital build-up and their group qualified for a P20,000 loan. So far, repayment is a record 100%.

Like any other organization, the Palo group experienced its own birthing pains. There was the initial skepticism about the organizer's intentions. The women did not have much faith in themselves, so they had to be encouraged, coaxed and cajoled into attending meetings so that plans could be discussed.

The vendors sell a variety of products. Some are into vegetables, others sell *kakanins*, native delicacies that use local ingre-

dients such as sticky rice, brown sugar, coconut milk or plain grated coconut pulp.

Estela Cuesta is the main producer of *lupak*. That's the Waray-waray term for this delicacy that's basically almost-ripe cooking bananas pounded in a mortar, then mixed with some brown sugar and grated coconut before it is molded into desired shapes. She supplies other vendors with her product thus assuring her of steady income.

Estela finds her life interesting. She thinks that she is not meant to lead a romantic life. She and her fiance had a seven-year engagement; they got married, all right, but she was widowed after four short years. That did not faze her at all because she believes that she is strong as a fortress. "Materyales fuertes ini (This is made of sterner stuff)," she says, pointing to her left bicep with her right index finger. Solo, she is bringing up her two sons one of whom is now third year high school and the other is in the first year.

When she was paying 20% interest to her loan shark, Estela was always broke. Now that they have this accommodation from LABRADOR, things are much easier. She says she feels younger. Remarrying is a complete no-no for Estela because she says that she finds her business very enjoyable and she is occupied by meetings and consultations in their or-

ganization.

A typical day starts at dawn for this brave woman. She is up at about 3:00 a.m. to supervise the pounding of her cooking bananas. She used to have a native grater for her coconuts but now she can afford to have her coconuts done by a mechanical grater.

While she looks after her preparations, she also starts breakfast for her children. She wants their needs attended to so studying would be easy for them. On weekends, however, they have their share of chores to do both for the business and for the house. Estela wants her children to grow up with a sense of responsibility. "I don't want them to face life unprepared. We never can tell the future."

Carmelita Liporada-Onida and her husband work hand-in-hand at parenting. They have six children and Carmelita dreams of seeing all of them graduate from college courses one day. Although their income is very limited, much of the burden of daily life is taken away because they own the house and lot they live in. Her husband inherited the property from his parents. This has spared them from having to pay monthly rental.

She sells a variety of *kakanins* at a very strategic site in their market. He drives a pedicab and helps her deliver her products to a nearby school canteen early in the morning. She says that she is able to

NCRFW Undertakes Gender Analysis of Philippine Laws

Under the auspices of the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW), Professors Myrna Feliciano and Maria Lourdes Sereno surveyed and analyzed 14,959 laws enacted from 1900 to 1989 including three constitutions of the Philippines vis-a-vis their outlook on women and their rights.

The framework of the analysis was divided into two steps: first, examination of the laws "on their face;" second, the study of the laws to determine the existence of discrimination in their implementation.

The analysis serves as the first phase of a project which seeks to encourage the legislature to remove discriminatory provisions from our laws.

NCRFW Chairperson Patricia B. Licuanan presented the study entitled "Gender Analysis of Philippine Laws" to Senator Santanina T. Rasul, chairperson of the Committee on Women and Family Relations in the Upper House.



NCRFW Chairperson Patricia B. Licuanan (fifth from right) presents the "Gender Analysis of Phil. Laws" to Senator Santanina T. Rasul (seventh from right) Chairperson of the Senate Committee on Women and Family Relations.

supply the school canteen because she no longer has to share 20% of her earnings with the loan shark. This allows her more money to use as revolving capital.

Carmelita thinks her decision to join the LWVDP has helped her both in the business and the personal levels. Business has definitely been very good since they were taught simple procedures such as costing, bookkeeping and accounting.

"Imagine," some of them say. "We hardly finished elementary schooling and we were told we must do bookkeeping and accounting. We all complained that they were hard to do. But the social development workers just kept on teaching us and following us up. Sometimes, we tried to make all the excuses so that the checking would be postponed. But when we learned how to do it, we found out how important it was because we really saw if we were earning or not. We owe LABRADOR a big favor," is a collective comment.

Their attention has also been called regarding quality control. They never heard about it before. Now, they have to watch out even for mistakes in packaging. Of course, they see to it that their food products remain delicious. And clean. Otherwise, they would surely lose their customers.

Being part of a big group looking towards the same direction has affected their personal life as well. The women

aim for good performance in the meetings because they are criticized by the entire group. They report to the group on the developments in their enterprise with Digna leading the women in asking the right questions so that the critique would be constructive. They recall how, in the beginning, their voices trembled and a few of them actually had to hold back nervous tears. Now that they have conquered their shyness, they look back to those days with amusement. In fact, they now laugh at how they were then.

The members say that they actually look forward to their meetings because it has been a factor in their growth as better persons. Even family relations are studied. Whereas in the past, they would resort to loud altercations with their husbands at the slightest provocation, they now marvel at how they are able to go through the process of investigation and dialog before they conclude, therefore abetting quarrels.

One thing that all the women appreciate is the requirement that they save part of their earnings. In the past, they had no idea that they could keep money at all. Their children had the habit of asking them money for candies and junk food. But when they agreed among themselves how much they should save in one day, they were able to discipline themselves and their children into frugality.

How do the five-six lenders look at

them now? Actually, the women had to pay up completely before they could set themselves free from the loan sharks. It took them some months to do this. When they refused the offer for another loan, the lenders were surprised. One of them actually said, "You will be back." All the Palo members want to prove her wrong.

It has been a year now since the members of the LWVDP gave their final installment to the five-six lenders in the Palo Market. Not one of them has gone back to borrowing.

Instead, they have kept their remarkable repayment record with LABRADOR and they have their bankbooks to show for their savings. They plan their own activities among which are micro-seminars on family planning and whatever issues interest them. Digna Lagaday still visits them, but this time, no longer as an organizer. She has become an adviser.

From the LABRADOR point of view, what has been done in these three areas is only the first phase of a huge undertaking. While it is true that the woman beneficiaries have been empowered by their discovery of their potentials as contributors to economic growth, many things remain to be done. For example, some of the members of LABRADOR are the husbands of these women whose consciousness about shared household responsibilities and shared parenting still

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Primer . . .

Affairs and the International Women's Rights Action Watch (IWRAP).

Atty. Emelina Quintillan, Executive Directress of the Pilipina Legal Resources Center (PLRC) which undertook the adaptation and translation says that women's groups which want to have copies of the primer may purchase them at the PLRC at Gima Building, Magallanes Street, Davao City 8000, at nominal cost.

Sexism . . .

the concept of the workplace for the woman which she described as the formal setting, the informal one and the home. She said that although sexism operates in a broad field, no studies have been made to point out its direct manifestations. She brought up the need for individual, organizational and social strategies as well as those for the workplace because as things are, women have nowhere to go when harassed or oppressed by men.

Professor Alex Magno discussed the subtle manifestations of the patriarchal

ideology that now prevails in society. He said that feminists are undertaking proprietary notions of human relations in the private sphere and reproduce the same notions in the public sphere, saying that "the personal is political." He suggested that feminists make the political personal because public issues require a gender-sensitive treatment.

Ms. La Rainne Sarmiento of the Center for Women's Resources said that there is a need for women to value themselves and strategies should be set up with this as an objective. Women's empowerment being a comprehensive process, the women should start at personal empowerment. Their self-confidence must be awakened. Their experience and their skills must be enriched so that their access to more resources can be facilitated. This also means that they should have control over their bodies.

Prof. Laura Samson of the Department of Sociology enjoined everyone to be vigilant so that the sexism which is so pervasive in society as is manifested by the media may be minimized, if not

totally eradicated.

Professor Rene Mendoza added to the strategies presented by saying that legal action may also be resorted to by the women. They should be helped to know their legal rights.

The roundtable discussion closed with the formation of a Committee for a Plan of Action which would meet for their inputs to the recommendations made by the discussants.

Volunteers . . .

age. The applicants must be at least 25 years old and must have had at least three years of work experience in her/his field or profession and must be willing to work in the rural areas in the country of appointment.

Applicants must prepare photocopies of their college diplomas, two copies of their detailed curriculum vitae, certificates from the Professional Regulation Commission and/or reports of ratings of government examinations taken, letters of recommendation, certificates of attendance of seminars and trainings in re-

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Volunteers . . .

lation to their profession, marriage contracts and birth certificates of dependents (if applicable), two passport-sized photos and confirmation of availability to serve for two years.

Initial interviews are conducted by Philippine Government personnel. Those who qualify are recommended to UNV for further processing. Once accepted, a UN volunteer is assigned to a developing country for a tour of duty which usually lasts for two years. If necessary, however, one's tour of duty may be extended to a maximum of four years.

Travel and exposure to various peoples in their native cultural milieu are among the invaluable benefits that await the UN volunteers. Ms. Davide says that Filipino volunteers have been highly praised by their host countries. There have been several requests for the extension of their tours of duty. She relates with understandable elation the fact that when the UNV Headquarters in Geneva thought of documenting the activities of a typical volunteer, Joy Navarro, a Filipina assigned to Sri Lanka, was chosen for the filming.

Ms. Irene Morada-Santiago, Filipina chief of the Asia/Pacific Section of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), was told during a recent trip to the Gambia about a Filipina who was beloved by every one there because she set up their accounting system which is now working very well for them.

Those interested in trying their hand at volunteerism may file their applications with the Philippine National Volunteer Service Coordinating Agency (PNVSCA) at Belson House, 271 EDSA, Mandaluyong; Metro Manila with telephone number 775-394.

LABRADOR . . .

has to be raised. And when the men realize the importance of such notions, there is no assurance that they would adopt them as a way of life, they being part of a culture that still abides by the macho ideas governing the gender divide. Imelda and Junie have considered this as a problem they must address and they have held countless meetings trying to think of strategies so that their women-in-development program could make a dent in the collective thinking of their general membership.

For example, there was a clamor for women in the LABRADOR Board of Di-



Dr. Constantina Safilios-Rothschild speaks on how agriculture can be made rational.

Gender Issues in Agriculture taken up

Dr. Constantina Safilios-Rothschild, professor and chair of the Department of Gender Issues in Agriculture of the Agricultural University of the Netherlands, strongly suggests that if women do farm work, they deserve the title "farmers."

Presently, they are referred to as "farmer's wives," "rural women," or "farmhouse wives," even if they do soil preparation, actual planting, transplanting, weeding, harvesting, threshing, winnowing and other tasks which are indispensable to the farming process. Dr. Safilios, herself an agricultural engineer, says that this is one of the examples of the marginalization that women experience in countries where their role as contributors to the economic development of the country is unrecognized.

In a seminar attended by regional

directors and planners of the Departments of Natural Resources and Environment, Agrarian Reform and Agriculture held at the Philippine Sugar Center on December 3, 1990, Dr. Safilios stressed the need to integrate gender issues in government policies so that women may be put in the place they deserve to occupy.

The seminar was followed by a dialog between policy-makers and planners in the Agriculture sector of Philippine government and the UNIFEM panel composed of Ms. Thelma Awori, Deputy Director, Ms. Irene Morada-Santiago, Chief of the Asia/Pacific Section, Dr. Safilios spoke in the Regional Conference on Gender Issues in Agriculture where six cases involving gender issues in the Asian Region were discussed. The conference was jointly sponsored by UNIFEM and the Asian Development Bank.

rectors but when they got there, the women themselves refused to accept positions of responsibility. This has been an area of concern in the entire staff because the man officers wanted to share the positions with them.

For her part, Imelda Abenio says her responsibilities as coordinator of women-in-development activities are so numerous and time-consuming that she cannot afford to take in any more.

Like Lydia Trinchera who is married and has two children, the women in the staff are aware of the problem of the double burden that they now bear and they do not want to aggravate the situa-

tion they are in. The problem is that although their husbands have begun sharing household chores with them, there are still many problems that they have to face as wives and mothers by themselves. So they go about their daily duties at the office and in the field, aware that they have passed up a very big opportunity to raise their status as women in an organization which is very strongly pushing for egalitarian ends.

As Eusebio Abenio, Director of the Regional Resource Center says, "Management would be more effective if more women participated in all its processes."

REVIEWS & RESOURCES

Books, references and video materials available at the NCRFW Library

1. **Engendering Adjustment for the 1990's:** Report of a Commonwealth Expert Group on Women and Structural Adjustment. London: Commonwealth EGWSA, 1989.
 2. **Participation of women in decision-making for peace:** Case study on Sweden. By Karin Lindgren. New York: United Nations, 1989.
 3. **Violence against women in the family.** By Frances Jane Connors. New York: United Nations, 1989. Provides an overall picture of violence against women in the family as a world issue rather than as an issue that is confined to one country or culture system; identifies gaps in knowledge of the issue which constitute obstacles to the development of a proper understanding of the problem and appropriate action for its eradication.
 4. **International conference towards progress in women's rights and social status in developing countries.** Reports and papers. Berlin: German Foundation for International Dev., 1989.
 5. **Woman: the password is action.** New York: International Women's Tribune, 1988. A handy source of ideas on the production of women's publications with the use of "Clip Art."
 6. **Women organizing:** a collection of IWTC newsletters on women's organizing and networking strategies. New York: IWTC, 1984.
 7. **Women taking hold of technology.** New York: IWTC, 1984.
 8. **Women using media for social change.** New York: IWTC, 1984.
 9. **A framework for training women managers in public enterprises in developing countries.** By L. Stanley. Santo Domingo: IN-STRAW, 1988.
 10. **International Consultative Meeting on Communications for Women in Development.** By D.P. Fericcio. Santo Domingo: INSTRAW, 1988.
 11. **International Workshop on women entrepreneurship.** Manila, August 15-18, 1989. Singapore: Technonet Asia, 1988.
 12. **Moving on; education in organizing** Kowloon: Committee for Asian Women, 1990.
- BETA TAPES:
1. **June Bride:** An NCRFW-Philippine Educational Theater Association (PETA) co-production. Two families, one middle class and the other poor are juxtaposed with a third one serving as foil; the double burden issue and trade unionism are tackled in tandem. 30 minutes.
 2. **Hanayome-san, Asawa ng Hapon:** An NCRFW-PETA co-production. An exposition of the three sides of the mail-order-bride issue: tells of a successful Filipino-Japanese union, an unsuccessful one and explores the development of a third one which shows all the elements of an exploitative union; shows how government unknowingly helps expose Filipino women to the dangers of the trade. 30 minutes.
 3. **Stap Isi (Take It Easy):** Produced by the Women and Law Committee, Boroko, Papua New Guinea. Although billed as dealing on family violence, this film principally addresses the problem of wife-battering; depicts the possible roles of various institutions such as the church, the community and the school in reducing this form of violence; English subtitles. 30 minutes.
 4. **A Woman's Place – The City:*** An exposition of the significant ways women have made their presence felt in the "one square mile called 'The City of London' which is within the world-renowned 'London' "; chronicles one day in the lives of women who hold traditionally non-
- women positions such as that of the Lord Mayor, woman investigators for Lloyds of London, stock brokers, financial managers and a dance artist.
5. **A Woman's Place – Test Tube Babies:*** A moving narration of how childless couples work towards parenthood via the test tube method; the rationale behind the method explained by Mary Warnock, a feminist intellectual and an educationalist; features clips of Louise Brown, the world's first test tube baby, her sister who is the second one and their parents; shows interviews of couples seeking admission into the test-tube-baby program. 30 minutes.
 6. **A Woman's Place – New Technology:*** Focuses attention on women venture into science and engineering, two fields which are non-traditional for them, with encouragement from the Equal Opportunities Commission; shows the women saying they find computer science very challenging albeit unglamorous; shows a dynamicist explain her field. 30 minutes.
 7. **A Woman's Place – The Image Business:*** An odyssey into the world of image-making through promotions and public relations where men have been the masters through the years; one woman tries her hand at it and makes it to the top. 30 minutes.

* From the British Embassy



*... I became a woman
Under those vehement stars.
For it was there I heard
For the first time my spirit
Forging an iron rule for me,
As though with slow cold hammers
Beating out word by word:
"Only yourself can heal you,
Only yourself can lead you,
The road is heavy going
And ends where no man knows;
Take love when love is given,
But never think to find it
A sure escape from sorrow
Or a complete repose."*

From "Day's Ending"
Sara Teasdale