
Addressing Gender Issues in
APEC Concerns
Selected Useful Practices from the
Philippines

National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women
(Project Overseer, APEC Gender Information Session)
and the
Women's Studies Association of the Philippines

For the

APEC SOM Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Gender Integration

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September 2000

AC 4306 copy 2 (06-04-03)

The preparation of the case studies was funded by the Canadian Board of Canada (CBoC), while publication of the monograph was supported by the United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office (UN RC) and the Asia Pacific Gender Equality Network (APGEN). The analyses, opinions, and conclusions reflect the views of the case writers and the monograph editor and not the position of the CBoC, UN RC, or APGEN.

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ISBN 971-8701-02-8

**Published by the Women's Studies Association of the Philippines for the
National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women, 1145 J.P. Laurel St.,
San Miguel, Manila, Philippines**

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Acknowledgments

The Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) created in 1999 the Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Gender Integration (AGGI) to implement the “Framework for the Integration of Women in APEC.” Two of the tasks that needed immediate attention were the conduct of gender information sessions, with the Philippines as the Lead Economy and Dr. Amelou Benitez-Reyes (Chair, National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women or NCRFW) as Project Overseer; and the production of a gender mainstreaming idea book, with Canada as Lead Economy.

The idea of a collection of “best practices” of gender mainstreaming at the economy level came from Dr. Amelou Benitez-Reyes. This endeavor complements the book project of Canada.

The production of this monograph is a collective enterprise, and I wish to acknowledge the contributions of the following institutions and individuals:

- ▶ The Conference Board of Canada (CBoC), for funding the case-writing activities; and the United Nations Resident Coordinator Office and the Asia Pacific Gender Equality Network (APGEN), for supporting the printing of the monograph;
- ▶ Helen F. Dayo, Assistant Secretary of the Women’s Studies Association of the Philippines (WSAP), for technical assistance during the case-writing workshops; Victoria Bitanga of the University of the Philippines Center for Women’s Studies (UCWS), and Marie Rose R. Ramos and Aldo Niño I. Ruivivar, project research assistants of the Women’s Studies Program, Institute of Philippine Culture (IPC), Ateneo de Manila University, for

administrative support; and Marita Castro-Guevara, IPC Research Associate, for copy editing assistance;

- ▶ Mayumi C. Galang, Officer for International Affairs of the NCRFW, for her various roles in the year-long NCRFW-WSAP partnership;
- ▶ The different writers of the cases included in this volume as well as those whose cases could not be finalized before press time, for their enthusiasm and interest; and
- ▶ Dr. Amelou Benitez-Reyes for insisting that this monograph be written.

Jeanne Frances I. Illo
Monograph Editor
14 September 2000

Introduction

This monograph project is in support of the implementation of the “Framework for the Integration of Women in APEC.” The cases address the three elements of the framework: gender analysis, collection and use of data classified by sex, and involvement of women in the fora and activities of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC). Specifically, they illustrate how the framework can be applied at the economy level and the APEC level. What is not included as a “best practice” case is the experience of the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW) in making the Philippine government gender-responsive. Instead, the essay that appears in this volume describes the possible roles that national machineries for women can play in promoting the Beijing Platform for Action in an international organization like APEC. Nonetheless, a review of the major strategies and results of the NCRFW’s initiatives to promote women’s interests appears below.

While the present collection of cases pertains directly to the advocacy to make APEC and its fora and processes sensitive to gender issues and women’s concerns, it also responds to the worldwide interest to assess accomplishments vis-à-vis the Beijing Platform for Action in the areas of the economy, education and training, power and decision-making, and institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women.

The Case of the NCRFW

Deliberate and systematic efforts by government to address gender issues and concerns in the Philippines began in the late 1980s. Spearheaded by the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women, the campaign took what later became a familiar route to making government bureaucracies gender-responsive. This involved preparing the people who would push for and support bureaucratic processes and practices that consider the gender concerns women and men and that

address the historic disadvantage of women. It also entailed the creation of an organizational structure that favors the attainment of women's empowerment and gender equality goals. Moreover, it called for the establishment of mechanisms and structures that would help institutionalize the various changes. All this will be referred to here as NCRFW's advocacy to mainstream gender and development (GAD) in government.

Ever since NCRFW embarked on its large-scale reorientation of the Philippine government, it has conducted countless sessions aimed at raising the awareness of key officials and technical personnel—planners, program designers and managers, human resource development or training staff—in strategic national-level agencies. These sessions were followed by gender sensitivity training (GSTs) of longer duration and later by training in gender-responsive planning.

The GSTs and training in gender planning both required the generation and use of sex-differentiated data for the preparation of situational analysis or briefing sheets in GST sessions, and for use in gender analysis and planning exercises. This challenged offices to keep, report, and use gender-related information about their personnel (staff complement, training, promotions), processes (hiring practices, procedures for responding to complaints of sexual harassment, decision-making systems), programs and projects (listing of beneficiaries, training participants, qualification for access to resources, membership and leadership of organizations created by the program/project). Apart from all this, NCRFW also engaged government agencies charged with the collection and publication of statistics in discussions and activities to produce sex-disaggregated data.

To pursue GAD mainstreaming efforts, especially the implementation of the 1989-1992 Philippine Development Plan for Women (PDP-W), by departments, bureaus, and offices, then President Corazon C. Aquino instructed all agencies to constitute a group that would serve as their GAD (originally called Women in Development or WID) Focal Point. To make the Focal Points a more potent force within their organizations, their membership was drawn from the ranks of heads or deputy heads of departments, bureaus, offices, and attached agencies. A Technical Working Group (TWG) or similar body often provided technical support to the Focal Point. This top-level sponsorship of the GAD campaign as well as the involvement of key

technical officers and personnel have become an important ingredient in getting the organization gender aware or sensitive, generating sex-disaggregated databases, developing skills among key staff members in gender planning (and, later, in monitoring and evaluation), and addressing gender issues in the workplace.

A few years after the national-level efforts to introduce a concern to address gender issues in the mainstream of national government operations, NCRFW began to experiment with ways of influencing regional planning. This effort continues to the present, although the focus has turned from regional planning to the operation of local (that is, provincial, city, or municipal) governments, of which development planning is but a part, albeit an important one. Because of the large-scale demand for gender experts who could provide training, advice, and technical assistance to local governments, NCRFW also committed resources to the development of regional and local-level gender expertise in the academe, non-government organizations, and local government units and agencies. The Women's Studies Association of the Philippines (WSAP), a national organization of women's studies teachers, researchers, and practitioners, became a key partner in this sub-national endeavors.

Although training activities consumed the time and resources of NCRFW in the early years, these were but part of its GAD mainstreaming campaign. Policy advocacy was another, which has resulted in the appropriation by government of a certain percentage of its budget for GAD programs and activities of various agencies and offices. Another non-training activity involved the coordination of two development plans for women: the "Philippine Development Plan for Women," which was produced between 1987 and 1989; and the 30-year perspective plan ("Philippine Plan for Gender-Responsive Development or PPGD). Yet another part of the NCRFW campaign has been the support of research studies, policy research, and production of gender training materials.¹

¹These outputs include the sourcebook, *Gender and Development: Making the Bureaucracy Gender-Responsive* (Torres and Del Rosario 1994); the training casebook, *Gender in Projects and Organizations* (Ilo 1996); and the reader, *Sex and Gender in Philippine Society* (Eviota 1994).

These and previous efforts have been financed by the Philippine government with generous grants from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the United Nations Fund for Women (UNIFEM), and other multilateral and bilateral donors. UNIFEM funded the initial GAD mainstreaming activities, while CIDA continues to support the institutional strengthening of NCRFW, the regional activities, and other related efforts.

About the Cases of Useful Practices²

The cases provide an interesting selection for both the purposes of gender advocacy at APEC and post-Beijing assessment. The cases deal with different contexts, foci, and levels of action and results.

The first case pertains to a government development project in a coastal community. Gender analysis was conducted using technology and tools that the participants (in this case, village residents) could understand and use. It illustrates the application of a particular gender analysis methodology that allowed the community to proceed directly to the preparation of a community development plan. Such a plan invariably addresses the gender issues, and constraints and opportunities identified during the gender analysis. Apart from demonstrating the usefulness of the gender analysis to planning, the case also indicates the uses of gender analysis results to gender awareness raising sessions (similar to the gender information sessions for APEC fora). Given the ways in which gender analysis is integrated in the project and in community life, the outcomes include not only the generation of a plan and guide for a gender-responsive project, but changes in how women look at themselves, too.

The second case pursues the personal effects of gender advocacy on women, this time, on women working in the formal sector. The valuable GAD intervention guides a private corporation and its staff through a difficult process of coming to terms with competing demands of home and job on women workers because of their gender and the expectation that they remain responsible for the home/family while holding down a job. The Strengthening Personality Capability Program that was

²The three cases included in this collection represent part of the planned set; two others could not be completed in time for the printing of the monograph.

implemented at Rustan Commercial Corporation goes beyond harmonization of work and family to also address the need for personal and career advancement. In relation to the implementation of the “Framework for the Integration of Women in APEC,” the Rustan story provides one guide as to how APEC member economies can assist its workers become better complete individuals.

By showcasing the importance of collective action, the case of the Women’s Business Council Philippines offers an operational definition of involvement of women in APEC. At the economy level, the Council’s initiatives to address two key gender issues that women in small and medium enterprises (SMEs) face, access to credit and access to training, have resulted in women-owned and -led enterprises being established, improved, or expanded. In an effort to have a greater voice in APEC discussions, the Council has also sought representation for women in SMEs in the APEC Business Advisory Council. The case presents a challenge to APEC to implement one of the elements of the Framework, the involvement of women in APEC fora, processes, and activities.

The last essay describes and analyzes the various roles played by the NCRFW in the advocacy to instill within APEC a concern for addressing gender issues. As with the Women’s Business Council case, it likewise stresses the value of cooperation and collective action among like-minded advocates and activists in promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment within APEC. It, therefore, serves as an apt concluding article.

Jeanne Frances I. Illo
President, Women’s Studies Association of the Philippines
and Monograph Editor

Gender Analysis in Development Projects: Application in the Coastal Environment Sector¹

This case highlights the application of gender analysis in a project in Central Philippines of the Coastal Environment Program (CEP) of the Philippines' Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR). It particularly stresses how gender analysis forms part of the gender and development (GAD) tools that the GAD Focal Point at DENR has been promoting within the agency.

Organizational Context

The DENR, an agency mandated to manage and develop the country's environment and natural resources, has long recognized the value of "mainstreaming" GAD in its policies and programs and the importance of women's (and men's) participation in environmental governance. Its adoption of GAD came in the wake of its reorganization and its shift from a regulatory to a developmental agency through Executive Order No. 192 in 1986.

The slow but growing tide of people-centered reorganization and reorientation provided the backdrop for the entry and continuing efforts to integrate GAD in DENR policies, program, and projects. However, it was not until 1989 that the DENR began redirecting its programs and projects towards achieving greater social and economic equity for people in the upland and rural areas. It was only then that

¹Prepared by Marissa Cruz and Irma Paule of the Public Affairs Office of the Philippines' Department of Environment and Natural Resources. Both are members of their agency's Gender and Development Focal Point.

the women in the environment and natural resources sector were given a chance to be empowered. Within DENR, a technical working group (TWG) on women was formed to spearhead what was then called women-in-development (WID) efforts at DENR. This body was later transformed into the GAD Focal Point, with representatives from bureaus, attached agencies, and regional offices of DENR. Pursuant to Republic Act (RA) 7192, also known as the Women in Development and Nation-Building Act, the agency's Focal Point was charged with the promotion of the integration of women as full and equal partners of men in the sector.

In 1996, DENR adopted a two-pronged strategy: functional and structural. The functional strategy meant that the GAD Focal Point would use all the necessary tools to implement GAD at the levels of policy, program, and project. Meanwhile, the structural strategy would involve the linking of the focal points at different agencies and levels of DENR into a network, with the groups reinforcing one another in their efforts to establish and implement GAD.

The Program and Project Contexts

The Coastal Environment Program of DENR was created on 22 April 1993. It aims to rehabilitate, develop, protect, and manage the sustainability of the coastal resources of the country through participatory approaches. These resources include the mangrove areas, sea grasses, algae bed, coral reefs, marine sanctuaries, marine parks, and wildlife.

The DENR regional offices have identified CEP sites in each of the country's provinces and maintained them as showcases of the government's initiatives in coastal resource management and development. One such site is the CEP project in Pangangan Island in the Province of Bohol in Central Philippines. The site is 4.8 kilometers from the mainland, connected by a bridge made of stones filled with soil and quarry.

Long before the project began in 1994, the area was beset with poverty and widespread environmental problems, such as depletion of coastal zone resources, exploitation of fishing grounds, use of illegal and destructive fishing methods. The

villagers have long considered the twin problems as part of their everyday life. However, they also reportedly have high awareness of environmental problems in their area (such as illegal fishing) and welcome the CEP as one government initiative that would help protect the coastal resources of the island.

Established in 1994 as the provincial pilot project, the CEP in the Pangangan Island covers eight barangays (villages)² and a total area of 1,095 hectares, of which 115 hectares are mangrove timberland and 482 hectares are alienable and disposable land. Residing in the CEP site were about 717 households and 5,429 people who rely on fishing as their main livelihood.³

The project relied on the participation of coastal communities in protecting the coastal resources of the island. To achieve this, it employed a combination of strategies, including community organizing, training, networking with other institutions, extension of technical assistance in upland farming, and information/education/communication (IEC). To assist the barangays, the project recruited community development workers (CDWs) and formed eight people's organizations (POs). In the first five years, the project organized and mobilized 387 households (or 54 percent of the island households) into one PO per barangay.

Projects initiated under the CEP are mangrove rehabilitation, roadside tree planting, and establishment of private tree plantation and a fish sanctuary. In addition, the CEP supports livelihood projects, such as propagation of mango growing, hog and goat dispersal, credit, backyard gardening, and financing of a consumer store or a *bigasan* (rice retailing business). Most of the livelihood projects are land-based and are aimed at easing the pressure on marine resources. Backyard gardening is being promoted to help women provide fresh vegetables to their families. By early 2000,

²The barangays were Magtotong, Kinabag-an, Talisay, Lawis, Kahayag, Lomboy, Looc, and Madangog.

³A survey conducted in 1994 reported the average family size as five, and average annual household income to be about PhP2,000. The highest educational attainment among adults is the six-year elementary education. Fishing is the main source of income. Many fishing households also farm small parcels of land. A few have small businesses such as a variety (*sari-sari*) or convenient store, shell craft, hog-raising, and carpentry. The people's main source of information is the radio.

a total of 128 households (or 33 percent of the PO member-households) have benefitted from the CEP livelihood program for the island.

The project is implemented by a project coordinator, a project manager, and three CDWs. The coordinator and the manager ensure that the project is being implemented according to plan. The manager conducts periodic monitoring and evaluation of the project to check on problems and apply appropriate solutions. The CDWs prepare the associations to participate in the project, engage the communities and their leaders in the preparation of community profiles and the conduct of a socioeconomic survey, and monitor project status and the progress of the organizations.

Project implementation strategies included the following: (1) consensus building, where consensus or general agreement is sought during association assemblies or meetings on such decisions as choice of livelihood project; (2) consultation, where suggestions or comments of association members are sought in site selection, planning, and mapping of the site; (3) procurement of necessary materials, where payment is made after inspection or verification of authorities; and (4) mobilization of labor. In line with the participatory nature of the project, each people's organization prepares a work and financial plan for their barangay and submits this to the CEP project coordinator and project manager who request funding for the plan.

The Integration of GAD in the Project

A DENR policy (enshrined in Administrative Order No. 7, series of 1995) calls for the integration of GAD issues and concerns in all the DENR programs and projects. Three years later, the regional DENR office identified Pangangan Island as a pilot site of the DENR GAD program. The regional office recognized the challenge of integrating GAD in initiatives to address environmental problems, including illegal fishing, destruction of coral reefs and mangrove, dynamite/cyanide fishing, and uncontrolled commercial fishing. Moreover, introducing GAD in the island project would count on the participation of women and men in environmental conservation, something that the residents themselves want.

The integration of GAD in the Pangangan Island project came four years into project implementation. Nonetheless, the project management welcomed the initiative. A series of meetings with the regional and provincial DENR offices were held on how GAD could be addressed in the project. In the absence of data on gender, the GAD unit in the regional DENR office lobbied for the conduct of a (belated) gender analysis as an important first step in transforming the project into a “gender-responsive” development effort. An annual allocation of PHP250,000 was set aside from the regional DENR GAD funds for the implementation of GAD in the Pangangan Island project.

At the site, the DENR GAD advocates and the project conducted gender sensitivity training (GST) and gender-responsive planning (GRP) sessions for the people’s organizations, local government officials, and non-government organizations (NGOs) involved in the project. These two training activities were added to the project’s series of technical training on coastal rehabilitation, tree farming, solid waste management, fish sanctuary management, and animal raising. Apart from these training sessions, the project also held team building and indicative planning sessions, officers’ training and planning workshops, and training on the deputation of fish warden for *Bantay Dagat* (Sea Watch).

By end of 1999, women were actively involved in the project. About 53 percent (or 118 women) of the 220 women members participated in the training program, while 60 percent sat in committees, and 32 percent were elected to the board of directors of the people’s organizations.

Conduct of Gender Analysis

In accordance with an agreement reached in 1998, the regional DENR GAD unit, in close coordination with the local project management and project beneficiaries, initiated gender analysis activities in the project. Gender analysis was employed to identify gender issues and concerns among women and men in the island and to establish gender-related baseline socioeconomic and demographic profile. The gender analysis activity was expected to result in a gender-responsive plan. It was

also expected that the project would look into sex and age differentiation when it monitored the project and seasonal activities in the site.

Gender needs, issues, and problems of women and men beneficiaries were identified and strategies to address these explored using participatory rural appraisal on gender and environment concerns (PRAGEN) tools.⁴ PRAGEN employs gender-sensitive data-gathering techniques that could enhance the design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of development projects. Its processes encourage the involvement of women and men in community decision-making, organization, and mobilization. PRAGEN uses an ecosystems approach that can be used in the upland, urban, mangrove, coastal, and other ecosystems.

The staff of the regional DENR GAD unit prepared the module for gender analysis. The staff obtained training in PRAGEN in one of the GST sessions conducted by the Ecosystems Research and Development Bureau of the DENR.

The gender analysis was conducted in the island by a team consisting of the DENR regional GAD staff and project management. The workshop involved 30 participants from among the project beneficiaries. The workshop processes and outputs consisted of drawing the village map, a gender-based resource map, gender-based activity profile, disaggregated seasonal activities calendar, time-line analysis of events, Venn diagram of institutions, ranking of problems and needs, ranking of constraints, and ranking of intervention programs.

- ▶ The *village map* incorporates physical and social features of the area, such as human resources, institutions, infrastructure facilities, occupations, and available services. It reflects the island's land area; the topography of the eight barangays; the location of the church, school, health center, cemetery, and basketball court;

⁴PRAGEN is a community-level gender analysis approach that combines participatory rural appraisal (PRA) and Environment, Community Organization and Bender Tools (ECOGEN). It can be used most effectively not only for diagnosis of gender issues, but also as a tool for organizing and planning action to respond to the identified gender issues in the community. For details, see "Gendering Resource Management through Participatory Rural Appraisal and Gender Analysis (PRAGEN): A Case Study and Training Manual," by Cristy Guzman-Ututalum and Luz Lopez-Rodriguez (Iloilo City, Philippines: Local Government Support Program, 1998).

and the location of the mangrove swamp, coconut farms, and banana plantation. The gender analysis pinpointed problems and identified the area's available resources and solutions relative to mangrove and sea grass resources, settlements and institutions, and farmland. For example, the identified problems with respect to mangrove resources could be illegal fishing and pollution of the mangrove swamps. The solutions could include proper waste management, planning for the establishment of a fish sanctuary, and community planning of mangrove species.

- ▶ The *gender-based activity profile* probes into the underlying reasons for the activities of women and men and the resulting gender division of labor. By addressing the question of “who does what and why,” participants are made more aware of gender-based inequalities not only in work burdens, but, more importantly, in resource access and control.
- ▶ The *gender-disaggregated seasonal activities calendar* looks into livelihood systems and how tasks and responsibilities are distributed according to sex and age, the intensity of activities, and the seasonality/regularity of certain work. The calendar also lists the stress periods (that is, time of heavy work-load, illness, hunger, typhoon, drought), and incorporates both reproductive and productive tasks. The calendar likewise identifies important periods, such as the school season (to indicate availability of young people for various livelihood tasks), and the cold, wet, and dry seasons (for farming and fishing activities).
- ▶ The *time-line survey* provides a history of events that are important to the community. This covers the history of the island, migration patterns, changes in income sources and social norms, resource use, and cost of living in the area. The analysis reveals changes brought about by modern technology and by “Western culture” introduced by “migrants from Manila” and other parts of the country. It also provides a narrative account of the state of the forest and coastal resources at various points, and the onslaught of environmental damages that the residents have witnessed.
- ▶ The *Venn diagram* is used to analyze women's and men's perceptions of community institutions and organizations. It also illustrates the importance women and men attach to the various government agencies that provide services

to the community (such as the DENR and the departments of agriculture, education, social welfare and development, and health; and the police and local government).

- ▶ The ***ranking of problems and needs*** enumerates the concerns of adult women and men, and of young women and men. It also includes the reasons for these needs and problems. In Pangangan Island, the men identified inadequate income and lack of employment as their major problems, and transport facilities, roads and jobs as needs. The women, for their part, reported inadequate harvests, lack of facilities to transport their goods to market, irresponsible husbands, and education of their children on top of the problem of insufficient income. They claimed they need capital for livelihood projects and free medicine from their government in addition to roads and transport facilities that the men also identified.
- ▶ ***Analysis of constraints and opportunities*** also formed part of the PRAGEN exercise. In Pangangan Island, the participants identified the following opportunities: idle land that could be planted to crops, abundant supply of seaweeds, handicraft skills, available seashells that could be crafted to different products, and materials for basket weaving. Among the constraints are “controlled prices” at the marketplace, destructive fishing technologies used, and lack of less destructive fishing methods.

Utilization of the Gender Analysis Results

The gender analysis activity produced gender-focused information, a listing of gender needs and issues, and ranking of problems and concerns. As important as these, however, the activity also resulted in an action plan, which spells out the solutions or actions to address the identified issues and concerns. All these results, including the gender-responsive community plan, were presented to a forum that the CEP management in Pangangan Island convened to mark the formal integration of GAD concerns into the project’s development activities. Among those who came were project beneficiaries and PO allies in government and in the NGO community.

The CEP-GAD action plan that resulted from the gender analysis activity served as the basis for the mobilization of resources and other forms of support from the PO allies. In a memorandum of agreement between DENR, the local government, NGOs, and other agencies, the allies pledged their respective organizations' contribution to the achievement of the GAD program in the Pangangan Island CEP.

The gender analysis outputs were also used during the gender sensitivity training session that was held in each of the eight barangays. The GST discussed gender issues, including violence against women and children, and sexual harassment; presented legal mandates for GAD; and presented the CEP-GAD action plan. In a final workshop, the GST participants were asked to prepare a short-term action plan that would prioritize the immediate actions that need to be taken to address the gender issues in their barangay. At the of the series of GST, therefore, each PO or barangay had its own action plan that could be integrated into the CEP implementation.

Assessment of the Value of Gender Analysis

The integration of GAD concerns in the implementation of the Pangangan Island CEP has been widely considered to have contributed significantly to project success. Meanwhile, the GAD efforts benefitted from the participatory nature of the project. Hence, when gender analysis and other GAD activities began in 1997, the people—women and men—were already predisposed to participate in the activities.

The results of the gender analysis activity provided a direction and a guide in the implementation not only the of GAD component but of the CEP project as well. CEP implementors claimed that GAD has made a difference in the implementation of the project. They said that the project would not have been as “exciting” as it had been if not for the various GAD activities. Without them, the project would just be another project where coastal communities are trained in coastal rehabilitation and fishery resource management.

The people's organizations and their NGO partner agreed that the project has raised the awareness of people not only of the value of environment conservation but also

of the roles and contributions of women at home and in the community. The project has also helped promote a common understanding of gender equality in the communities. This, according to many, has improved relationships at home and paved the way for the effective involvement of women in project activities. PO and NGO leaders have also observed changes in “values,” which enabled women to become more active in community work and encouraged men and women to share in house and field work.

The beneficiaries are unanimous in their claim that the project has changed their lives, their values, and their behavior. They are now aware of the importance of environment protection, and the roles that men and women can play to bring this about. They also value working together as one in a community where survival is uppermost in people’s minds.

Women who were previously timid and home-bound are now playing active roles in the community. They partly attribute this change to their awareness of their rights and their claim to equal partnership at home and in the community.

Another factor contributing to project success lies with the project implementors who are motivated to work, regardless of geographic distance and limitations of funds and other resources. Their willingness and interest to promote gender analysis and other GAD activities in a project that was already well underway has greatly facilitated the integration of GAD in the project.

Three years of implementation of the GAD activities have reportedly left their indelible imprint in the lives of the coastal communities, particularly the women. The DENR provincial CEP management has recognized its success and is ready to move on to another site where the Pangangan experience could be replicated.

Gender and Strengthening Personal Capability Program: The Rustan Commercial Corporation Case¹

This case describes the efforts of a private corporation to deal with gender issues in the workplace. Called the Strengthening Personal Capability (SPC) Program, it involves the conduct of a course designed to strengthen the women work force by providing them with tools to handle their dual (family-work) roles for career advancement in a way that would benefit both the employee and the company. A program of the Employers' Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP), it was implemented at Rustan Commercial Corporation (RCC, also referred to here as Rustan's) in January 1999.

Overview of Issues

Even when women are socially tasked to tend to household concerns, they are pushed to work primarily due to economic necessity especially in poor countries where there is a compelling demand for dual-income households. This condition places most women in a very difficult situation for while they are responsible for the home, they are also to be blamed for whatever mischief, inefficiency they incur at work because of domestic problems and vice versa. To top it, the reality in most workplaces that besets women is the predominance of inequality and work-related danger that hampers career growth and, in the long run, social and economic development.

¹Prepared by Anilene C. Cometa, HRM Analyst with the HR Planning and Research Department of the Human Resource Management Division (HRMD) of Rustan Commercial Corporation. She is also the copy editor of the company newsletter, *Insights*.

The Philippine economy is poised to make another major concession to globalization and trade liberalization. In the retail industry, the approved Senate Bill 153 or the Retail Trade Liberalization Bill would pave the way for the entry of foreign retailers. This stiffer competition requires local retailers to provide quality products and services, lower prices and more choices for consumers. It also provides a sure death to those who will fall short against this demand.

Though the bill has yet to be enacted into law, local retailers are gearing themselves for the entry of foreign competitors. Since the retail industry is dependent not only on the products but also on the services extended to customers or consumers, quality workforce is a primary requirement. Employers must be fully aware that employees are valuable assets in braving the competition. Hence, they must invest on employees' development especially that of their female workers who are the most susceptible to abuse and harassment in the workplace.

One program that addresses gender concerns amidst the changing environment is the Strengthening Personal Capability (SPC) Program of ECOP, an initiative that is supported by the International Labor Organization (ILO) and the Government of Norway.²

The Program Context

Management. To ensure the formulation of policies and the implementation of activities in accordance to the framework of the project as well as to other gender

²In 1995, ILO and the Norwegian government recognized the role of employers' organizations in facilitating the development of internal mechanisms for equality in their member companies. They supported the project, "Promotion of Women in Private Activities through Employers' Organizations," implemented in six countries: Bangladesh, India, Philippines, Lesotho, Mauritania and Swaziland.

Initiated by the Bureau of Employers' Activities (ACT/EMP) of ILO, the project will identify and categorize fundamental problems of equality and will provide a basis for practicing equality in employment towards national and social development.

The project focus is a company's capacity to bring out the full potential of their employees to respond to the demand of the economy. The strategy is sensitizing the company to gender concerns and valuing the contribution of their employees. An important project partner is the employers' organization, which is expected to exert its influence on their member companies.

concerns, ECOP created its Committee on Women. It also formed five task forces under the committee to carry out this endeavor namely: training, research, advocacy, national issues and legislation, and best practices. The SPC program is a course developed by the training task force.

Training Needs Analysis. The first step taken by the training task force in designing a training manual was to conduct a training needs assessment (TNA) to determine knowledge, skills and attitude deficiencies. With the use of a survey instrument, the task force was able to ascertain the training needs of managers and employees (see Table 1). The survey was participated in by a sample group of 6 managers and 210 women employees from the Clark Special Economic Zone.

Table 1. Training needs as ranked by managers and employees

Rank	Managers	Employees
1	Work attitude	Interpersonal relations Career planning
2	Balancing role in her job and family	Time management
3	Balancing rights with obligation of employees	Communication
4	Overall business perspective/ requirements	Work attitude Balancing rights with obligation of employees
5	Career planning	Balancing roles in the job

Training Design. The TNA suggests that women managers and employees can choose to take an active role in shaping the fate of the company and directing the course of national development. Among the workers, the choice could be to be committed, organized and self-directed women employees; among employers, to nurture and keep such committed employees. It was apparent, however, that two competing domains must be balanced: roles demanded by the company/enterprise and the roles demanded by the family.

On the one hand, women are expected to contribute to productivity through faster cycle-time/response time, quality products or services, and competitive pricing (efficiency). These could be achieved by having positive work attitude, technical knowledge and skills, communication, and teamwork. On the other hand, family building—which involves being a good wife and mother, teacher and counselor, housekeeper, partner in income earning, and good daughter to parents—requires strong family values, time management/prioritization, and communication skills and teamwork at home.

To help women workers respond to these competing demands, ECOP designed four complementary and separate modules, namely: self-awareness, career planning, time management, and communication and interpersonal relations. These modules comprise the course “Strengthening Personal Capability (A Course for Women),” which has the following objectives:

1. To examine and affirm personal strengths, needs, values and priorities in relation to one’s roles and expectations at work and in society;
2. To acquire basic skills in career planning and develop a career plan in order to increase self-direction;
3. To acquire time management concepts and strategies to be able to achieve goals and balance time for work and family life; and
4. To increase work satisfaction and fulfillment through enhancement of basic skills in communication and interpersonal relations.

The training framework posits that workers can adapt to the conflicting demands of the enterprise and the family through increased awareness of their roles, strengths and weaknesses, and career plans and priorities; effective interpersonal and communication skills at work and at home; and effective time management, which would involve being proactive, organized, clear about priorities, and possessing an action plan. All these would help create “committed, organized and self-directed women employees at work” (see Figure 1, below).

The SPC course was pilot-tested in companies at the Clark Special Economic Zone before it was implemented in Metro Manila and other parts of the Philippines. In addition, one SPC Trainors’ Training held at the Clark Special Economic Zone and another in Metro Manila; these produced 39 accredited trainors, one of whom was

a manager from RCC. The accredited trainers would facilitate in-house workshops and would be in-charge of pursuing the program in their respective companies.

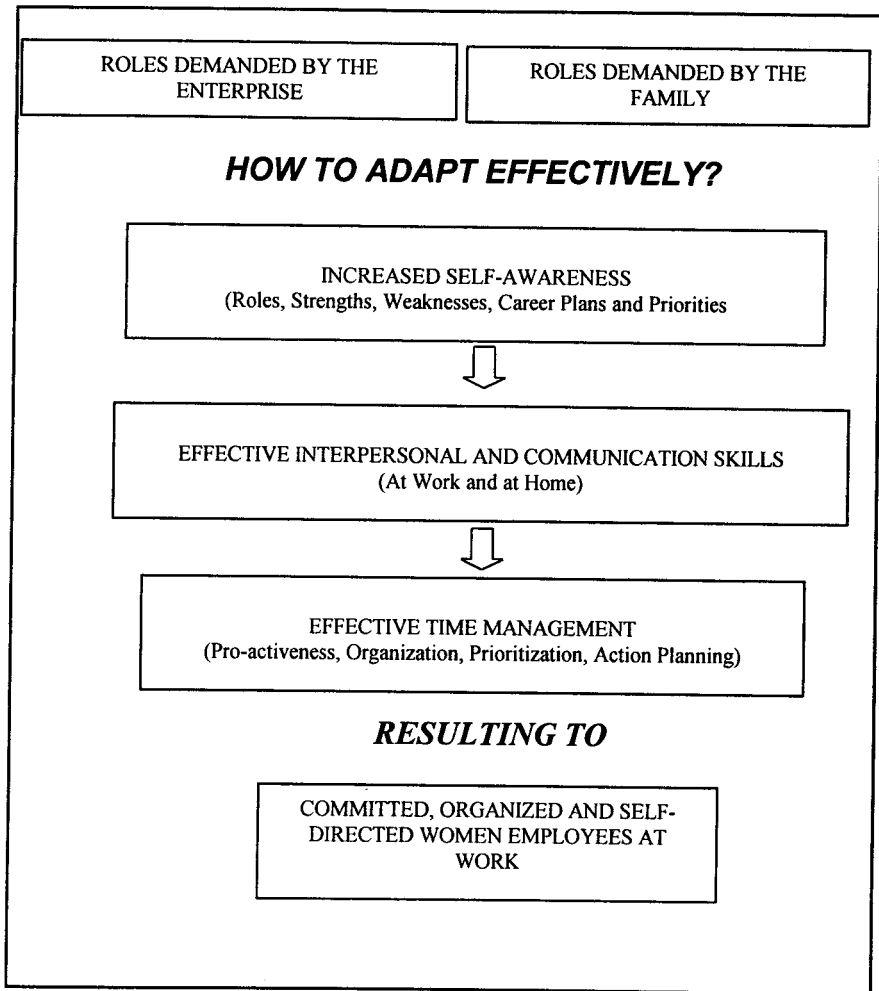


Figure 1. SPC Training Framework

Organizational Context

Profile. The Rustan Commercial Corporation, a family corporation, started out as a humble boutique and gift shop at San Marcelino, Manila 49 years ago. It was founded by Mrs. Gliceria R. Tantoco and Ambassador Bienvenido R. Tantoco, Sr. Today, RCC is considered as one of the premier department stores in the country with five branches in Metro Manila and one in Cebu. It is the flagship company of the Rustan's Group of Companies (RGOC) that has expanded to include supermarkets, cosmetics and perfumes, coffee shops, investment and financing, insurance, ready to wear, international trading and security services.

The company was awarded the 1999 Outstanding Filipino Retailer Award for Department Store Category by the Philippine Retailers Association of the Philippines and had received various commendations from other national award-giving body for achievements in retail work.

The department store usually caters to upper-class consumers who opt for RCC's array of local and imported merchandise with the highest quality, personalized customer service, assurance of comfort and convenience in shopping, and elegant ambience. The department store also houses consignors that adhere to the standards set by the company both in terms of the quality of merchandise and salespersons that had passed the scrutiny of the Merchandising Division and the Recruitment unit of the Human Resources Administration (HRA). RCC seeks to be a customer-focused corporation that anticipates, fulfills and exceeds the needs, wants and aspirations of its customers.

In early 2000, the RCC workforce includes 1, 278 regular and probationary rank-and-file employees and 240 executives. Due to the nature of the business, it is female-dominated; at the executive level, women outnumber men 4 to 1.

Vision, Mission, Operating Principles and Strategies (VMOS). In a strategic planning session held in 1995, Rustan's set the new direction of the company as it sought to maintain its leadership in the retail industry. It intended to accomplish this by "mastering innovation, aggressively implementing solutions to improve lives;

abiding by the teachings of God; valuing integrity and the desire to contribute to the greater good of humanity”.

Recognizing their employees as the company’s most important stakeholders, the RCC management aims to provide them with a “stable and empowered working environment where they can achieve their individual and team goals.” Mandated to realize this goal are the five departments of the Human Resources Management Division (HRMD), namely: HRA, Human Resource Services (HRS), Executive Resource Services (ERS), Human Resource Development (HRD) and Human Resource Planning and Research (HRPR).

RCC supports the foundation of the Rustan’s Employees Council (REC), formed in 1987, and the council’s activities/projects. The REC serves as the link between employees and management. It is composed of employees representing all RCC locations/stores. The REC aims to maintain smooth working relations in RCC, and to facilitate the attainment of productivity and improved quality of life of all employees. The council is tasked to develop, recommend and monitor the implementation of corporate projects on benefit and welfare, employee’s communication, recreation and social activities and grievance handling.

The SPC Program at RCC

From January to July 1999, the ECOP Committee on Women and the RCC-based SPC trainer conducted SPC classes for five batches of RCC employees. The course ran for three working days, and each batch consisted of 28 to 30 participants. By July 1999, the program had graduated 146 trainees, or 10 percent of the total RCC employees and executives.

SPC training participants were recommended by their immediate superior or manager and were allotted by the company an allowance for materials and meals for the duration of the training. The first batch of participants was composed of REC officers and RCC supervisors; the succeeding batches consisted of supervisors and staff.

The SPC is composed of modules that address how women can adapt to the demands of work and home. It seeks to equip women to take on a higher position at work. The course as implemented at RCC is described in Figure 2, below.

Day 1 - Discussions focused on developing self-awareness. By situating women, their roles and societal expectations of them, the training team helped the participants understand the need to develop their capabilities to adapt to the changing environment. The participants identified their strengths and areas for improvement during the process of discovering who they are. They also ascertained things/people important to them based on the premise that values give people strength to act. They were then taught how to craft their own vision and personal mission statement to give them direction in life by determining their desired end and purpose. To end the module, participants prepared action plans to realize their visions and goals.

Day 2 - Two modules were covered. The first, career planning, opened with a discussion of the meaning and scope of "career." Participants were urged to be career-driven, not just job-driven. The training team led the participants to identify their individual career needs and challenges. As the participants discovered that each has unique career needs, they were introduced to the different external and personal factors affecting their careers. The team then guided the participants through step-by-step career planning. The module on time management followed. It began with a discussion of the importance, definition, and process of time management. Participants analyzed how their time was spent for one week. From there, they were given tips on how to budget time to accommodate important matters both at home and at work.

Day 3 - Discussions and activities focused on interpersonal and communication skills. The trainers stressed the value of these skills to personal and career development, and discussed the elements and types of communications and of human behavior. They taught the participants the importance of active listening and of knowing the barriers and filters that hinder effective listening and communication. Participants also learned the value of giving feedback to relationships.

Figure 2. SPC course as implemented at Rustan Commercial Corporation

After every class, the participants evaluated the facilitators and the course based on its content and the effect on their knowledge and skills. There was also an evaluation of the participants accomplished by their superior a month after attending the course. This was done to determine the effectivity and measure the success of the program.

Impact Assessment of SPC at RCC³

Prior to the Integration Session, 25 SPC participants were chosen to attend a briefing session facilitated by the RCC-based accredited trainer. They were asked to accomplish a follow-up evaluation form to assess the impact of the SPC in their lives based on the objectives of the modules. It is interesting to note that a majority (at least 80 percent) admitted that the SPC had greatly helped improve their self-understanding, time management, planning and actions taken to improve career, and effectiveness in communicating and relating with others.

While 2 of the 25 surveyed participants attribute at most 20 percent of the changes in job performance to the SPC training, the rest credit the training for at least 80 percent of the improvement in their work motivation and job performance.⁴ Meanwhile, 20 to 21 participants trace 80 percent or more of the changes in their job satisfaction and productivity, respectively, to the SPC training.

³To assess the effectivity of the training course, data from four sources were reviewed: (1) post-evaluation from participants, (2) post-evaluation from immediate superiors, (3) results of the integration session, and (4) data from the focus group discussion (FGD) and the accomplished questionnaires from the immediate superiors.

On 22 February 2000, seven SPC participants (who also attended the October 1999 Integration Session) were gathered for FGD meant to assess the adequacy and effectivity of the program. First-hand accounts of SPC impact in their lives were related, discussed and confirmed by other participants.

The case writer was unable to convene the participants' immediate superiors. They were given questionnaires instead. Data from the questionnaire pertain to improvements in SPC participants after the training and the support the superiors extend to the participants to sustain their development. The superiors enumerated organizational support deemed necessary.

⁴During the Integration Session, one participant said, "I have been in RCC for 30 years and all this time, I have been happy with my company and have been productive. With SPC, I have been enhanced by about 10 percent more" (*Insights*, November 1999).

On the effects of the training on the two competing domains, workplace and family, SPC participants and their supervisors made a number of observations, many of which suggest improvements in self-esteem, time management, and relationships with family members (at home) and fellow workers and supervisors (at work).

Family-building. What really set the SPC apart from the previous training and seminars given by HRD is the equal focus given to the personal and family lives of the participants. There is likewise an acknowledgment of the effect of the workers' family condition/status on work quality and vice versa. The focus group discussion (FGD) participants cited several specific family-oriented changes.

1. *Built confidence as a mother and wife.* Taking care of a normal kid is hard enough. Mrs. N's situation is doubly difficult. Her only child suffers from tuberous sclerosis, a congenital impairment of the brain. Baby N would undergo various tests every now and then that are both financially and emotionally draining for the family. Mrs. N claimed that the course gave her a much-needed boost. Armed with the knowledge of what she is capable of doing, she gained confidence to bear with the situation, boosting her self-respect and earning the respect of her spouse.

As a single parent, Mrs. M found it very difficult to be both father and mother to her three children. There was never a moment that she did not feel overwhelmed by the responsibility. She used to be morose, irritable, ill-tempered. She rarely smiled, at times even in front of customers. The SPC course reportedly changed her outlook towards her situation. She was able to appreciate the good things she did not notice before, and to recognize her strengths and begin capitalizing on them. In the process, she became amiable and her fellow workers have noticed the sweet smile Mrs. M now wears.

2. *Appreciated quality time with family.* Mrs. G got so engrossed with work that she often overlooked the needs of her family other than their physiological needs. She used to bring home gripe and tension from work, which made her easily irritated by the whining of her kids and the slight mistake of her husband. Now, she has learned to value her home not as a place to vent her work-related anger, but a place to build dreams and future plans with her family. She has also learned to listen to her spouse and children.

3. *Realized needs of family members.* Mrs. B learned that she had neglected the needs of her husband, and that all these years of being together, she had not given her best in their relationship. Right after the SPC, she tried to make it up with him. Their relationship has improved since then.

The tantrums of her baby boy used to irk Mrs. C, but she has learned to become more patient, resulting to decreased hypertension. She is trying to develop the emotional intelligence of her child by being an emotionally intelligent person herself. Mrs. C relates that, unlike before the course, she can now successfully control her temper, avoiding tension build-up between her husband and herself. She claims that she seldom needs to control herself now that she has become cognizant of her husband's needs and behavior.

4. *Acquired greater understanding of women.* Mr. MM attests that the SPC, though a course for women, can also be beneficial to men. For instance, the course has taught him to value his wife and her sacrifices as she strives to run their house and earn an income. He claims that he has always helped with housework. He stresses that household chores should be shared by couples. The course has also taught him to become more understanding of the needs of his wife and to be more aware of areas where his wife could gain personal development. With the knowledge gained from SPC, he now claims he is giving his total support to his wife and her career.

On the whole, participants share a new image of woman that was disclosed to them during the training course—a woman that can attend to her family well and still is a productive employee at work.

Productivity. In terms of productivity in the workplace, the following changes were noted:

1. *Developed interest in career advancement.* After 16 years of doing staff work, Mrs. L has finally taken the initiative to ask for a promotion to another department. For 16 years she was content with her present job, and was only concerned with her monthly pay. Though very active in company functions and highly skilled in her job, she has not sought new challenges until the SPC course. Because there are no chances for promotion within her department,

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Mrs. L has asked for a transfer to another department. She believes that if she does not take action she might spend years doing what she has been doing. She knows she is ready for a promotion and it is high time she let her superiors know about it. During the Integration Session Mrs. L was quoted as saying, "After [the] SPC [course] , I have learned that I also have a career to take care of. It is my responsibility to develop my career for which I have been trained . . . So when the company grows, I, too, will grow." By mid-2000, her papers for transfer/promotion were under evaluation.

2. *Improved punctuality at work.* Punctuality is the offshoot of good time management. Mrs. N attests that not only did she have an improved attendance but she also seldom came late for work after SPC, aside from those times that she had to absent herself because of her daughter's sickness. She was able to divide time with her family, work and her added function as an editorial staff in the company's newsletter.
3. *Appreciated work and the company.* Immediate superiors noticed that their staff have become energetic and enthusiastic at work. Employees are now willing to keep longer hours to finish pending tasks. If this attitude infects other employees, then productivity will definitely be raised, considering that even the quality of output of the employees has improved. A probable reason for the change was provided by Mrs. G who surmised that workers have realized the connections between their work and the goals of the company, and between the latter and their individual goals; and the interrelationship among various tasks. The SPC trainees have become cautious of committing mistakes, knowing that their inefficiency could affect not only the output of their unit but also that of other units. They are also observed to accept work load without complaint.
4. *Developed willingness to learn new technology, methods, and techniques.* Mrs. M said that even if one is not trained to handle a new task, if s/he wanted to, s/he could do the task well. For instance, she was not an expert in computer operations, but when assigned to a job dealing with computers she willed herself to learn and now is able to perform her job well. Supervisors readily agreed that after attending the SPC course, their staff has been eager to learn how to operate the computer and to apply new computer programs.

5. *Enhanced interpersonal relationship with co-workers and superiors.* Supervisors agreed that the SPC participants have better relations now with co-employees and immediate superiors. Mrs. C finds it easier now to deal with people after learning that everyone is unique, and acts differently, depending on temperament and culture. Her new-found patience benefits her work with the Internal Audit Department where smooth relations with customer is crucial.

Mrs. B used to answer complain when given additional tasks and to answer back whenever her supervisor called her attention to a mistake. Mrs. B has reportedly improved the way she handles criticisms and workload.

Finally, an employee was cited by her superior as extending assistance to co-employees who were having problems performing tasks, something which the employee did not do before.

Action Steps as a Measure of Effectivity

The SPC program has clearly made a strong impact on the participants. But how do they fare in achieving their individual goals?

During the SPC, participants identified goals they want to achieve within the next five years and action steps to realize these goals. Some declared that after the SPC, they have aggressively complied with the action steps. Others were guilty of forgetting the action steps they had made, but, mentioned that they got involved in activities that help them move closer to their goals.

Three participants have made considerable progress in achieving their goals. The SPC course has inspired Mrs. OI to finish her graduate thesis, which she had neglected for sometime. As a result, she was promoted from Merchandiser to Management Trainee for Merchandising. Another employee, Mr. AS, planned to open his own business. After winning the bid for canteen operation at the newest branch of Rustan's, he resigned and pursued his goal. A third example is Mrs. L who had planned to operate a water-supply business. Less than a year after attending the SPC, she and her husband have already installed a deep well and motor pump in their yard. They are presently canvassing for a water tank and processing business papers for the opening of their water supply station.

A Need for Support System

The FGD participants all agreed that the company must be aware of the career plans of the employees and provide support for them. After attending the SPC, they felt that the environment where they work should be modified to nurture the behavior they learned from the seminar.⁵ They also recognize the role of their immediate superiors in this.⁶ In view of this, they hope that RCC could give its managers the opportunity to attend the SPC seminar, thereby building a pool of managers and supervisors who could evaluate staff performance accurately and guide them in their chosen career paths.

The SPC participants have likewise cited the need for their husbands and the rest of the RCC staff to undergo the course. Men should not be left behind in discussions concerning gender relations. As Mr. MM attested, SPC or courses like SPC are beneficial to men as well as women. Couples would have smoother relationship if both husband and wives undergo the training course. Any changes seen in each other will be understood, welcome and nurtured by the other parties. In the same manner, a co-employee may not fully understand the changes in an SPC participant and might look at it negatively. Mrs. B said that her concern for the company was enhanced. She would openly express her concern to co-employees but some would remark that she is only doing that for personal gain.

Without the proper opportunity to practice and share the content, tools and techniques of the training program, participants may revert back to their old habits. If this happens, the training program will be put to waste.

⁵Among the forms of organizational support that were identified by management were: follow-up training regarding gender concerns; provision of training on other areas of personality development, staff-manager relations, and interpersonal development; assignment of SPC participants to tasks or functions that give them personal and career satisfaction; and support in the employees' career development.

⁶When asked about the support that they could extend to their SPC-trained employees, the supervisors cited the following: inspire and encourage them to strive for further development; provide and open communication channels to facilitate exchange of ideas, particularly on work matters; grant the staff sufficient authority to decide on certain issues; assign tasks or projects that will challenge the employees' skills; and coach employees assigned to new jobs.

Collective Action among Women in Business: The Case of the Women's Business Council Philippines¹

This case describes the formation of the Women's Business Council Philippines (also referred to as WBCP or the Council) and its various initiatives to address two key gender issues confronting women in business, particularly those with small and medium enterprises: access to credit and access to training. Its strategies that combine policy advocacy, enterprise development, and networking have resulted in the commitment of billions of pesos that women in business can tap; launching of new enterprises and expansion of existing businesses as trainees apply the technical, enterprise, and management skills learned from the Council's various training programs; and expansion of markets and contacts as local women in business link among themselves and with foreign businesswomen's organizations.

APEC and the Business Sector

In November 1995, leaders of the economies in the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) region established the APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC), as recommended by the Pacific Business Forum, an ad hoc group of business leaders from APEC member economies. ABAC would be a permanent advisory body that would provide an independent business perspective within the APEC process on both progress by APEC on its trade and investment liberalization agenda, and on future work to improve the regional business environment. They are

¹Prepared by Adele B. Adeva of the Bureau of Small and Medium Business Development (BSMBD) of the Department of Trade and Industry. The case writer wishes to acknowledge the cooperation and support which she received from BSMBD and the Women's Business Council Philippines.

also tasked with encouraging the engagement of other regional business and private sector organizations in APEC activities.²

The leaders of each APEC economy name a maximum of three representatives to ABAC who come from a range of business sectors, including small and medium enterprises (SMEs). As of early 2000, ABAC has 62 members, of whom only three are women. ABAC members and their staff meet three to four times a year, culminating in a face-to-face dialogue with Economic Leaders during the annual APEC leaders meeting.

ABAC activities are funded through annual dues paid for by the private sector membership of each member economy. An annual report is prepared for the Economic Leaders, and regular reports are made for APEC Ministers and Senior Officials.

The Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry

In the Philippines, business leadership is provided by the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI), an organization created by government instruction to be the “sole official representative and voice of the entire business community.” PCCI is a non-stock, non-profit and non-government organization of enterprises, local chambers and industry associations representing various business sectors. By early 2000, PCCI has 1,150 corporate members, and 18,000 SME members in geographical areas such as North Luzon, National Capital Region, South Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. It has 88 local chamber affiliates and 122 industry associations.

²In line with its commitment to provide independent advice or perspective to improve the regional business environment, ABAC responded readily to the East Asian economic crisis. It focused its attention first on responding to the immediate concerns of businesses and economies affected by the crisis. Two years after the onset of the crisis, ABAC shifted its energies to work on the longer term stability of financial systems and structural reform. In view of this, it dismantled the financial crisis task force at the end of 1999, and set up a new task force on financial architecture in 2000.

The chamber has 43 standing committees, one of which focuses on SMEs. Its key thrusts include, among others, business advocacy, trade and investment promotion, and SME development.

Gender Issues in the Business Sector

Women's role in economic development has been steadily growing (Women in Business 1999b). Women comprise 32 to 46 percent of the labor force of the countries in the Asia-Pacific Region. Women are usually involved in wholesale and retail trade, social and personal services. They account for 23 to 36 percent of all businesses, having always taken active part in entrepreneurial activities (Women in Business 1999a). Women's participation in business may be described as follows:

- ▶ Women play a very significant role in the economies of Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand;
- ▶ Many women-owned businesses are small and medium in operation, but a significant number have grown into large enterprises;
- ▶ Women-led businesses make major contributions to the region's employment generation;
- ▶ While women are indeed clustered in certain traditional sectors, the success of many women in areas such as real estate, technology linked business and business services opens up new possibilities for women;
- ▶ Women-owned businesses are generally a family enterprise, the modern version of the woman working at home is a thriving woman-led family business;
- ▶ Women-owned businesses withstand the test of time, many have been in operation for a long period of time;
- ▶ Women run their business in a financially conservative manner; although most women-owned businesses operate locally, women are also aggressively going into exports; and
- ▶ Women-owned businesses have been much affected by the Asian financial crisis and have had difficulty coping with its effects (Licuanan 1998).

However, contributions of women remain largely unrecognized, as evidenced by barriers facing women in business today. Among the barriers are economic development policies, most of which are not gender-neutral. They can, and do, differentially affect men and women, in many cases, disadvantaging women. Such gender-differentiated effects arise because men and women have unequal control

of productive resources (human, financial, physical and social capital). Moreover, the institutional environment, which shapes choices and behavior, excludes people from economic opportunities on the basis of gender (King and Mason 1998).

Various meetings of women in business have pointed to four concerns that need to be addressed: access to finance, access to information, training, and markets. In the Philippines, credit-related issues include difficulty of monitoring compliance to laws governing micro-finance for women (Republic Act [RA] 7882) partly because of the absence of sex-disaggregated data on loans. Contributing to the difficulty of women in obtaining loans is the bank industry practice of requiring the husband's marital consent before a woman can avail of a loan. Although the New Family Code lifted this legal requirement, the banks continue to require the husband's signature (WBCP 1997).

Other issues are those that do not affect most businessmen. Women, unlike men, are expected and do strive to balance their business interests and roles with their family responsibilities as wives and mothers. For many women, their social roles as mothers and homemakers greatly restrict the amount of time they can devote to the business, the scope and location of their business activity, their career, earning and savings opportunities and their chances for education and training. Such conflicting demands on women's time and energy underlie the common perception that women lack the "entrepreneurial spirit" and are less interested in business expansion than men. Other factors that may also be important are the lack of role models for women to follow and the lower level of representation of women in leadership in industry ("APEC Technical Paper on Women's Issues in SMEs in APEC Economies," 1998).

The Women's Business Council Philippines

The government needs to play a central role in "providing incentives to equalize access to productive resources by gender, fostering open and competitive labor and capital markets, and creating a legal and regulatory framework that treats men and women equally" (King and Mason 1998). To encourage government to discharge these functions, women in business need to organize themselves into lobby groups

and to be trained in lobbying. In general, women's lobby groups are envisioned to "combine the strengths of business women into one effective voice, with a goal of improving the position of all women in business."³

Lobbying can be done by advocates through existing organizations of businesspeople or by groups specifically formed to promote women's interests. Ms. Isabelita Palanca, WBCP President, explains the rationale for the formation of the Council thus:

[Because] the present private sector setting does not provide for the voice of women in business to be heard. And that is what WBCP is trying to address. In advocacy for instance, when they say that globalization has the face of an angel and a devil, they fail to consult women's groups—WBCP, Philippine Association of Women in Business, Women for Women, National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women, and other women NGOs and associations—and to listen to women [on] how it is impacting them. It is particularly critical, since 50 per cent of the population is women . . . Sadly, they . . . do not seek our opinion, because the popular view is that business has no gender. This is probably true, but the impact of poverty on men and women has not been measured. They just say that women will get affected at least 50 per cent, but they do not consider it a significant figure.

History. WBCP was the brainchild of the Department of Trade and Industry's Office of Special Concerns (DTI-OSC). It was born after a series of brainstorming sessions with small groups of businesswomen from different fields or industries to tackle the issues affecting women in business. The activity culminated on 23 May 1997 in a gathering of some 150 top women chief executive/operating/finance officers, owners and proprietors of SMEs in a forum at Malacañang Palace, called "Women Business Leaders Forum," with the theme, "Bringing Women into the Mainstream of Economic Development."

During the forum, the leaders of each sector were pre-identified. They were responsible for keeping the discussions within the prescribed topics, to wit: key

³An example of an operational lobby group is the Australian Council of Businesswomen (ACOB), which endeavors to act as conduit between existing groups of women in business, small and large, national and local; and to assist in communicating with government and media (ACOB Fact Sheet. www.acob.org).

issues and concerns on women's entry and rise in business; resources, strengths and support mechanisms available; and recommendations to maximize women's role in achieving global competitiveness. Among the recommendations was the formation of the Philippine Council of Women Business Leaders, which would become the "voice of women in business" (Women in Business 1998). The assembly picked out eight women—most of whom were presidents or chief executives of their own businesses—to become the Council's Founding Trustees.

The organization eventually became the WBCP. It was registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission on 25 August 1997. By their own admission, the movers behind the Women Business Leaders Forum neither designed nor expected the one day event to lead to a more permanent coalition of businesswomen, the Women's Business Council Philippines (WBCP 1997).

Then Philippine President Fidel Ramos commended the formation of the Council and urged all government agencies, with DTI as lead, to give their full support to the group. He gave official blessing to DTI to provide the seed fund for the Council. Likewise, the national machinery for women, the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW), actively supported the Council.

Mission and Vision. WBCP sees its mission as one of building "a business culture that is cognizant of women's contribution to the economy and supportive of women's quest for excellence, whether as workers, entrepreneurs, owners or executives, in pursuit of sustainable economic growth, global competitiveness and social equity."

WBCP aims to enhance women's access to finance, generate benchmark data on women in business, develop entrepreneurship, engage in policy advocacy, undertake networking and business matching, and expand membership. It intends to promote women economic empowerment through enterprise development, or "[making] women-owned and women-run enterprises viable."

Membership and Leadership. In the beginning, membership was by invitation and was, therefore, small. The Council tried to get women in different types of businesses and industries. The result is a mixed group that includes women in

electronics, garments, private technological-vocational education, and the like.⁴ About 15 industries are represented in the organization.

WBCP has two operational “chapters.” The main chapter, based in Metro Manila, has 43 founding members; the second, Rizal chapter, has 23. The Davao chapter is not yet operational as it still trying to establish its membership base. On the whole, the WBCP members are mostly presidents of their SMEs or head of the business organizations or associations that they represent. A majority are involved in manufacturing and sales.⁵ The Council president believes that women in business are well represented in the WBCP: “We have small, medium and large entrepreneurs as members, coming from different industries, and a combination of strategic decision-makers (owners and chief finance/executive officers, managing partners).”

There are plans of expanding membership, as the Council realized that it has to have numbers for it to be listened to. But the economic crisis has made it difficult to recruit members as people have been busy attending to their own businesses. There are likewise plans to establish linkages with the Employees Confederation of the Philippines, PCCI, and Federation of Filipino Industries, although the WBCP priorities remain to be membership expansion and chapter formation.

The Council has a board of directors, headed by a chairperson (Atty. Elena S. Lim) and a set of executive officers under the president (Ms. Palanca). The other leaders include the vice chairperson (Ms. Zenaida G. Gordon), the corporate secretary (Atty. Lorna Patajo-Kapunan), and the treasurer (Ms. Evelyn Singson). The Council

⁴The WBCP has also conferred honorary membership to a few women and men. The invitation is based on several criteria, including unquestioned integrity, prestige, and distinction in the business community; active management of top-level commercial, industrial, or financial enterprise; established leadership of a government institution or agency; and significant contribution to the growth and advancement of the Council.

⁵The WBCP executive director says that about 60 to 70 percent of the Council members classify themselves as “small entrepreneurs,” but this is misleading as some women entrepreneurs declare themselves as such, although they actually own or run medium-sized ones, in order to keep a low profile.

also employs a full-time executive director and project staff who are responsible for daily operations of the organization.

WBCP Activities and Projects

The Council maintains a Women's Business Center, which is run by the Secretariat, and continues its policy advocacy and international networking activities. Among its policy advocacy issues is the lending window for women. Of its diverse activities, however, the Council president and the executive director consider the lending window and enterprise development (including training) as their priority programs.

Women's Business Center. The WBCP secretariat office serves as a women's business center. The center delivers information and offers referral services to start up or existing ventures for expansion. It publishes a quarterly newsletter that serves as a tool for the Council's membership drive and campaign to introduce the women's business center to women entrepreneurs.

Lending Window for Women. The lending window for women program is an advocacy to help women in business obtain bank credit. It is a two-year project that WBCP has been promoting with the help of DTI and Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) to secure greater access to financing for women in SMEs. A distinctive characteristic of the program is the LATRAMMS framework (see box below) which ensures that women entrepreneurs' endeavors can be duplicated and sustained.

The overriding goal of the program is for government financial institutions (GFIs) and private financial institutions to develop gender sensitivity in the credit process. Equally, the program aims to promote value formation on credit and credit responsibility on the part of borrowers. These can be achieved with the cooperation of the government, civil society and private organizations.⁶

⁶The Council's partner organizations for its lending program include the Philippine Association of Women in Business (PAWB), Women for Women Foundation Philippines (WOW), Balikatan sa Kaunlaran National Foundation (BALIKATAN), International Women's Forum (IFW), Pangasinan

- **LAunch** — for other lending institutions to follow suit and launch lending windows for women in SMEs
- **TRAI**n — for borrowers to be trained in fiscal management and lenders in gender sensitivity
- **Market** — for program partners, now and in the future, to market lending programs nationwide to enhance the growth of the countryside
- **Monitor** — for program partners to establish a monitoring system of availments and other fiscal and business indicators
- **Simplify** — for lending institutions to institutionalize the continuous simplification of the lending process

As of mid-2000, three government banks and one private bank have responded to the WBCP lending-window advocacy. The Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP) launched PINAY, or *Puhunang Inilaan sa mga Pinay* (literally, Capital Dedicated for Filipino Women), on 1 December 1999. PINAY is a PhP1.0-billion credit facility for rural or non-rural-based enterprises that are either owned or led by women. The Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP) has also set aside PhP1.0 billion for women in SMEs, while Banco de Oro (a private bank) is providing PhP500 million, and Small Business Guarantee and Finance Corporation (SBGFC), PhP100 million in credit and guarantee.

Business Matching/Networking. The women's business center is linked to the Internet in order to enhance its networking efforts with local and international organizations. It also manages an ASEAN web page, which was launched in September 1997, where it features profiles of women-led or women-owned companies to facilitate business matching. The Women in Business page could be accessed from the home page of the APEC Center for Technology Exchange and

Council of Women (PCW), Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP), Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP), Small Business Guarantee and Finance Corporation (SBGFC), People's Credit and Finance Corporation (PCFC), Chamber of Thrift Banks (CTB), Equitable PCI Bank, Banco de Oro, Planters' Development Bank, Asia Trust Bank, NCRFW, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), and the Board of Investments.

Training for Small and Medium Enterprises, under the sub-heading “Let’s Do Business.”

Entrepreneurship Development. In partnership with the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), WBCP organized various seminars and short courses which are all aimed at developing the capability of women as entrepreneurs. Among the courses are the following:

- ▶ Two-part basic business start-up course for grassroots women, in cooperation with DTI;
- ▶ Business improvement and survival course for women entrepreneurs, in cooperation with TESDA and DTI;
- ▶ Export seminar to Canada for women handicraft exporters, in cooperation with Can Asian Businesswomen’s Network, Trade Facilitation Office Canada (TFOC), and the Philippine Trade and Training Center (PTTC);
- ▶ Candle-making and enterprise development course for differently-abled and physically-challenged women, in cooperation with DTI;
- ▶ Business enhancement course for Indo-Chinese women SMEs from Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, and the Philippines, in cooperation with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific (ESCAP) and TESDA;
- ▶ Women-friendly credit process workshop for women borrowers and bank loan officers and frontliners, in cooperation with DTI;
- ▶ Upgrading of candle-making skills for differently-abled women, in cooperation with DTI; and
- ▶ Roundtable discussion on how banks could design specific programs according to the LATRAMMS framework, in cooperation with DTI, GFIs, Bankers’ Association of the Philippines, and private banks.

The different training programs have yielded a variety of results. Participants in the basic business start-up course claimed that they learned to delegate tasks, to separate their business capital from their personal and household funds, and to prepare annual profit projections. Some developed ideas of potential business during the course, while others were able to link up with other women who were already or just planning to venture in similar business.

One training yielded more than just linkages. After the candle-making and enterprise development course, the participants formed a cooperative called “Molding Hands.” Although the group has yet to register with the government, put their books in order, and raise sufficient capital, the members have already canvassed orders, and produced and sold candles. They have also addressed flaws of their initial outputs (candles easily melting, color fading after a week). As one former trainee confessed, “We had rejects, but then we recycled and repackaged them, and we were able to sell them at a gift shop. We also had a PO [purchase order] from the TWH president’s son who has a shop of his own.” Another added, “It was basically trial and error, but we eventually got it right.” They found production by dipping cheaper, and production by molding easier. In time, they learned to use resources more efficiently and to improvise materials. To improve their production, they also went on a study mission to a group that had more experience and far more advanced production methods.

Another set of training-related results that participants cited pertained to the development and application of entrepreneurial and management skills, such as costing, pricing, packaging, and marketing of candles. Participants in another course learned to keep a close watch on market trends and opportunities. One trainee claimed that she reviewed her strengths and weaknesses of her enterprise, and reorganized her business according to the training modules/inputs. Another trainee learned to believe in herself. She also profited from the Canada Export Seminar as prospective buyers have been contacting her. A third participant reported that she was able to restructure her organization, set realistic objectives, and meet deadlines.

Policy Advocacy. The Council’s involvement in policy advocacy took various forms. The WBCP submitted to DTI its official comments on Senate Bill Nos. 75 (proposed Committee on Equal Opportunity for Women), 539 (proposed National Commission on Women), and 1334 (Promotion of Home Industries).

It also pushed for the implementation of the “Micro-Finance for Women Act,” holding meetings with GFIs which resulted in several actions and/or commitments:

- ▶ From the Central Bank (BSP), commitment to further study the issues identified during the meetings to enable BSP to implement measures to make credit more accessible to women borrowers, and pledging of support of the BSP representative to

the initiatives of DTI and WBCP in the Small and Medium Enterprise Development (SMED) Council;

- ▶ From the Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP), issuance of a circular instructing all its branches to actively implement the law, and issuance of a press release to national dailies that advertise the credit facilities available to women in business; and
- ▶ From the DTI, supplying the DBP with a list of organizations that have good credit standing in the DTI's Tulong sa Tao program..

Moreover, WBCP sits in the Board of Commissioners of the NCRFW and, along with NCRFW, continues to advocate for the operationalization of “mainstreaming gender and development” in government departments and agencies. The Council also serves as a policy adviser on trade and industry to DTI, and maintains links with the National Statistical Coordination Board for the generation of sex-disaggregated data. The Council has requested to be involved extensively in the process of instituting gender-responsive design changes in government forms and surveys.

WBCP was singled out by the *Abanse Pinay!*, a group registered in Comelec's party list for sectoral representation in Congress, to provide the business perspective for its legislative agenda. The *Abanse Pinay!* adopted the Council's vision of establishing a lending window for women in banking institutions, and setting up Women's Business Centers in all regions of the country.

International Commitments and Participation. WBCP is involved in various regional and international organizations of women business leaders.

- ▶ *Confederation of Women's Business Councils (CWBC) in APEC Economies.* WBCP helped form the CWBC in 1998. It is a charter member and its president serves as CWBC deputy chair. Originally, there were only 4 member economies: Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines and Australia. A year later, the membership expanded to include Brunei, Hong Kong-China, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Peoples' Republic of China, Chinese Taipei, and Thailand. The CWBC meets quarterly either in Malaysia or in Australia.

CWBC aims to present the views and concerns of women in business in the APEC process through WLN; exchange information on best practices of government, NGOs and the private sector that enhance and facilitate business development; encourage member councils to be incubators for start-up business and/or to mother small businesses; and networking and doing business with one another.

- ▶ *Women Leaders' Network.* WLN was established in Manila in October 1996. Unlike CWBC, the WLN is a diverse network that encompasses women in business, government, academe and civil society in APEC economies. The WLN is mandated to generate, disseminate, promote and apply gender-relevant information and knowledge, with the end in view of serving as a catalyst to raise awareness and build strategic alliances in ensuring the relevance of APEC's agenda to women. The Council president serves as the WLN Philippine focal point under the Philippine Advisory Group.
- ▶ *Can Asian Businesswomen's Network.* The Council has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with Can Asian Businesswomen's Network of Canada. The main objective of the partnership is to increase commercial business between women entrepreneurs in the Philippines and Canada who are involved in the import and/or export of goods and services. The Council deputy chair represents WBCP in said network.

In addition, the Council is trying to push for the expansion of member economy representation in ABAC from 3 to 4, with the additional (4th) slot allotted to women in business. This proposal is intended to address the issue of under-representation of businesswomen in ABAC.

Critical Factors for Success

The WBCP president feels that the Council has already created waves in its brief existence, particularly considering that it was born in the middle of the crisis. "We managed to convince the public that we are very serious about women empowerment. We were able to make them listen to us. But there's so much more to do, in being effective catalysts," she said.

The WBCP leaders cited several factors that worked in the Council's favor. These are: role modelling, support of government, group cohesion and a clear agenda.

Role Modelling. The WBCP is respected because of who the members and the leaders are. Its leaders have proven themselves in their respective sectors. They are said to be particularly effective during training seminars because they speak from personal experience, both where they went wrong (so that others could avoid repeating them) and where they did well (for others to replicate, should they wish to). The leaders, in particular, serve as very powerful role models for other women who wish to succeed in business. As the WBCP deputy chairperson puts it, "WBCP has done its share in women empowerment in the sense that [the leaders and members] are all role models, and they are now trying to work in communities, to reach out to women in business."

The Council executive director attributes the success of the organization to leadership. She said of the leaders: "These are women who are already at the top, they are now concerned about what they can share instead of what they can get."

Support of Government Agencies. From the beginning, the Council has had the support of key government agencies, especially the trade and industry department and the NCRFW. It also had the endorsement of the president, which facilitated the commitment of resources by government agencies. DTI continues to help WBCP, providing office space although the Council is an independent, private entity.

The partnership with another government organization, TESDA, has been facilitated by the fact that the Council deputy chairperson sits in TESDA board. Because of similar strategic positions occupied by WBCP leaders in the private and/or public sector, important linkages were established.

The involvement of other government agencies is apparent in the Council president's summation of WBCP achievements:

We came up with the first ever study on the economic contribution of women in business and how the Asian financial crisis affected our businesses. We were also able to influence APEC and other government agencies in producing sex-differentiated data. We were also able to put up lending window for women which was participated

in by GFIs like DBP [and] Land Bank; commercial banks like Equitable, PCI, Banco de Oro; the chamber of thrift banks; the rural bankers' association . . . [There was also support from] DTI, NCRFW, TESDA, and others. It has come full circle. And three billion pesos to be made available for lending! We were able to gain international acceptance [and support from] UNIFEM [the United Nations Women's Fund], UNDP, and others."⁷

Clear Agenda. The Council seems to be in agreement about its priorities: the lending window for women in SMEs and enterprise development. It has, therefore, been able to harness its limited resources to make headway in these two areas. Not only are the leaders clear about what they want to do. They also pursue these goals single-mindedly. As the president says, "Single-mindedness is the key to getting what we want—if we want it then we do all we can to get it, by forming alliances and networks to get to where we want to go." However, she is wary of another financial or economic crisis. "If another one hits, the members will again be busy trying to cope with the payments, etc. The enthusiasm has to be sustained, so does the perseverance," she said.

Group Cohesion. The early successes of the WBCP have also been traced to the strong relationships among the members. The deputy chairperson puts it aptly:

WBCP clicked because we are friends, and we believe so much in the activities we are in. We also have a common thinking that we should survive with the help of our networks. Connectivity is now in—before it was an impolite word, now it is the word, between government and private sector, etc. Connect and do according to your strengths and weaknesses.

Looking into the Future

After making inroads in two of the four issues it has identified—access to credit and training—it can begin to address the two other issues: access to information and access to market. Another area that is being seriously pursued is the formation of

⁷WBCP was the only private sector invited to participate in the Asia-Pacific Parliamentarians Meeting. It could be said that its international connections are overshadowing its successes in local advocacy.

chapters and recruitment of more members. The president admits that there is also a need to penetrate well-entrenched business associations, to be able to penetrate their hierarchy.

There is likewise a strong interest in bringing in younger businesswomen. The deputy chairperson explains this interest, thus:

We would like to put a second and third level of women in business composed of these [younger] women, so that when the first batch retires, they would be ready to take over. These younger businesswomen are different. IT [information technology] is the buzzword, e-commerce is looming, and we have to react and adjust to them fast. And this is something for the young; not for us core group of seniors in business at this point in time. That is why we are trying to bring in younger women in business, those who are 30-40 years in age. Most of us are even already thinking of bringing in their daughters in a 'mentoring' situation.

Among the other areas being explored are:

- ▶ Publicizing, packaging and marketing WBCP better, fielding a full-time spokesperson to the different industries;
- ▶ Position papers in line with the Council's advocacy; and
- ▶ Assisting its Rizal chapter, since the women doing business there need to upgrade their skills in the production of bags, garments, and similar goods that are threatened by cheaper imports. WBCP also wants to work in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), principally because there is a market to its textile products.

The Council president compares their cause to building blocks. "First comes acceptance that there such as being as a woman in business, [a person] who has her own needs and contribution. [This will be made evident] through sex-disaggregated data. This is the reason why we set a high priority to the collection of sex-disaggregated data. Having built the first blocks, we would now need allies and networks, e.g., local and international agencies. We would also need well-entrenched organizations and the press . . . then a wider membership, as well as a clearer handle in how to be effective catalysts so that our opinions will be sought."

Mainstreaming Concerns for Gender Issues at APEC: The Roles of National Machineries for Women¹

This case describes the efforts of the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW) to push for the integration of gender concerns in the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC). However, it also underscores the need for and the value of cooperative and collective action of “insiders,” primarily advocates who sit in some APEC fora and, “outsiders,” consisting mainly of national machineries for women such as NCRFW to promote gender equality/equity and greater involvement of women in APEC. It traces the route taken by APEC and its internal advocates and external partners, from the initial discussions at the working group level, to the formation of the Women Leaders’ Network (WLN) and the Ministerial Meeting on Women in the Philippines, the crafting and adoption of the “Framework for the Integration of Gender in APEC” in New Zealand, and the current implementation of the framework.

Initial Efforts within APEC

In 1996, key women members of the Industrial Science and Technology Working Group (ISTWG) were actively promoting discussions of gender issues in APEC. Reportedly most active in this campaign were women delegates from Canada, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Thailand. Early in the year, an Indonesian member mobilized the Indonesian Institute of Science and Technology to organize the “International Workshop on Women and Technology in Southeast Asia and the

¹Prepared by Mayumi C. Galang and Mercy Ria F. Orca, both of the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women.

Pacific.” Participants in that meeting recognized the importance of APEC as a point of policy intervention. Subsequently, women leaders from public and private sectors in science and technology with expertise in the gender dimension in trade, investment and development cooperation met in Jakarta to determine how gender issues and interests could be integrated within the APEC process. The Philippines’ Department of Science and Technology (DOST) and the Asian Alliance of Appropriate Technology Practitioners, a nongovernment organization (NGO), convened another workshop with the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Regional Office of Science and Technology as host and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) as sponsor. A network of women in science and technology was organized with members from Canada, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand; Vietnam was admitted as an observer. The first formal discussion of gender issues in IST within the APEC framework took place during the Second APEC Minister’s Conference on Regional Science and Technology Cooperation in Seoul, where Canada presented the paper, “Gender and Science and Technology in Knowledge-Based Economies: Some Considerations for APEC.”

Other APEC fora, notably the Human Resource Development Working Group (HRDWG) and the Policy Level Group on Small and Medium Enterprises (PLGSME), also started discussing gender issues in their respective fields. Many of the fora, however, began to consider women’s participation and gender-focused issues only after the 1998 APEC Ministerial Meeting on Women (APEC 1999a).

The Women Leaders’ Network

Under the leadership of Canada and in collaboration with ISTWG women leaders in the Philippines, the network of women in IST that was formed in Jakarta in 1996 agreed to convene a first-ever meeting of women leaders in the Asia Pacific region. The choice of the Philippines as the site of what would later be known as the Women Leaders’ Network meeting was in recognition of the pioneering role that the country (specifically, the NCRFW) played in mainstreaming gender and development (GAD) in government.

In April 1996, the NCRFW and the DOST organized a strategy workshop on the positioning of gender, science and technology for the November 1996 APEC Forum in Manila. Moreover, a Philippine planning group was created to organize the WLN meeting. Represented in the group were the following: DOST, Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), two NGOs (APPROTECH ASIA and Women for Women Philippines), and NCRFW. Canada served as the Planning Liaison. Although the pioneer members of the WLN are mostly women from the IST sector, the network expanded forthwith to other sectors, such as business, academe, Civil Society, and government in all APEC economies. The first WLN in Manila gathered more than 100 women from 14 APEC economies.

The conference had several significant outputs, among which were the organization of the WLN and the crafting of inputs to the 1996 Leaders' Declaration. Paragraph 18 of the Declaration articulated the first high-level support for women's concerns in APEC:

The implementation of our economic cooperation agenda is based on genuine partnership to which all APEC economies contribute. We direct our ministers, working in partnership with the private sector, to identify ways to encourage such participation by all APEC economies. In addition, we ask that they put special emphasis on the full participation of women and youth.

Several factors contributed to the passage of the above epochal statement. First, the WLN has lobbied for the issues and needs of women in business and science and technology sectors and presented its agenda with the various working groups and economies its members represent. Second, members of the WLN meeting planning group also provided technical support to the Leaders Meeting in the Philippines. It was, therefore, easy to introduce the WLN agenda to economic leaders and ministers as advocacy recommendations. The third and most important factor was the considerable effort that then President Fidel V. Ramos gave to push the integration of women's concerns into APEC policies and programs.

The formula of collaboration and two-pronged force from within and without APEC to promote the integration of women created other equally important results. It was able to encourage the APEC Economic Leaders to direct their Ministers to include

women's needs in their programs. More so, concrete actions by working groups to accommodate the concerns of women gradually became evident.

The NCRFW can be located in all these junctures. With Canada as a principal ally, it convened the first WLN meeting. It also assisted in shaping the agenda for the Economic Leaders Meeting in 1996 by sponsoring a workshop solely for that purpose. Key NCRFW officials sat in the planning group and partook in the drafting of the Leaders' Declaration. NCRFW also actively participated in advocacy meetings and top-level consultations with President Ramos and several cabinet members in preparation for the Economic Leaders Meeting.

Ministerial Meeting on Women

As APEC moved from the Philippines to Canada, the focus of the WLN and APEC meetings shifted to small and medium enterprises (SMEs). More importantly, however, the Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) agreed on the holding of the first-ever APEC Ministerial Meeting on Women (MMW) in 1998. The Philippines was once again chosen as the venue.

The Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs spearheaded the preparations for the MMW, with NCRFW providing technical and secretariat assistance. To ensure the success of the meeting, a National Organizing Committee was formed with the support of the Philippine Delegation. NCRFW sat as a member of the committee.

The Ministerial Meeting on Women had as its theme, "Women and Economic Development and Cooperation in APEC." Several technical papers were prepared around that theme: an overview paper, for which the Philippines was responsible; and three others on the sub-theme of SMEs, IST, and human resource development (HRD), which were assigned to Thailand, Chinese Taipei, and the United States. As the practice in APEC, NCRFW, as secretariat, circulated drafts of the papers to APEC member economies, collated their comments, and passed them on to the lead economies for the papers.

Two meetings were held to prepare for the MMW, both of which were chaired by the Philippines. The first was in Penang, Malaysia, where the Senior Officials agreed on the purpose, nature, process and timeline for the preparation of the MMW. The second was held in Makati City, during which preliminary drafts of the technical papers were presented and substantial inputs for the draft Joint Ministerial Statement were received. NCRFW coordinated the soliciting of inputs and comments from APEC member economies and Philippine government agencies on the draft Joint Ministerial Statement.

The success of the first Ministerial Meeting on Women rested on a number of factors. First was the decision to have it in Manila. The Philippines is known for its achievements in mainstreaming GAD in government and its dynamic national machinery on women. Second was the financial and substantive support that the Philippines received from Canada and its national machinery for women. And third was the solid advocacy of the Philippine APEC SOM Leader (Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs Rosario G. Manalo), who ensured that a first ever Ministerial Meeting on Women was put in the APEC agenda.

Crafting and Implementation of the APEC Gender Framework

Following the recommendation of the 1998 Ministerial Meeting on Women, “to accelerate the progress of integrating women in the mainstream of APEC processes and activities”, the APEC Economic Leaders, in their 1998 Declaration, issued a directive to “develop a framework for the integration of women in APEC,” and approved the creation of an Ad Hoc Task Force on the Integration of Women in APEC which would formulate the “Framework for the Integration of Women in APEC” (hereinafter referred to as the Framework).

Taking off from this directive, steps immediately went underway to develop the framework. The Philippines, through the NCRFW, was tasked to draft the Terms of Reference (TOR) for the Task Force on the Integration of Women in APEC, using as basis, the MMW’s Joint Ministerial Statement. After comments and inputs from other APEC member economies, the final TOR was presented at the

preparatory meeting of the Task Force held in February 1999 at Wellington, New Zealand. This meeting resulted in the agreement that New Zealand, Canada and the Philippines will serve as Co-Chairs to the Task Force. All co-chairs came from the economies' national machinery for women.² The New Zealand Ministry for Women's Affairs served as the secretariat.

With Korea, the three co-chairs led the crafting of the Framework. Canada coordinated the drafting of the introductory and gender analysis sections; New Zealand, data collection of sex-disaggregated data; the Philippines, involvement of women; and Korea, the implementation plan. Following APEC processes, drafts of the various sections of the Framework were circulated for comments. A final meeting took place before the third SOM (or SOM III), where the final draft of the Framework and its implementation plan were presented and endorsed with some revisions. The amended Framework was approved by the Economic Leaders during their meeting in Auckland in September 1999. The Leaders hailed the Framework as "a significant step to enhance the ability of women to contribute to and benefit from the prosperity of the region" (APEC 1999b). The formation of the SOM Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Gender Integration (AGGI) was likewise approved.

There are five tasks that are critical to the implementation of the Framework in 2000-2001. These are: printing and distribution of copies of the Framework (with Korea as lead economy); crafting of gender criteria for project proposals, approval, and evaluation (Australia); development and conduct of gender information sessions to various APEC fora on the Framework and gender analysis (Philippines); collection of sex-disaggregated data (United States); and production of a gender mainstreaming idea book (Canada). With the implementation of the Framework coming into play is the phasing in of a new set of key players in the AGGI and the fading out of New Zealand. AGGI leadership is being provided by Korea. At the implementation stage of the Framework, as in earlier periods of gender advocacy with APEC, cooperation and collective work continue to be the rule.

²The participation of the Philippines as one of the Co-Chairs was made possible by partnering anew with Canada. The latter provided financial assistance to the NCRFW, through the Conference Board of Canada (CBoC).

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ISBN 971-8701-02-8