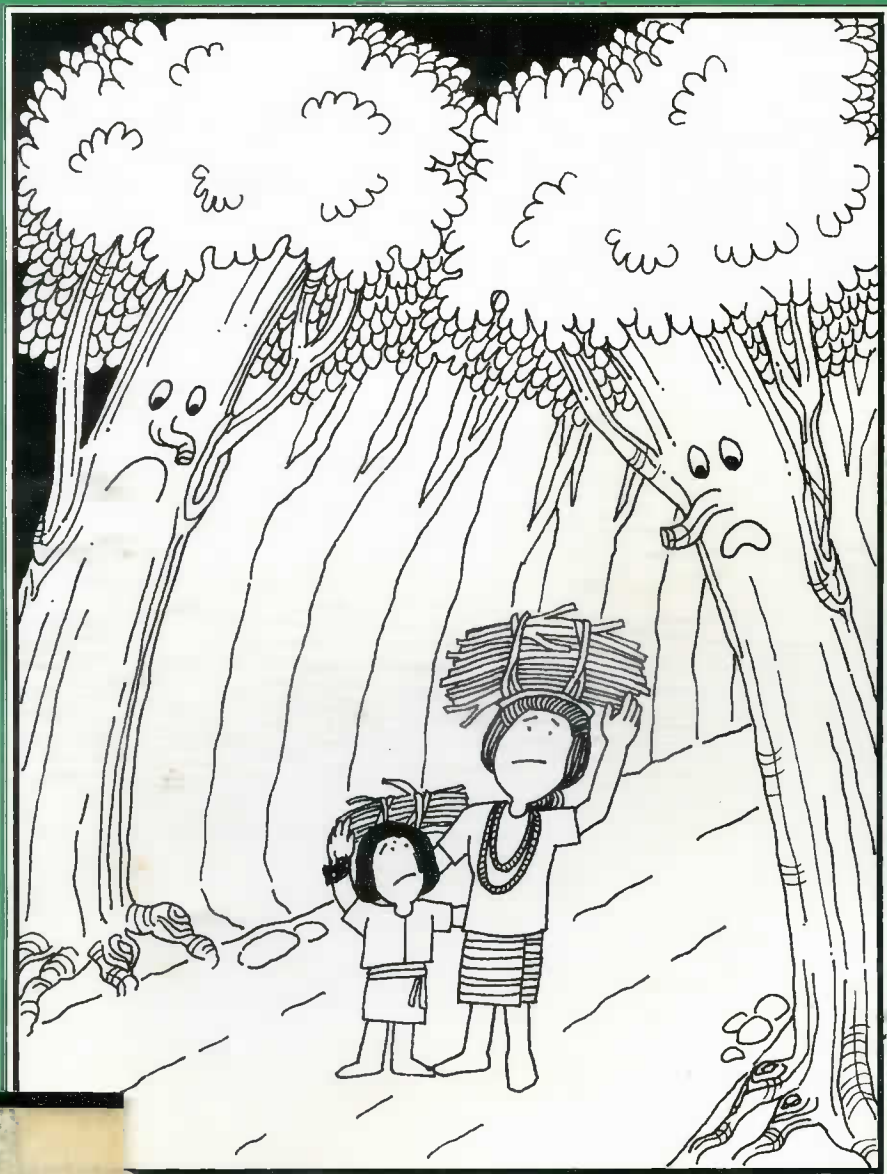


Towards a Gender-Sensitive Community-Based Forest Management Program



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Towards a Gender-Sensitive Community-Based Forest Management Program

By Antonio P. Contreras, Ph.D.

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INTRODUCTION

It is now believed that the forest is not just a bio-physical entity but is also a cultural heritage and a social artifact. The first is part of a social and economic system, and the emergence of a pro-people, participatory and social-oriented management system affirms the recognition that forest resources is an area where the state and forces of civil society can interact.

The Philippine government has embarked on a new policy direction in forest resources management. What used to be a technical domain concerned with the regulation of timber and forest production has now actively adopted a developmental orientation which subscribes to the idea of participatory development and people empowerment. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), by virtue of Executive Order (EO) NO. 192, is tasked to promote the well-being of the Filipino people through sustainable development of the country's forest resources. In doing so, it upholds the Philippine Strategy for Sustainable Development (PSSD) which seeks to balance economic growth with environmental quality and social equity.

THE POLICY SETTING

The Master Plan for Forestry Development, a 25-year framework for the development of the forestry sector, outlines the guiding principles for forest governance and directs the country's forestry sector to take specific steps to forge a blueprint for sustainable forestry development.

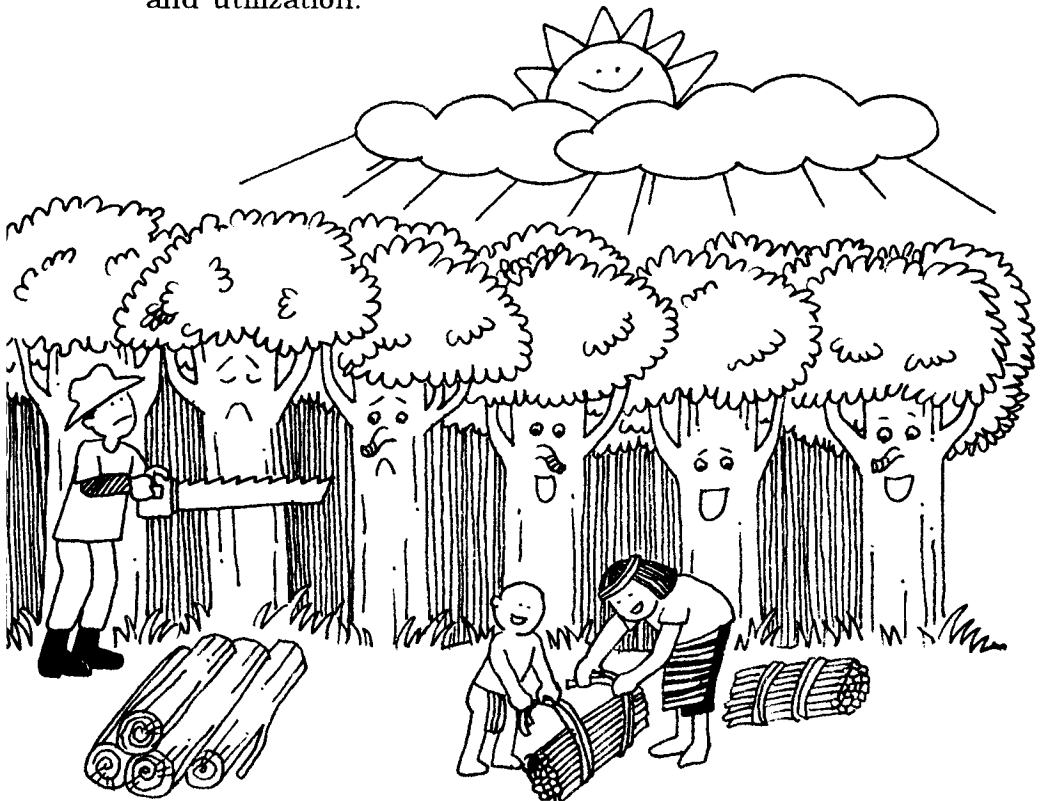
One of the two major umbrella programs of the master plan is the Man (sic) and the Environment Program which hopes to implement the people-oriented programs and activities in forest management.

What are the issues and concerns in people-oriented or community-based forest management (CBFM)?

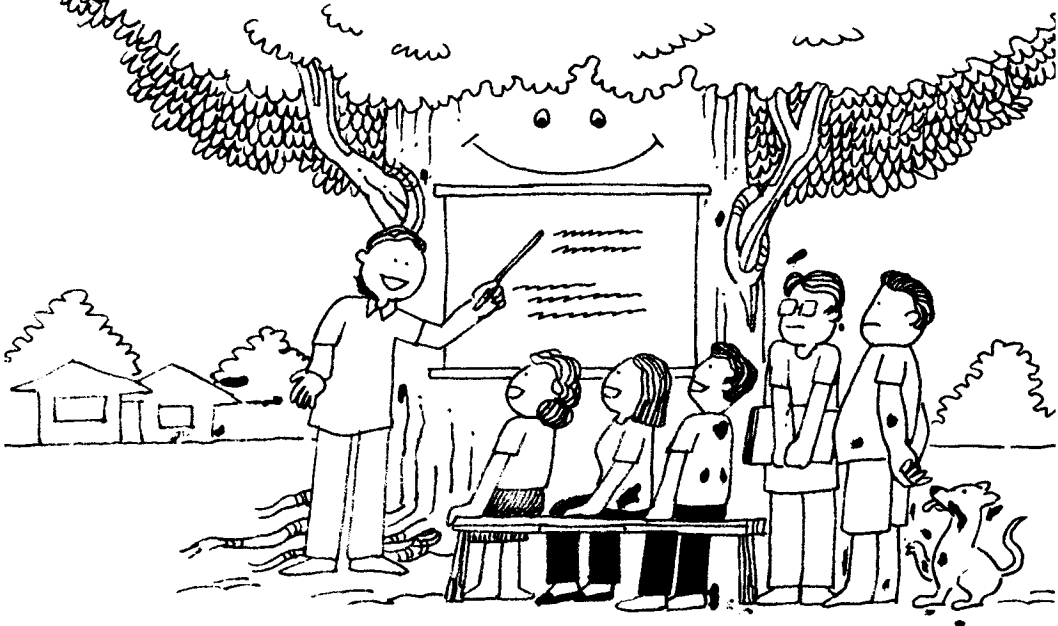
- The democratization of access to forest resources by migrant upland farmers and the indigenous cultural communities and even the forest-based industries composed of corporations, capitalists and financiers ;



- The issue of tenurial security and rights and the institutionalization of a system of ownership or stewardship of public forestlands, which are considered to be “common property resources”;
- The existence of rampant small-scale logging and unguided forest management by forest occupants of nearby forests;
- The need to involve forest communities, both migrant and indigenous, in and nearby the forestlands in the conservation, protection, and improvement of the remaining residual forests, and the rehabilitation of the degraded forest lands;
- The generation of employment and alternative livelihood systems in the uplands in the context of community participation in forest protection, development, rehabilitation, and utilization.



- Grants to participating communities access to the forestland resources under long-term tenurial agreement, provided they employ environment-friendly, ecologically-sustainable and labor-intensive harvesting methods;
- Establishes a CBFM Special Account from grants and donations and other legitimate sources in order to facilitate the implementation of the strategy;
- Formulates guidelines for the submission of a National Comprehensive Community Forestry Action Plan;
- Sets up a community forestry training program in collaboration with Colleges and Universities, private and public organization to support people's organizations (POs), non-government organizations (NGOs), LGUs and other government personnel.
- Encourages partnerships and sharing arrangements among DENR, LGUs, NGOs, financial institutions, and other



government and private institutions in order to achieve the objectives of CBFM.

What is the CBFM Steering Committee and who are its members?

The main function of the committee is to formulate and develop policy guidelines that will create incentives and conditions necessary to carry out the CBFM Strategy. It is headed by the DENR secretary with representatives of various government agencies as members. Representatives from the Philippine Chamber of Commerce, Philippine Wood Producers Association, NGO coalition groups and other public and private organizations may be invited to sit in the Committee.

How will the CBFM program or EO263 be implemented?

1. DENR issued in 1996 Department Administrative Order (DAO) No. 96-29 which provided the rules and regulations for implementing the program and institutionalized the collaboration among the community, DENR, LGUs and other government agencies, NGOs and other private entities and defined their roles.
2. DAO No. 96-30 formalized the integration of all CBFM strategies and people-oriented forestry programs and projects into the DENR regular structure. It created the CBFM Office (CBFMO) under the Forest Management Bureau (FMB) to oversee the implementation of the program.

Are there existing CBFM projects?

At present there are 643 CBFM projects all over the country, covering about 3.3 million hectares and involving 72,356 families. (Table 1 presents a breakdown of the projects by region.)

REGION	No.	Hectares of Proj.	No. of HH
1. Ilocos Region	28	89,325	2,880
2. Cagayan Valley	70	710,090	20,409
3. Central Luzon	48	88,944	5,265
4A. Southern Tagalog, Mainland	22	40,380	1,825
4B. Southern Tagalog, Islands	44	474,832	10,156
5. Bicol region	49	90,625	3,812
6. Western Visayas	40	77,753	1,360
7. Central Visayas	43	46,387	1,515
8. Eastern Visayas	38	165,739	1,393
9. Western Mindanao	37	166,731	6,687
10. Northern Mindanao	32	205,641	6,740
11. Southern Mindanao	61	575,574	2,291
12. Central Mindanao	35	49,314	467*
13. Caraga	35	233,819	3,375
ARMM	6	3,261	no data
CAR	54	328,353	4,181
NCR 1	500**		
Total	643	3,347,180	72,356

Source: DENR

* Incomplete

** The project in NCR is a coastal environmental project

Are there other forest management agreements?

About 3.35 million hectares are covered by active timber licensee agreements (TLAs), pasture lease agreements (PLAs) and integrated forest management agreements (IFMAs) which are given to private corporations, and regular reforestation projects and mangrove forests which are administered directly by DENR.

The area covered by CBFM projects are now almost equal to those covered by corporate-based projects. The total area which are left as open access, and are available for either community- or corporate-based forestry projects, according to DENR data, is estimated to be about 7.56 million hectares.

GENDER GAPS AND OPPORTUNITIES

DENR has been rated by NCRFW as one of the more gender-sensitive line departments. A big part of this reputation is due to the presence of a host of community-oriented strategies which offer opportunities for women to have access to both tenure and livelihood activities.

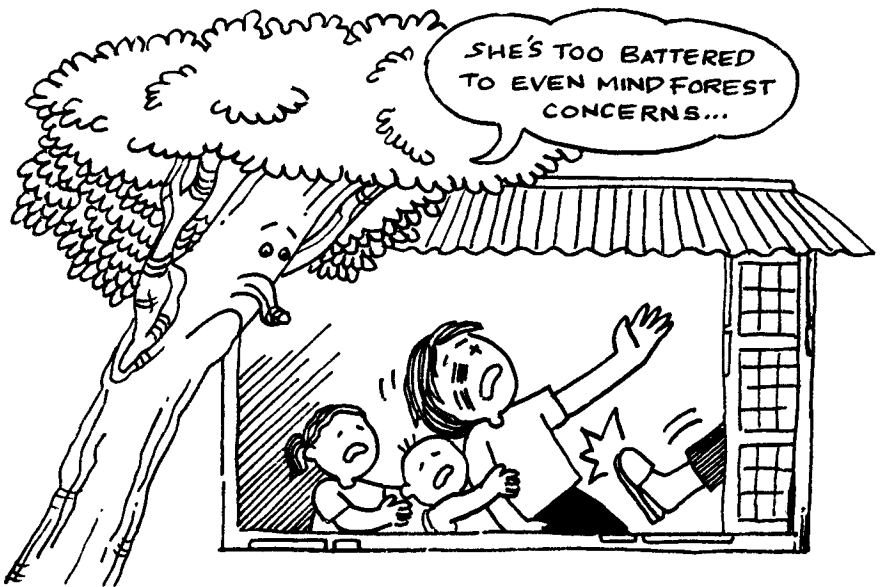
The Integrated Social Forestry Program has provided women upland farmers the opportunity to become recipients of Certificate of Stewardship Contract (CSCs) independent of their husband's. Joint access is also mandated in the practice of putting the name of both husband and the wife in conjugal contracts. Some CBFM projects have supported the establishment and operation of women's groups and of women-specific activities, which address their practical needs.

In general, CBFM strategies, with their stated orientation towards social development, provide a receptive terrain for the entry of gender-sensitive development. As to whether such opportunity is indeed taken and is substantiated in policy intent and content and by direct action is where the gaps lie.

What are the gender gaps in CBFM?

1. Even as the principles of empowerment and participation permeates the language of the policy, what is lacking is a direct reference to the promotion of gender equality through women's empowerment. For example in DAO No. 96-29, there is no single reference to the principle of gender equality, and the word "women" as directly referring to a specific sector is totally absent.

2. And as a logical consequence of the first, the treatment of community development and people empowerment remains operationalized in the form of livelihood programs in the context of sustainable forest management; and does not include the equally important, if not more substantive dimensions of social development seen in the context of nutrition and health improvements, adequate and good quality educational opportunities, legal literacy and end to violation of rights, including violence against women (VAW) and children.



3. The apparent neglect of health and nutrition, education and violence against women and children is reinforced by the system of institutional arrangements and processes which support the implementation of CBFM. In the steering committee, the line agencies concerned with health, education and social welfare, namely DOH, Department of Education, Culture and Sports (DECS) and DSWD are not represented.

4. The conduct of community appraisal and PO formation does not address the need to include a gender-disaggregated social, demographic, political and cultural information.

Why are the activities of CBFM limited to resource management?

The principle of community involvement is deployed only as instrumental to sustainable resource management. However, the only rights issue being confronted is the issue of land tenure, and here, deploying communal tenurial instruments such as Community-based Forest Management Agreement (CBFMAs) and Certificate of Ancestral Domain Claim (CADCs), which remove from individuals the access to tenure, and lodge this in communities may even be discriminating against women.

What is the possible implication of this practice on women?

One possible implication is the removal of access of tenure from women and other marginalized members of the community.

Why should CBFM policy include advocacy for women's health and against VAW?

The inclusion of health and nutrition, education and human rights violation including VAW is consistent with the Social Reform Agenda (SRA) which is supposed to be upheld by DENR. The Philippine Strategy for Sustainable Development (PSSD) is unequivocal in including the integration of population concerns and social welfare as one of the parameter indicators for sustainable development. The advocacy for women's health and against VAW



are but logical offshoots of SRA and PSSD. It is also, therefore, logical for CBFM, as a sector-specific strategy which hopes to promote the SRA and PSSD agenda in forestry, to include in its policy a tacit promotion of women's health and an advocacy against VAW.

Is there a resistance to this idea?

The DENR culture, though receptive to the idea of gender equality, has yet to show concrete policy statements that will seriously consider not only the resource-management dimensions of gender, such as providing livelihood opportunities to women, but also to include a holistic view of people empowerment to include women empowerment. Part of the realization is to accept the necessity to address women's health needs, and the issue of VAW in upland and indigenous communities. It is only through this that the CBFM policy terrain can truly become empowering.

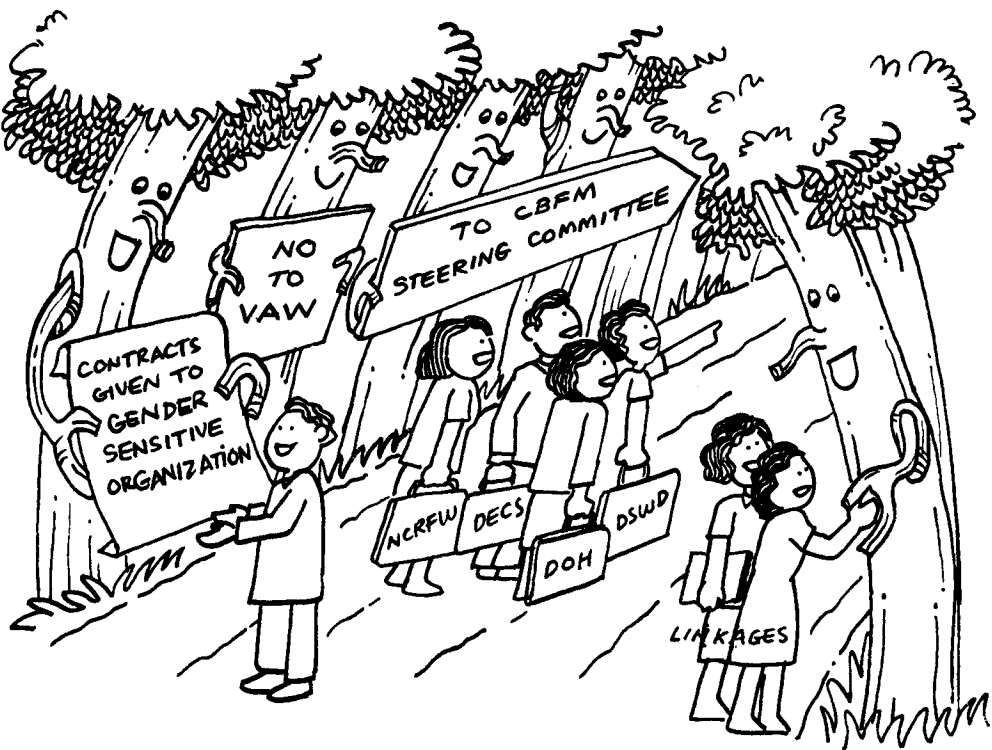
POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

DENR has taken much effort to lay the foundation for gender mainstreaming in its policies, programs and operations. The DENR Gender and Development (GAD) Focal Points, both at the national and the regional levels, continue to give gender sensitivity training (GST) to its key decision makers. Recent DENR policies reveal an effort to veer away from using the male generic. This makes it easier to put forward recommendations to plug the gender gaps.

What are the recommendations for engendering the policy instruments?

Revise DAO No. 96-29 which integrated all people-oriented forestry programs under DENR into the CBFM program:

1. Articulate in unequivocal terms a commitment to both resource management objectives as well as social development thrusts that will address the rights of women and other marginalized sectors in the uplands, including issues crucial to gender equality and women's empowerment, such as the promotion of women's health and an end to violence against women in upland migrant and indigenous cultural communities.
2. Gender-sensitive appraisal, planning, monitoring and evaluation systems must be institutionalized. Community profiling and appraisal must include an explicit attention to health-related problems of women and prevalence of VAW.



3. Include DOH, DSWD, DECS, NCRFW in the Steering Committee and provide mechanisms that will involve these agencies in the various stages of CBFM implementation.

What are the recommendations for engendering policy support mechanisms?

The successful implementation of a gender-sensitive CBFM program rests on a network of support mechanisms such as adequate and gender-sensitive skills and data and information systems.

1. Conduct GSTs for its key policy makers at all levels; gender analysis and planning (GAP) for all rank and file involved in the implementation of CBFM and community-based GST

and GAP training. In the case of indigenous cultural communities, care must be taken to ensure that the process will not necessarily create tensions and conflict in the community level.

2. DENR should include gender-sensitivity as a basis for awarding contracts to third parties such as NGO and corporate contractors.
3. Monitoring and evaluation systems of staff, project and program performance should include parameters which reflect the degree and level of gender mainstreaming. Establish and maintain gender-sensitive information database.
4. Training and adequate funds must be available to the research and development arm of DENR, to continue to conduct basic and applied gender research on community programs and projects, including a focused analysis on the gender division of labor, on the impacts of specific technologies and strategies used and women-specific social development problems related to women's health and VAW in upland and coastal areas. DENR should also cultivate its linkages with research institutions and universities, and with women's advocate groups.

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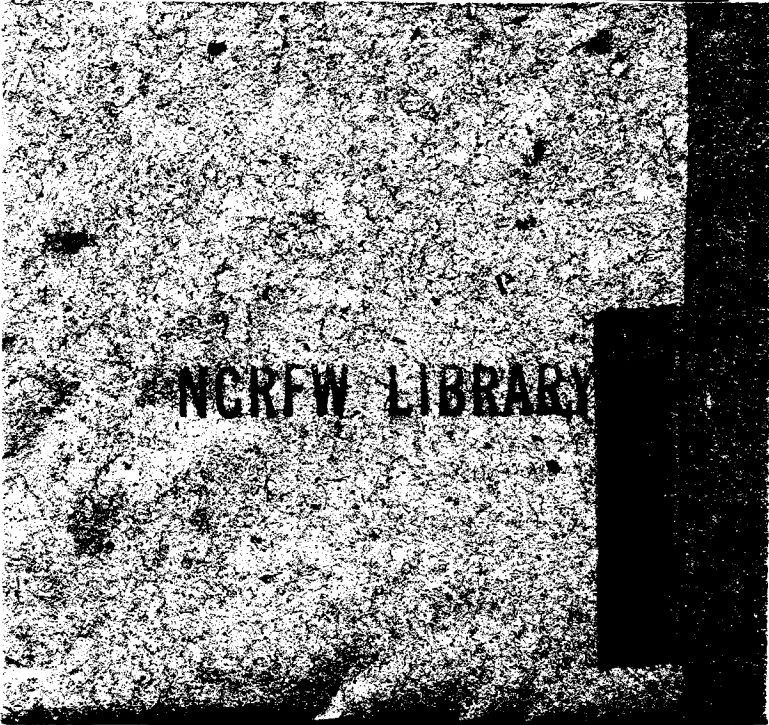


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This popular version of the policy paper of Dr. Antonio Contreras was written and edited by Olivia H. Tripon for the Policy Development and Advocacy for Women's Health Project. Layout and illustration by Liza S. Azarcon.

Produced by Women's Feature Service Philippines Inc. with UNFPA support for NCRFW, 1998.
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