Building Social ASEAN:
Towards a Caring and Sharing Community

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Defining   Integration for the People

Dr. Emerlinda R. Roman
President, University of the Philippines

I would like to welcome the participants – from overseas and from the different educational institutions at home — to the 8th ASEAN Inter-University Conference (IUC)! Mabuhay!

Special welcome, too, to the Asia-Pacific Regional Organization of the Union Network International (UNI-APRO) and to its sister organization, the ASEAN Service Employee Trade Union (ASETUC), for their participation – as co-sponsors, as dialogue partners and as conference discussants – in this Conference. Indeed, we cannot build this ASEAN House if the working people who make up the majority of the ASEAN Society are not active participants.   As the song goes, "a house is not a home, if there are no people there."   We want to build an ASEAN house where people in the region shall live in peace, harmony and prosperity. Or, what the ASEAN Leaders proudly proclaim, "a community of caring and sharing societies."

This brings me to a topic closest to my heart and what I have been teaching in the University – development is meaningless if it does not lead to more choices and opportunities for peoples of all walks of life. Such choices and opportunities can only happen in a socio-economic environment that enables individuals and communities to hone their talents and strengthen their capacities to have fulfilling lives.

be a force for either good or bad. Regional integration ought to have rules — social, economic and labor rules — to ensure that integration is inclusive, broad-based and participatory. Thus, I join those who clamor for an ASEAN that is capable of listening to the people, an ASEAN capable of consulting with the people, an ASEAN capable of empowering the people.

At present, we see that the soaring ASEAN rhetorics on a caring and sharing community is not fully matched by the policies which will give substance to such rhetorics. For example, the ASEAN, in its newly-minted ASEAN Charter, talks of respect for human rights, and yet, the mechanisms for the monitoring and enforcement of human rights are taking forever to be instituted. Similarly, there is so much delay in the operationalization of the ASEAN Declaration on the Rights of Migrant Workers, which was adopted in January 2007 in Cebu City, Philippines.

There are also ambiguous policies which need to be clarified. For example, the ASEAN is a proponent of the principle of non-interference, which is a foundation principle in support of the sovereignty of the individual neighboring countries. And yet, the observance of such a principle can be stretched to bizarre and irrational limits, for example, translating the principle of non-interference into a policy of turning a blind eye to the callous and barbarous subjugation of a people by a military dictatorship. Such policy blindness can extend to the environment, when officials do not see, feel and react to the massive degradation of the environment, which naturally affects everyone's country.

For the truth is that issues related to the environment, justice, equity and growth require decisive pro-people responses at the national, regional and global levels.

I hope this Conference can contribute a lot in clarifying and fleshing out these responses, or at the least, giving a people's perspective to these issues. By framing the issues of regional integration correctly, academics and social activists like you are doing the ASEAN a great service as to how regional integration shall proceed.

If you succeed in doing so, and I have no doubt you will, this Conference shall be a great contribution to the building of an ASEAN House we can proudly claim as our ASEAN Home.

Imagining Regional Identity
Dr. Sergio S. Cao
Chancellor, UP Diliman

On behalf of the University of the Philippines Diliman, I would like to welcome all of you to the 8th ASEAN Inter-University Conference (AIUC). I would like to commend, too, the two UP Diliman units – the UP College of Mass Communication and the UP School of Labor and Industrial Relations – for having successfully organized this event, easily the biggest academic gathering of its kind in the ASEAN region this year. We proudly claim this Inter-University Conference as one of the high points in our University's year-long celebration of its Centennial.

I take note of the theme of the Conference – "Solidarity in a Globalizing World." Indeed, how can ASEAN evolve into a genuine community if there is no genuine solidarity between and among the peoples of the ten ASEAN countries? How can ASEAN become a community of caring and sharing societies if its development agenda and decision-making processes are determined and dominated by a technocratic few? How can ASEAN advance into an ASEAN Union if the ten ASEAN Leaders meet annually without any serious consultations with the peoples on the different ASEAN integration blueprints that the ASEAN Jakarta office has been churning out with increasing regularity?

Ironically, studies commissioned by the ASEAN show that majority in Southeast Asia do not understand, much less identify with, the ASEAN and its processes. No Singaporean or Filipino or Thai or Vietnamese or Malaysian will be quoted as saying 'I am an ASEAN citizen'. The

officially involving the ASEAN governments in dealing with some specialized concerns such as trade tariffs or forest haze and the like. But ASEAN as a badge of a Southeast Asian's identity, as part of his or her being or consciousness? This is like a puzzle, or something for the birds and the bees.

This is why this Conference is extremely important, for it is raising, and probing into, the different dimensions of life which ASEAN, in its numerous integration blueprints, either tends to simplify or ignore. We need to encourage a deeper exchange of ideas and studies on how real integration should proceed and how this ASEAN identity can evolve and develop. For example, how should the ASEAN concept of citizenship and the cultural, political and economic dimensions of such citizenship be defined? How about the national culture of each of the ten ASEAN countries? And can we really imagine an ASEAN polity happening?

Yes, we know that globalization and cross-border exchanges in the region have been undermining our traditional understanding of sovereignty. They are also influencing our patterns of consumption and views of the world around us. But is there enough basis to proclaim our ASEAN identity? Can a Thai employer consider his Burmese refugee worker an ASEAN brother?

And if we have to surrender part of our nation-hood to an ASEAN-hood, what kind of regional identity do we really want?

There are many unsettled questions and, probably, as many unsettling and disquieting answers. But this is precisely where the value of a Conference like the IUC comes in. We need scholars and academics from the humanities, social sciences and natural sciences to share and

demic exchanges shall remain academic if they are not validated against the real world of the ordinary people – the world of workers, farmers, home-based producers and the millions who make up the ASEAN society. This is why I commend the organizers for their success in bringing in the UNI-APRO, ASETUC and the Fair Trade Alliance, who together represent the broad labor and civil society movements. We need to test the validity of our academic assumptions by holding dialogues and exchanges with the people on the ground. In such interactions, we hope we can help humanize this process called regional integration and bring about a truly caring and sharing regional community.

Social Dialogue and Representation: The EU Experience

Mirko Herberg
Resident Representative, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung

The Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) lauds and supports the efforts of the organizers of the 8th ASEAN Inter-University Conference to focus attention on the social and labor issues of regional integration. These particular concerns are often neglected when countries resolve to engage in cooperation that is primarily focused on, and driven by, economic integration, i.e., the removal of barriers to trade and investments. This is also the case of the ASEAN today, whose leaders envision building a regional economic community characterized by the free flow of goods, services, capital and skilled labor. Whereas regional integration may serve in fostering economic development, the world has, however, witnessed widening development gaps and rising inequalities when regionalism and economic integration are guided only by the recipes of liberalization and deregulation. Regional economic integration without a social development compass is fraught with societal risks, labor instabilities and a lack of legitimacy.

Defining and shaping this social development compass in the ASEAN is a collective task that needs to involve a wider spectrum of the ASEAN citizenry. The social, natural and other scientists and researchers in the region have a leading intellectual role to play by charting realistic ways to achieve democratically set goals of regional integration. And so do

trade union movement in the region who have been raising their voices and who have developed their own vision of ASEAN that has the people at its core. Linking all these groups of actors is indeed necessary, and we welcome the initiative of the 8th AIUC organizers to bring in the trade unions and civil society organizations to what is traditionally an academic exercise.

Our own experience in the European Union (EU), hailed by many observers as the most successful economic integration project in the world, shows that there is no royal road to regional integration. On one hand, it cannot be denied that the European integration project is a major factor in transforming a continent that has been shattered by the ravages of war into a zone of peace and a leading global economic bloc that creates and sustains jobs and incomes. On the other hand, there are continuing criticisms on how the EU has subverted political democracy within the individual member countries and how the project has benefited primarily the European transnational corporations.

And yet, the social and labor gains in Europe cannot be denied. Trade unions and other progressive forces are represented in several European institutions, where they are directly involved in decision-making and consultation. One example of their successful engagement is their ability to have secured a European Social Directive which requires transnational corporations operating in two or more European countries to conclude a "Framework Agreement" and establish a "European Works Council" with their counterpart unions. These are developments which deepen industrial democracy in the era of globalization. Nevertheless, a whole range of economic, social and labor issues remains to be debated upon and decided in the EU context. Pertinent cases are the twin issues of business flexibility and labor security.

However, one fact is undeniable – these issues are best addressed through a continuing process of social dialogue among society's stake holders. This, in turn, requires a genuine and effective representation of the basic sectors in the integration table. Without such representation in the EU policy-making bodies, the voices and concerns of the European trade unions would not and will not be heard.

Without social dialogue, urgent social and development policies cannot be adopted, much less discussed. For example, the difficult and expensive program of closing the wide development gaps between the advanced EU countries in the North and the less developed ones in the South and East would not have come into being. Incidentally, this program shows that growth and development do not automatically occur in the less developed areas if the social and physical infrastructures for growth and development are absent.

There is, of course, no global recipe for regional integration. The EU regional integration model cannot be mechanically replicated in the ASEAN setting given the wide political, historical and cultural differences between the two major regions - the European Union and Southeast Asia.

However, one of the critical success factors in any integration process is people's participation, which includes their ability to articulate their own interests, and how society can address those interests.

The success of the ASEAN integration project, therefore, will depend to a great extent on the ability of the ASEAN Leaders to invite the ASEAN people to play a more genuine role in shaping the future of the integration process in Southeast Asia.

Foreword

ASEAN Integration:
Liberalization and Development for Whom?

Wigberto E. Tañada
Lead Convenor, Fair Trade Alliance

The ASEAN region has been hailed as one of the fastest-growing in the world. It has a large population of close to 600 million people, producing an annual regional Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of over $1 trillion. It is surrounded by dragon economies – Japan and South Korea in the east, China in the north, India in the west, and Australia and New Zealand in the south.

In fact, Japanese economists are unabashedly pushing for ASEAN to serve as the core of a bigger East Asia Community (EAC) composed of the ten ASEAN countries and the three East Asian dragon economies of Japan, China and South Korea. This EAC will have a collective GDP that will easily dwarf that of North America and the European Union's.

But, before we are dazzled and confused by the economic hype on a rising and integrated ASEAN economic community (AEC), or the Japanese vision of EAC, let us first consider some realities on the ground.

First, the ASEAN, founded in l967, has just begun its 5th decade. And yet, it is adopting its TOR or terms of engagement only now, through an ASEAN Charter composed of 55 short articles.

Second, the ASEAN, formed at the height of the Vietnam War to counter this is part of its commitments to the bilateral trade agreement with the the so-called inroads of communism in Southeast Asia, now includes the Indo-China states of Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos and even Myanmar.   In short, the original cold-war premises underlying the formation of ASEAN were artificial and had to be junked, to give way to the realities of a post-Vietnam War era.

However, the main point that should be made here is that economic liberalization *per se* does not necessarily lead to regional integration. In the l980s, the ASEAN initiated a number of regional integration projects, such as, preferential tariffs for certain ASEAN products and comple-mentation projects in support of ASEAN industries. In the l990s, ASEAN became even more ambitious with the establishment of an ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) project implemented through a Common Effective Preferential Tariff regime (CEPT), which has reduced tariffs for ASEAN goods at 0-5 per cent.

And yet, despite the AFTA-CEPT and the various integration projects, the growth of intra-ASEAN trade or trading among ASEAN members has been much less than the growth of extra-ASEAN trade or trade by the individual ASEAN countries with those outside the ASEAN. The AFTA-CEPT projects account for less than five per cent of the intra-ASEAN trade, meaning member countries do not avail of the so-called preferential tariffs under the AFTA-CEPT.

There are at least three reasons for the poor growth of intra-ASEAN trade and the limited impact of AFTA-CEPT.

First, most countries in the ASEAN have unilaterally liberalized their

of the IMF-World Bank conditionality package. In the case of Vietnam, this is part of its commitments to the bilateral trade agreement with the United States and a price of membership in the WTO.In the case of Singapore, liberalization has always been considered an integral component of its open trading economy.   In short, AFTA-CEPT and other ASEAN-led liberalization programs have played a marginal role in the liberalization of the individual ASEAN economies.

Second, most of the developing ASEAN countries are competing with one another. A number is producing similar agricultural products, such as, rice and oilseeds, exporting similar industrial products, such as, sewn garments and textiles, and sending migrant workers overseas to ease the unemployment situation at home. Interestingly, over 40 per cent of intra-ASEAN trade is accounted for by one country with the lowest population base next to Brunei: Singapore.

The third, and probably more important reason, is the uneven development between and among the ASEAN countries. On one end, ASEAN has the trade-rich Singapore and oil-rich Brunei, whose per capita GDP is around US30, 000. On the other end, it has the CLM countries – Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar - whose per capita GDP is less than half a thousand dollars.

In-between are the newly-industrializing, natural-resource-rich Malaysia; the coup-prone, tourism-dependent Thailand; the heavily-indebted Indonesia and Philippines, and the fast-growing-but-late-liberalizing Vietnam.

However, there is also so much unevenness within the individual ASEAN countries, with some benefiting from economic integration and global-

extensive documentation on how liberalization and globalization tend to benefit a few, the included, mainly the economic partners of transnational corporations and some skilled professionals like IT programmers.

At the same time, these processes of globalization and liberalization tend to marginalize many others — the excluded, such as, the small farmers; communal fisherfolk; small and micro enterprises with no global linkages; domestic industries producing for the home market; indigenous peoples who do not comprehend the meaning of *tradeables* and *exportables*; workers displaced by privatization and corporate restructuring, and many others who have no sustainable jobs or business niches under globalization and economic liberalization. Even in the rich ASEAN countries, they have a growing segment of old, redundant workers, who cannot find meaningful and secure jobs in a liberalized and globalized economy.

This unevenness in economic development is also reflected in other areas of social life. Without going into specifics, there are studies showing that some countries have huge deficits in governance – specifically, respect for democracy, observance of human rights and compliance with global core labor standards.

And yet, the ASEAN countries would rather deal with difficult and embarrassing issues, such as, human rights violations, through the so-called 'ASEAN way', meaning to just keep silent or to look the other way around. There are also cross-country concerns, which are not addressed decisively in the ASEAN, particularly, the annual problem of haze, the exhaustion of common marine resources, the illegal trafficking of people and so on.

mainly on a narrow economic liberalization formula. Most of the integration is being done by the transnational corporations, which are able to take advantage of liberalized borders and to treat the region as one production base and a single distribution market.

This is what the Japanese car and electronics manufacturers are doing. This is also what some home-grown transnationals, such as, CP of Thailand, Temasek of Singapore and San Miguel of the Philippines, are doing.

On the other hand, the narrow and limited integration offers an explanation as to why majority of the peoples in the ASEAN does not understand the ASEAN and why they cannot relate their lives to the ASEAN integration project. Do the ordinary Filipinos know how their Laotian brothers and sisters live? Do the Thais understand the culture of Indonesians? Do workers in Malaysia and Singapore consider migrant workers from poorer ASEAN countries as brothers and sisters? Do farmers, small traders and home-based producers in the various ASEAN countries actively interact with one another and forge meaningful and profitable economic networks? Can mass poverty, mass unemployment and backwardness in some areas be solved through a narrow ASEAN liberalization formula?

Unfortunately, these are the questions that the existing ASEAN institutions are unable to answer. In the first place, the processes of information sharing and consultation on regional integration with all the stakeholders – so vital in any unification process as demonstrated by the experience of the European Union – are absent, despite the grand declarations that ASEAN is building a community of caring and sharing societies. This is why civil societies have been engaging ASEAN, in

Fortunately, there are positive developments. Civil societies, trade unions and small producers in the region are now speaking up and getting organized. Regional networks of farmers, home-based workers, trade unions and civil societies are also being formed.

This is what it should be, for real integration can only happen if there is integration at the grassroots level, if people in the ten ASEAN countries begin to understand that they are ASEAN citizens and that they have a right to be heard.

Real development means growth is not jobless, for more and better jobs are being created for all; that integration is not voiceless, for all the stakeholders are being informed and consulted; that development across the region is not ruthless and rootless, for peace, equity and harmony among the people are being preserved; and that the ASEAN project is not future-less, because the environment is being preserved and sustained.

Such a vision should be the basis for building an ASEAN community of caring and sharing societies.

Of course, the success of such an integration vision will depend on how strong we – at the grassroots — are in uniting with one another and building an ASEAN-wide movement around this vision.

Putting People at the Center of Regional Integration

Christopher Ng
Regional Secretary, UNI Asia-Pacific Regional Organization

We, at the Asia-Pacific Regional Organization of the Union Network International (UNI-APRO) and the ASEAN Service Trade Union Council (ASETUC), are pleased to be co-organizers of the 8th ASEAN Inter-University Conference whose theme is very close to the collective heart of the trade union movement – people solidarity.

Indeed, the greatest challenge facing us in the ASEAN is how to put the interests and well-being of the working people in the ten ASEAN countries on top of the regional integration agenda. We want closer linkages between and among the ten ASEAN countries.

However, we want the integration process to be, not only inclusive, but, also, truly beneficial and equitable to those who constitute the majority of the ASEAN society. Like globalization, regional integration can be a force for good as well as an instrument for exclusion and inequality.

It is in this context that we warmly welcome the great idea of a people's dialogue and collaboration with the leading social scientists and academicians working on the various dimensions of ASEAN life such as migration, food security, environment, and so on. Together, the academe and the trade union movement can do a lot in humanizing

This is why UNI-APRO and ASETUC have been active in engaging ASEAN on the ASEAN Charter and on the economic and social directions of the various regional and industry liberalization programs. In particular, we have been pushing for an integration process that respects the universal core labor rights and leads to genuine social and economic cohesion among the peoples of Southeast Asia.

As to the regional integration processes underway, we note that, after four decades, the ASEAN is now accelerating economic integration. In the 2003 Bali Summit, the ASEAN declared the goals of regional integration as being based on three pillars – economic, socio-cultural and security. The following year, in Vientiane, ASEAN adopted an Action Program to fast-track integration through the 11, now 12, Priority Integration Projects.

In 2006, ASEAN advanced the target date for economic 'community-hood' from 2020 to 2015. In 2007, in Singapore, the ASEAN leaders endorsed a draft 'ASEAN Charter' as the new governance guidepost for the region, and adopted a blueprint or road map for the fulfillment of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC). The idea is to make ASEAN a single market and production base, or into a single economy, like the European Union.

Great integration ambition, indeed! But how is ASEAN trying to do it?

On this question, we, in the trade union movement, are perplexed. It appears that the authors of ASEAN integration want to achieve integration by simply opening up everything through a tangle of liberalization schemes, *e.g.*, road maps on the liberalization in investments and trade in goods and services and regional free trade agreements

Partners". In addition, member countries are encouraged to conclude bilateral free trade agreements with these dialogue partners.

ASEAN also wants an early conclusion to the World Trade Organization (WTO) talks on the "Doha Development Round." These talks have been deadlocked since 2003 due to the Northern countries' resistance to the Southern countries' demands for reduction in agricultural subsidies by the developed countries and for more flexibility in industrial tariff reduction for developing countries. In short, ASEAN wants to open up everything with the expectation that somehow this would lead to economic integration.

And yet, there is hardly any official discussion on the social and labor dimensions of integration. Where are the workers in this mind-boggling integration process?

We, in the labor movement, raise this question because we have seen the uneven and anti-labor outcomes of the economic liberalization taking place in the region and in the world. Many workers and farmers have not felt any positive change in their lives as a result of globalization.

Many employees, in both the old smokestack industries, such as plastics and textiles, and the new sweatshop export industries, such as garments and fish canning, have been victimized by 'labor flexibility' measures, like short-term hiring or deployment by 'labor-dispatching companies. Worse still, a never-ending process of down-sizing is taking place all over the region due to a never-ending series of mergers-acquisitions-consolidations (MACs) among the big banks, telecoms and various industries that are being opened up in the name of liberalization and globalization.

ASEAN is also promoting 'value-chain production network,' called 'Factory Asia,' which some footloose TNC investors translate to flexibility to relocate plants from country to country in search of cheap labor, thus fueling a 'race to the bottom' among capitalists. The obsession for privatization has also put jobs in the public sector on the brink, especially in countries with a large number of state-owned enterprises. All these measures have enabled investors to squeeze maximum profits from underpaid and unorganized workers.

In the countryside, the situation is even more unequal. There are pockets of growth in agrarian ASEAN countries, principally those hosting TNC investments on export-oriented crop production. But the ordinary small farmers and fisherfolk are vulnerable, not only to the vagaries of the weather, but, also, to the monopoly control by the big traders, the TNC distributors of farm inputs and the global producers from the rich subsidizers – the United States, European Union and Australia.

As a result, rural farm incomes have been shrinking, while the ranks of the landless and jobless rural poor have been swelling, providing the ASEAN TNC employers with numerous migrant recruits to do the 3D jobs (dirty, dangerous and difficult) in the developed ASEAN and other Asian countries.

In short, globalization and regional integration have effectively excluded thousands in the ASEAN region. Thus, we are alarmed over the obsession on the part of the ASEAN officials to focus singularly on economic regional integration via economic liberalization. The reduction of agro-industrial tariffs, the deregulation of the service sector and the liberalization of investment regimes, without due regard to the development disparities in the region and individual ASEAN countries,

This integration formula is no different from the 'one-size-fits-all' liberalization model being propounded by the IMF-World Bank group and by the WTO neo-liberal economists.

This is why UNI-APRO has joined the broad civil society movement in the region in engaging the ASEAN leadership on the social and labor dimensions of regional integration. UNI-APRO also helped organize a new ASEAN labor formation, namely, the ASEAN Service Trade Union Council or ASETUC, which will address, specifically, the concerns of the migrant workers and the employees in the globalizing and integrating service sector, now hailed as the biggest sector in the ASEAN economy.

Among the first trade union initiatives in the ASEAN is the crafting of an 'ASEAN Social Charter' which the UNI-APRO and other global unions in the region formulated in 2003-2005 to counter the 'race to the bottom' occurring in a globalizing-liberalizing ASEAN region. The Social Charter seeks a formal recognition by the ASEAN of the internationally-recognized core labor rights – freedom of association, collective bargaining, non-use of forced labor, non-discrimination at work and elimination of extreme forms of child labor – and their observance by the ASEAN and the individual ASEAN countries.

A campaign to propagate the Social Charter was undertaken by the UNI-APRO and the different unions. In the 2006-2007 civil society consultations undertaken by the Eminent Persons Group (EPG) and the High-Level Task Force (HLTF), who were mandated to draft the 'ASEAN Charter' UNI-APRO submitted the trade unions' proposal to the ASEAN Social Charter for consideration and deliberation.

Unfortunately, when the approved ASEAN Charter was finally released,

of law. Nor was there any clear provision on a system of consultation with the workers and civil societies. And, yet, the ASEAN Charter had a full section on consultations with the 'Dialogue Partners' namely, the governments of Japan, China, United States, South Korea and others.

Clearly, engagement on critical social and labor issues in the ASEAN is a difficult process. Nonetheless, UNI-APRO and ASETUC have remained steadfast in pursuing this process and in propagating their labor and social demands.

In the 2005 Kuala Lumpur Summit, UNI-APRO joined the first ASEAN Civil Society Summit (ACSS), a broad formation of non-governmental and people's organizations across the region. The first ACSS was followed by ACSS-2 in Cebu, Philippines, in December 2006 and by ACSS-3 in Singapore in November 2007.

UNI-APRO has also tried to reach out to the ASEAN Business Advisory Council (ABAC), a big business association enjoying formal ASEAN recognition as a dialogue partner. In September 2006, on the occasion of the IMF-World Bank Annual Conference in Singapore, the UNI-APRO organized a multi-sectoral workshop and invited ABAC representatives to participate.

The workshop concluded with a consensus on the importance of 1) raising labor and social standards, such as having minimum employment contracts for migrant workers and workers in general, 2) developing ways of advancing people-oriented regional integration, and 3) pushing social dialogue to insure that the working peoples shall have a 'voice' in the integration process.

Leaders' Summit in Cebu. Key leaders of ABAC attended said dialogue where its Jakarta-based regional secretary, UNI-APRO and several civil society organizations reiterated the importance of social dialogue.

They also broached the concept of regional integration based on balanced and sustainable development, transformation of the weak and vulnerable into strong players in the integration process, and the incorporation of the UN covenants on labor and human rights into the proposed ASEAN Charter.

Finally, UNI-APRO organized a social dialogue with Dr. Surin Pitsuwan on November 27, 2007, or just weeks before Dr. Surin assumed his post as the new ASEAN Secretary General. A big number of Thai and overseas labor and civil society organizations attended the said dialogue. The UNI-APRO Regional Secretary summed up the recommendations of the ASEAN civil society movement on how to address the social and labor dimensions of regional integration in order to make ASEAN a people-centered regional community.

However, to date, we still have to see a concrete ASEAN response to the foregoing trade union-CSO initiatives and demands. It is abundantly clear that transforming ASEAN into a Social ASEAN, one that is, not only willing to sit down with the representatives of the working people, but, also, prepared to give these representatives a seat at the ASEAN table, is a difficult, exhaustive and prolonged process. Making this Social ASEAN happen requires deeper and closer solidarity among the ASEAN peoples themselves and deeper and closer unity among the trade unions and civil society organizations in the region.

Building a People-Centered, Rules-Based ASEAN

Reynato S. Puno
Chief Justice, Supreme Court of the Philippines

Introduction

I welcome the participants of the 8th ASEAN Inter-University Conference (AIUC). I am informed that this is the biggest gathering of scholars from the Social Sciences, Natural Sciences and Humanities in the region and one of the biggest academic international conferences of this kind throughout the world. It ought to be considered that 23 countries are being represented by the delegates here and nearly 200 scientific papers have been submitted. I have no doubt that the Conference will bring forth a bountiful harvest of ideas on how to fast-track the integration of interests in our region.

Indeed, your theme – ASEAN as a Community: Solidarity in a Globalizing World – expresses the need of our times. For from sunrise to sunset, our eyeballs are grabbed by the fearsome problems of food sufficiency, energy security, climate change and human rights abuses within and without the perimeters of the ASEAN region. Today, these problems may confront only some of us, but tomorrow, they will be the concern of all of us. In a world where the walls are collapsing, we are all neighbors, independent from, yet interdependent on, one another.

We don't need a prophet to predict that these problems will not leave us

continue to threaten the peace and prosperity of the region. Hence, it ought to be self-evident that we need to act together to eliminate the deepening roots and the overarching branches of these problems.

As a caring and sharing community, we should focus on nothing else but the promotion and enhancement of the highest interests of the peoples of the ten ASEAN countries. Their different histories, varying cultures and dissimilar levels of development – all these demand that we continuously consult these peoples for it is only their informed consent that can glue us together as a regional community.

Asserting our humanity: The most urgent integration guidepost

The urgency for the ten ASEAN countries to build a functional, integrated Southeast Asian regional community is now beyond question. The century just-passed has demonstrated beyond any iota of doubt that we cannot hope to deal with the global powers such as the European Union, United States, Japan and China on a good footing unless we push the ASEAN regional integration process with greater passion and precision. But aside from our shared aspiration for integration, our thoughts are still in turmoil, after the lapse of four decades, on the rudiments and mechanics of regional integration. The result is tragic. We behold regions that have integrated exploding with economic growth, while we see countries in the ASEAN region not moving as one, enfeebled by disasters, natural and man-made.

First, consider the disaster that struck Myanmar. Cyclone Nargis snuffed out the lives of at least 80,000 Burmese people, with over 50,000 missing. Tears continue to stain our faces for the ASEAN appears to have

The disaster has become an aid crisis that exposes the impotence of the ASEAN in assisting a member country that has been knocked down on its knees.

To be sure, the ASEAN Secretary General has called for a "coalition of mercy" in the region to attend to the needs of Myanmar. But while the body bags kept piling up in Myanmar, the coalition couldn't immediately come to life, given the ASEAN slow-motion-way of inter-governmental consultation and consensus-taking process. Undeniably, what counts is what works, and there has to be a better ASEAN way of assisting neighbors in distress. Yet, it is crystal clear that the Myanmar crisis is an ASEAN disaster because the health and economic convulsions in Myanmar have serious ramifications on the stability of the region.

Secondly, consider the seriousness of the rice crisis. On one hand, half of the ASEAN member countries, namely Indonesia, Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei, is import-dependent on rice. On the other hand, the other half is not only self-sufficient, but an exporter of rice. Without denigrating the numerous high level ASEAN economic integration meetings, we do not see any effective ASEAN response to the rice crisis that has swept the region in the first few months of this year.

Indeed, we hear some contradictory solutions postulated by different ASEAN leaders: some seek the creation of an export commodity bloc, while others plead for a more rational system of agricultural market distribution. Again, the rice crisis has far-reaching repercussions on the stability of the region for there is no greater threat to tranquility than the rumblings of empty stomachs. ASEAN has targeted the year 2010 for full agricultural integration and 2015 for full economic integration, but given the effects of our halting pauses and half-steps, these targets seem

Thirdly, consider the creeping global recession. Triggered by its subprime crisis, and spiked by the escalating prices of oil and other commodities, the US recession is now threatening the ASEAN and the rest of the world. These are economic realities we cannot petrify.

The question that demands more than the shrug of cold shoulders is: what is the ASEAN's response to this global recessionary trend, the oil spiral madness and the global speculation on commodities running riot? Except for a few technocratic sub-ministerial meetings on these issues, we have yet to feel from ASEAN a more muscular or substantial response to the problem. This recession, now so visible on the horizon, is reviving the horrors of the 1997-98 Asian financial crisis, which started in Southeast Asia. Our memory bank will remind us that the crisis wiped out millions of jobs and businesses in Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines and other Asian countries. Some of these countries were compelled to borrow under unconscionable conditionalities and they are still laboring under the dictatorship of debts.

I mention these three inter-related crises – Myanmar's aid crisis, rice crisis and the global economic recession – because all of them have serious implications, not only on the stability of the ASEAN Region, but more importantly, on the right to a life of dignity of every ASEAN man and woman. In fine, they demand decisive, determined and prompt co-ordinated regional policy response from the ASEAN, based on a singular need – the need to promote the essential well-being of every ASEAN citizen, worthy of respect by other citizens of the world. The dream of ASEAN is to develop a caring and sharing ASEAN community, but let us be warned that dreams are not without deadlines.

Quo vadis, ASEAN?

Now on its 41st year, ASEAN is a middle-aged institution. By a stroke of good luck, ASEAN managed to hurdle its first three decades of existence without getting destroyed by divisions and without being mired in any serious regional conflicts. Indeed, it even survived the Vietnam War, whose horrors constitute one of the reasons that compelled the formation of the ASEAN. Be that as it may, the recorded progress of the ASEAN countries to integrate in its first three decades, appears to be written in invisible ink.

The European Union, born only a decade ahead (1957) of the ASEAN, has already transformed itself into a vibrant social and economic community. More than 60 per cent of EU's global trade is accounted for by intra-EU trade. In the case of North America, the North American Free Trade Area (NAFTA) accounts for more than 50 per cent of the global trade of the United States, Canada and Mexico.

As to ASEAN countries, intra-ASEAN trade accounts for not more than 20 per cent of their total global trade. Even then, studies by both the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) indicate that this intra-ASEAN trade is not primarily due to the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) preferential tariff arrangements, as indicated by the fact that the users of the AFTA's Form D, a certification that the product being traded has 40 per cent ASEAN content, constitute a distinct minority.

Richard Baldwin, in a paper written for ADB (Managing the Noodle Bowl: The Fragility of East Asian Regionalism, February 2007), explains

that most of the intra-ASEAN trade were due to the "unilateral liberalization" programs adopted by the ASEAN member countries. The transnational corporations, such as the global car makers and global electronics assemblers, have used the liberalized trade regimes of the ASEAN countries to promote their chains of global factories in the region and move goods and jobs across borders with ease. The conclusion is that, unlike EU's "Fortress Europe," ASEAN's economic regionalism is simply one of open liberalism.

A recent survey commissioned by the ASEAN itself indicates that most of the peoples in the ASEAN have scant understanding of the ASEAN and its processes, and hence, they do not identify themselves as "ASEAN citizens." Some observers look at the ASEAN as a top-down technocratic project designed by faceless officials with little contact with the peoples of the region. ASEAN is meant for the people and must be appreciated by the people in order to succeed.

Re-examine the Rule of Consensus

Without doubt, the big problem facing the ASEAN is the way that ASEAN governs itself – through the rule of consensus. Unlike the EU, ASEAN does not have an ASEAN Parliament, neither a powerful ASEAN Commission, nor an ASEAN Court, and varied inter-governmental ASEAN bodies that would harmonize national and regional policies.

Last year, ASEAN adopted a Charter, which is a giant step in building a rules-based regional grouping. However, the ASEAN Charter still has a long way to go. The charter failed to put in place institutions for consul-

clear on the mechanisms and instruments, except for some references on the need for arbitration. The charter did not include the explicit recognition of core labor rights. While the charter did establish a human rights body, sadly, the details of how the body shall be set up are still subject to further ASEAN deliberations.

Perhaps, it is time to re-examine the effectiveness of the ASEAN rule of consensus in light of changed and changing circumstances of the world's social, economic and political milieu. We do appreciate the rule of consensus when it was adopted during the diaper days of the ASEAN for they had to overcome the hesitation of countries in joining the movement.

The hesitation was driven by a diversity of reasons. Primarily, there was the reality that the countries in the region are economic competitors governed by the law of the jungle that does not allow the weak to survive. There was also the belief that the cultural gaps in the region are unbridgeable and attempts to diminish them would be futile. There was also the fear that a hidden political agenda undergirds the formation of the ASEAN. But more fundamentally, the time was characterized by the stubborn insistence of states to protect their sovereignty even from minimal diminution. Hence, they have had to settle with the rule of consensus which accommodated all these fears and shielded the sovereignty of states from all assaults.

But times have changed. The successful formation of regional aggrupations in Europe, the Americas, and in Africa have demonstrated that social, cultural, economic and political differences need not negate the fruitful integration of people. Likewise, studies show that in the second half of the last century, "the recognition and increasing acceptance

expanding number and variety of international regulatory institutions, and finally, the internationalization by States of standards of behavior from these sources increased the importance of international decision making in many areas and eroded the reality of sovereignty." (Maclaver, Political Issues in the World Today.

It is submitted that the ASEAN rule of consensus, which is essentially premised on a desire to keep state sovereignty inviolable, should be re-examined and adjusted to meet the developmental needs of the region. It is now self-evident that an unbending insistence on the rule of consensus could hamper the international struggle against terrorism, transnational crimes, unlawful migration, environmental decay, etc. These are problems without nationality, problems that cross borders and which no country can solve by its own might alone. The ASEAN needs the cooperation of all.

The way forward: Addressing the social and economic ambiguities

ASEAN community building remains a great development challenge for all of us in the region. The collective task facing all of us in the region is how to dare the ASEAN governments, the ASEAN leaders and the ASEAN Secretariat to accelerate its promise of a community of caring and sharing societies.

In this regard, the role of scholars like you is crucial. More than others, you have the capability to flesh out the social and economic agenda of regional integration and to help in defining the institutions that should govern ASEAN processes. Researches, rigorous analyses and sharp

than words of encouragement, it is more wisdom that will enable the ASEAN to hurdle the remaining difficulties of integration.

I look at this conference as a meeting of the wise, where at its end, there will be an abundant offering of wisdom – the wisdom that will convince us to be one, while not the same; the wisdom that will tell us that we can successfully step into the future, but only in unity; and that, in disunity, others will step all over us.

Academics and Labor Advocates
For a Social ASEAN

Now on its fifth decade, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is fast-tracking the transformation of the region into one integrated economic community. In their 2003 Bali Summit, the ASEAN Leaders declared that ASEAN shall evolve into "a single market and production base, turning the diversity that characterizes the region into opportunities for business complementation making the ASEAN a more dynamic and stronger segment of the global supply chain."

At the same time, the ASEAN Leaders proclaimed that the ASEAN community shall be "a socially cohesive and caring ASEAN where hunger, malnutrition, deprivation and poverty are no longer basic problems; where strong families as the basic units of society tend to their members particularly the children, youth, women and elderly; where the civil society is empowered and gives special attention to the disadvantaged, disabled and marginalized, and where social justice and the rule of law reign."

A fine and ennobling Community vision indeed!

But how will this ASEAN vision of "a caring and sharing community" be translated into reality? This is a big imponderable. In the first place, there are wide gaps in the level of development among the ten ASEAN countries. Brunei and Singapore enjoy a per capita income of US$30,000, more or less, while Myanmar and Laos have a per capita income of less than US$400. The remaining six ASEAN countries (Cambodia, Indo-

Malaysia and Singapore, the overwhelming majority of the working population in the ASEAN countries belong to the informal economy, where jobs are unprotected and incomes are generally precarious.

As it is, the integration instrument relied upon by the ASEAN is mainly economic liberalization, meaning the reduction of tariffs to 0-5 per cent within the region to facilitate intra-ASEAN trade and the elimination of barriers to the free flow of capital, services and skilled labor within the region. But economic liberalization per se, as documented in the studies of the UNDP and the ILO, will not necessarily lead to a more equitable and inclusive growth pattern. Building an integrated and social ASEAN will take some doing.

It is in this context that the organizers of the 8th ASEAN Inter-University Conference elected the theme, "ASEAN as a Community: Solidarity in a Globalizing World". The idea is to highlight the central role of people-to-people unity and networking in building a regional community and addressing the social and labor dimensions of regional integration. Certainly, academics and researchers are in a position to deepen the debates or discourse on what should constitute the social and labor foundation for a caring and sharing ASEAN. This is also the reason why the organizers introduced a major innovation in the holding of the 8th AIUC — the participation of the trade unions, represented by the Union Network International/Asia-Pacific Regional Organization (UNI/APRO) and the ASEAN Service Trade Union Council (ASETUC), and of the industry-civil society groups, represented by the Fair Trade Alliance (FairTrade) – as AIUC co-sponsors and contributors to the regional discussion on how to build Social ASEAN.

The 8th AIUC, which was held in Manila last May 2008, turned out to be

to 350 participants from 23 countries.   The AIUC also generated a rich harvest of papers, 150 in all.   A significant outcome of the 8th AIUC is the formation of the Academe-Civil Society Network of Southeast Asia (ACSN-SEA), a reflection and reaffirmation of the central importance of academe-civil society partnership in seeking answers to questions on the social and human condition in the ASEAN.

This book, a compilation of select AIUC articles, outlines the numerous and diverse economic, social and labor issues facing the ASEAN.   This book is a contribution to the debate on how to build a truly caring and sharing ASEAN society.

Let the debate begin!
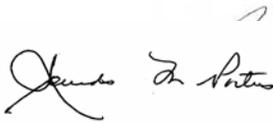
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How Intermediary Groups Use Communication Tools for Grassroots Women's Empowerment

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<u>Abstract</u>

People's Communications for Development is a three-year study conducted by Isis International - Manila, Philippines, together with partner organizations in India, Thailand, Fiji and Papua New Guinea.

This study interrogates the ICT-centric framework of development and the influx of new ICTs in gender and development work. On the assumption that access to new information and communication technologies would lead to women's empowerment, project interventions privileged the use of new ICTs over traditional communication tools long used by intermediary groups in effecting change with grassroots communities. Has the emergence of new ICTs affected the way in which intermediary groups use traditional communication tools in reaching grassroots women? Are new ICTs perceived as more effective and more empowering compared to traditional communication tools?

In each of the five countries, the study conducted: 1) reviews of related literature on the gender and communication landscapes of

ary organizations, and 3) focus group discussions with grassroots women's organizations.

Findings show that traditional communication tools such as radio, popular theatre, and film were evidently the most effective tools in interacting with grassroots women. The effectiveness of traditional communication tools in development work for grassroots women's empowerment was repeatedly observed and substantiated by the intermediary groups. The study surfaces the need to return to the fundamental principle behind gender and communications advocacy: the people traversing the multiple information societies.

Key words: communication for development, ICTs for development, women's empowerment

Introduction

The introduction of new information and communication technologies or new ICTs into the gender and development framework is based on the notion that access and effective use of these technologies will lead to women's empowerment and development for all. Though this new ICT-centric framework of development has been the subject of debates and discussions, many ICT-focused development projects have already been implemented on the ground. Despite lack of data to support the above claim, these project interventions privilege new ICTs over traditional communication tools long used by intermediary groups in effecting change in grassroots communities. It is in the context of interrogating the ICT-centric development framework that Isis International proposed a study to determine the most effective communication tools used by intermediary groups in reaching grassroots women.

With funding support from the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Isis International conducted a three-year study in collaboration with Aalochana Centre for Documentation and Research on Women (AALOCHANA) of India; The Civil Media Development Institute (CMDI) of Thailand; FemLINK Pacific: Media Initiatives for Women (FEMLINKPACIFIC) of Fiji, and Health, Education, Sustainable Livelihood and Participation for All, Resources, Inc. (HELP) of Papua New Guinea. Isis and its partner organizations examined how intermediary groups were using new ICTs and traditional communication tools for grassroots women's empowerment in five Asia-Pacific countries: India, Philippines, Thailand, Fiji and Papua New Guinea.

Using an applied qualitative research framework, the study utilized Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with intermediary groups as the primary data-gathering method. It supplemented this method with its Review of Related Literature (RRL) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with grassroots women.

Background of the Study

In 2001, Isis International, together with its Asian Women's Resource Exchange (AWORC) partners, conducted a research project entitled, "An Exploratory Study on the Use of ICTs by Women's Organizations in Asia". This study was subsequently published in a book entitled, "NGOWomen@asia.net" in 2002.

The outcome highlighted several important findings on the level of ICT use among women's groups in seven countries in Asia, namely India, Nepal, Indonesia, Philippines, Japan, Korea and Mongolia, and provided

access and use, catering mostly to urban-based women's groups. Second, there is limited access and under-utilization of the technology due to inadequate technical skills. And, third, a large number of groups has been excluded because of non-usage of the English language and lack of resources to maintain the technology.

Three years after the research project was completed, Isis International recognized that, in the context of the global south, these findings represent only a fraction of women's information and communication concerns in relation to new ICTs. Furthermore, the research could not conclude that access and utilization of new ICTs led to women's empowerment.

Since then, more fundamental issues on the ICT framework for development have emerged in various fora, among them, the Gender Strategies Working Group (GSWG) Meetings and Gender Caucuses (GC) leading to the WSIS or the World Summit on the Information Society in Geneva in 2003; parallel meetings by Isis and its partners during the UN CSW or Commission on the Status of Women Meeting in New York in 2003; the Empowerment of Women in the Global South through Information and Communication Conference and Workshops in Vienna in 2003; and the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre in 2003.

In these discussions, the analysis on the Gender and ICT framework was not limited to women's effective use and access of new technology. It also examined a) the macro level issues of globalized corporate ownership, control, and monopoly of new ICTs and b) the political economy of ICT systems and structures. These discussions brought in new perspectives into the gender and ICT debate.

On the ground, new ICTs were being introduced into the development

new ICTs would accelerate development through women's integration with the global market economy. This assumption fuelled many development projects aimed at equipping women and young girls with the information, skills and technology needed to ensure their full participation in the emerging "information society".

Isis and other feminist information and communication organizations have pointed out that many of these ICT project interventions were operationalized despite lack of evidence to support the claim that new ICTs led to development. Data were lacking for establishing the need for, and relevance of, community-based ICT projects for women, in general, and grassroots women, in particular. As such, there remained a critical gap in information on the impact of new technologies on changing social relations, particularly on how new ICTs empower grassroots women. To address this gap, this research project looked at how intermediary groups viewed new ICTs and how they have utilized new technologies for grassroots women's empowerment. In addition, this study asked grassroots women themselves how they viewed empowerment and new ICTs, and how the work of intermediary groups had made an impact in their lives.

Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of this study are: a) to know how intermediary groups use new ICTs and traditional communication tools in interacting with grassroots women, and b) to determine which are the most effective communication tools for grassroots women's empowerment in five Asia-Pacific countries, namely, India, the Philippines, Thailand, Fiji and Papua New Guinea.

The study has four specific objectives: [1] To generate updated information on the communication tools environment and infrastructure in each of the five countries, including economic, political, and social/ cultural factors related to the use of new ICTs and traditional communication tools by intermediary groups; [2] To derive data on the usage, accessibility and effectiveness of new ICTs and traditional communication tools in the work of intermediary groups interacting with grassroots women in each of the five countries; [3] To determine the meaning of empowerment, empowering information and empowering communication tools for intermediary groups in each of the five countries, and [4] To know the experiences and views of grassroots women on how selected intermediary groups use communication tools for women's empowerment.

Methods

a) Key Informant Interview or KII

A total of 81 intermediary groups were purposively selected from India, the Philippines, Thailand, Fiji and Papua New Guinea. The main criterion for inclusion was that the intermediary group or NGO (non-governmental organization) must target grassroots women. Efforts were made to ensure geographical representation of the groups.

Isis together with its four country partners, Aalochana, CMDI, Femlink Pacific and HELP Resources, conducted the interviews in the five countries. All interview transcripts were validated by the intermediary groups and subsequently transcribed to English by the country partners. The Isis research team conducted content analysis and thematic analysis of the interview transcripts. The KII write-ups were then validated by

b) Focus Group Discussion or FGD

A KII participating organization was purposively selected as a country case study. The FGD with women from grassroots communities was conducted to complement the KIIs and to surface grassroots women's own views and experiences.

A total of four FGDs was conducted: one each in India, the Philippines, Thailand and Fiji. The FGDs were documented, transcribed, and translated to English by Isis and the country partners. The FGDs were written into a story narrative by the Isis research team. The FGD write-ups were then validated by the country partners.

c) Review of Related Literature or RRL

A review of literature was conducted by the country partners and was later augmented and eventually written by the Isis research team. The RRL write-ups were then validated by the country partners.

The conduct of the interviews followed a KII guide. The interviews were conducted in the local language or the language of the key informant, at a time and place convenient to the participant. Interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed using a standardized template. The interview transcripts were then validated by face-to-face or email communications.

In India, 19 intermediary groups were interviewed as follows: Association for Advocacy and Legal Initiatives (Aali); Allaripu; Bailanjo Sad; Charkha; Creating Resources for Empowerment in Action (CREA); Kriti; Kutch Mahila Vikas Sanghtana; Majlis; Banglar Manabadhikar Suraksha Mancha (MASUM); Nirantar; North East Network; Olakh; Sakhi; Sampark; Sanhita; Swayam; Stree Mukti Sanghatana (Women's

who participated in the FGD for India were members of the North East Network.

In the Philippines, 20 intermediary groups were interviewed as follows: Antique Development Foundation (ADF); Al-mujadilah Development Foundation, Alternative Systems for Community Development Foundation (ASCODE); Balay Alternative Legal Advocates for Development in Mindanaw (Balaod Mindanaw); Center for Women's Resources (CWR); Forum of Women Advocates for Reform and Development (FORWARD); General Assembly of Binding Women for Reforms, Integrity, Equality, Leadership, and Action (GABRIELA); Ilocana Development Foundation (IDF); Igorota Foundation; Inang Makababaying Aksyon (IMA) Foundation; Kanlungan Center Foundation Inc.; Lihok Pilipina; Lingap Para sa Kalusugan ng Sambayanan (LIKAS); Lumah Ma Dilaut (LMD); Pambansang Kalipunan ng mga Manggagawang Impormal sa Pilipinas or National Network of Informal Workers (PATAMABA); Philippine Educational Theater Association (PETA); Participatory Research Organization of Communication and Education towards Struggle for Self-Reliance (PROCESS-Bohol); Saligan-Mindanaw; Tagum Cooperative and TALIKALA. The grassroots women members of PATAMABA were the participants of the Philippine FGD.

In Thailand, 17 intermediary groups were interviewed as follows: Ammatcharoen Women's Friend Centre; Centre for Girls; Centre for Labor Information Service and Training (CLIST); Community Theater Project; Development and Education Programme for Daughters and Communities; Empower Foundation; Fai-In-See Villagers Group; Friends of Women Foundation; Foundation For Women; Northeastern Women's Network; Operation for the Community and City for Better Living in

Resource Management for the Southern Coastline Project; Sunflower Group; Woman's Studies Center and Women's Health Advocacy Foundation. Participants of the Thailand FGD were grassroots women constituents of the Foundation for Women.

In Fiji, 16 intermediary groups were interviewed as follows: Ba Senior Citizen Centre (BSCC); Citizens Constitutional Forum (CCF); Catholic Women's League (CWL); Ecumenical Centre for Research Education and Advocacy (ECREA); Fiji Disabled Peoples Association (FDPA); Fiji Human Rights Commission (FHRC); Foundation for Rural Integrated Enterprise and Development (FRIEND); Fiji Women's Rights Movement (FWRM); Interfaith Search Fiji (IFS); National Council of Women Fiji (NCWF); Partners in Community Development Fiji (PCDF); Pacific Island Association of Non Governmental Organisations (PIANGO); Poor Relief Society (PRS); Pacific Regional Rights Resource Team (RRRT); Women's Action for Change (WAC) and Women's Information Network (WINET). The Fiji FGD participants came from the grassroots women communities of the Catholic Women's League.

In Papua New Guinea, nine intermediary groups were interviewed as follows: Baua Baua Popular Theatre; Community Development Initiative Foundation; HELP Resources; Kup Women for Peace (KWP); Lae Catholic Family Life; Leitana Nehan Women's Development Agency (LNWDA); Meri I Kirap Sapotim (MIKS); National Catholic Family Life Apostolate (NCFLA) and Women and Children's Support Centre (Lae). This relatively small sample size is proportionate to the number of intermediary groups in PNG, which is in an early stage of social movement building . Sampling limitations are acknowledged.

Results

Findings from the five Asia-Pacific countries, namely India, the Philippines, Thailand, Fiji and Papua New Guinea, show that traditional communication tools such as radio, film and popular theater are the most effective tools in interacting with grassroots women. Among the reasons for a tool's effectiveness are its wide reach, stimulating or interactive qualities, and cultural appropriateness.

With the influx of new ICTs and within the ICT-centric development framework, intermediary groups in this study generally found traditional communication tools to be more useful, more accessible, and more effective for grassroots women's empowerment. Meanwhile, new ICTs, such as the computer and the internet, were generally perceived as inaccessible and ineffective. Most interesting was how intermediary groups and grassroots women reported oral communication or direct, two-way, face-to-face interaction as the most empowering mode of development communication.

The relative and specific utility, accessibility, effectiveness, and empowering potential of each communication tool varied for each country, and even for each intermediary group in its unique context. The meanings of empowerment were diverse as well, and were clustered as economic independence, political participation, community-building, family transformation, societal transformation and individual agency, with forms of women's agency being the most elaborated. Political factors such as communication policies; economic factors such as technological infrastructure, and cultural factors such as language, as well as geographical considerations, were noted.

its appropriateness to the practices of grassroots women on the ground. It is the focus on grassroots women and what is empowering from their own perspective and experience that leads to empowerment.

The Power of Radio, Theater and Film

One reason why the radio is seen as effective in reaching grassroots women is its harmony with women's everyday activities. *"With the radio, even if you are doing the laundry, even if you are cooking... while they are working... they can listen to the things that are being shared to them."* (Philippines KII)

"Radio is something that is part of the tapestry of their daily lives... they got it going on in the background and they are listening." (Fiji KII)

Another reason is the need for information relevant to the community. *"When they go to work in the fields, they would like to listen to a radio program about their own community... The community radio can respond to community needs and provide channels for villagers to communicate."* (Thailand KII)

Finally, the power of the radio lies in its accessibility and reach. *"Radio could reach out to places that we cannot go to, the remote areas..."* (PNG KII) Grassroots women in Fiji believe that the radio is the cheapest and most accessible form of communication.

The street play is considered by Indian grassroots women's organizations as a cultural tradition that is most effective in empowering women. One reason is its emotional impact. As one woman recalls one particular

realized that the street play was able to touch the heart of the viewers." (India FGD)

Theater also initiates discussion and dialogue. *"After every performance, the conversation, the people chat, ask questions... answer – very effective!"* (India KII) In India, popular theater is seen as most culturally appropriate. *"Within the traditional lore, messages on health, gender bias, superstition and many others can be woven in."* (India KII)

The process itself of doing theater is empowering for grassroots women. *"What it does is it creates a space... these women would never actually go to become actors... But what is important for me is the fact that they get this space where they can jump, scream, shout, something they have never been allowed to do in their lives."* (India KII)

A film's audio-visual quality makes messages easy to understand. *"If it's in video or documentary, it can be absorbed easily by the participants because they see something, they hear something."* (Philippines KII)

Films also reach diverse grassroots communities. *"Many people, they are illiterate... They are seeing the pictures and also the sound and all that goes with it, the movement. So, they get a lot from that."* (PNG KII)

Grassroots women from the Philippines narrated the ability of videos to facilitate communication for grassroots women who were either presenting in international conferences or to convey messages to women

Southeast Asian conference, we showed the video... we didn't need to speak. It was subtitled in English." (Philippines FGD)

Films initiate reflection and facilitate discussion. Films can be powerful enough to touch viewers and create change. *"In our culture, you don't see women doing... traditional male jobs, such as construction work or police work... we want to show them films of Muslims... in other parts of the world... who are into construction work."* (Philippines KII) *"People can identify with the message if they actually see the person..."* (Fiji KII)

The Power of Face-to-Face Interaction

Oral communication or direct, two-way, face-to-face interaction is the most empowering way of sharing information between intermediary groups and grassroots women.

The grassroots women from India shared their struggles to reach the communities they were serving. One reason for their success is the intimate, personal and experiential quality of face-to-face interactions. The grassroots women activists interact with villagers in a very intimate setting such as the villagers' own homes. Moving from door to door, the women enter each home and sit with the people in their own households. *"By interaction, we understand them. We decide a strategy based on what we gather from the people."* (India FGD)

The Thai grassroots women talked about the value of face-to-face meetings. Interactive fora made information understandable by giving an opportunity for two-way exchange and explanation. Referring to a legal forum discussing specific laws, one participant narrated, *"As poorly*

explain to us how those texts can be interpreted and how they affect our lives. They always ask for our opinions." (Thailand FGD)

The grassroots women from the Philippines found value in new ICTs while asserting the need for interpersonal face-to-face communication. Despite difficulties, the network's members travel to different parts of the country in order to meet. Meetings and trainings were also believed to be the most effective by some intermediary groups. *"Communication tools which provide venue for interaction, participation, reflection and dialogue are more empowering."* (Philippines KII)

In Fiji, some intermediary groups believe that face-to-face communication is still the best mode of exchange and fear that the use of new ICTs would endanger personal communication. Speaking on empowering women, a participant shares, *"That's the best way we can empower them. It is to go and sit down with them, explain to them, and of course, allow for that dialogue and exchange of opinions or views and opportunities for clarification."* (Fiji KII)

In Papua New Guinea, many of the intermediary groups also believe that oral communication is most empowering. *"Passing information through word of mouth"* is one of the surest ways to transmit information (PNG KII). A member of a women's group shared that there were two main ways of communicating with grassroots women in the country, *"firstly, by sending messages through people, and secondly, by sending messages by letters."* (PNG KII) Although the physical distance was a barrier to face-to-face communication, women reported traveling for days or spending the night along the way to pass information to those who lived in far-flung areas.

Views of and Experiences with New ICTs

The utility, accessibility and effectiveness of traditional communication tools in development work for grassroots women's empowerment were repeatedly observed and substantiated by the intermediary groups. Meanwhile, new ICTs were reported to be generally inaccessible and ineffective for grassroots women across the five countries.

Internet technology, computers and cellular phones were reported as the least accessible tools for grassroots women. Inaccessibility refers to structural factors, including the lack of infrastructure such as electricity or telecommunication in some areas as well as the high costs in terms of acquiring the technology, the skills to use the technology, and the resources to sustain the use of the technology. *"When we say that the future of Fiji's women's movement faces a rocky road ahead, it is more than just a figure of speech. Land travel is very difficult in Fiji, and communication by post and new ICTs along with it. Some women's groups even reported that to make use of their cellular phones, they had to ride on horseback to a place where the signal was clear."* [Fiji KII]

Inaccessibility also means ineffectiveness for new ICTs. Some intermediary groups believe that new ICTs are potentially empowering for communities. The group of grassroots women from the Philippines would attest to this if they could only access new ICTs *"First is learning how to speak. Then to develop one's personality, and from there to learn to use different technologies...How do you organize them with the use of technology?"* (Philippines FGD)

Other intermediary groups think that new ICTs are not useful or beneficial

asserted, *"Why do they have to learn about these equipment... It is more proper to learn something relevant to their life... It is no need for them to have their own computer."* (Thailand KII) Still others feel that new ICTs are not the solution to grassroots women's empowerment. *"But if they are still cooking over open fire, in a leaking kitchen, is it morally justifiable that we provide them computers?... We haven't addressed basic things."* (Fiji KII)

Usage of Communication Tools

Although the general research findings across the five countries overwhelmingly supported the power of traditional communication tools over new ICTs for grassroots women's empowerment, findings on which specific communication tool was most frequently used, most (and least) accessible, and most (and least) effective varied from country to country.

Film or video emerged as the top communication tool used by the five countries combined, followed closely by radio and popular theater. Among the new ICTs, the computer emerged as the fourth most commonly used, primarily for making visual presentations when meeting with grassroots women.

But, comparing country data on the top two most frequently used tools, the radio emerged as the most frequently used tool in four countries (Philippines, Thailand, Fiji, and PNG); film, in three countries (India, Philippines and Thailand), and theater, in two countries (India and PNG). The landline phone was in the top two for Thailand, and print media, in terms of books and pamphlets, for PNG. The computer was mentioned in the top two for Fiji.

phone… If we phone them, they will come." (Thailand KII) A specific example is the helpline. *"Telephones are main tools for women to escape and to be released from forced prostitution."* (Thailand KII)

Print media are very important for Papua New Guinea, primarily because they are accessible and readily available. Posters, with *"sharp and powerful images"*, are always in high demand. *"There is never enough for distribution."* (PNG KII)

The use of leaflets and pamphlets, handy publications, was also reported as readily available. *"They can pick it up anytime and read when they have time available after their busy day schedule."* (PNG KII)

The computer was the top new ICT used by intermediary groups, primarily for making visual presentations for the community. *"It is very visual and you get good feedback." "It makes them interested and awake." "It enhances learning… makes it user friendly and learner friendly."* (Fiji KII)

Accessibility of Communication Tools

The most accessible communication tool for grassroots women, using the combined data from all five countries, was the radio, which was also reported as among the top two most accessible tools in all countries except India. This was supported by the Review of Related Literature where radio emerged as the most accessible tool in the five countries as well.

Film emerged as the second most accessible tool using the combined data, but it was only in the top two of PNG. The cellular phone was the

Philippines. Interestingly, the cellular phone was also mentioned as the third least accessible tool using the combined country data.

Theater was among the most accessible tools for India; the landline, for Thailand and Fiji; and print media, for Fiji and PNG. The poster, as a type of print media, was specifically mentioned as the most accessible tool in PNG.

The least accessible tools were primarily the new ICTs, with the internet and the computer cited as the most. Again, the RRL supported this finding as the literature review showed that new ICTs were indeed least accessible in all five countries.

The radio is the most accessible communication tool because of its wide-reaching coverage in all five countries. It is relatively cheap to own and easy to use with no special skills needed to operate it. The radio is a medium found in many grassroots households and can be used even in far-flung areas where there is no electricity. *"In remote villages, the easiest and cheapest mode is radio."* (India KII) Accessibility also specifically means being accessible to grassroots women. *"It would reach grassroots women because they listen to the radio."* (Fiji KII)

The accessibility of the cellular phone was reported both in India and the Philippines. *"It seems that almost all people, (even) mothers who are poor have cell phones."* (Philippines KII) Due to minimal costs and easy accessibility in its use, grassroots women are able to maximize the mobile phone's potential. Through its short messaging service (SMS) or text, intermediary groups and grassroots women are able to interact, sending and receiving messages instantaneously. *"A mobile phone is the most effective communication tool we have now because it is on*

problem in the community, within seconds, everybody know." (India KII).

Effectiveness of Communication Tools

The most effective communication tool from the combined country data is the radio, followed by theater and film. Looking at per country data, radio is among the top two most effective tools in all five countries; theater, in three countries (India, Thailand and PNG); film, in two countries (India and Thailand); and print media, in two countries (Thailand and Fiji).

Story-telling or the oral tradition and the internet were mentioned in India, whereas the cellular phone was among the most effective tools in the Philippines. Among the new ICTs, only the cellular phone was effective and only for the Philippines.

Included among the top reasons why a communication tool is perceived as effective were the following: a tool's wide reach or coverage, visually stimulating qualities, interactive features, cultural appropriateness and clear target focus. The internet and the computer were the least effective tools because of high costs, lack of infrastructure in some countries, and the skills/literacy requirements. The cellular phone was the third least effective tool using the combined country data.

Print media were among the most effective tools in Fiji and Thailand. One reason for effectiveness was sheer accessibility, especially given the lack of an enabling environment for digital or electronic media in Fiji. *"The print form is still the cheapest form in the Pacific"* (Fiji KII). In Thailand, visually stimulating print media such as posters seemed

most effective. *"Now we are making more posters because they are the more effective media in local community."* (Thailand KII)

An interesting anecdote was shared by the Thai grassroots women on the use of letters. *"I consider the letter as very important. It provides me evidence for my husband. If I only receive the information via telephone, he will question me a lot, but the letter confirms that it is really about work."* (Thailand FGD) Letters apparently were used by Thai women to legitimize their community work, particularly to their husbands, given the negative stigma suffered by feminists in Thailand.

Empowering Potential of Communication Tools

Intermediary groups from all the five countries repeatedly confirmed that oral communication or face-to-face interaction was the most empowering means of interacting with grassroots women. The focus group discussions with grassroots women corroborated this as the women found direct interaction with the intermediary group the best mode of communication. Intermediary groups also reported the radio and popular theater or performing arts as empowering in all the five countries. These were again supported by the FGDs with grassroots women who found these traditional communication tools most appropriate for them.

Film was cited as empowering in three countries (Fiji, PNG and the Philippines); television or TV, in three countries (India, the Philippines and Thailand); and print media, in two countries (Fiji and PNG). Telecommunications or the landline was not cited.

Empowerment and New ICTs

Intermediary groups further validated that new ICTs, namely the internet, computer and cellular phone, generally did not empower grassroots women. Though intermediary groups found the internet as empowering on their part, these tools were not empowering the grassroots women they served. However, the utility of the computer for making visual presentations was cited in the Philippines and Thailand as empowering. The use of the cellular phone for mobilization and other activities was empowering on the part of the Philippines. Interestingly, only intermediary groups in Fiji and PNG saw the potential of new ICTs in empowering grassroots women.

Groups from India and the Philippines generally believe that new ICTs would not necessarily lead to development. Meanwhile, the intermediary groups in Thailand found new ICTs as inappropriate for grassroots women. Grassroots women in the FGDs supported these views in describing new ICTs as least effective, except as a means for communicating outside their immediate communities. As a unique case, the Philippine FGD highlighted the value of the cellular phone in facilitating communication among grassroots women.

Meanings of Empowerment and
Meanings of Empowering Information

The meanings of empowerment for the intermediary groups are diverse. The general themes that cut across all five countries are empowerment as economic independence, political participation, community-organizing or solidarity-building, and individual agency. Empowerment as individual agency was most elaborated by the intermediary groups in the five

Fiji and PNG, whereas family transformation was uniquely mentioned in the Philippines.

The top five ways by which information becomes empowering are when information is accessible, accurate, transformative, based on interactive dialogue, and useful. The accessibility, accuracy, and transformative quality of information are themes shared in all five countries. Accessibility means: in the local language and using tools suitable or appropriate for the grassroots women or community. Accuracy refers to using only information that is based on research from the ground or the community. And, transformative quality implies that information is for initiating change.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this research shows that traditional communication tools are more useful, more accessible, more effective, and more empowering for grassroots women than the new ICTs. The radio, popular theater, and film are the most effective tools in the five Asia-Pacific countries included in this study. Oral communication or direct face-to-face interaction is the most empowering mode of communication between grassroots women and intermediary groups.

Underlying the effectiveness and empowering potential of any communication tool is a common denominator that resonates across the five Asia-Pacific countries studied. This shared element in the communication process is the centrality of grassroots women in determining the intermediary group's choice of communication tool and, consequently, its choice of communication strategy. It is the focus on

The relative utility, accessibility, effectiveness and empowering potential of each tool differ for each country, as well as for each intermediary group in its unique context. But the common thread to a communication tool's success is its harmony with the practices of grassroots women on the ground.

It is in this light that Isis International together with Aalochana of India, CMDI of Thailand, FemLINK of Fiji, and HELP of Papua New Guinea, propose People's Communications for Development or PC4D.

Posing the PC4D Model
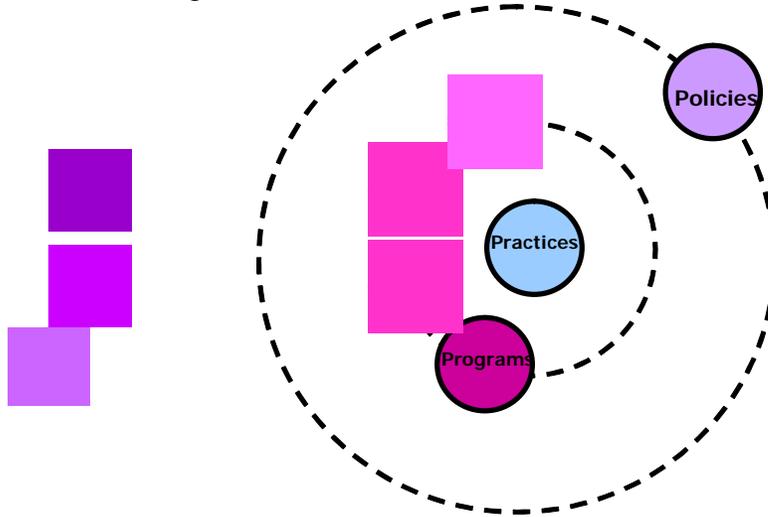
The People's Communications for Development model has three major spheres: (1) practices, (2) programs, and (3) policies. Akin to the solar system, 'practices' lies at the core while programs and policies revolve around it in successive concentric circles, similar to planets orbiting around

communication activities by grassroots women or people on the ground, the sphere of programs is simultaneously busy with intermediary groups or other development actors engaged in communication projects, while the sphere of policies is likewise filled with states and other bodies that are setting communication policies.

Framed within the research parameters, grassroots women lie at the core of communication practices; intermediary groups, in communication programs, and states and other development bodies, in communication policies. However, the key players in development may enter any sphere. States, donors and other development agencies may initiate or support programs as well as determine or influence policies. Intermediary groups, feminist networks and social movements may direct programs for grassroots women and for social movements as well. They may also be engaged in their own communication practices.

As with the solar system, communication programs and communication policies must constantly revolve around communication practices. As such, the PC4D model stresses that programs and policies cannot be separated from what is happening on the ground. The basic assumption is that development takes place only when programs and policies are solidly focused on community practices. Policies and programs that are not based on the perspectives and experiences of the people in communities will not lead to the kind of development that is truly empowering to people. Hence, development must begin from the ground, must be rooted in practices, and must be determined by grassroots women, communities, and people themselves. Failure to keep people and community practices at the core leads to maldevelopment.

Isis International, Aalochana, CMDI, FemLINK, and HELP envision a

policies are constantly grounded on community practices. PC4D is a reminder that people are at the core of development.

Reflecting on Meaningful Impact

For the PC4D model to create any meaningful impact it puts forward four platforms of engagement. The first area of engagement is categorized as "Gender and Development Paradigms and Communication Policy Directions." This area refers to the ways in which the PC4D model challenges the assumptions about ICT for Development (ICT4D) as a single path to development. The PC4D model advocates multiple paths, situating the ICT4D model as one path that can possibly complement PC4D. As such PC4D is not intended to replace ICT4D, but is positioned to promote a critical approach to technology-led development.

In the research project, the key issue in terms of communication policies is access: how grassroots women and intermediary groups working for grassroots women's empowerment can access potentially empowering communication tools. If the results of the study were to enter the policy-making discourse, policy actors could ensure access, control, and ownership of new ICTs as well as mass media systems and structures by grassroots women and marginalized communities. This is the desired impact of the project in terms of policy directions.

The second area of engagement is "Politics of Traditional Communication Tools, State Interventions, and Donor Programs for Grassroots Women." This thematic area refers to the ways in which the PC4D model promotes the revaluing of traditional communication tools for development work

traditional communication tools particularly in development projects directed at grassroots women and marginalized communities.

Clearly, the study reveals that it was not new ICTs, but traditional communication tools, that were most frequently utilized and were most effective for grassroots women's development projects. An example of the desired impact of the project is promoting programs such as public spaces for meetings, street theater, public libraries, independent films, community TV and community radio.

The third area of engagement is "Social Movements, Feminist Networks, Intermediary Groups, and Communication Strategies." This area refers to the ways in which the PC4D model seeks to include grassroots women and marginalized groups into the development agenda; as well as to enhance the communication capacities of social movements, feminist networks, and other civil society actors. Should such capacity-building programs be promoted among development actors, it is expected that there would be a deepened understanding of the crucial role that communications plays in determining the success or failure of development projects targeted at achieving grassroots women's empowerment.

The fourth area of engagement is "Traditional Communication Tools and New ICTs as Shaping and Reflecting Everyday Life." This theme refers to the ways in which the PC4D model promotes the need for development projects to be grounded on the practices and everyday realities of poor and other marginalized communities. By emphasizing the notion that communications both shape and reflect social realities, it is hoped that the use of traditional communication tools and new ICTs in development projects particularly for grassroots women would be

its content, and its context. How a particular development project, for instance, becomes empowering to grassroots women living in a specific context not only for the project's content but because of the medium used. It is hoped that the PC4D model can bring development policies and programs closer to the conditions and needs on the ground, particularly of grassroots women who remain among the most vulnerable of marginalized communities.

The model seeks to involve multiple players in the multiple spheres of development, namely policy-making bodies, development programs, and community practices on the ground. There is no hierarchy among the spheres, but there is a core that is being advocated by the PC4D model. That core consists of marginalized peoples and their everyday realities.

Imagining PC4D

The distinct nature of the PC4D model and the role it seeks to play are not imposing a new set of solutions. Rather PC4D advocates the problematizing of the role of development communications. Such questioning is deemed crucial given that the new ICT phenomenon is rapidly transforming the character and operations of industries, sectors, and communities, including the development domain. If development players are to maintain a critical edge, the nature and role of communications in development cannot be taken for granted.

While the PC4D model is critical of the quick-fix approach of techno-deterministic development paths, particularly for women, it certainly does not advocate the rejection of communication technology nor does it see this as a hindrance to development. PC4D veers away from such binary

and cultural evolution, its dynamic existence, and its unyielding power for social change.

The added value of a feminist approach to development communications that is advocated by the PC4D model is not to extend to women's conditions the general conclusions derived. Rather, it is to allow the diverse realities of grassroots women to dictate the general directions of development communications and shape the development agenda.

It is always that which is seemingly straightforward and in existence for the longest time that is often overlooked and unquestioned, be they the exercise of everyday gender roles in society or the everyday communication strategies in development. PC4D asserts that should the politics of the everyday be given the attention it deserves, should the practices from the ground be allowed to take the lead, then meaningful and appropriate changes at the level of development programs and policies can follow.

Perhaps there can be no grand development communication model but a plurality. Still the success of diverse models must be measured by their ability to include and empower. PC4D is not the answer to development, but rather, a reminder for us to sincerely make the search.

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A Study in Penang

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Abstract

This paper presents the findings of a survey on the capability of voluntary associations in Penang to generate social capital. The stock and types of social capital produced in six categories of voluntary associations, namely, faith-based, service, sports/recreation/culture, resident, commercial and civil society organizations, are compared. Comparison is also made between ethnically mixed and mono-ethnic associations, given the pertinence of ethnicity underlying everyday politics in multi-cultural Malaysia. The structure of social capital in terms of membership, associational activities and networks is examined. As well, the more subjective relational, psychological attributes of trust, friendship and participation of members are also discerned. Finally, the capacity of these capitals in bonding, bridging or linking the diverse, multi-ethnic populace in Penang is assessed.

Key words: Social capital, voluntary associations, ethnicity

Introduction

Associations are often looked upon as important pillars of society. Not only do associations build and sustain the social fabric of society through fostering trust and mutual support amongst members, hence nurturing the social cohesion of society and contributing towards its social sustainability. They can also be sites for developing bonds, participation, collective decision-making/action and networks between and among members and various groups, essential for the development of a vibrant, civil and democratically plural society.

Associations are therefore regarded as generators of social capital by fostering group activity and providing a setting in which people can interact and act collectively to pursue shared objectives. They are venues where social capital can be created, used and transmitted within and between associations and even to the general public. However it has been noted that different kinds of associations have different capabilities in producing different types of social capital, depending on the organization's objectives and the kind of activities they are engaged in, and not social capital is necessarily "good"!

This paper presents the findings of a survey of the stock and types of social capital produced in seven different categories of voluntary associations in the urban north east district of Penang. The first part of the paper presents the conceptual framework by briefly outlining the discourse on social capital in terms of definitions and types of social capital, and the use of social capital to examine associational life. Part two provides a background to the range of associations located in the northeast district of Penang. The third and main part of the paper examines the stock and types of social capital produced as resources present or

Comparison among the different categories of associations is specifically made to discern the types of social capital generated by these various associational types and the implications of these 'capitals' for nurturing social cohesion. The paper concludes with an exploration of the role and potential of different associational types in building bridging social capital as the 'glue' for cementing social cohesion for a multi-cultural society.

Social Capital in Organisations

The discourse and research on social capital in organisations are relatively new. These have generally centered around two core themes, namely the role and potential of organisations as generators of social capital and the effects of the organisational social capital on society. Indeed, the importance of voluntary and non-profit organisations in fostering group cohesion and group identity, and, in general, the development of social capital cannot be underestimated (Donoghue 2002).

Research on associational life was revitalized by Putnam in the 1990s through his work on the role of voluntary organisations in the development of democracy and society. He defines social capital as 'features of social life - networks, norms and trust – that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives (1995: 664). Putnam emphasizes the connected aspects of social capital - the 'social connections and the attendant norms and trust' and, therefore, it is about our 'relations with one another' and people's 'connections with the life of their communities' (Putnam 1995: 665).

Social capital as conceptualized by Putnam is not collective action per

What matters are those activities that lead people to develop deeper and more meaningful relations with each other. Therefore, networks of civic engagement, be they associations, or families or community are potentially generators of social capital as they foster the norms of reciprocity and collectivity.

Voluntary or non-government organisations are now increasingly recognized as important incubators of social capital. For example, Varshney (2003) found that vigorous associational life which facilitates strong ties formed across communities in urban centres acts as a serious constraint over the polarizing strategies of political elites. In fact, he placed more potential in associational engagements than in everyday engagements, hence the potential value of social capital in and from organizations in addressing ethnic tensions.

Organisational social capital has also been regarded as a general resource to empower and build stronger communities (Taylor 2000). Studies have also shown that social capital can serve both a bonding function within organisations or/and a bridging function between organisations (Starkey, Tempest & Mckinley 2001). Contemporary discourse tends to concentrate on these two basic types of social capital in associations.

Bonding social capital is characterized by strong bonds like those in a family and close friendships in which people can depend on each other for practical, everyday support. It is based on exclusive ties of solidarity among 'people like us' and is restricted to enabling people to 'get by'. It serves to bring people together who may know each other and have something in common in ways that develop interaction, connection, communication and trust, resulting in strengthening their common identity. This type of social capital exists among people who share similar values,

be inward looking, reinforcing existing feelings of identification and connection, even to the exclusion or discrimination of outsiders.

Meanwhile, bridging social capital tends to bring people together who are different in some ways and who do not know each other. It bridges the gap between separate individuals, associations and institutions, and tends to be outward looking, creating new feelings of identification and connection. Bridging social capital therefore refers to less dense, less strong, but cross-cutting ties that transcend various social divides (e.g., ethnicity and religion) and extend beyond closely knit groupings with wider connections and acquaintances from another 'outsider' group.

Even though systematic research on this form of social capital is generally lacking, Putnam's contribution has been seminal. He highlights voluntary associations as creating and sustaining the bridging social capital that enables people to 'get ahead'. He puts more value to the 'bridging' form of social capital that refers to co-operative connections with people from different walks of life, than bonding social capital.

Woolcock (2000) argues that a range of bridging social capital is necessary for accessing a wider range of resources and making connections. He gives the example that squatter communities tend to have well developed bonds but cannot move beyond slum life because of their lack of bridges. Conversely, middle class people often have many bridges and connections especially through their professional associations, but their bonds are not as strong. In multi-cultural societies where ethnic or cultural polarization persists, it has been found that bridging social capital, especially through associational life, is particularly useful to help diffuse or harmonise the potentially conflicting ethnic groups (Varshney 2003).

Indeed, organizations with strong internal bonding, but without complementary external networks associated with bridging social capital, will find themselves with an isolated, inward-looking ethos (Cohen & Prusak 2001). To avoid such insularity, the important role of vertical networks, or linking social capital[1] that connect unlike parties who are also unequal or asymmetrically endowed with power, authority and status, has been highlighted as necessary for building stable and integral structures of civil society (Prakash & Selle 2004). Linking social capital are connections between different hierarchies, like different levels of power or social status between communities/organisations and the state.

Just as there are different types of social capital, with different impact, different organizations have different social capital building capabilities. Rudolph (2004) puts forth the value of constructing a more nuanced category of voluntary associations to ascertain the types of associational forms that can best lead to the inculcation of habits of cooperation and trust with the wider community of purpose that constitutes civil society. Not all associations can or have the same capacity to generate mutuality and cooperation. Likewise, social capital is not necessarily something inherently good or similar in its wider societal implications. The negative consequences of social capital like the exclusion of outsiders, excess claims on group members, and restrictions on individual freedom have been noted. The social capital generated by and in associations can be exclusive or appropriated by sectional interests, and not accessible to others outside of that particular group.

Associations that are able to generate internal solidarity may succeed in ways that make members feel empathy only with each other and insulate them from the 'other'. Associations may nurture those who participate together, enhancing their mutual concern and sympathies, but do not

**Table 1: To
District of

| Association
Types |
| --- |
| Religion |
| Social Wel
being |
| Social &
Recreation |
| Culture |
| Mutual Bene |
| Commerce |
| Sports |
| Youth |
| Education |
| Labour
Association |
| General |

is therefore important to find out what are the conditions and mechanism that translate the social capital generated by associational life from inside to outside and that make social capital available for strengthening the pursuit of the public good for developing an active conscious citizenry.

Background

As of 2005, the Registrar of Societies (ROS) in the north east district of Penang registered a total of 1464 non-governmental associations. Table 1 shows the total number of associations based on functional roles and ethnic background of members. Mono-ethnic or ethnically homogeneous associations have members who are exclusively Malay, Chinese or

Table 1: Total Number of Associations in North East District of Penang

Associational Types	Ethnicity				Total
	Malay	**Chinese**	**Indian**	**Mixed**	
Religion	3	257	47	48	355
Social Well-being	23	175	9	120	327
Social & Recreation	12	13	1	133	159
Culture	7	25	3	41	76
Mutual Benefit	13	29	2	5	49
Commerce	11	22	8	104	145
Sports	3	8		58	69
Youth	1	1	5	22	29
Education		8		8	16
Labour Association	2			11	13
General	5	59	4	158	226

Indian[2]. Mixed-ethnic associations are those with members from at least two or more different ethnic groups. In fact, the mixed-ethnic associations consist mainly of Chinese and Indians, with a small number of Malays in a few of these associations, if there are any. (Note: The small number of Malay associations under the religion category could be misleading as most Islam-related associations are required to register with the state religious department instead.)

This study is a survey of 55 associations categorized into seven functional groupings: faith-based, service, sports/recreation/culture, resident association, commerce, civil society organization (CSO) and others (see Appendix 1 for the full list). It also compares associations which are ethnically mixed (mixed-ethnic) and ethnically homogeneous (mono-ethnic associations, as shown in Appendix 2).

In this paper, we focus mainly on the subjective, cognitive dimensions of social capital via the norms of trust and reciprocity vis-à-vis members' participation, trust in each other, friendship bonds and sense of belonging/identity, and to a more limited extent, the aspects of structures of associations and their networks to examine the stock of social capital in the associations surveyed.

The research instruments consist of two sets of questionnaires (Q1 and Q2). Q1 was designed to gather information about associations' profiles, networks and activities from a committee member. Q2 elicits information directly from ordinary members about their participation in activities organized by their associations and their perceptions about trust, friendship bonds, reciprocity and sense of belonging in their respective associations. For each selected association, we interviewed three ordinary members and one executive.

Stock of Social Capital in the Associations of Penang

The components used in this paper for gauging the stock of social capital are trust, friendship bonds, sense of belonging and reciprocity. An association that exhibits high levels of these components is assumed to have higher capability and potential in generating social capital.

Trust

Central to building social capital is 'trust' and trust is also the essential part of social capital (Coleman 1990: 306). It is built up through continued interaction across networks of relationships. Social capital "helps to create a vibrant and virtuous community where people know their neighbors, join together in voluntary associations, give of themselves, and commit themselves to moral codes ..' (Uslaner 1999: 121-122).

Table 2a shows the various levels of trust respondents have amongst members in general and amongst those of different backgrounds within their own associations. Overall trends show high trust levels recorded in the civil society organisations, sports/recreation/culture and service groups followed by the faith-based and commerce associations. Meanwhile, resident associations are regarded with the lowest trust levels in most aspects.

Interestingly, members from mixed ethnic associations seem to exhibit more trust with other members in general and, also, with those from different ethnic backgrounds within their associations compared to the mono-ethnic grouping.

Members from civil society organisations give the highest trust ratings

members of resident associations have relatively low trust ratings for their office bearers. Compared to the mono-ethnic associations, members from the mixed-ethnic groups give higher trust ratings for their office-bearers. Only a small number of members distrusts the office bearers of their associations.

Members from civil society organizations also seem to have the highest trust among members irrespective of their ethnic backgrounds. This can be seen in Table 2a where members from the CSO have a high level of trust with members from the same ethnic background as well as those from different ethnic backgrounds. Interestingly, the mixed ethnic associations record the highest trust level with members from the same ethnic background compared with those from the mono-ethnic groups. Among the mono-ethnic groups, members from the Indian mono-ethnic group seem to have a higher level of trust among themselves compared to the members of Chinese and the Malay-based associations.

Ethnically mixed associations also have more trust among members from other ethnic backgrounds. According to the respondents, ethnic Indians, followed by Chinese, tend to have higher trust with members from other ethnic backgrounds compared to Malays. (Trust with members from other ethnic background is not applicable for the mono-ethnic group.)

Age does not seem to influence the level of trust among members. However, the levels of trust with older members tend to be higher in most of the associations compared to the levels of trust with members of younger generation. Respondents feel that other factors could have a more distinct influence on the levels of trust among members. Among the members of various types of associations, members from the CSO

TRUST	TYPES OF ASSOCIATIONS								
	ALL	FB	SER	SRC	RA	CO	CSO	Other	Coding/N
On a scale of 1-5,									
How would you rate your level of trust with members of this association?	3.99	3.92	3.97	4.07	3.82	4.10	4.07	3.92	1=least trusted; 5=most trusted (162)
Please indicate how much you trust office bearers of the association in general.	4.25	4.46	4.31	4.23	3.83	4.05	4.27	4.17	1=least trusted; 5=most trusted (165)
How would you rate your level of trust in members of the association in general who are in the same ethnic background as you?	3.96	3.90	4.06	4.10	3.83	3.90	4.07	3.58	1=least trusted; 5=most trusted (164)
How would you rate your level of trust with members of other ethnic groups?	3.85	3.58	4.06	4.21	3.86	3.70	3.93	1.00	1=least trusted; 5=most trusted (95)
How would you rate your level of trust with younger members?	3.48	3.57	3.43	3.17	3.40	3.33	3.87	3.73	1=least trusted; 5=most trusted (128)
How would you rate your level of trust with older members?	3.92	3.90	4.00	3.83	3.90	3.83	4.20	3.67	1=least trusted; 5=most trusted (132)
How would you rate your level of trust with members in the different income/status groups?	3.66	3.55	3.67	3.78	3.71	3.36	3.93	3.67	1=least trusted; 5=most trusted (124)

– all the 55 associations, FB - Faith based; SER -service, SRC - sports/recreation/culture, resident association, COM -commerce, CSO -civil society organization, Other – other types like alumni

Table 2b: Levels of Trust by Mixed or Mono-Ethnic Association

TRUST	MIXED/MONO-ETHNIC			
	Mixed	Chinese	Malay	Indian
On a scale of 1-5,				
how would you rate your level of trust with members of this association?	4.17	3.75	3.93	4.0
please indicate how much you trust office bearers of this association in general.	4.40	4.47	4.20	4.50
how would you rate your level of trust in members of this association in general who are in the same ethnic background as you?	4.41	4.07	3.87	4.41
how would you rate your level of trust with members of other ethnic groups?	4.07	3.21	3.00	4.14
how would you rate your level of trust with younger members?	3.47	3.44	3.40	3.60
how would you rate your level of trust with older members?	4.07	3.76	3.20	4.00
how would you rate your level of trust with members from the different income/status groups?	3.83	3.59	3.18	3.56

of their age. Likewise, levels of trust do not depend too much on whether members are from different income/status background. Civil society

Friendship bonds

As illustrated in Table 3a, about 87% of members from the CSO group develops friendship bonds with different ethnic groups by participating in activities organized by their respective associations. All members from the sports/recreation/culture as well as the resident associations also expressed that they developed friendship bonds with other ethnic groups whenever they participated in activities organized by their associations. Table 3b shows that more members from the mixed-ethnic group develop friendship with other ethnic groups compared to the mono-ethnic groups. Again, more members from the CSO group as well as the mixed-ethnic group tend to have a good level of friendship with members of other ethnic groups.

Most members in the civil society, sports/recreation/culture and faith-based associations have substantial levels of friendship with members of different age groups. Only one member from the resident association indicated that he/she had a very good level of friendship with members of different age groups. Members from the mixed-ethnic group also indicated substantial levels of friendship with members of different age groups. Majority of the Malay mono-ethnic group rated their friendship as normal.

Most members from all the various associational types develop friendship bonds with members from different income groups. However, only 60% of the CSO membership develops friendship bonds with members from different income groups compared to about 90% and 87% from the faith-based and sports/recreation/culture groups respectively. Mixed-ethnic associations did not record high levels of friendship bond among members from different income standing as compared to the other

Table 3a: Friendship Bond by Type of Associations

FRIENDSHIP BOND	ALL	FB	SER	SRC	RA	CO	CSO	Other	Coding/N
Have you developed any friendship bonds with the different ethnic groups by participating in the activities organized by your association?	.85	.90	.65	1.00	1.00	.81	.87	.50	0=No; 1=Yes (113)
On a scale of 1-5, how would rate your level of friendship with members of other ethnic groups?	3.90	3.71	3.78	4.32	3.86	3.92	4.07	3.0	1=very not good; 5=very good (103)
On a scale of 1-5, how would rate your level of friendship with members of different age groups?	3.93	3.94	3.90	4.08	3.73	3.74	4.20	3.83	1=very not good;5=very good (148)
Have you developed any friendship bonds with members of different income/status	.87	0.97	0.78	0.96	1.0	0.89	.60	.75	0=No; 1=Yes (134)
Do you socialize (go out shopping, makan etc.) with members of this association?	.84	.87	.67	.97	.83	.90	.87	.75	0=No; 1=Yes (165)
How often do you socialize with them?	3.74	3.12	3.83	4.17	3.90	3.58	4.54	3.44	0=everyday; 5= occasionally (165)

N- all the 55 associations, FB- Faith based; SER-service, SRC-sports/ recreation/ culture, RA-resident association, COM-commerce, CSO-civil society organization, Other-other types like alumni associations

Table 3b: Friendship Bond by Mixed or Mono-Ethnic Association

FRIENDSHIP BOND	Mixed	Chinese	Malay	Indian	Coding
Have you developed any friendship bonds with the different ethnic groups by participating in activities organized by your association?	.87	.74	1.00	.88	0=No; 1=Yes
On a scale of 1-5, how would you rate your level of friendship with members of other ethnic groups?	4.02	3.61	3.67	3.94	1=very not good; 5=very good
On a scale of 1-5, how would you rate your level of friendship with members of different age groups?	4.05	3.92	3.47	3.95	1=very not good; 5=very good
Have you developed any friendship bonds with members of different income/status	0.80	0.95	0.93	0.90	0=No; 1=Yes
Do you socialize(go out shopping, makan, etc.) with members of this association?	.81	.87	.93	.78	0=No; 1=Yes
How often do you socialize with them?	3.95	3.62	4.0	3.29	0=everyday; 5= occasionally

most of their members developed friendship bonds with members from different income groupings.

The data also indicate that majority of the respondents socializes with members of their associations. Almost all members from the sports/ recreation/culture group socialize among themselves. Members from

from Malay mono-ethnic associations socialize the least among themselves.

Sense of belonging

To examine 'sense of belonging', we asked respondents if they identified strongly with their associations, about the strength of the feeling of togetherness or closeness and, also, if there was a spirit of belonging in their associations.

As shown in Table 4A, all members from the CSO group identify strongly with their associations. They also indicated that there is a 'spirit of belonging' in their associations. Members from the faith-based and sports/ recreation and culture also identify strongly with their associations. Likewise, members from these associations also expressed the presence of 'the spirit of belonging' in their associations as well. However, members from resident associations generally do not identify strongly

Table 4a: Sense of Belonging by Type of Association

SENSE OF BELONGING	ALL	FB	SER	SRC	RA	CO	CSO	Other	Coding/ N
Is there a "spirit of belonging" in this association?	.89	.97	.83	.90	.42	.86	1.00	.67	0= No; 1=Yes (165)
Do you identify strongly with this association?	.85	.95	.89	.93	.67	.81	1.00	.83	0= No; 1=Yes (165)
How strong is the feeling of togetherness or closeness in this	3.98	4.13	3.89	4.10	3.42	4.00	4.20	3.67	1=very distant; 5=very close

with their associations and they also do not feel the 'spirit of belonging' in their associations.

More than 80% of members from the mixed and the mono-ethnic groups indicate that they identify strongly with their associations and also feel the 'spirit of belonging' in their associations (see Table 4b). The reasons why they identify strongly to their associations are mostly related to the values and the common cause for which they have come together to pursue through the objectives of their respective associations. Most of them affirm that the spirit of belonging have been developed in the process of participating in activities organized by their associations. Members interact and act together to pursue a common cause.

Table 4b: Sense of Belonging by Mixed or Mono-ethnic Association

SENSE OF BELONGING	Mixed	Chinese	Malay	Indian	Coding/N
Is there a "spirit of belonging" in this association?	.87	.81	.80	.93	0= No; 1=Yes
Do you identify strongly with this association?	.94	.89	.80	.81	0= No; 1=Yes
How strong is the feeling of togetherness or closeness in this association?	4.12	3.80	3.80	4.07	1=very distant; 5=very close

A high percentage of members from the CSO group experiences strong feelings of togetherness or closeness in their associations. Such feelings are also felt among members of the sports/recreation/culture and, also, the faith-based associations. However, the majority of resident associations' members does not have such strong feelings of togetherness and closeness. Members from mixed-ethnic associations also have stronger feelings of togetherness compared to the members of mono-

	Other	Coding/N
	.67	0= No; 1=Yes (165)
	.83	0= No; 1=Yes (165)
	3.67	1=very distant; 5=very close

Malays does not feel that close (only somewhat) with the members from their associations.

Reciprocity

This dimension is represented by how well members help each other. As shown in Table 5a, about 75% of members in the service and CSO groups are always or somewhat helping out each other.

Resident associations have the least members who help each other out frequently.

In the ethnic-mixed group (see Table 5b), about 70% of members agree that they always or somewhat help each other out. Most members of all associations agree that they can easily seek help from members of their associations. As to whether respondents have helped or have been helped the past six months, the responses that indicate a 'no' do not necessarily mean members could not get help or refused to help but help does not arise in both cases.

Bonding and Bridging Social Capital

Social capital in associations serves both as a bonding function within an association and as a bridging function between associations. In this paper we define the social capital bonding function of an association as its role/s in bringing members together in ways that develop trust, friendship bonds, reciprocity and a sense of belonging among members within the association. The bridging function is expressed through the capacities of an association in bringing together and connecting its

Table 5a: Reciprocity by Type of Associations

RECIPROCITY	ALL	FB	SER	SRC	RA	CO	CSO	Other	Coding
How well do members in the organization help each other these days?	2.25	2.33	1.89	2.10	2.83	2.40	2.07	2.58	1= always helping out; 5= never helping out (163)
Suppose something unfortunate happened to someone among members of the association, such as a serious illness, or death, etc. How likely is it that other members would help each other?	0.58	0.47	.56	0.62	.67	0.48	0.43	.50	0=very likely; 3=very unlikely (160)
In the past 6 months have you helped anyone from this association?	.67	.79	.58	.77	.75	.57	.60	.50	0=No; 1=Yes (165)
In the past 6 months, have you been helped by members of this association?	.53	.59	.58	.47	.58	.38	.73	.33	0=No; 1=Yes (165)

Table 5b: Reciprocity by Mixed or Mono-Ethnic Association

RECIPROCITY	Mixed	Chinese	Malay	Indian	Coding
How well do members in the organization help each other out these days?	2.03	2.51	2.43	2.11	1= always helping out; 5= never helping out
Suppose something unfortunate happened to someone among the members of the association, such as a serious illness, or death, etc. How likely is it that other members would help him/her?	0.52	.54	0.69	0.73	0=very likely; 3=very unlikely
In the past 6 months have you helped anyone from this association?	.67	.72	.53	.67	0=No; 1=Yes
In the past 6 months, have you been helped by members of this association?	.58	.48	.53	.52	0=No; 1=Yes

From an earlier discussion, based on the mean values of stocks of social capital, such as levels of trust, friendship bonds, reciprocity and sense of belonging, the CSO, faith-based, sports/recreation and service groups tend to have a higher stock of bonding social capital. Resident associations have the least bonding social capital. Ethnically-mixed associations are also the richest in their stock of bonding social capital followed by the Indian, Chinese and the Malay mono-ethnic groups.

Strong relationships among the bonding social capital indicators are also

Table 6: Correlation between Some Bonding Social Capital Indicators

	On a scale of 1-5, how would you rate your level of trust with members of this association?	On a scale of 1-5, how would you rate your level of friendship with members of different age groups?	How well do members in the organization help each other out these days?	How strong is the feeling of togetherness or closeness in this association?
Roughly how often do you involve yourself in this association?	.316(**) .000 (N=162)	.164(*) .046 (N=148)	.316(**) .000 (N=163)	.447(**) .000 (N=165)
On a scale of 1-5, how would you rate your level of trust with members of this association?		.524(**) .000 (N=147)	.372(**) .000 (N=160)	.680(**) .000 (N=162)
How well do members in the organization help each other out these days?				.405(**) .000 (N=163)

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

togetherness and vice versa. The most outstanding outcome is higher trust that could greatly strengthen the feeling of togetherness and closeness among members in an association.

Bridging social capital

Bridging social capital is demonstrated by the association's involvements with other associations such as collaboration: interacting or working together either on common or different goals. As shown in Tables 7a and 7b, not all associations have responded stating that their activities have some forms of involvement with other associations. Overall there is a high percentage of associations working or interacting with other associations with similar goals either in Penang or outside Penang. Not many are involved with other associations of different goals.

Among the different types of associations, the CSO seems to have the highest bridging social capital. Most of the associations from CSO have collaborations and interactions with other associations of similar or different goals either in Penang or outside Penang. None of the resident associations has worked or interacted with other associations of similar or different goals outside Penang. Besides the CSO group, associations from the commerce group also indicate a higher bridging social capital. Almost all the associations do not organize activities that link them with groups outside their associations' own set of concerns.

Table 7b shows that associations from the mixed-ethnic group have the highest bridging social capital, followed by the Indian, Malay and Chinese mono-ethnic groups. None of the Chinese mono-ethnic group has any collaboration with other types of associations to address issues that are of relevance and concern to the larger society of Penang or Malaysia.

Table 7a: Bridging Social Capital by Type of Association (mean)

	ALL	FB	SER	SRC	RA	COM	CSO	Other	Coding
Does this association work or interact with other associations with similar goals in Penang?	1.13	.77	1.00	1.30	1.50	1.50	1.60	.80	0=No, 1=Yes Occasionally, 2=Yes Frequently
Does this association work or interact with other associations with similar goals outside Penang?	.75	.62	.67	.90	.00	.83	1.60	.60	0=No, 1=Yes Occasionally, 2=Yes Frequently
Does this association work or interact with other associations with different goals in Penang?	.62	.54	.50	.70	.50	.83	1.00	.40	0=No, 1=Yes Occasionally, 2=Yes Frequently
Does this association work or interact with other associations with different goals outside Penang?	.44	.31	.42	.50	.00	.67	1.00	.20	0=No, 1=Yes Occasionally, 2=Yes Frequently
Does your association collaborate with other association?	.82	.69	.75	.90	.75	1.00	1.00	.80	0=No, 1=Yes
Does your association organize activities that link you with groups outside of your association's own set of concerns?	.30	.31	.23	.29	.45	.10	.58	.42	0=No, 1=Yes
Does your association work with other types of associations with similar goals?	.67	.74	.56	.79	.71	.79	.69	.11	0=No, 1=Yes
Does your association work with other types of association with different goals?	.34	.34	.24	.24	.71	.2	.54	.64	0=No, 1=Yes
Does your association collaborate with other types of association to address issues that are of relevance and concern to the larger society of Penang/Malaysia?	.24	.31	.19	.13	0	.28	.64	0	0=No, 1=Yes

ALL- all the 55 associations, FB- Faith based; SER-service, SRC- sports/recreation/culture, RA-resident association, COM-commerce, CSO-civil society organization, Others, e.g., alumni associations etc

Conclusion

Because associations engage and connect people, there is an implicit assumption that they contribute to the development of social capital. Do voluntary associations in Penang help build social capital? If so, what

categories of associations are more capable of generating social capital? How effectively does each of these associational categories play the role of generator of social capital? What kinds of social capital are

Table 7b: Bridging Social Capital by Mixed or Mono-ethnic Group (mean)

	Mixed	Chinese	Malay	Indian	Coding
Does this association work or interact with other associations with similar goals in Penang?	1.39	.89	1.00	1.00	0=No, 1=Yes Occasionally, 2=Yes Frequently
Does this association work or interact with other associations with similar goals outside Penang?	1.00	.44	.40	.89	0=No, 1=Yes Occasionally, 2=Yes Frequently
Does this association work or interact with other associations with different goals in Penang?	.65	.61	.60	.56	0=No, 1=Yes Occasionally, 2=Yes Frequently
Does this association work or interact with other associations with different goals outside Penang?	.57	.28	.40	.44	0=No, 1=Yes Occasionally, 2=Yes Frequently
Does your association collaborate with other association?	.91	.78	.80	.67	0=No, 1=Yes
Does your association organize activities that link you with groups outside of your association's own set of concerns?	.37	.28	.27	.19	0=No, 1=Yes
Does your association work with other types of associations with similar goals?	.68	.61	.67	.76	0=No, 1=Yes
Does your association work with other types of association with different goals?	.42	.21	.55	.36	0=No, 1=Yes
Does your association collaborate with other types of association to address issues that are of relevance and	.31	0	.55	.39	0=No, 1=Yes

being generated and to what effect? What factors are useful or contributory in facilitating the formation of social capital in these associations? Does the social capital generated help build a socially cohesive multicultural, multi-ethnic Malaysian society?

High levels of trust, sense of belonging, reciprocity and friendship bond exist among members in associations with a correspondingly high-stock of social capital. Members' involvement in these associations' activities is also more regular, in fact, very frequent – daily, more than once a week, or weekly. Activities of associations and their respective organizational network events provide the platform with which members interact, build trust, friendship and reciprocity among one another, hence generating bonding dimensions of social capital. Philanthropic objectives of some of the associations enhance members' commitments to practice their values and beliefs which further foster the formation of more social capital.

Most associations in this study do generate some form of social capital, and so do residents associations where the level of participation and interaction among ordinary members is generally very low. Among the various groups of associations surveyed, civil society organisations stand out relatively higher in their overall stock of social capital. Faith-based, service and sports/recreation/culture groups also fare fairly well in generating social capital among their members.

Resident associations seem to have a relatively low stock of social capital. Based on the same measurement, ethnically-mixed associations are found to have a higher stock of social capital compared to associations which are homogeneous in their ethnic composition (mono-ethnic groups). It is interesting to note that even trust among members

The type of social capital generated in these associations is mainly bonding social capital. This is particularly the case among those sharing the same ethnic background. Among the different groups of associations, again the civil society organisations have the highest capability in generating bonding social capital, followed by the faith-based, sports/ recreation/ culture and the service categories. Resident associations have the lowest stock of bonding social capital. The ethnically-mixed associations are better able to generate bonding social capital compared to the homogeneous ethnic associations.

Most associations have very limited capabilities in generating bridging social capital. Though some amount of bridging social capital is generated, it is mainly produced through inter-organizational collaboration rather than through direct interaction among members across associations. Civil society organisations and ethnically-mixed associations have better capabilities than others at generating bridging social capital. Associations which have higher bonding social capital also tend to have better capabilities in generating bridging social capital. This initial observation needs to be further investigated to unearth the links and interrelationships of different types of social capital.

Overall, the findings indicate that not all voluntary associations are similarly productive avenues for the generation of social capital. Some are more effective than the rest. Civil society organisations, faith-based, sports/recreation/culture and service organizations have greater potential than resident associations in developing bonding and bridging social capital. Ethnically-mixed associations have greater capabilities than ethnically homogenous associations in generating bonding and bridging social capital among their members. This study highlights the value, role and potential of ethnically-mixed and civil society associations in nurturing

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Endnotes

[1] This is sometimes referred to as a sub-category of bridging social capital

[2] The other ethnic categories are left out as these are only few in numbers in the context of Penang.

Appendix 1

Types of Association	Names of Associations	
Faith based N=13	Anjuman Himayaihul Islam Persatuan Wadda Gurdwara Sahib Jelutong Tow Boe Keong Kew Ong Tai Tay Persatuan Suma Ching Hai Penang Jemaah Islah Malaysia Pertubuhan Buddhist Tzu-Chi Merits	Masjid Kapitan Keling Penang Tao Yuan Persatuan Hindu Sangam Farlim Petra Baptist Church Pertubuhan penganut Dewa Nah Toh Ah Peh Penang Sri Sathya Sai Baba Centre
Service N=12	Kelab Kiwanis Georgetown Persatuan Kesihatan Jiwa Khoo Kongsi Persatuan Pembantuan Kristian Penang North Malaysia Malayali Samajam Persatuan Silsilaye Muhibhi Penang Chinese Teacher Assn.	Rotary Club Penang Senior Citizen Caring Assn. Sima Handicapped Centre Persatuan Kebajikan Metta Malaysia Utara Society For The Prevention Of Cruelty to Animals Penang
Sports/recreation/culture N=10	Kelab Sukan Brats Penang Penang Sports Club Kelab Sukan Jabatan Kerja Raya Penang Symphony Society Penang Basketball Assn	Persatuan Bola Sepak Pulau Pinang Penang Chinese Chin Woo Athletic Assn Penang Judo Assn Persatuan Nihon Aikido Kenkyukai Penang Pertubuhan Belia Dramatis Penang
Resident association N=4	Perbadanan Pengurusan Blok 33 Taman Pekaka Persatuan Penduduk Kampung Melayu Persatuan Penduduk Taman Paya Terubong Resident's Association of Bandar Bayan Baru	
Commerce N=6	Malay Chamber Penang Chinese Chamber Muslim Jewellery & Money Changer Assn Penang Chinese Physician Assn	Penang Indian Chamber Persatuan Pemandu Teksi dan Kereta Sewa Melayu Pulau Pinang
Civil Society Organization N=5	Aliran Society of the Disabled Person Penang Consumers Association Penang	Penang Heritage Trust Women centre for change(WCC)
Others N=5	Badan Pembangunan Akhlak Pulau Pinang Penang Press Club Gabungan Belia Persatuan Klan Cina	Penang Persatuan Alumni Han Chiang Persatuan Pekerja Islam Penang Port Sdn. Bhd.

Appendix 2

Mixed or Mono	Names of Associations	
Mixed N=23	Aliran Persatuan Pembantuan Kristian Pulau Pinang Consumers Association Penang Persatuan Bola Sepak Pulau Pinang Kelab Kiwanis Georgetown Persatuan Kesihatan Jiwa Kelab Sukan Brats Penang Persatuan Nihon Aikido Kenkyukai Penang Kelab Sukan Jabatan Kerja Raya Persatuan Penduduk Kampung Melayu Penang Heritage Trust Rotary Club	Penang Judo Assn Sima Handicapped Centre Penang Press Club Society of the Disabled Person Penang Penang Sports Club Sri Sathya Sai Baba Centre Penang Symphony Society Women Centre for change(WCC) Perbadanan Pengurusan Blok 33 Taman Pekaka Resident's Assn of Bandar Bayan Baru Society For The Prevention Of Cruelty to Animals Penang
Mono: Chinese N=18	Gabungan Belia Persatuan Klan Cina Penang Persatuan Alumni Han Chiang Jelutong Tow Boe Keong Kew Ong Tai Tay Persatuan Kebajikan Metta Malaysia Utara Khoo Kongsi Persatuan Penduduk Taman Paya Terubong Penang Basketball Assn Persatuan Suma Ching Hai Penang Penang Chinese Chamber	Pertubuhan Belia Dramatis Pulau Pinang Penang Chinese Chin Woo Athletic Assn Pertubuhan Buddhist Tzu-Chi Merits Malaysia Penang Chinese Physician Assn Pertubuhan penganut Dewa Nah Toh Ah Peh Penang Chinese Teacher Assn. Petra Baptist Church Penang Senior Citizen Caring Assn. Penang Tao Yuan
Mono: Malay N=5	Badan Pembangunan Akhlak Pulau Pinang Jemaah Islah Malaysia Malay Chamber Persatuan Pekerja Islam Penang Port Sdn. Bhd. Persatuan Pemandu Teksi dan Kereta Sewa Melayu Pulau Pinang	
Mono: Indian N=9	Anjuman Himayaihul Islam Persatuan Hindu Sangam Farlim Masjid Kapitan Keling Persatuan Silsilaye Muhibhi Muslim Jewellery & Money Changer Assn	Persatuan Wadda Gurdwara Sahib Penang North Malaysia Malayali Samajam Penang Indian Chamber Sri Muniswarea Temple Perak Road

Synergy of Three:
A Formula for Revitalising the Labor Movement

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Abstract

Conventional wisdom paints a generally gloomy scenario for the future of the labor movement worldwide. The unceasing waves of labor market flexibility have been marginalizing the labor movement more and more. However, there is light in the darkness — cooperation and networking between and among the trade unions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and academe. Based on Indonesia's experience, this paper discusses the potential of this cooperation-networking among the three actors as an empowerment strategy for the labor movement. Working together and exchanging and sharing knowledge may look simple, but, gradually, they help build a strong foundation for a revitalized labor movement. They also bring about heightened awareness among the three that each has resources that can be shared in promoting a strong social movement. What is needed is to provide a fertile ground for this cooperation-networking to bloom and let the gloom on the labor movement fade away.

Keywords: labor movement, networking, trade union, NGO, academe

Overview

This article discusses the importance of networking among the three groups in the community — trade union, NGO and academe — as a strategy to strengthen the labor movement.

In the Indonesian context, the revitalisation of the labor movement is vital. After the labor reforms in the late 1990s, the movement had a golden opportunity to counter the deleterious effects of the heavy-handed labor control policies under the long period of Soeharto's New Order regime, from the mid-1960s to the mid-1990s. Somehow, this opportunity slipped away for varied political and economic reasons. This includes the failure of the contending Indonesian labor centres and federations, which proliferated after the collapse of the Soeharto regime, to unite and come up with a common agenda of social and labor reform. The revitalisation of the labor movement is also imperative to put back unions at the center of the Indonesian social movement as they once were and overcome the image of the unions as exclusivist and economistic institutions.

The democratisation process at the end of the Soeharto's authoritarian regime also marked the politics of decentralization, which has provided regional governments wider autonomy for self-governance. This local devolution policy opened another arena for policy advocacy and engagement for the labor movement. And yet, this arena is also full of opportunities and threats. On one hand, decentralisation has enabled citizens and grassroots organizations to reach or have access to the government more easily and articulate their respective demands. On the other hand, the ensuing local-level politicization has caused a decline in the professional management of the local government apparatuses

community members pushing for their own vested sectoral interests and agenda.

The greatest threat to the Indonesian labor movement, however, is the neo-liberal programme of economic globalisation which was put in place in the latter half of the Soeharto regime and which has been continued by the succeeding post-Soeharto Administrations. On the labor front, this neo-liberal economic programme has been translated to a programme of "labor market flexibility", meaning greater ease for capital or investors to hire and fire workers, to increase or reduce wages and benefits, to avoid or muzzle unionism, and to locate or relocate investments in areas where labor is cheap, docile and unorganised.

In short, the practice of labor market flexibility is the primary reason for the marginalisation of worker's interest vis-à-vis capital, especially in situations when governments bow to the demand of capital to stay away as much as possible from its role as protector of workers or enforcer of labor standards. The economic policy regime prioritizes the requirements of foreign investment, including a red carpet welcome and trouble-free and union-free business environment. Thus, despite the so-called labor reforms of the 1990s and the wholesale adoption by Indonesia in 1998 of the ILO's core labor conventions, the economic policy regime and its accompanying labor market flexibility programme implemented by capital and consenting local officials have succeeded in eroding the strength of the labor movement and degrading the situation of many workers.

To sum up, the national and global economic and political context has by and large not been favourable to the growth of the Indonesian labor movement. However, this paper argues that labor actions and labor networks, formed in close cooperation with NGOs and academics at

Labor Movement in Indonesia since the *Reformasi* Era

Observers of the labor scene in Indonesia, especially those belonging to the trade unions, labor NGOs and academe, had two opposite scenarios on the directions of the labor movement during the early days of the *reformasi*, or after the collapse of the Soeharto regime at the height of the "krisis moneter". The first scenario was pessimistic, based on the view that the labor movement would never be strong and influential due to internal and external problems of the movement, in particular as a result of the weak tradition of political democracy (Tornquist 2005:84) and inherent organisational weaknesses (Hadiz 2006:14).

The second scenario was optimistic, based on the assumption that the serious fragmentations within the trade unions and the expanding social-economic-political pressures in the community would force the labor movement to revitalize or renew itself and re-think its overall strategy (Abdullah, 2007, Tjandra 2007, Tjandraningsih & Herawati, 2008). Of course, the opposite scenarios arose from the different ways of looking at the unions: the first scenario looked at the unions primarily at the national or macro-economic level, while the second scenario saw the dynamics of union work at the local level.

The democratic ambience for the labor movement started in 1998 with the ratification of the ILO Convention No. 98 and the enactment of Law No. 21/2000 on Trade Union. After the enactment of the new law, there was a mushrooming of unions brought about by union fragmentation, which, in turn, was due mainly to the bolting out of unions from the SPSI, the one and only single labor centre that was permitted by the government during the New Order in power (Mizuno et al 2007).

was declining even as more and more unions were being registered. There are several reasons to explain this paradox. The overall environment engendered by a more relaxed policy on labor that began in the middle of the politico-economic crisis of the late 1990s happened at a wrong time (see also Pabottingi 2005). The policy was endorsed amid a severe economic crisis and high unemployment rate even as the government was trying to provide a friendly and flexible investment environment for the business community. As a result, the new-found freedom of association was observed in an ironic and contradictory manner, with unions mushrooming, but with overall union density declining because the union organisers were fishing in the same and declining pond (Tjandraningsih 2002).

It should be recalled that Indonesia was the hardest hit in Southeast Asia by the 1997-98 Asian financial crisis. Hundreds of factories closed down, rendering thousands of workers unemployed. Unions lost large numbers of members and nothing much could be done to deal with this reality. Then in the midst of this crisis, the government ratified the ILO convention on the freedom of association and six other ILO core conventions, making Indonesia Asia's leader when it comes to the ratification of international core labor conventions. Two years later, the era of state-controlled unionism ended with the enactment of Law No. 21/2000 on Trade Union.

Since then, new unions have been born. In seven years, there were three confederations, 68 federations and thousands of plant-level unions (Tjandraningsih 2007:4). These unions can be categorized into five groups based on their origin: the SPSI group; the ex-SPSI; the unions of the 1950s that are "reborn"; the lawyer's unions, or unions that are established and led by lawyers; and the independent unions or NGO-

However, most of the unions have similar approaches, programs and strategies. They are also generally involved in economic unionism. And yet, most of the unions are in competition with each other. Worse, union-raiding has become a practice, with union organizers recruiting members, who are already organized in large establishments, rather than organizing the unorganised workers, who are usually found in smaller establishments or in more difficult or inaccessible areas.

Then, in 2003, and in a reversal of the 1998 labor democratization process, the Indonesian government passed the Law No. 13/2003 that provides legitimate ground for the practice of flexible labor market and flexible labor measures, in line with the demand of capital.

The policy of flexible labor market has dire implications for workers and unions. In particular, it allows the practice of hiring contract workers as replacements to permanent workers. This practice has effectively reduced union membership since unions generally cater to permanent workers for collective bargaining purposes.

Soon after the law was passed, there was a massive shift in the labor market, with employers laying off permanent workers and replacing them with contract workers or changing the status of permanent workers into contract-based. As a result, workers with non-permanent status automatically lost their membership from their unions. Overall, the practice of flexible labor shows the strategic retreat of the state away from industrial relations matters and from its role as protector of workers' interests.

Another complication in the world of work which poses new challenges to workers and unions has risen with the implementation of the policy of

levels because there is a tendency for the local governments to appoint staffs based on personal judgment rather than on qualifications or merits. In turn, this declining professionalism at the local level has spawned "horizontal conflicts" between workers and other members of the community as local government units become timid in restraining capital from undertaking labor flexibility measures.

This is probably best illustrated by the conflict related to the issue of labor outsourcing. The factories' preference to employ contract workers has created tensions between unions and community and even family members around the factory. When unions try to protect their members not to be shifted from permanent to contractual tenure, the family members of the worker oppose the union policy for fear that he or she might completely become jobless. Since the practice of contract-based hiring has become widespread, workers have no choice but to accept such an arrangement even if the job is a regular one or requires regular or permanent workers. To refuse is tantamount to losing the job completely and becoming unemployed.

Rise of Three Actors in the Indonesian Labor Movement

Developments in the post-Soeharto labor movement are full of contradictions as outlined above. The democratization of the labor policy regime has not ushered in a stronger labor movement; instead, it has spawned a law that subverts unionism through greater labor market flexibility in the hiring and firing of workers.

However, the post-Soeharto period has also seen the rise of other actors

Since the 1980s, a number of labor NGOs has been active in Indonesia. These NGOs, enjoying support from some foreign donors, came into being in response to the repressive and exploitative situation obtaining at that time as a result of the Soeharto policy of economic growth that was reliant on foreign investments and the policy of supporting these investments through a cooperative labor movement or through a non-union policy. The situation was particularly bad in the export-oriented labor intensive industries where workers were exposed under very poor and terrible working conditions.

Since then, part of the labor movement in Indonesia has developed with the assistance of these NGOs. Some of these NGOs have even played a central role in shaping the internal or organizational dynamics of the labor movement due to their political and social position in society and their network with international donors.

As to the academe, its role in the labor movement became visible in the 1990s. A number of Indonesian and foreign academics and researchers developed an interest on labor issues and became part of the movement through their studies, researches and analyses of burning labor issues. Some also monitored labor policy and labor market developments and shared their analyses and reflections with the unions. Some pro-labor studies were at par or even better than those produced by government agencies.

In sum, there are now entities or actors – the trade unions, the labor NGOs and the labor-oriented academics who are in a position to help Indonesia's working population. Their unity and cooperation, based on their different roles, are critical in revitalizing the Indonesian labor movement.

Some Characteristics of the Three Actors

1. Trade unions

As the legally-recognized representatives of workers in an enterprise, the trade unions tend to be exclusivist. This tendency is based on the belief that the subject matter of their business, worker's rights, can be dealt only within the purview of union-management relations. The implication of the belief is reflected in the exclusion of labor issues from wider social and economic issues.

The primary and never-ending advocacy issue for most unions is wage, that the minimum wage be raised in the annual May Day celebration and rally. Other concerns are the labor law changes or revisions and the labor market flexibility measures. These issues are considered exclusive only to workers vis-à-vis other public issues such as the price hikes for oil, electricity and basic needs, including food that is sometimes not raised in workers' rallies.

Other characteristics of the trade unions are their weak political power due to fragmentation, rivalry and organisational weaknesses. Unions, in general, also face shortcomings in human resources and organisational skills development. Financial constraint is also the problem of most unions because it is not easy to collect dues from their members.

2. Labor NGOs

The weak political power and influence of trade unions became the basis for labor NGOs to back up the labor movement. NGOs have had a long history in advocating and articulating labor issues and concerns. During the New Order government, some NGOs were able to exert

pressure on government to adjust their labor policies in support of workers.

Labor NGOs also play a critical role in the field of mass education and advocacy. With their access to international donors, NGOs are able to organise various training and education programs for union members to enhance their skills. The scope of the training includes workers rights, negotiation skills and appreciation of labor laws. NGOs also initiate cooperation and network among unions and facilitate workers' actions and rally. Sometimes, NGOs serve as facilitator-mediator when there are conflicts among unions.

Who are the labor NGO activists? Most of them have a university background. They started their activities in defending workers when they were still students. Other NGO activists are ex-workers and/or church-based activists.

3. Academics

As labor issues and the world of work have become more complex, the role of academics, professional researchers and intellectuals has acquired central importance. They help back up the labor movement in providing a broader perspective on the issues encountered by the movement as well as those that have to be dealt with in broad political economic terms. Above all, they provide solid data, solid studies and solid arguments for certain positions taken by the labor movement. They also serve, not only as resource persons and intellectual analysts, but also, as devil's advocates, who help in strengthening the rigor of the labor cause. They help counter or even demolish the arguments raised by the apologists of capital, and provide critical insights on capital strategies against unionism, which is vital whenever unions reflect and formulate their own strategies.

Why the Network of the Three?

The three actors have different but complementary functions. If there is unity and synergy in their work, the positive impact on the labor movement is tremendous. Hence, there is the need to build deeper and wider solidarity among the three.

At the same time, a network of the three should also constitute a strategic step to help bring back the labor movement as the backbone of the broader social movement for change in society. From a movement in itself, the trade union movement should become a movement for itself and the broader society. This can only happen if it realizes that it is part of this broader movement for change and that labor demands cannot be divorced or separated from the broader social issues affecting the family, community, environment, economic governance, political democracy and so on.

Various actions can be carried out in and with collaboration among the three. Among others, these are joint research-based advocacy; exchange of ideas in developing strategies for the labor movement; organising forums to develop ideas and thoughts to confront the new challenges and so on. One example of healthy collaboration between NGOs and academe found useful by unions can be mentioned here. In 2007, three NGOs and one research center under a university worked together to write a position paper on Labor Market Flexibility (Nugroho & Tjandraningsih 2007). The study tried to explain the link between the conceptual basis of the policy of the LMF with the actual experiences of workers on the ground as a result of this policy. The study elicited a positive response from the unions, with many unions stating that they found it helpful in understanding more clearly the phenomenon happening

in the world of work and appreciating the importance of rethinking and reflecting on appropriate strategies in response to LMF.

Conclusion

Trade unions have gradually acknowledged the need to intensify the network with NGOs and academe, each actor having a role to fulfill in empowering the Indonesian working people. The reality is that new realities in the labor market and in society pose new challenges in the labor movement, new challenges which need new ways of thinking and seeing things. In the context of contemporary Indonesian labor movement, the network of the three is crucial in strengthening the "thinking" side in the movement in order to make the movement more powerful, more influential and "muscular".

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Workers' Conditions in Indonesia's Manufacturing Industry

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<u>Abstract</u>

A flexible labor market is a major trend in the global economy. Proponents of such a labor market system believe that this system is an inclusive strategy to help create wider employment opportunities for the poor and unemployed. Research findings, however, point to the opposite — the practice of labor market flexibility creates social exclusion. This article explains how labor market flexibility processes lead to social exclusion and the degradation of the social and economic conditions of workers in the case of Indonesian manufacturing industry.

Keywords: social exclusion, labor market.

Introduction

Discourses of social exclusion in the labor market have been around for sometime in the academic and labor circles. Discussions of this phenomenon began to appear at about the same time that the welfare state system in Western Europe started to erode in the 1980s and 1990 (Rodgers et al, 1995). They began as a response to the rising trend of poverty, followed by social exclusion, as a result of shifts in labor policies. The concern grew when the labor market system and labor policies

a more liberal form of market in which the state reduces its roles in social security.

At the international level, this concern has also grown stronger as more countries restructure their economies to suit a flexible labor market system. Policymakers in developed countries are convinced about the positive assumptions on the effect of the new labor market system to employment (Cunha, 2002; The World Bank, 2006; Miura, 2001). It is assumed that the labor market system pushes towards inclusion, as it is able to reduce unemployment rate and poverty through the widening of employment opportunities resulting from flexibility.

Through global interactions and international development programs, this conviction becomes more widespread, even among the governments of developing nations, including the ASEAN region (Deyo, 1995; Begin, 1995). The Indonesian government is among those that have adopted this policy. It has chosen this labor policy as part of its attempts to reduce unemployment and poverty, which have not been significantly reduced following the long effects of the 1998 economic crisis (Bappenas, 2004; Widianto, 2006).

This policy choice opens the opportunity for a critical discussion. Empirical studies at the micro and mezzo levels on the social conditions of workers, whether inside or outside the workplace, in fact show the rising social exclusion due to the practice of labor market flexibility. This phenomenon of social exclusion is found notably among the unskilled laborers.

This article intends to discuss how social exclusion occurs in the flexible labor market, forms of social exclusion, further impacts of social exclusion, and finally, explains why such a labor market system has

unskilled workers in the manufacturing sector based on several studies[1]. There are three main parts of this paper: a) a conceptual exposition of social exclusion and flexible labor market, b) a description of the reality of social exclusion occurring among workers in the manufacturing sector in Indonesia and the consequences of the social exclusion, and c) a discussion of this issue.

Social Exclusion and Paradox of the Flexible Labor Market

Social Exclusion and the Labor Market

The concept of social exclusion emerged when France experienced a rise in the number of the poor, excluded from the social security programs provided by the state (Peace, 2001). This concept later spread as other European nations, in the restructuring of their economies, observed a rise in the number of society's poor (Peace 2001; Gore, 1995). The restructuring, done as an attempt of structural adjustment due to the pressures of economic crisis and market liberalisation, in fact creates new poverty and increases the number of the impoverished (Gore, 1995).

This phenomenon shows that poverty is not merely a lack of certain goods, but, also, an outcome of social exclusion as well. This form of social exclusion is broader than the same concept used in social policies in France. This exclusion is defined as the loss of access of a group of people towards various socio-economic and political resources available in the society which are required to preserve their social existence in society.[2]

This social exclusion is inseparable from the labor market. Social

conceptually (Atkinson, 1995: Silver, 1995). Rodgers (1995) even specifically states that:

> The understanding of many processes of social exclusion comes through the understanding of the mechanisms at play in the labor market.

In welfare state economic systems, such as in Western Europe, this relation finds its conceptual and political receptacles (Gore, 1995). In the system, it is normative that the labor market is an institution which provides not merely employment, but, also, adequate conditions of work; career and job security; collective protection through the active and strong role of trade unions, and social security programs allowing each member to have a guaranteed socio-economic life. The state and the market cooperate as main guarantors of the institution to enable it to continually provide socio-economic resources to the society.

Thus, the people, marginalised from these resources or lacking access can be regarded as excluded persons. They lose their normative rights as citizens. In this aspect, citizenship is instrumental in the relation between social exclusion and the labor market (Rodgers, 1995).

The relation between social exclusion and the labor market, however, fundamentally exceeds the limit of the principles of welfare state. Their relation is based on the essence of the labor market as the source of fundamental socio-economic resources for humanity and society. In the capitalistic economic system at present, access to socio-economic resources is essential for members of the society to preserve their social existence. Employment derived from the labor market is the main source of income, welfare and social status in the society.

The fundamental relation between exclusion and the labor market can explain that the issue of social exclusion is not only valid in the context of welfare states, but is also conceptually relevant in the liberal economic model. Thus, it opens a wider opportunity to discuss forms of social exclusion occurring in all types of labor market system.

The Flexible Labor Market: A Strategy of Social Inclusion?

In the recent era, transformation of labor market into a flexible labor market is occurring in almost all societies.[3] This changes the existing structure of opportunity for the socio-economic resources available in the labor market. This change also reconstructs various existing roles and institutional arrangements. Dominant actors, institutional arrangements and forms of strategic policies – all these undergo fundamental changes.

In the flexible labor market, the role of the state is much reduced. On the other hand, the direct relations between employers and workers become more prominent.

The state also drastically reduces its protection towards workers, especially informal workers and the unemployed. Several Western European countries, for example, cut back their social security schemes by reducing budgets and the scope of the protected groups. Those not working in the formal sectors are out of insurance (Peace, 2001).

Meanwhile, protective policies on the roles and functions of labor unions are also slashed. The formerly rigid hiring and firing policies has become more flexible. The use of contract and outsourcing employment system is more widely implemented.

A flexible labor market is a free market, in the sense that it is free from interventions. This market brings together economic actors: employers who provide employment, workers and job seekers merely for economic purposes. Freedom of the actors to transact is regarded as a prerequisite for the ideal performance of the labor market. Various limitations set by the state on the employers and workers to decide on their employment relations are removed as much as possible. The labor market requires flexibility in hiring and firing, working hours, wages and benefits according to the principles of market laws, not socio-political decisions. Protective state policies are regarded as impediments and interventions harming the workings of the market.

The flexible labor market also stresses the importance of economic formalisation for the development of the market, capitalism and distribution of economic surplus for welfare. The greater the number of people working in formal corporations, the more equal the distribution of surplus for their welfare. Thus, the unemployed and the workers in informal sectors are urged to enter formal occupations as formal employment is regarded to better guarantee social protection and provide certainty in wage system and career path compared to the informal economy (World Bank. 2006). Consequently, the use of contract system in employment relations and the increasing flexibility for hiring and firing have been regarded as instrumental for providing a wider opportunity for the unemployed and informal workers to enter into the formal jobs.

Based on this set of assumptions, the proponents of the flexible labor market believe that this system provides a more inclusive strategy of employment. By reducing labor market rigidity, the employment opportunities become wider. This will allow corporations to be flexible in surviving in the competitive commodity market, thus preventing the

workers will also stimulate self-employment, which in turn creates new opportunities.

Social Exclusion in the Flexible Labor Market: A Conceptual Criticism

These rosy assumptions invite strong criticism. The concept of freedom in the labor market completely disregards the reality of unequal relations between job seekers and workers on one hand and employers on the other. These unequal relations are inherent within the capitalist economic system, wherein the economic actors do not have an equal chance to obtain and preserve resources in the labor market.

When welfare states are forced by market forces to diminish much of their protection to workers, the unemployed and informal workers, triumph actually goes to the employers. With their capital, employers are in a position to control the type of workers they need the length of employment, the working conditions and wages, and the organisation of production to be applied. Especially in a condition of labor market dominated by a labor surplus - especially unskilled labor such as in most developing nations, the bargaining position of employers becomes much stronger. This reality shows that the flexible labor market results in a domination of the opportunity structure by capital. Employers and the flexible labor market regime monopolise access to resources in the labor market (Silver, 1995; Tjandraningsih & Nugroho, 2007).

The abrogation of the labor protection system, the easing of restrictions in the labor market and the push to formalise the economy comprise the combination of factors resulting in the explosion of the use of contract and outsourced labor. These are two types of labor which can be

to the need for efficiency and business security in the competitive market. Hence, these groups of workers are generally without adequate protection, especially in the work relations and in the labor market. Short-term employment; low job security; non-inclusion in the social security system and collective protection from the trade union; low wages and the entrapment of labor commodification – all these result in the workers' position being very prone to exploitation.

The dominance in the control of the labor market and work relations by the employer and the weak position of workers in the flexible labor market system show that workers have lost their access, and their control of access, to their desired resources in the labor market. Social exclusion has occurred in the flexible labor market. The opportunity structure becomes much more constricted as Capital has already monopolised it. The State, as a political actor that might have the power to protect, is no longer there.

Workers in the Current Labor Market of Manufacturing Industries in Indonesia

When the new Labor Law was introduced in 2003, the fear of workers, especially those in the manufacturing industries, arising from the introduction of a flexible labor market system, began to appear. The law was regarded as giving legitimacy to the use of contract and outsourced workers. Less than two years after the enactment of the law, the use of these types of workers had spread to many subsectors in the manufacturing industries, and even reached the services sector and the public services. This situation creates unrest among workers and unions.

Workers and unions were struck with panic when in 2006 the government, supported by businesses and neoclassical economists, began to draft a bill to increase the flexibility of the labor market (Kompas, May 4 to May 6, 2006).[4] Immediately, rallies and strikes were held in various industrial cities as acts of resistance of workers and unions to the plan. Then the plan was shelved, at least temporarily.

Although attempts at the policy level to increase flexibility of the labor market have not been completely successful, in practice, the process is ongoing.[5] In fact, these moves often exceed what is stipulated by law. Increasing flexibility of the labor market occurs most rapidly in the manufacturing sector. Harsh competition in the commodity market and sharp fluctuations of the economy are the reasons stated by the employers for their use of contract and outsourced workers. The need for such workers is justified by the strategy of efficiency of production costs. Besides, the government is also interested in creating an investment-friendly climate. Thus, regional governments in industrial areas tend to allow employment to become increasingly flexible.

At the beginning, flexibilisation hit workers in supporting sections of the manufacturing sector, such as cleaning service, security, driver, warehouse operators and catering (Tjandraningsih, Nugroho, Tjandra, 2008). Outsourcing and contract employment systems for this category are, indeed, allowed by law. However, worsened by the weakness of the labor inspection system of the local government, the workers in the main production line were also struck by this wave.[6] (Nugroho & Tjandraningsih, 2007) By 2007, several major foreign investment companies had replaced permanent workers with contract and outsourced workers for some production lines, which required no skills, such as packing, filling and labelling.[7] This also occurs in the domestic

Control of Access

The increasingly flexible labor market is not merely marked by the change of status from permanent to contract or outsourcing, but also, by the increasing hiring and firing circulation among contract and outsourced workers in the company. This is the essence of a flexible labor market. A worker is recruited as a contract worker, or is supplied by an agent, employed for a certain period of time and terminated at the end. The former contract worker has to find another job and, afterwards, follows the same process of circulation. An outsourced worker will be re-employed by the agent in another company until he or she is terminated, then he or she will be delivered to another company. In short, it is a process of labor commodification (Nugroho, 2007).

The hiring and firing circulation reflects how flexibilisation has changed the structure of the labor market. In such a structure, opportunities to obtain permanent jobs become more difficult. However, it becomes much easier to get temporary or non-permanent jobs. For all non-permanent jobs, it is easier to find employment through outsourcing agent services than it is to obtain a contract employment without an agent.

There are two mutually-supporting causes of that condition. The first is that many companies subcontract their recruitment process to outsourcing agencies. The second is the mushrooming employment outsourcing agencies. Both of these make the outsourcing system dominant in the access to employment opportunities. Employment is no longer accessed directly by the job seeker as it has been taken over and controlled by the outsourcing services agencies. There are even tendencies that access to certain forms of employment are monopolised by these agents.

The changes in the labor market structure and the takeover of access control create social exclusion among workers and job seekers. This is a form of social exclusion within the labor market (Rodgers, 1995).[8] They might not be completely excluded from the labor market and become permanently unemployed (social exclusion from the labor market), but they cannot obtain the employment they need and become trapped in the circulation of precarious jobs; segments where jobs are insecure, ill-paid and low-skilled (Rodgers, 1995).

Existing studies find that the process of such exclusion involves a complex process. This occurs in two loci and involves two interrelated stages. The process occurs within the workplace (internal labor market) and outside the workplace (external labor market) while the stages are recruitment and employment.

Social exclusion affecting incumbent workers in the workplace happens through several managerial strategies. These include excessive workload designed to force permanent workers to resign and become outsourced or contract workers; delegation of some work to outsourced workers; transfers of workers allowing their previous position to be filled by contract or outsourced workers, and - most explicitly and frequently - termination without any specific reason and re-recruitment as contract workers or referral to outsourcing agents.

These strategies are quite effective in pushing permanent workers to become temporary workers. This shows how the management plays an important role in controlling access to the internal labor market, excluding permanent workers and trapping them into the hiring and firing circulation of the flexible labor market system.

When workers lose their permanent employment or become temporary workers, they have to follow a recruitment process again, but in a different structure of labor relations. Those who apply individually will enter a system of individual contract labor relations. Most workers, however, are trapped in an outsourcing system where outsourcing agencies dominate access to supporting jobs and even core production jobs in manufacturing companies.

The entry into the agency system traps them all – laid-off workers, whose status changes almost by force, and new job seekers – into a labor commodification, which leaves them with no power over their own labor. All decisions on job placement, wages, rights and duties are controlled by the agents. Workers in such a system have to submit themselves to the logic of transaction between agents and employers.

Dualisation Process

This structural change of labor market does not only narrow the opportunities of access and takes over the control of access, but also creates a dualisation process. Rodgers defines dualisation as, on one side, there are "bad" jobs with easier access but where poverty is concentrated and, on the other side, "good" jobs with restricted access providing a degree of security and acceptable working conditions (Rodgers, 1995: 46). Jobs which are easier to get are those requiring no skills, with short terms, low job security, low wages and almost no extra benefits, and with inadequate working conditions. These jobs also do not provide collective protection through collective labor agreement, and do not provide workers with membership in unions. In general, characteristics of this type of employment create uncertainty in fulfilling their needs in the long term.[9]

Existing studies show that the wages that outsourced workers receive only range between 40-60 percent of wages that permanent workers receive in the same field of work.[10] This shrinkage occurs due to stoppages that have to be paid regularly to the agent. The wage becomes far lower than the prescribed minimum wage.[11] Contract workers generally only receive minimum wages without any allowances from length of employment. Both outsourced and contract workers do not receive allowances for transport, meals and insurance for accidents, health, superannuation and death. Annual bonuses are also not provided. Many contract and outsourced workers do not receive holiday bonuses, while the rest receive a small amount based on their length of employment.[12]

Such workers also do not have rights for paid leave. They also do not receive severance packages when their contract expires or is terminated. They can also be terminated at any time from work depending on the economic condition of the company as well as on their performance and employment relations. In general, they only work for a few months, at most no longer than two years. Their level of job security is very low.

These workers are generally unable to join unions due to management pressure. Union membership is often used as a reason to terminate employment relations. On their part, unions cannot build a stable membership out of contract and outsourced workers whose memberships are temporary. The workers' temporary status makes them prone to losing their jobs. Their status also prevents workers from building established social relations with other workers, either permanent or temporary.

Their social identity is often defined differently based on their behaviour.

different uniform from permanent workers.[13] In some cases, outsourced workers are imagined as being less responsible to their jobs since they are not tied to the corporation, while in other cases, they are regarded as being more diligent and productive (interviews with union officials in Tangerang and Bogor, 2007).

They become socially separated from the collective which otherwise has the potential to be their reference group. Their social status is separated both formally and informally.

Impacts on Social Economic Life

Indecent working conditions for flexible workers have a significant effect in their socio-economic life. Their wage, lower than the allowed minimum wage, which in itself is lower than the standard for a decent life, shows the weakness of their economic capacity, even for the fulfilment of the bare necessities of life.[14] A case study shows that their wages only account for 82.2% of the minimum spending of a worker family (FPBN, 2006). Their lack of access to allowances also impoverishes them from sources of life support in the medium and long terms.

Such economic conditions degrade workers who formerly had permanent employment with permanent income and various allowances and certain economic rights. The uncertainty of employment and income creates uncertainty in planning their socio-economic life. Their marginalised position, lacking rights and economic resources, has further consequences on their opportunity to obtain social and economic access in society. This is shown from the lack of opportunities to obtain adequate health and education support available in communities or society. Their temporary status also excludes them from access to personal

Discussions

The practice of flexible labor market in Indonesia within the last few years results in social exclusion in a complex configuration in several levels of the social structure. Exclusion takes place in the internal labor market (workplace level), in the external labor market as well as in the wider social economic sphere. Exclusion involves complex social process and relations between actors. This whole complex process of social exclusion does not enable the identification of the starting point and the end point of the process. The whole creates a circulation and mutual relationships.

Social exclusion consists of at least two dimensions: the access and the control of access itself. Meanwhile, the access within the labor market has also two dimensions: the access to jobs (job status) and the access to resources within the job. Therefore, the social exclusion vis-à-vis the access refers to the extent of the opportunity to get job status and resources within job.

Meanwhile, the control of access refers to the extent that the people dominate and control the opportunity to get job status and resources. Both dimensions are inseparable empirically, but they involve different social processes. It can be seen from the pattern of workers' struggle and the different arena of social conflicts among workers, job seekers, companies and labor agencies.

In the flexible labor market, workers and job seekers on one side are losing their opportunities to jobs due to the increasing domination of the labor agencies over control of access. On the other side, there is an increasing number of companies which change the pattern of their

actions in the internal labor market. This condition shows the domination of Capital over the access to jobs (Silver, 1995).

The consequences of this domination do not only create distance between workers and job seekers on one hand and the access to job opportunities on the other, but also, between them and the access to most of the resources after they shall have entered the job. The available social and economic resources within jobs, such as welfare, collective protection, social identities and the membership of social groups, are only concentrated as benefits to the permanent workers. Meanwhile, companies gradually increase their non-permanent workers.

This social process shows that flexibility does not only exclude workers into precarious jobs, but also, increases exploitation within the production relations as well as the labor market. The surplus value which is taken by the companies or the capital owners – to be defined by the management as the efficiency value – increases due to the practice of flexibilisation. The profit has a positive correlation with the efficiency, but has a negative correlation with the resources and rights that workers get. The decline of wage value and all labor costs that results from the implementation of this system, on the one hand, and the indifference of workloads of the non-permanent and the permanent workers, on the other hand, explain the increasing values taken by the capitalists. It confirms Byrne's arguments that there is a strong relationship between social exclusion and exploitation (Byrne, 2005: 49-51).

In the external labor market, the process of exclusion does not occur due only to domination or monopoly of the job providers and the labor agencies, but also, due to the political-economic relations of capital. Some empirical findings show that this relations might contribute to the

in practicing flexibilisation; b) collaboration between local government officials and human resource managers and some community leaders in establishing the business of outsourcing labor agency, and c) the advice of HRD (human resource development) consultants to practice flexibility in order to be efficient. There is also an increasing concern about the decline of business and investment climate due to the threat of companies' closure in the economic pressures, and this concern makes the local government tend to allow the increasing face of flexibility for the sustainability of companies.

Such dynamics of political economy strengthens the legitimacy and the intensification of the practice of flexible labor market even though the national employment policy is unchanging. This situation does not only describe the increasing limit and the narrowing process of the access of workers to jobs and resources for their social existence, but also, reflects the absence of institutional arrangements that should protect them. The State, both at the local and national level, has been absorbed into the structure and logic of the market.

From the policy side, the assumption of flexible labor market as a strategic form of inclusion in handling the problems of poverty and unemployment has failed to prove itself in the empirical sphere, especially in the labor intensive manufacturing industries. The reality demonstrates the opposite. The system has created extensive social exclusion. The assumption overlooks the unequal bargaining position between workers/ job seekers and employment providers. The relations in the labor market are supposed to be considered not only as the relations between employment providers and job seekers or workers, but should be regarded also as a part of production relations within the context of capitalist production system. Hence, when the labor market releases the protective system and the

becomes stronger. The conflict is unavoidable since it is inherent within their relations.

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Endnotes

[1] Major sources of the empirical discussion in this article are taken from findings of the research project conducted by the collaboration of researchers from AKATIGA Foundation, LabSosio Centre for Sociological Studies at the University of Indonesia and Trade Union Right Centre (2006) (see also Tjandraningsih, Nugroho, Tjandra, 2008) and another institutional collaboration research of LIPS, LabSosio CSS-UI, AKATIGA Foundation, and Perkumpulan Prakarsa (Nugroho & Tjandraningsih, 2007).

[2] Social exclusion is a difficult concept to define. It has various definitions, dimensions, and paradigm foundation (Gore, 1995; Silver, 1995). This article limits the discussion of social exclusion to the context of employment, more specifically the labor market. This is the context in which this concept arises and the roots of the thoughts and conceptual debates are present.

[3] Transformation to the flexible labor market system is a logical consequence of the development of capitalism in the global order. This transformation is the result of the dialectics of capitalism 's own development. The failure of the Keynesian economic system in responding to the global economic crisis opens the opportunityfor the liberal economic system, based on neo-classical and neo-liberal thoughts.

[4] Attempts to ease rigid labor regulations are mostly directed to regulations limiting employment termination and regulations limiting the use of contract and outsourced labor.

[5] The planned revision of the law is now directed to the creation of a new Governmental Regulation to change the severance package system. This is also intended to ease the rigidity of the labor market with a specific scope and a lower legal standing compared to legislation.

[6] Flexibilisation in this group of workers is illegal, but there are debates on how core work should be defined. (ILO, 2004).

[7] Observations conducted in January 2007 in manufacturing industries in Tangerang, one of the largest industrial regions in Java.

[8] Rodgers differentiates social exclusion from the labor market from social exclusion within the labor market (1995). However, this study shows that the difference is not great. Workers, either permanent or contract/outsourced, who are currently unemployed can be categorised as open unemployed, but they might obtain a new employment, and then get terminated again, and be employed again repeatedly.

[9] This is in opposition to the other type of employment which is decreasing in number and is only provided to skilled workers defined as the production core.

[10] These existing studies include studies conducted by (and processed data from) the following: AKATIGA-TURC-LABSOSIO UI, 2006; Ma'ruf, 2006; FPBN, 2006; Nugroho & Tjandraningsih; individual interviews (2007-2008).

[11] A 2006 study shows that outsourced workers wages in a foreign-owned beverage company was IDR 342,000 (USD 37) per month, while permanent workers receive IDR 875,000 (USD 95) (Tjandraningsih, Nugroho, Tjandra,

[12] In some cases, corporations provide holiday allowances to the outsourced and contract workers, and another corporation provides meal allowances, but not transport allowances (Tjandraningsih, Nugroho, Tjandra, 2008).

[13] In some cases, outsourced workers are imagined as being less responsible to their jobs since they are not tied to the corporation, while in other cases, they are regarded as being more diligent and productive (interviews with union officials in Tangerang and Bogor, 2007).

[14] 81.25% (in 2007) and 87.1% (in 2008) of the regional minimum wages in Indonesia are lower than the actual minimum requirements for life (Disnakertrans, 2008).

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Movements Within a Globalizing ASEAN

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ABSTRACT

Due to the impact of globalization, informal work already comprised 156 million or 63.7 percent of total employment in ASEAN in 2006, according to the ILO. This rise in informal sector employment is accompanied by an alarming decrease in the ranks of formal workers. This change has led to a redefinition of the concept "worker" away from very narrow notions associated with formality, regularity, and clear employer-employee relations which now only refer to a shrinking male minority. All who live by working to earn an income is now considered worker, and therefore can form part of labor movements. They include women and men who do unprotected and unregulated work as homebased workers, vendors, small transport operators, construction workers, waste recyclers, etc.

The growing significance and myriad problems of informal workers have led to the emergence of their organizations in the last two decades. Home-based workers in Indonesia, Philippines and Thailand, majority of them women, were the first to form their networks. They later converged in Homenet Southeast Asia for greater visibility in national as well as regional policy advocacy towards social protection, occupational safety and health, gender-responsive participatory governance, fair trade and solidarity economy. These initiatives are meant to extend the labor rights and standards, to which

between women and men in traditionally male-dominated labor movements which by necessity must become more inclusive, innovative, flexible and comprehensive in strategy and approach.

Key words: gender and labor, labor movements, formal and informal divide

Due to the impact of globalization, informal work already comprised 156 million or 63.7 per cent of total employment in ASEAN in 2006, according to the ILO (ILO, 2007:3). Although the percentages vary from some 80 per cent in Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam, more than 70 per cent in the Philippines and Indonesia, more than 50 per cent in Thailand, and 8.8 per cent in Singapore, the average is still quite high. This rise in informal sector employment is accompanied by an alarming decrease in the ranks of formal workers.

This change has led to a redefinition of the concept "worker" away from very narrow notions associated with formality, regularity, and clear employer-employee relations which now only refer to a shrinking male minority. All who live by working to earn an income are now considered workers, and therefore can form part of labor movements. They include women and men who do unprotected and unregulated work as home-based workers, vendors, small transport operators, non-corporate construction workers, waste recyclers, domestic and other service workers, and in some countries, even small farmers and fisherfolks.

The growing significance and myriad problems of informal workers have led to the emergence of their organizations in the last two decades. Home-based workers in Indonesia, Philippines and Thailand, majority of them women, were the first to form their networks in the sub-region,[1]

Employed Women's Association (SEWA) in India. They later converged in Homenet Southeast Asia for greater visibility in national as well as regional policy advocacy towards social protection, occupational safety and health, gender-responsive participatory governance, fair trade and solidarity economy.

These initiatives are meant to extend the labor rights and standards, to which formal workers are entitled, to informal workers, thereby bridging the formal/informal divide. They are also meant to foster equality between women and men in traditionally male-dominated labor movements which by necessity must become more inclusive, innovative, flexible and comprehensive in strategy and approach.

Growth of Workers in the Informal Economy

The trend towards the informalization of work is worldwide. The informal economy is growing in terms of share in total employment and in new jobs. The global picture shows that even in the developed countries, 25-40 per cent of employment is "non-standard" and 12 per cent of non-agricultural employment is self-employment. In the developing countries, 50-90 per cent of total employment is informal, and the self-employed comprise 31-53 per cent of non-agricultural employment (Chen, 2008).

In the whole of Asia, informal employment provides the majority (65 per cent) of non-agricultural employment (ILO, 2002). In China, where burgeoning export-oriented industries are now concentrated, ILO figures show a steady decline in formal sector employment by 34.1 million, accompanied by a steep rise in irregular, casual-wage or self-employment by 80 million in 1990-2002 (Landsberg and Burkett,

from 80.5 per cent to 83.2 per cent from 1994 to 2000 (Landsberg and Burkett, 2006:31).

Of the new jobs being created in Southeast Asia, two-thirds are in the informal sector (ILO estimate cited in Landsberg and Burnett, 2006:31).

Table 1. Workers subsisting on US$1/day and US$2/day in ASEAN, East Asia and South Asia (1996, 2006)

	US$1 a day working poor				US$2 a day working poor			
	Millions		Share in total Employment (%)		Millions		Share in total Employment (%)	
	1996	2006	1996	2006	1996	2006	1996	2006
ASEAN	36.7	28.5	16.9	10.8	140.1	148.7	64.5	56.5
East Asia	145.0	95.0	20.3	12.1	442.9	347.2	61.9	44.2
South Asia	250.8	196.9	51.9	33.0	427.1	500.2	88.4	83.7

In the Philippines, the informal sector now comprises 76.34 per cent or 24.6 million of the country's total employed, an increase of several percentage points from previous estimates. In Indonesia, the share of informal work in non-agricultural employment rose several percentage points to 70.8 per cent in the period 1998 to 2003. Similar increases were recorded in Thailand and in Vietnam (Landsberg and Burkett, 2006:31).

Informality is often linked to poverty. There are 500 million working poor in the world, and many of them are found in the informal economy. By working poor is meant those who are working but cannot work their

extreme poverty, subsisting at less than one dollar a day. (In the Philippines, one out of five; and in Laos and Cambodia, one out of three) Of the more than 262 million workers in ASEAN, 148 million or 56.5 per cent - at least five out of ten — are living in poverty, subsisting at less than the two dollars a day poverty line. In terms of country breakdown, 80 per cent of workers in Cambodia and Laos, 70 per cent in Indonesia, and 60 per cent in the Philippines do not have enough income to get themselves out of poverty (ILO, 2007:4, 18).

The unprecedented growth of the informal economy worldwide has given birth to a global movement using a much more inclusive definition of worker as "anyone who lives by selling his or her capacity to work, either for wages or for other forms of income" (Gallin, 2002:1). Such a definition covers the majority of workers in the world who work in the informal economy, or all those who have unprotected and unregulated work.

The informal economy has been growing in both North and South, due to the combined effects of liberalization, deregulation and privatization, which altogether drove out millions of workers from the formal economy. (24 million, according to the ILO, in East Asia alone in the aftermath of the Asian financial crisis, in itself a consequence of the liberalization and deregulation of financial markets culminating in the successive domino-like devaluation of Asian currencies).

At the same time, as exemplified by the production or value chains spearheaded by transnational corporations particularly in the garments industry, the informal economy serves as the bottom end of the production ladder, providing cheap and unprotected labor vulnerable to exploitation while management saves on costs by retaining a small core of permanent

Poverty, Gender and the Informal Economy

Women are particularly involved in informal employment (averaging 65 per cent of all women in non-agricultural employment in Asia), and when agriculture is factored in, women's share of informal employment increases tremendously, since women tend to be very much engaged in agricultural work. This perhaps helps explain why two-thirds of the working poor in Asia are women (ILO, 2006:25-26).
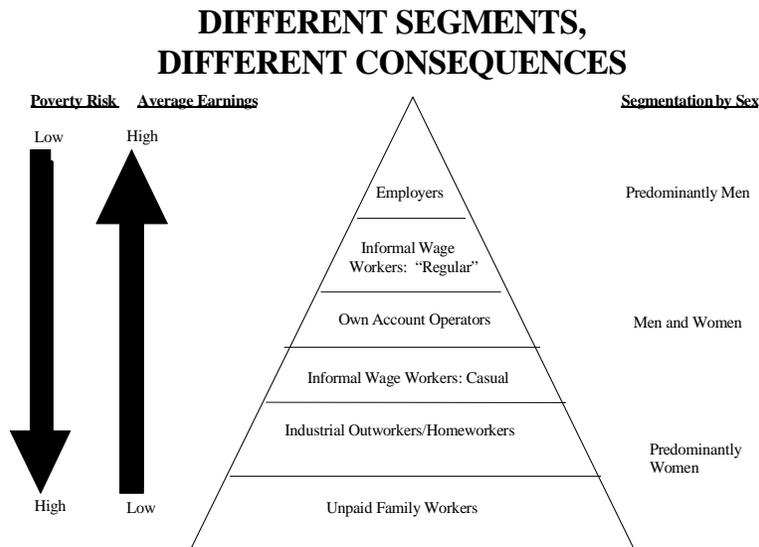
The informal economy is highly gendered, serving as a catch basin of women who have been among the first to be displaced from formal work, especially in the garments industry, as globalization progressed. But women have also been the mainstay of the informal economy even before the onslaughts of globalization, since informal work (e.g., home-based work) is compatible with their reproductive work (child care, domestic chores), and since their status as secondary or supplemental earners often deprive them of opportunities to find formal employment. In their particular case, class, gender, ethnicity, and other issues often intersect.

As the pyramid in Figure 1 suggests, women are concentrated in the lower strata of unpaid family workers and industrial home workers where earnings are meager and where poverty-inducing risks such as illness and job insecurity are high. On the other hand, men are concentrated in the higher rungs as employers and as fairly "regular" informal workers with bigger remuneration and lower risk.

In the current context of unbridled globalization, women informal workers exhibit strengths as well as weaknesses, and face opportunities as well as threats. Many of them have the capacity, the resilience and the

because they need to seize every opportunity to earn in order to ensure family survival. However, these very same forms of employment in the informal economy are also subject to the vagaries of the global and local markets, and can be threatened by competition, instability and lack of support.

Figure 1. Hierarchy of Work

DIFFERENT SEGMENTS, DIFFERENT CONSEQUENCES

Poverty Risk	Average Earnings		Segmentation by Sex
Low	High	Employers	Predominantly Men
		Informal Wage Workers: "Regular"	
		Own Account Operators	Men and Women
		Informal Wage Workers: Casual	
		Industrial Outworkers/Homeworkers	Predominantly Women
High	Low	Unpaid Family Workers	

Source: Martha Chen, WIEGO (2008)

Under such circumstances, women's overburdened state becomes a vicious cycle of having to shoulder various means of making a living while tending to domestic as well as community responsibilities. As it is

education, credit, healthcare and other resources needed to meet basic needs. Informal workers generally suffer from substandard wages, poor working conditions, exposure to occupational health and safety hazards, and lack of social security.
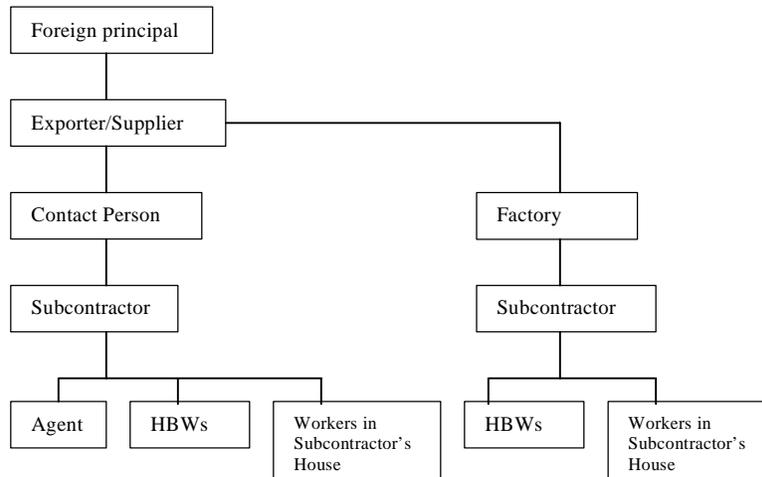
High unemployment and underemployment due to the decline or stagnation of local industries faced with ruinous competition drive displaced workers abroad in an often uncertain diaspora. Many of these migrants, especially the undocumented ones, wind up in unprotected, informal, 3D (dirty, dangerous, demanding) jobs in construction, service and other industries.

Feminization of migration has been a phenomenon since the early nineties, and lately, women comprise almost three-fourths of newly deployed migrants in the Philippines, and the majority in the case of other ASEAN countries like Indonesia. Many of these women migrants wind up as vulnerable and much abused domestic workers in host countries, prompting labor advocates to mount a campaign for an ILO Convention on Domestic Work similar to the ILO Convention (177) on Home Work. The campaign is anchored on the recognition of domestic work as work, even if done at home, and such work should comply with certain minimum labor standards.

From Informal Sector to Informal Economy

The ranks of unprotected informal workers in the ASEAN region are growing fast, even while those of regular formal workers are being depleted by the onslaughts of trade liberalization and the increasing flexibilization and contractualization of labor. Formal workers may go

Figure 2. The Subcontracting Chain

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                    ┌──────────────────┐
                    │ Foreign principal │
                    └──────────────────┘
                             │
                    ┌──────────────────┐
                    │ Exporter/Supplier │──────────────────────┐
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                    ┌──────────────────┐            ┌──────────────────┐
                    │  Contact Person  │            │     Factory      │
                    └──────────────────┘            └──────────────────┘
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                    │  Subcontractor   │            │  Subcontractor   │
                    └──────────────────┘            └──────────────────┘
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    │ Agent  │ │  HBWs  │ │  Workers in  │   │  HBWs  │ │  Workers in  │
    └────────┘ └────────┘ │Subcontractor's│   └────────┘ │Subcontractor's│
                          │    House     │               │    House     │
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Source: NSO Labor Force Surveys; Annual Surveys of Philippine Business and Industry
as interpreted by the Employers' Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP) in its position papers and website.

subcontracted home workers under precarious and insecure conditions. In this sense, they provide cheap and unprotected labor vulnerable to exploitation at the bottom of the production ladder while firms save on costs by maintaining just a few regular workers.

Formal and informal types of employment are often linked together by the subcontracting chain. And towards the bottom of the chain the distinctions between the two can oftentimes get hazy. This chain is negatively affected by the intricacies of international trade, where larger firms tend to exploit micro-enterprises by ordering at low prices or subcontracting certain stages of the production process to save on labor

Table 2: COMPARATIVE SIZES OF FORMAL AND INFORMAL SECTORS 1999 AND 2005

	1999		2005		Difference
	No of workers	% to total employed	No of workers	% to total employed	
Labor Force	30,758,00	90.19%*	**	**	**
Total Employed	27,742,000		32,313,000		+4,571,000
Formal Sector	6,013,688	21.68	5,322,320	16.4%	-691,368
Informal Sector	20,492,312	65.13	24,666,680	76.34	+4,174,368
Wage & Salary	4,156,312	14.98	7,068,680	21.88	2,912,368
Own account	10,792,000	38.90	12,104,000	37.46	1,312,000
Domestic Helpers	1,498,000	5.40	1,473,000	4.55	-25,000
Unpaid workers	4,046,000	14.58	3,893,000	12.05	-153,000

* Per cent unemployed
** Cannot be computed due to the adoption of the revised unemployment definition starting April, 2005
Source : NSO Labor Force Survey of Philippine Business and Industry

In this example, a foreign principal based abroad (a large enterprise) could order from a Manila-based exporter (a medium enterprise), which in turn could subcontract to a province-based factory (a small enterprise). This factory could order from outlying barangays, where agents could tap the productive capacity of micro-enterprises and/or home-based workers (HBWs). As the chain goes downward, so do the wages and benefits of the workers who range from formal at the top to informal below.

In the Philippines, figures based on annual labor force surveys and on business and industry surveys show that informal workers now comprise 76.34 per cent or 24.6 million of the country's total employed (see Table 2), an increase of several percentage points from previous estimates. This rise in informal employment is accompanied by an alarming decrease in the ranks of formal workers.

	Difference
al **d**	
	**
	+4,571,000
	-691,368
	+4,174,368
	2,912,368
	1,312,000
	-25,000
	-153,000

g April, 2005

The National Statistical and Coordination Board (NSCB) issued the following operational definition of the informal sector in 2002 after consultations with various stakeholders, including representatives of informal workers' groups:

> Units engaged in the production of goods and services with the primary objective of generating employment and incomes to the persons concerned. It consists of household unincorporated enterprises that are market and non-market producers of goods as well as market producers of services.

> These enterprises are operated by own-account workers, which may employ unpaid family workers as well as occasional, seasonally hired workers.

> These enterprises may also be owned and operated by employers which may employ less than ten employees on a continuous basis (NSCB Resolution No 15, series of 2002).

The informal sector, thus officially recognized and defined, includes the following sub-sectors, among others: the micro-entrepreneurs; home-based workers (including subcontracted, own-account workers and self-employed); vendors; small transport operators (of tricycles, pedicabs and bancas); petty retailers; barter traders; small-scale miners and quarry workers; non-corporate construction workers; entertainers; beauticians; laundry persons; hairdressers; small and landless farmers; artisanal fisherfolk; on-call domestic helpers; volunteer workers; barkers; unorganized cargo handlers, etc.

In recent years, there has been a shift in terminology from "informal sector" to "informal economy," the latter defined by the ILO as "all economic activities by workers and economic units that are – in law or in practice - not covered or insufficiently covered by formal day laborers, and industrial outworkers (also called homeworkers)" (Chen, 2008).

Decline of Traditional Labor Movements

Unions in Southeast Asia cover only a tiny fraction of the total employed and not all of them have collective bargaining arrangements. They not only have a rather narrow base from which to operate but they are also at a disadvantage, given the large numbers of unemployed and underemployed in most of the region.

A process of de-unionization has accompanied changing employment patterns (flexibilization which is most visible as contractualization, as well as informalization and migration) in a globalizing economy. Workers are affected by labor-cost-cutting measures adopted by micro-businesses just to be able to keep up with increasing competition under globalization. The core of permanent workers is reduced to accommodate temporary and casual employees. The increasing use of cheap labor, such as apprentices and migrants, is continuing.

Moreover, subcontracting production and services outside formal workplaces (outsourcing) is accompanied by an increased number of shifts per day, overtime and use of piece rates. All of these actions have an overwhelming impact on workers, women and men, in both formal and informal employment.

In the Philippines, a mere 9-10 per cent of the employed is currently covered by unions, and only one-third of union members and one-fourth of union leaders are women. Worse, according to trade union leaders, only 230,000 of unionized workers are covered by collective bargaining agreements (CBAs)[2] The sharp decline in union membership in the Philippines is dramatized by the fact that, from 1995-2004, the country's unions lost two million members, down from 3.57 million to 1.57 million. And of this, only one third had CBAs (Serrano, 2005).

The decline has been attributed to "union avoidance by employers combined with weak enforcement of labor laws" (Serrano 2005). Part of union avoidance is transfer of operations to economic zones, industrial parks and other areas where unions are curtailed and/or discouraged. Compounding the problem is the long history of trade union disunity punctuated now and then by short-lived attempts at trade union unity.

Globalization has placed many unions in crisis. Many unionized firms have closed down due to losses as well as labor unrest, eroding the membership base of labor federations. More sophisticated management techniques at coercion and persuasion have prevented the unionization of large masses of workers. Thus, not surprisingly, in the whole of ASEAN, union density, with the exception of Vietnam, has not gone beyond 20 per cent of total employed (Serrano, 2005).

Women and Trade Unions

There are many hindrances to getting women organized, among them the lack of emphasis on equality issues in trade unions, lack of family support, more vulnerability to employers' retaliation, isolation and

marginalization (especially in the case of women in home-based work, for example), and legal restrictions in countries where ILO conventions are not observed. Despite persistent and emerging issues and obstacles, however, there are also some gains and advances.

In the mid-1990s, the proportion of women rank-and-file members in Asia ranged from between 10-20 percent in India and Bangladesh, between 20-30 percent in the Republic of Korea, Japan and Fiji, between 40-50 percent in the Philippines, Malaysia, Australia, Singapore, Hong Kong and New Zealand, between 50-60 percent in Sri Lanka and Thailand, to between 60-70 percent in Mongolia (ILO, 1999:76). Exclusively male unions are fast disappearing. However, there are many fields of work where the predominantly female force remains unorganized, particularly export processing zones, agriculture, the informal sector, and other precarious areas of employment such as part-time, casual, or home-based work.

Trade union centers and movements are paying more attention to these non-traditional fields for organizing, conscious that women workers comprise a fertile source of membership and revitalization. However, there is a lack of women leaders and organizers to undertake such a task. Conscious of the limitations of traditionally male-dominated trade union structures, some groups have attempted organizing women into separate organizations in order to give them the freedom and the space to develop without having to deal with male-centered hierarchies and practices.

At the leadership level of most trade unions, women have always been under-represented. They usually comprise a small minority of union boards and general councils. For example, June 2004 data provided by

22,426 male union officers vs. 6,981 female union officers; and 3,125 male union presidents vs. 563 female union presidents. In Indonesia, only two women leaders appeared in the roster of 60-plus national federations registered with the Manpower Department. The Indonesian Trade Union Congress elected only two women leaders into its 14-member Executive Committee during its first Congress in 2003 (Gardner, 2003).

Despite the increasing number of women unionists, male dominance in union leadership has prevailed. This is true even in service industries where women abound, and in sectors where females outnumber men as union members (such as wholesale and retail trade as well financing, insurance, real estate and business services). It is also the case in individual manufacturing firms where majority of the work force are women (such as electronics and garments). Thus, while male union Presidents lord it over union organizations, women play minor roles as members of the Board of Directors, as second in command or as treasurers or secretaries—traditional spheres of women even in business and other organizations. This is true not only at the level of the local union, but also, at the level of the federation.

Why are women not more assertive in the trade unions? Why do they not want to get involved in union activities? Gender issues are the major reasons. Women's multiple burdens do not allow for time for union work. Traditional roles and stereotypes inhibit women from entering what is perceived to be a male domain. Unions are associated with aggressive and confrontational activities such as strikes and pickets which appear to be threatening to women. Aside from these, women workers have low self esteem, and believe that unionism is a male turf which women do not have the competence to enter. Many unions do not bother to

International trade union federations have done a lot to put gender equality on the agenda of their affiliates. Although there is increasing recognition among trade unions regarding the need to mainstream gender equality in the work place, in policy-making, in collective bargaining and other forms of union work, this usually just remains on paper and is seldom put into practice (ILO, 1999: 69). Setting up Women's Committees is a step forward for many unions, but more needs to be done in terms of staffing, resource allocation and other support mechanisms to prevent them from being marginalized as mere tokens of women's participation.

Gender-sensitivity and awareness-raising activities tend to involve only women. They should also target the men within trade unions to give gender equality the necessary push towards realization in practice.

There have also been attempts, notably by the Dutch trade unions FNV and the CNV, to put more emphasis on organizing women workers in especially difficult circumstances, including those in export processing zones and in informal work. In Asia, the more successful efforts are among the ranks of home-based workers. Some of them, as in the famous SEWA example in India, have eventually become recognized as trade unions in their own right.

Organizing Women Informal Workers

In the beginning, there were only informal workers, and trade unions organized them to "formalize" them. In the words of Dan Gallin and Pat Horn (2005:1):

At their origin, all trade unions were formed by informal workers, since the entire economy was informal at the time trade unions were first organized. Trade unions were, and still are, self-help organizations of workers who, through collective action, seek to regulate their wages and working conditions so as to eliminate the worst forms of exploitation, i.e., to formalize an informal situation. A "formal" economy is an economy in which the labor movement has negotiated regulated wages and conditions through a combination of industrial and political action (by collective agreements and by law).

In the process of organizing, however, women were neglected and marginalized, resulting in a situation where more male workers enjoy "regulated wages and working conditions while more women workers remain in the unregulated informal economy" (Gallin and Horn 2005:1). Women trade unionists, often influenced by the women's movement, nevertheless organized women workers separately or in tandem with the men. More often than not, they had to struggle to assert their rights and entitlements as workers and as women vis-à-vis exploitative employers and domineering men within the trade union movement.

Amidst the onslaughts of globalization, the growing significance of informal work, and the myriad problems of informal workers, have led to the emergence of their organizations in the last few decades. Given the diversity of subsectors engaged in informal employment, the classical trade union structure could not be applied mechanically. The needs of women workers who predominate in the informal economy had to be met by other forms of organizing and service delivery, notably in the areas of ensuring economic security and social protection while at the same time gaining visibility and voice. Even then, links with trade unions were purposely cultivated to emphasize labor unity.

Example of SEWA (India)

Organizing among home-based workers (HBWs) in Asia, for example, has had a long herstory/history, beginning with the founding of the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) in India and its multi-pronged approach to women's empowerment, which includes mass mobilization and negotiation along industry lines (particularly in the case of the bidi workers); formation of production and service cooperatives; establishment of a bank where even illiterate women can borrow; provision of insurance and other social protection schemes, and engagement in trade facilitation, international advocacy and networking.

SEWA's main strategies are: a) increasing employment opportunities for women and thus increasing women's bargaining power; b) developing women's assets; c) capacity-building and leadership development of rural women; d) providing food and social security, and e) becoming self-reliant, economically.

SEWA had a rocky relationship with the trade union (Textile Labour Association) of which it was a part. This progressed to a complete break in the early 1980s over issues of caste, class and gender. SEWA resolved to do things its own way, combining trade unionism and cooperativism. It is now the largest primary union in India (with 700,000 members in 1974 and more than a million now), and has been recognized by the largest conglomeration of international confederations of trade unions (ITUC) (Bhatt, 2006:13-16).

Following the example of SEWA, home-based workers in Indonesia, Philippines and Thailand (later joined by Homenet Laos and now artisans in Cambodia) were the first to form their own networks in the early

Through the strengthening of their own organizations and networks, HBWs and other workers in the informal economy hope to realize their economic, political and social rights; the improvement of their working and living conditions; the enjoyment of income and employment security, including social protection; and participation in governance related to homeworkers' and informal workers' concerns.

PATAMABA (Philippines)

PATAMABA is a people's organization led by grassroots women who sought to empower themselves by founding and running their own organization. Founded in 1989 as the first organization formed by Filipino home-based workers, PATAMABA started out as the *Pambansang Tagapag-ugnay ng mga Manggagagwa sa Bahay* (National Network of Homeworkers).

In its May 2003 National Congress, its expanded name was changed to the *Pambansang Kalipunan ng mga Manggagawang Impormal* (National Network of Informal Workers) to reflect fundamental changes in its targeted membership which now includes, in addition to homeworkers, vendors, small transport operators, construction workers and young workers. From being primarily a women's organization (98 percent of the members are women between the ages 18 to 75), it has started its evolution into an organization that seeks to address the concerns and uplift the conditions of both female and male workers belonging to the informal economy.

PATAMABA's expanding influence among the informal workers has been manifested in orientation activities for new members and organizing in other subsectors. The latest count (2007) of PATAMABA membership

and 1,524 are combinations of both. The subcontracted workers are in garments, handicraft, papier mache, bags, Christmas balls, sawali, fashion accessories and embroidery. The self employed members are into livestock, agri-based products, garments, bags, slippers, fashion accessories, novelty items, food, woodcraft, and weaving.

PATAMABA's networking now spans a wide range of different sectors and groups - from informal ones like street and market vendors to official policy-makers and formal academic institutions. PATAMABA, with the support of Homenet Southeast Asia, helped spearhead the successful launching in May 2006 of Homenet Philippines, a broad coalition of 23 organizations composed of home-based workers' groups and NGOs of various persuasions with a total membership reach of about 60,000. The formal launching of Homenet Philippines' advocacy agenda helped boost the advocacy campaign on ILO Convention 177 on Home Work and the Magna Carta for Workers in the Informal Economy.

Broad-based policy advocacy for a rights-based legislation for informal workers, who now comprise 24.6 million or 76 percent of total employed, has taken a significant leap with the formation of MAGCAISA (Magna Carta for the Informal Sector Alliance) in October 2007. MAGCAISA is a loose coalition of POs, trade unions, NGOs and academe-based institutions with a long record of involvement in informal worker issues. The driving forces of the coalition include Homenet Philippines; the Association of Construction and Informal Workers (ACIW); the National Union of Building and Construction Workers (NUBC), and ASAPHIL, which includes tricycle and other small transport operators.

Through the years, PATAMABA's policy advocacy work has occurred at various levels. It has influenced the national anti-poverty policies and

Informal Sector Council (WISC) of the National Anti Poverty Commission (NAPC). After many years of trying, it has aided in persuading the Social Security System (SSS) to allow self-employed homeworkers to avail of social insurance and to facilitate this process through the Automatic Debit Arrangement (ADA) whereby self-employed SSS members can use the facilities of participating banks to pay their contributions.

PATAMABA's main strategies are: 1) participation in governance and institution building through organizing, networking, representation in national, local and international bodies, and institutionalizing programs and projects for the informal sector; 2) human development services such as production-related skills training and skills upgrading; capability-building; training on gender awareness, health and reproductive rights; computer literacy and connectivity; workers' and working children's rights under the law; participatory research, fieldwork data collection, facilitation and linkages; 3) socio-economic assistance as exemplified by its credit facility program and microfinance, enterprise development, and marketing of home-based products through a showroom and participation in trade fairs and bazaars; 4) networking, advocacy and para-legal work for fair trade, Magna Carta for Workers in the Informal Economy, anti-poverty strategies, and other policy changes, through building partnership with trade unions, cooperatives, POs, GOs, NGOs, academic institutions, and international development agencies.

Homenet Thailand

Homenet Thailand was established in June 1992 by home-based producers as well as concerned NGOs in Bangkok, the North and the Northeast of Thailand under the ILO project on rural homeworkers. In

center, Homenet Thailand, registering in 2003 as Foundation for Labour and Employment Promotion.

In the beginning, the foundation through regional networks was reaching out to home-based producers, both self-employed and sub-contracted workers. Later on, the foundation expanded its activities to cover other groups of informal workers, for instance, contracted farmers; waste pickers; domestic workers; motorcycle drivers and workers in the services sector. In late 2007, there were about 144 groups of home-based workers, 14 groups of agricultural workers and three groups from services sector affiliated to Homenet Thailand. Within the 151 groups, there were 6,637 workers - 1,606 males and 5,031 females.

Homenet Thailand is now operating through five regional networks in the South, North, Northeast, central and Bangkok which have autonomy to develop their own regulations or bylaws. Each regional network operates according to its own plan, but generally under the guidance of the national network. The national board members are nominated from each region. The board members come from the academe, NGOs, trade unions and informal workers' groups.

The strategies employed by Homenet Thailand are: 1) strengthening capacities in production and management through skills training and other development activities for homebased workers; 2) promotion and strengthening of the homeworkers' and other informal workers' organizations by coordinating and maintaining a good network and organizational system; 3) promotion of labor standards and social protection among informal workers through campaigns in the areas of occupational health and safety as well as wages and social security, and 4) exercising influence over government policies in relation to the legal

Homenet Thailand has had high visibility in advocating for occupational safety and health (OSH), and for the approval of the 30 baht scheme which later evolved into a universal health insurance scheme for all. It has had the most success in focusing on OSH issues through its OSH project for home-based and other informal workers conducted in cooperation with the Ministry of Labor and the Ministry of Health. It has also been working closely with formal sector workers' groups in advocating for occupational safety and health, and favors strengthening these ties through more joint activities to forge greater solidarity among all workers.

Concluding Remarks

The previous discussions show that, in the context of globalization, informal work is expanding in the ASEAN region, and that it is often linked to poverty. Women are very much into informal employment, and therefore poverty in the region usually has a woman's face.

The trade union movement is in decline, and has not yet confronted the challenge of organizing informal workers and bringing the women in not only as members, but also, as leaders. What has happened is autonomous organizing by informal women workers' movements, notably among home-based workers, but these efforts are not necessarily antagonistic to existing trade unions and, in fact, have sought convergence with them, especially in terms of policy advocacy.

There is hope that both the formal/informal and the gender divide in the labor movement in ASEAN can, in the long run, be bridged with the support of enlightened global union federations and more innovative

The commonality in both trade union and informal women workers' movements is membership-based organizing rooted in democratic principles whereby leaders are elected by and made accountable to the rank-and-file (Chen et al, 2007). Inclusion of informal women workers in trade union membership and their eventual ascendance into leadership positions may also be considered true measures of the democratic space and impetus within labor organizations.

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Endnotes
[1] Homenet Southeast Asia expanded to Laos in 2006, with the formal

(CDEA); in 2008, the Artisans' Association of Cambodia (AAC) also joined the subregional network.

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[2] Proceedings of the Labor Agenda meeting sponsored by FES Manila, Nov. 7, 2007.

Freedom in a Glocalizing Asia?

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<small>ABSTRACT</small>

This paper outlines the contours and directions of Asia's social development in the information age, with specific reference to the use of new media by non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Aided by new media (mobile communications, Internet, etc.), the NGOs' critical engagements with the globalization project championed by international governmental organizations (IGOs) such as the IMF, World Bank and the WTO are crucial in shaping the social future of the Asian region, at least in the observance of human rights. Challenged by NGOs' mobilizations at various geo-political forums in the last decade, the IGOs have been forced to make policy adjustments. This has resulted in IGO-NGO policy interfacing and learning processes that have become a virtual regime for consultations (or consensus building?) for promoting (or exploiting?) the economic, social and cultural (ESC) rights of the peoples.

The paper has four parts. Part one outlines the dynamics and contradictions of the globalization project in the informational capitalism, which threatens ESC rights. Part two situates the human rights movement within the wider context of the new (and media -enhanced) social movements at the global scale. Part three examines the strategies and critical engagements of NGOs with the use of the new media, supplemented with case studies. The paper ends with normative remarks on Asia's project for socio-ecological modernity,

Positioning IGOs and iNGOs for Human Rights unto Globalization Project

Globalization is a real challenge to and a test to the capacity of IGOs and iNGOs in the promotion of global human rights (Held, 2002; Milanovic, 2003; UN, 2005; World Bank 2006). Globalization processes tend to polarize the socio-economic lives of people and consequently affect their economic, social and cultural rights. This has been validated by the Report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization (WCSDG 2004).

There are two contesting views on globalization: One hails globalization as a benign and automatic force that fosters better economic benefits for all, including the poorest group; the other contrary view is espoused by the political extremes of the Left and Right. For the Left, unbridled capitalism leads to the exploitation of the weak and to socio-ecological degradation; for the Right, the malignant forces of globalization engender xenophobia and the demise of local people's jobs, culture, language and hence identity (Milanovic 2003, Lai 2005a).
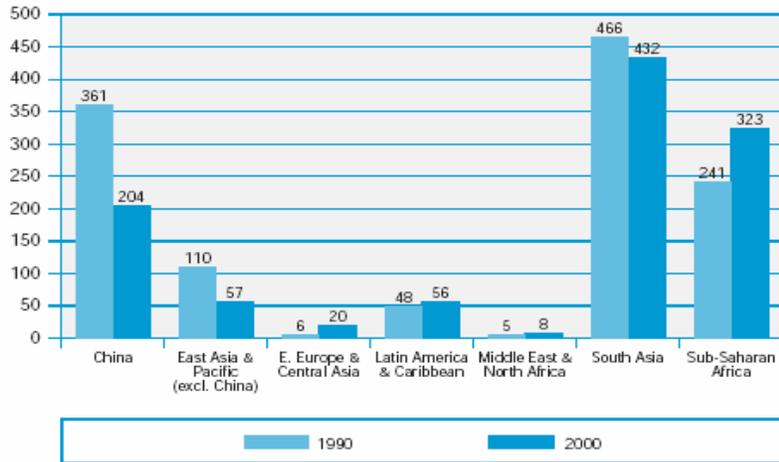
1.1 Differential Impacts on Local People: Genesis of Anti-Globalization Movement

The globalization discourse has been defined by the debates on the political and ideologically-driven "economic reforms" in the so-called welfare states in the developed economies. Most of these reforms

forces have not helped them much either. With the exception of China, global poverty has not improved during the globalization decades of the 1980s and 1990s (Milanovic 2003, p.679, Ravllion 2004). The number of the poor (subsisting on less than US$1 per day) has fallen in Asia, but has risen elsewhere. It is roughly doubled in Africa and overall the figure is about one in three now (see Fig.1)! At the global level, income inequality has become the norm for many developing countries (see Fig.2). Thus, the question is rightly raised: Is the worsening of ESC rights at the global level not the trend?

Figure 1:

People living on less than 1 US$ per day, 1990 and 2000 (millions)

Source: World Bank, *Global Economic Prospects 2004*.
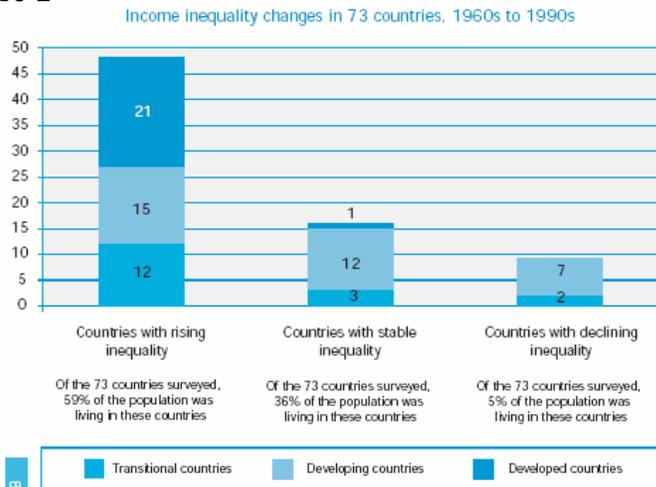
(Source: WCSDG, 2004, p.45)

Figure 2

Income inequality changes in 73 countries, 1960s to 1990s

Countries with rising inequality

Of the 73 countries surveyed, 59% of the population was living in these countries

Countries with stable inequality

Of the 73 countries surveyed, 36% of the population was living in these countries

Countries with declining inequality

Of the 73 countries surveyed, 5% of the population was living in these countries

Transitional countries · Developing countries · Developed countries

Source: Giovanni Andrea Cornia and Sampsa Kiiski, "Trends in Income Distribution in the Post-World War II Period: Evidence and Interpretation", WIDER Discussion Paper No. 89, UNU/WIDER, Helsinki, 2001.

(Source: WCSDG, 2004, p.44.)

To recapitulate the state of the globalization project: economic productivities have improved in the developed economies and in a few developing countries, like China and India, but the aggregate human progress arising from economic liberalization has not achieved globalization's intended purpose of a better and just world (WCSDG 2004). It is against this context that the anti-globalization movement or discourse has been articulated and has developed (Held and McGrew 2002).

The globalization processes are giving rise to dual/divided cities, great disparity between the rich and the poor, and wider gaps between urban and rural life (see for instance the case of mainland China, Fig.3). So

the daily life of people and their local welfare, with the local labor market declining due to the off-shoring strategies of firms. What has instead developed as a common trend is social dualism: widespread poverty within affluent societies/localities, with the set of deregulatory policy initiatives favoring the private sector and resulting in the commodification and privatization of social services.

Figure 3: **Modernization – Life Chance Divides**

Pulling away
Average income per head, yuan '000
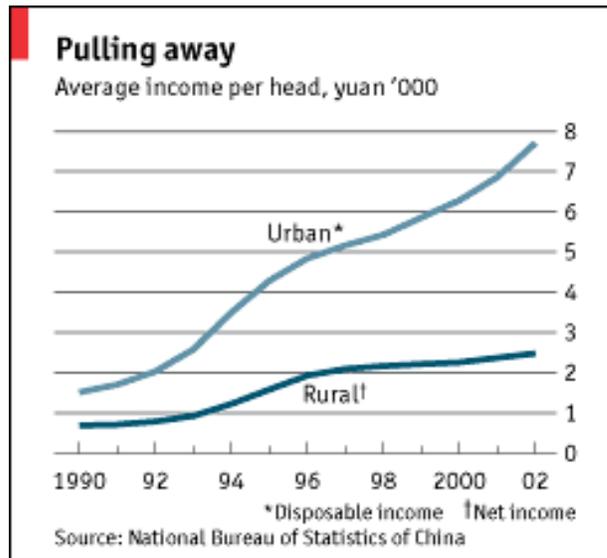
(Source: The Economist, 25.September 2003, online edition)

Individual ESC rights, e.g., labor standards, social protection and welfare entitlements, are downgraded by the call for deregulation and flexible

welfare services (social security in particular) is supposedly assured to a citizen (a status conferred by the nation state), the concept of social citizenship itself is eroding under the strong currents and waves of economic globalization and pro-market initiatives (Rodrigues 2005, Roth 2004).

Globalization processes hence have put the state-society at a very peculiar position, as both are exposed to the challenges of 'external' forces. Capital, goods and labor (jobs) are more mobile than the previous international economic order. Social impacts are eminent! In response, the anti-globalization campaigns at various international economic institutions' (WTO, World Economic Forum and G7) meetings have become more the norm, with the battle cries based on the demands for global social justice and a sustainable future (Abe & Lai 2005, Lai 2004a/b, 2005a/b).

1.2 *Activating International Networks for New Human (Social, Economic and Cultural) Rights*

At the international and regional levels, the promotion of human rights (HR) has historically been the mandate of HR-oriented international governmental organizations like the United Nations and its affiliated institutions, e.g., Commission on Human Rights (http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu2/2/chr.htm), regional institutions like the European Union's Human Rights Principle and Policy (http://ec.europa.eu/comm/external_relations/human_rights/intro/index.htm#1), Council of Europe (http://www.coe.int/t/commissioner/default_EN.asp), and the European Court of Human Rights (http://www.echr.coe.int/echr). For more than half a century, human rights promotion and advocacies have centered

of *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, which was ratified in 1948 by the United Nations in the aftermath of the Second World War and the Holocaust; the European Convention on Human Rights (1950) (http://conventions.coe.int/treaty/en/Treaties/Html/005.htm), the 1966 *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (ICCPR); and the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* (ICESCR) (http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/a_ccpr.htm, http://www.ohchr.org/english/law/cescr.htm). The new waves of human rights advocacies around the people's economic, social and cultural (ESC) rights are rooted in all these fundamental international conventions.

Compared with the UN framework, the European one is more progressive for human rights protection. In Europe, the human rights framework model of rights has been tailored to the continent. On 4 November 1950, members of the Council of Europe signed the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). The Convention came into force in 3 September 1953 and three major subsequent institutions were entrusted with safeguarding its workings: The European Commission of Human Rights (1954), The European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR 1959) and The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. The creation of these bodies (the court being based in Strasbourg) allowed individuals with a grievance against the state to challenge their treatment at an international level. Compared with regions, the European human rights regime hence is more progressive, as well as conducive for NGOs (as well as individuals) making their case to be heard by the ECtHR (*BBC News*, 29 September 2000, 15:19GMT; Moravcsik 2000).

Nevertheless, the six-decade-old *UN Human Rights Declaration* forms the basic foundation for all the legal and quasi-legal HR frameworks. More recently, human rights issues have been taken up by international

application and dispatch. But the intervention of IGO's and/or IFIs at the international level for the protection of human rights (the minimal task in promoting human rights) is far from satisfactory, resulting mainly in the paper documentation of HR debates and articulation of 'sanitized' HR policy declaration and principles. Thus, one observer noted:

> The World Bank claims that the advancement of broadly defined human rights is not possible without development. Development, of course, is the Bank's business. Yet large amounts of money continue to flow to governments that systematically abuse human rights and have shown little commitment to alleviating poverty or protecting the natural resources on which a majority of people in developing countries depend. Financial support for an authoritarian government often leads to a further strengthening of the repressive apparatus of its regime, worsening the country's human rights situation. Under such conditions, the World Bank's stated goals of achieving broad-based economic development have to be called into question (Horta 2002: 228).

More specific for the NGOs' promotion of labor rights, the ILO's *Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work*, and the more recent *Declaration on Social Justice and Globalization (*http://www.ilo.org) (ILO 2009) have been serving as a leverage for, and used by, human rights activists and groups to challenge those corporations and state institutions if they are doing their duties to promote ESC rights.

2.   *Dynamics of Action-Policy Learning: Activism of IGOs and iNGOs*

Glocal responses against the globalization project are more than obvious: the internationalization of advocacies networks and the iNGOs' appeals are more than visibly seen in mass and cyber- media (Lai 2004a/b). More specifically, in the last decade, partly in response to the failure of IGOs and IFIs initiatives in the enforcement of human rights at the global and local (glocal) levels, iNGOs' global movements have been targeting the IGOs and IFIs themselves. And yet, the latter also realizes the potential contribution of iNGOs in shaping participatory human rights movement at societal and community levels (Lai 2006, Rodrigues 2005). More fundamentally, they see the increasing importance of iNGOs in global affairs, as can be seen in the burgeoning growth of iNGOs as well as their diversification of services and advocacies (Fig.4 and Fig.5). Thus, there seems to be a convergence in the mobilization of international communities' support for civil and political rights (ICCPR) for both the IGOs and NGOs.

Historically, IGOs set the background and framework for discussing human rights, or human rights in the course of socio-economic development. For this, international and global summits, conferences and symposia organized by IGOs and IFIs become the targets for iNGOs mobilizing work and demonstrations, challenging the established rule and way of governance of the global order. We are witnessing the conglomeration of IGOs and iNGOs in global summits like G8 meeting, World Bank and UN Summits, with confrontational protests and demonstrations outside, yet heated debates within the conference venue (Abe and Lai 2005).

Figure 4: iNGOs Growth
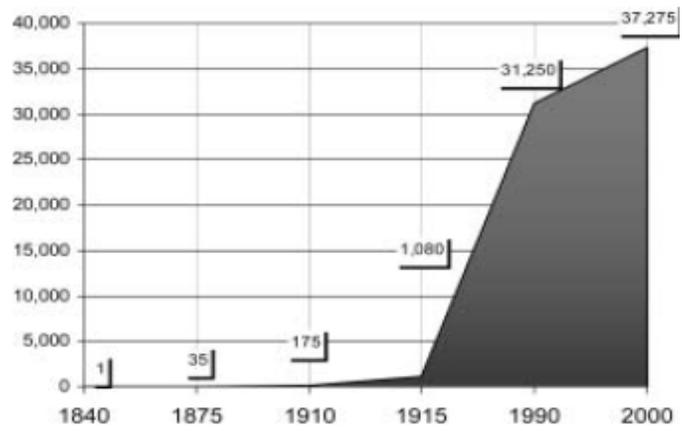
(Source: Christensen 2006)

Overall, iNGOs serve as:

- Focal point, platform and network for information gathering and research required to challenge as well as create new policy for human rights like those in the Human Rights Watch;

- Base for articulating particular human rights abuses/issues. For example, the Amnesty International has a large monitoring component to challenge human rights abuses, be they individual or collective cases;

- Agency for mobilizing and/or articulating various forms and modes of confrontational protests and demonstrations, targeting IGOs and allied Transnational Corporations (TNCs);

Figure 5: Range of iNGOs Activities
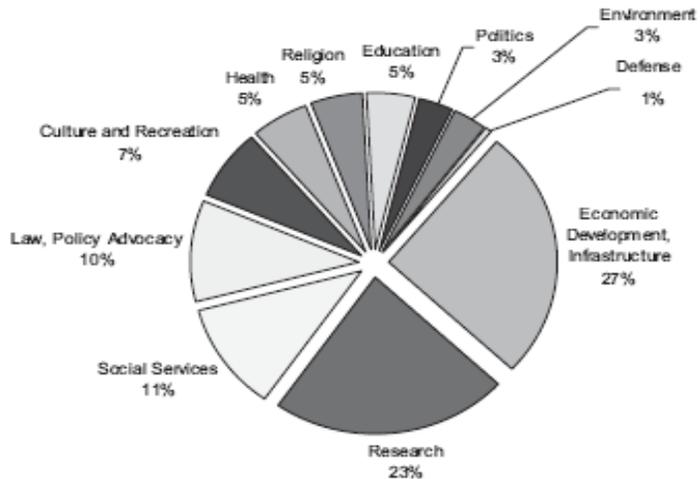
(Source: Christensen 2006)

- Networking forum for transnational advocacies and communication to push local, regional and international government bodies to react to human rights abuse, and

- Center where good local supports and iNGO activities help reshape the contours (for the benefits of human rights) for national policy or constitutional domain, which are more likely to promote a shift in the worldview towards global society (Christensen 2006).

From the insightful studies on iNGOs (Christensen 2006, Roth 2004, Tsutsui and Wotipka 2004) and based on the foregoing discussions, the

processes at the international, national and local level, by offering alternative perspectives and logic for socio-developmental course; secondly, in moving the human rights concern beyond a particular geo-political space, to the global level, shaping global norms, politicking and law governance for human rights; thirdly, in legitimizing non-state actors (iNGOs) as global monitor and adjudicator for human rights; and last, but not least, in providing for cross-national policy learning.

For IGOs, intervention comes in two ways, namely the call (sometimes treated as lip-service) for human rights observance and the creation of development fund (mostly set up by the UN and World Bank and some bilateral funds) for developing countries. For the advocacies side, statements or declarations on human rights without the political, economic, or military sanctioning power are mostly ineffective in preventing human rights abuse, as the genocides prior to international intervention at Sarajevo, Rwanda and Darfur demonstrate clearly.

On the other hand, with reference to the governance and human rights issue at Chad, the receiving country for World Bank's funding, Horta (2002) notes that the situation in Chad and so many other countries shows that money is not the answer; oftentimes it is at the root of the problem. In other words, international development funding often strengthens the hands of an authoritarian government and leads to more human right abuses. It eases pressure within the country for policy changes towards a better society. This observation echoes many NGOs' claims that development funds reinforce human rights abuse and reduce the development potential for better alternatives by legitimizing the authoritarian regime and its abuses on human rights. Perhaps, development funds and corporations are part of the sin against human rights (Darrow and Tomas 2005).

However, despite the obvious inadequacies of IGOs' intervention in promoting human rights through development initiatives, there is also mis-management of human rights issues in the development works by some iNGOs, which is an important aspect of policy learning. Thus, there is an emerging space for joint consultation and joint policy learning processes, between and among iNGOs and IGOs, in targeting nation state's agencies in charge of improving human rights. Their synergetic efforts, though clouded or overshadowed in some instances by confrontational conflicts, are moving into consensus for not only basic human rights, but also, economic, social and cultural rights in general, highlighting that the project "human rights for all" is much shaped by, as well as shaping, the international norms and values for social and sustainable development.

In this regard, the call by a recent UN report entitled "In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for All" (UN 2005) is right: the world must advance the causes of security, development and human rights together, otherwise none will succeed. Humanity will not enjoy security without development, it will not enjoy development without security, and it will not enjoy either without respect for human rights.

3. *Transformative Human (ESC) Rights Movement: New or Old Issues?*

With the iNGOs-driven glocal activism, the transformative change in human rights advocacies is emerging! Historically, the HR promotion and advocacies have been based on the articulation of people's civil and political rights under the banner of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as ratified in 1948 by the United Nations in the aftermath of the

1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) (http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/a_ccpr.htm, http://www.ohchr.org/english/law/cescr.htm).

The focus on civil and political rights (ICCPR) has provided a base for both the IGOs and NGOs in the further mobilization of international communities' support to the cause of human rights. This is exemplified by the active critical engagements of NGOs, like Amnesty International (AI) and Human Rights Watch (HRW), in their campaigns for the release or more human treatment of prisoners of conscience and victims of torture, utilizing strategies of shaming offending regimes and/or internationalizing (politics of embarrassment) their HR violations such as torture, unjust imprisonment or disenfranchisement of their citizens. This has sometimes resulted in the release or better treatment of victims and usually in facilitating the establishment of international norms on human rights (Lai 2005b).

3.1   *Glocalization of Human Rights Advocacies*

Under the impact of globalization as championed by the international corporations, the individual's ESC rights are under threat. And at this historical conjuncture, NGOs at both international and local levels are confronted by the social calamities that are rooted and embedded in the globalization processes.

They are thus moving to a new arena of critical engagement, namely, from the focused articulation of human rights to incorporating ICESCR. For instance, the Human Rights Watch (HRW) has in recent years increasingly addressed economic, social and cultural rights as well. HRW

focuses particularly on situations in which HRW methodology of investigation and reporting is most effective, such as when arbitrary or discriminatory governmental conduct lies behind economic, social and cultural rights violations (http://www.hrw.org/esc/). More specifically, HRW monitors and mobilizes supports against ESC rights violations when they result from violations of civil and political rights or contributing to the violations of civil and political rights. Reportages of HRW address ESC rights, including the rights to health care, education and fair conditions of labor.

Another example is Oxfam, an international development charity movement originating from Great Britain, which has been actively mobilizing people and resources to advocate ESC rights for both developing and developed economies. Oxfam International seeks increased worldwide public understanding that ESC rights and social justice are crucial to sustainable development. It strives to be a global campaigning force promoting HR awareness and global citizenship, seeking to shift public opinion in order to make equity the same priority as economic growth (http://www.oxfam.org./). For advocacy on ESC rights, it mobilizes people for popular campaigning, alliance building and media work designed to raise awareness among the public of the real solutions to global poverty, to enable and motivate people to play an active part in the movement for change, and to foster a sense of global citizenship.

Drawing from decades of experience in international movements for human rights and various social movements, human-rights campaigners are now boldly lobbying for ESC rights such as the rights to health, information, healthy water and food, and even sexual pleasure (Oriel 2005, Solomon 2005, Tsutsui & Wotipka 2004).

Moving from an approach to advocate the civil and political rights towards the ESC ones requires not just change in terms of strategy, but also the reasoning for morality. For the latter, it has to be demonstrated that the moral imperative to stop poverty, exploitation/discrimination against the disadvantaged groups, or disease is as convincing as the moral imperative to stop torture. The attempt so far is far from successful.

For new strategies, the anti-globalization protest movements, at the global level, which usually attack IGOs meetings (of APEC, G7/8, IMF, World Bank and WTO) and international business forums (like World Economic Forum), highlight the 'parallelization' of international events. By challenging as well as embarrassing the status quo and the legitimacy of the pro-economic liberalization bodies, NGOs contribute a service towards the promotion of ESC rights with examples, including visualization, of the victimization of individuals and groups.

NGOs are now assuming the role of "morality checker", providing guidance on ESC rights, usually using tactics of blacklisting and embarrassment publicity for the offenders of international norms on ESC rights, such as, state agencies, governments and transnational corporations. This is the reason why some TNCs, stung by anti-HR labels, now respond with their so-called corporate social responsibility or CSR initiatives (cf. Bastmeijer and Verschuuren 2005, Dermirag 2005). Hence, the morality checker role extends to the preventive and precautionary one, with suggestive problem-solving options for TNCs and governments to consider in enhancing ESC rights of all people.

For instance, Amnesty International (AI) has recently attacked a

and pumping it to the Cameroon coast via a 665-mile (1,070-km) pipeline. This is a $4.3 billion project in Africa, the biggest foreign investment in Africa.

This has long been a cause célèbre for NGOs, which being fearful of the impact of the project on one of the poorest and most ill-governed parts of the world, has exposed the one-sided and anti-people nature of the project (*The Economist*, 8.September 2005, online edition). Against the context that oil firms have often been damned by association with human-rights abuses in similar places, not least Royal Dutch/Shell in Nigeria and Unocal in Myanmar, AI is not (yet) accusing the consortium of any specific human rights abuses in the Chad-Cameroon project (though protesters against it have been abused in government crackdowns). Instead, the AI's preventive and precautionary report focuses on the potential harm that may be done, as a result of the contracts governing the deal. At the heart of these contracts is a "stabilization of law" clause, under which the consortium will be compensated for any economic harm caused to it by changes in the legal regimes governing the project – a protective clause for the oil firms against the risk of the unscrupulous governmental ripping off foreign investments. But, AI argued that one effect of the clause may be to impose a financial penalty on any government that tries to improve human rights by, for example, requiring higher minimum safety standards or quicker redress for lost land.

To recapitulate, the nexus between business and human (civil and political, as well as ESC) rights is that there are many (financial, ethical, regulatory) reasons why human rights have become a business issue. This is against the context that, as a key player in the globalization process, many TNCs have been taking their technological and capital

often politically repressive elite and the rest of society. What is more critical now is that, apart from legal obligations set down by the host country and the moral responsibilities towards local and international norms, TNCs can – through their foreign direct investment and business practice – make important contributions to the promotion of economic and social welfare, the improvement of living standards, the creation of employment opportunities and the realization and enjoyment of basic human rights (Sullivan 2003).

3.3   *Synergy of Cyber-Activism and Human Rights Advocacy*

Human rights activism stands out to be active in getting projection in both mass– and cyber-media, and in the advanced use of the new media. For example, HRW provides its expertise in human rights abuse reportage, ranging from the political imprisonment to the censorship of the high-tech viaduct, like the Internet. Juxtaposing the World Summit on Information Society (WSIS, on 15 November 2005 in Tunis), HRW released a comprehensive report on the repression of Internet users in the Middle East and North Africa, exposing that the host of WSIS has been jailing individuals for expressing their opinions on the Internet and has been suppressing Web sites critical of the government (http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm). States have been facilitating the spread of information and communications technologies mainly with economic benefits in mind. At the same time, they pursue a contradictory and double-bladed policy by maintaining their old monopolies and control over the flow of information. Thus, HRW argued that the Internet has proven a boon to the development of civil society and freedom of information, but it has occasionally provoked government backlash as well.

human rights abuses is extremely important. Therefore, the informational rights should be protected and become the fundamental one for ESC rights (Lai 2005a/b, Rodriguez 2005, Roth 2004). The essence of recent advocacies of human rights and development NGOs for the promotion of ESC rights is that the informational rights (for free access and communications) are obviously an extension of ESC rights. In short, the new campaigning theme for human rights NGOs is broadening, widening and deepening into all aspects of human development.

The new form of mobilization called cyber-activism has five distinct yet inter-related issues: Firstly, the globalization processes have put state-society relations at a very peculiar position, as both are exposed to the challenges of 'external' forces. Capital, goods and labor (and jobs) are more mobile than the previous international order. Sometimes, the globalizing forces adversely affect the livelihoods and jobs of the people, causing human rights abuses (WCSDG 2004). There is the recognition that global economic change reinforces the existing socio-economic-cultural fault-lines, but it also creates new and different kinds of alignment of non-state actors around core issues and across borders. Their collective impacts are rarely addressed by government policy. The contribution of TANs of iNGOs like AI, Greenpeace International, HRW and Oxfam alike are invaluable and should help address this missing link.

Secondly, thanks to ICTs, the cyberspace has become a domain where individuals can articulate non-mainstream politics, ranging from human rights to animal rights. Here, non-state actors can participate and non-traditional political themes can be discussed.   Moreover, they can gain visibility in international politics beyond one's nation state territory (Sassen 2004). Indeed, the diffusion of human rights information, ranging from

HR movement to social movements, can be instrumental in defining the global and local human rights agenda.

Thirdly, there are 1,407 million world online population (March 2008), or 21 per cent of the world population. Asia users account for 37 per cent of the world internet users, followed by Europe (27.1 per cent) and North America (19%). What is important here is the recent momentum for cyber-dynamism in East Asia's Newly Industrializing Economies (NIEs), China and India, the Four Little Dragons (South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore), and the earliest developed economy of Japan. As ICTs have become an integral part of modernization and development, the call for Human Rights for All, particularly in Asia, will witness more cyber-dynamics in decades to come.

Fourthly, the issue of culture and language has to be taken seriously, especially considering that human rights form part of global values that many (but not all) cultures share. The problem of cyber 'imperialism' and cultural domination over the universal values of human rights should be noted (Hamm & Smandych 2004) here. English was used as the primary language of cyber-communication (30.4%), followed by Chinese (16.6%), Spanish (8.7%), Japanese (6.7%), French (4.8%), German (4.5%), Arabic (4.2%), Portuguese (4.1%), Korean (2.5 %) and Italian (2.4%). In a highly differentiated way, the top ten languages accounted for 84.8% of the cyber-communications (See Table 1). Here, English consequently is the *de facto* standard language of the Internet, and the domination effect of the English language in global communication is threatening the existence of minority languages (Lai 2004b).

Furthermore, other than the language itself, the contents and messages for communication are influenced for commercial and political purposes,

music, comics, other forms of popular culture (cultural imperialism), and news and documentaries (the US version of the War Against Terrorism represents such a case). These are cultural manifestations and celebration of the Western global capitalism. In short, as long as the Internet is based on the existing social cultural structure, the Internet could also work to reinforce such cultural imperialism in our complex, globalizing world.

It is culturally sensitive that global human rights values be communicable in local languages, at the very least making the case of human rights universalism down-to-earth. For this, AI has a Russian language website (http://www.amnesty.org.ru) to promote respect for human rights in the Russian Federation, and the campaign for justice in the Russian Federation (http://www.amnesty.org/russia), with almost one million page views in 2007.

Last, but not least, are the networking logic and dynamics. In most cases, the offerings of informational society enhance the least advantaged groups' life chances or choices (cf., Lai 2008). More specifically, the logic of Internet enhanced e-mobilization is its bottom-up process: communities and interest groups are able to connect to one another. We need to enable the deliberative skills (informational personality) people may possess, and look into what actually happens in the space for advocacy. The Net is instrumental in various stages of building up the informational personality in social mobilization: individual chat rooms and discussion lists enable people to communicate and learn from each other. The discovery of new knowledge, the building up of trust among each other, and enhancing the capacity to mobilize others to make social change – this cycle is clearly a progressive capacity-building process for social change. In short, human rights advocacy is not just talk and

Table 1: Top Ten Languages Use in Internet (March, 2008)

TOP TEN LANGUAGES in INTERNET	Internet Users %	Internet Users by Language	Internet Penetration by Language	Language Growth 2000-2008	Estimated Population for the Language
English	30.4 %	427,436,880	21.0 %	201.1 %	2,039,114,892
Chinese	16.6 %	233,216,713	17.1 %	622.0 %	1,365,053,177
Spanish	8.7 %	122,349,144	27.1 %	395.7 %	451,910,690
Japanese	6.7 %	94,000,000	73.8 %	99.7 %	127,288,419
French	4.8 %	67,315,894	16.4 %	451.8 %	410,498,144
German	4.5 %	63,611,789	66.0 %	129.6 %	96,402,649
Arabic	4.2 %	59,810,400	16.7 %	2062.2 %	357,271,398
Portuguese	4.1 %	58,180,960	24.3 %	668.0 %	239,646,701
Korean	2.5 %	34,820,000	47.9 %	82.9 %	72,711,933
Italian	2.4 %	33,712,383	57.9 %	155.4 %	58,175,843
TOP 10 LANGUAGES	84.8 %	1,194,454,163	22.9 %	263.6 %	5,218,073,846
Rest of the Languages	15.2 %	213,270,757	14.6 %	556.7 %	1,458,046,442
WORLD TOTAL	100.0 %	1,407,724,920	21.1 %	290.0 %	6,676,120,288

(Source: http://www. worldinternetstats.com/)

Therefore, direct actions at the local (for both individuals and groups) level are still the basics for social change for a better world.

Human Rights for All: An Unfinished Project in 21ˢᵗ Century?

The debates and advocacies on human rights have become the currencies for international development discourse for both IGOs and iNGOs. They use the discourse on human rights as the default for social development. This is vividly shown in the case of Myanmar (Burma) for Asia. Here, the HR rhetoric is not yet translated into reality (UN 2005, WCSDG 2004, World Bank 2006). In particular, the neglect of human rights damages efforts for social development, possibly reinforcing inter-state, inter-ethnic groups and inter-classes conflicts, and leads to civil war or genocide. Yet, the iNGOs' mobilization process and dynamics for human rights reinforce global social development:

> By the same token, development would be at best hindered and at worst reversed in a world driven by violent conflict or mesmerized by the fear of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, or one in which human rights were trampled, the rule of law was disregarded and citizens' views and needs were ignored by unresponsive and unrepresentative Governments (UN 2005: 23).

For IGOs, the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals and the related Declaration have an important strategic direction, for which members of IGOs (in the UN system in particular) have been making efforts to promote democracy and the rule of law, as well as respect for human rights and fundamental freedom. The lip-service respect for human rights is not enough. All human beings have the right to be treated with dignity and respect, with the support of global civil society, NGOs and people organizations in particular.

To continue the project for the promotion of human rights, four major

World Bank) and regional institutions like EU, it is a positive development that human rights are now part of the default for all policy making for member states, although far more have to be done by these global and regional bodies. This should also apply with more vigor on IGOs like the WTO and the emerging economic regional blocs like the ASEAN and APEC. To what extent are these institutions developed into pro-human rights ones is a challenging task for iNGOs. Hopefully, iNGOs can be successful in their campaign to make IGOs responsive to human rights appeal.

Regionally, development banks have to take up the ESC rights, within a broader framework to promote healthy development of civil societies. For instance, since1995, Asian Development Bank (ADB) has established an Accountability Mechanism which local and international NGOs can use to protect and promote ESC rights vis-à-vis development issues.[2]

Secondly, continuing the project for the synergy between and among IGOs and iNGOs will be critical for the future promotion of human rights. This is critical in the case of governmental institutions and non-governmental agencies at the local, national and regional levels. It is necessary to challenge human rights abuses, undemocratic processes and the less than normal rule-of-law regimes. Here, it would be a mistake to compromise human rights observance or enforcement with the need for security or ill-defined development.

Thirdly, iNGOs have been instrumental in shaping the moral and ethical appeal of global standard(s) for human rights, rule of law and democratic governance. Their innovative strategies should be benchmarked for practical effectiveness in human rights promotion and should be shared

Economic Forum is a welcome one, especially in developing the concept of global citizenship.

Lastly, the promotion of the universal values of the rule of law and human rights, within a framework of participatory democracy, cannot be compromised, whether undertaken by IGOs and/or iNGOs. The basic respect for human dignity and striving for a world of social justice and stability with peace are fundamental and non-tradable. The project, however, is an unfinished one. More synergy regarding policy and praxis learning is needed and should be articulated and practiced by all stakeholders.

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Working Peoples Meet the Academe and Media

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AsiaDHRRA

A̲B̲S̲T̲R̲A̲C̲T̲

This case study explores the experiences of the Asian Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Asia (AsiaDHRRA) in engaging the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in pro-poor policy advocacy and program cooperation. It provides a brief rationale for the engagement, examining the context of growing regional integration, regionalism, and cross-border issues, ASEAN's charter building, and an increasing although uneven Civil Society Organizations (CSO) Cooperation. The case discusses AsiaDHRRA's approach as it evolved over a five-year period, reflecting on strategies employed, constraints, gains, challenges faced and lessons learned. Finally, it makes recommendations on how CSOs can more effectively engage with a regional body like ASEAN.

Key words: ASEAN Engagement, Broad-based Advocacy, Agriculture and Rural Development

The theme of the AIUC is very fitting in the context of our region these days. We, at AsiaDHRRA, find the developments in the ASEAN region both exciting and prospective. Although some of our advocacies in the drafting of the ASEAN Charter were not fully met, we, as civil society organizations, cannot just stop and cry over the outcomes. We are

is due us as ASEAN peoples, and help push ASEAN to adopt more people-oriented policies and programs at the national and regional levels.

AsiaDHRRA-ASEAN Engagement

Our organization, AsiaDHRRA, has a relatively short history of engaging ASEAN. Short, and yet, we are already feeling some tangible results. We began our ASEAN engagement in 1999 after almost three decades of criss-crossing the region in pursuit of genuine human resource development. Our entry point in ASEAN relations was the ASEAN Foundation (AF), founded by the ASEAN foreign ministers in 1998. As a grant-making body, the Foundation supported our flagship program directed at the formation of a regional farmers' alliance in Asia. i.e., the Asian Farmers Association (AFA), now an autonomous organization representing more than ten million farmers in the region.

AsiaDHRRA used its connection with the Foundation to expand cooperation in some "not-so-CSO-familiar/friendly" Southeast Asian countries. In our exploratory entry work in Myanmar, AsiaDHRRA received support from the ASEAN Foundation to have the ASEAN Secretariat[6] arrange our meetings with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Myanmar. The "courtesy calls" were used as opportunities to dialogue with the government on what CSOs do and the potential roles we could play in nation-building, which is an exercise of "demystification" for both sides.

While the original entry point to ASEAN was the ASEAN Foundation, AsiaDHRRA moved to establish links with the ASEAN Secretariat and its Bureau for Human Development. This bureau's mandate to support

Eradication (SOMRDPE) clearly matches the institutional agenda of AsiaDHRRA, which focuses on promoting a people-centered rural development. This has proven to be crucial in our effort to find viable institutional links in ASEAN that would ensure that our advocacy voice is heard in a sustained manner. We opted to become an ASEAN CSO affiliate in 2004, to give ourselves more lanes to access in the engagement process with ASEAN. By seizing the opportunity opened by the initial entry point, AsiaDHRRA was able to strengthen its links with ASEAN.

Continuing the Progress: Tactics, Persistence and Growing Engagement

The past four years have been marked by continuing efforts on the part of AsiaDHRRA to learn more about ASEAN and to have them respond to some tactical requests designed to test their responsiveness (e.g., setting up of meetings between CSO representatives and ASEAN Secretariat leaders, exchange of information, and reviewing of papers). These we saw as small confidence-building steps that proved to be helpful in understanding more how and whom to deal with in ASEAN.

Since our accreditation, AsiaDHRRA has sustained its engagement on sector-based concerns, specifically in our effort of promoting the roles of NGOs and peoples organizations in rural development. In 2007, the ASEAN Secretariat extended a vote of confidence to AsiaDHRRA's proposed technical cooperation towards linking small farmers to markets. This action was taken despite a technocrat's expressed opinion that investing resources into the marketing activities of small farmers would not be viable. The argument was that it would be more worthwhile to

AsiaDHRRA works. The ASEAN decision is a solid indicator that the ASEAN could and can be convinced to support CSOs who are serious about engaging them on concrete social and economic concerns on the ground. With the constant and proactive hammering out of issues and positions, it is possible for CSOs to win tactical and even strategic gains.

Nurturing the Ground for Broad-based Advocacy

Together with other regional CSOs like the UNI-APRO, AsiaDHRRA has helped move the process of broad-based engagement with the ASEAN on a whole range of regional issues, in particular the assertion of civil society's position on the proposed ASEAN Charter. The series of proactive engagements with ASEAN by a broad gathering of regional CSOs culminated in the ASEAN's recognition of the ASEAN Civil Society Conference or ACSC as a formal CSO summit that was convened in conjunction with the annual ASEAN Leaders' Summit.

With the promise of the ACSC platform as an official link to ASEAN leaders, four regional CSOs agreed to facilitate the coming together of regional and national NGOs toward a common agenda. This led to the birth of the Solidarity for Asian Peoples' Advocacy or SAPA. The SAPA Working Group on ASEAN since then has engaged ASEAN on critical issues such as the drafting of the ASEAN Charter and the substantive issues that the Eminent Persons Group (EPG) and the High-Level Task Force on the ASEAN Charter must consider. The series of interaction on the ASEAN Charter sent a clear signal to ASEAN that there is now a proactive and organized CSO stakeholder group in the ASEAN and that the CSOs are organizing among their ranks in order to be more effective in their engagement and advocacies.

On the rural development front, AsiaDHRRA and five other regional rural development CSOs decided in early 2008 to form a Working Group for ASEAN Engagement. We have leveled off on our identity as a thematic platform, our reason for being, our priority issues and our modus operandi. We are at the moment proactively establishing our link as a group with the ASEAN. Compared to other regional issues, rural development is seen by others as a soft issue, meaning not as dramatic nor a priority regional advocacy. Hence, our resolve to strengthen our ranks in order to have a bigger voice and to be more proactive and effective in engaging ASEAN based on specific agricultural issues.

Agriculture and Rural Development: Obstacles and Constraints

Of course, agriculture and rural development play an important role in meeting the UN's Millennium Development Goals (MDG) on poverty reduction and hunger elimination in the ASEAN region and beyond. More than 70 percent of the world's poor live in the rural areas and the rural poverty rate is more than double the rate of poverty in the urban areas. Against the backdrop of the current food crisis, the world may not be able to meet this goal, thus making it more important than ever that poverty eradication be made the central theme of rural development programmes and policies.

After a quarter century of neglect, agriculture is back on the international development radar. The current food crisis has highlighted the fragility of the efforts (others call it a failure) to feed the world's growing population with the technologies of the much touted First Green Revolution and the subsequent agricultural improvements. It is now a

given that agriculture needs reinvigorating. Productivity growth has been slowing down for some time. Soils are being depleted and rendered less fertile. Water is becoming scarcer in many places and good agricultural land is being lost to other uses and endless degradation. Public investments in agriculture, including donor support, have been dwindling.

NGOs working for rural development are concerned with the economic and technological growth in the rural areas and their implications on the holistic human development of the rural peoples, especially the marginalized sectors. To us, development means unleashing the people's full potentials to actually direct their own lives and to use properly their resources through education and people-oriented processes which lead towards active and meaningful participation in various governance structures at different levels.

NGOs, when given the space and opportunity, do participate actively in national and local development processes. In the case of the Philippines, since the 1970s and earlier, NGOs have been actively involved in organizing, training and education. They have been implementing livelihood projects and providing support services to farmers and agrarian reform communities despite the many constraints and obstacles, including risks to their lives in the face of political and military repression. Land lies at the heart of rural development. To farmers and indigenous peoples the world over,

Land is life

Without access to productive land and resources, farmers leave for the

More than three billion rural people increasingly face the threats of displacement from their lands and alienation from their livelihood sources to give way to mega-development projects, such as, large dams, commercial-industrial zones and agro-fuel plantations. Conflicts over land and natural resources are likely to increase with climate change.

Most of us know all about this ugly reality of land inequities. Maybe some of the academicians here are directly involved in responding to these issues. But the question is: to what extent are the academic community and the media meaningfully contributing to help address this ugly reality and to help reduce poverty among the rural poor for them to achieve sustainable development?

To achieve sustainable development, there is a need to have an enabling environment at all levels. We need good governance and institutional capacity building. There is a strong need for strengthening science research and education that are focused on solutions. There should be improved extension services so that information and solutions get into the hands of farmers, particularly small-scale farmers. Above all, there should be mechanisms for facilitating dialogue between and among scientists, decision-makers and farmers.

Defining Development Priorities

Poverty, unsustainable natural resource use and food insecurity are interlinked issues that must be addressed in a coherent, integrated manner. Unfortunately, many rural development policies in place are not cognizant of the importance of the social, political and cultural dimensions and values that are the essence of rural lives and livelihoods, and that are

the brunt of agricultural work, is dismally unrecognized. These policies, more often than not, are supply-driven and not anchored on economic growth brought about by greater security of jobs and by more secure access to and control of the means of rural productivity such as land and financing.

Investment trends in rural development are also not favourable in meeting the current challenges, although many governments have made efforts through national policies and programmes to reverse these trends. The share of ODA allocated to agriculture has gradually declined since the 1980s.

Economic growth should lead to more equitable distribution of gains and should be anchored on food security, not only for the benefit of the elite, agribusiness and transnational corporations. For agriculture, this would mean: stronger support services delivery to farmers;; greater investment in research and development; ensuring farmers' control and access to farming technology including seeds; stronger farmer/producer linkages with the domestic and international markets, and continuing capacity-building towards entrepreneurship.

Rural livelihoods are largely based on the environment and its vast natural resource. Thus, the degradation of fragile lands and the continuing over-exploitation of our natural wealth put the marginalized rural poor are at risk. The various adaptation measures developed by local organizations and communities through constant interaction with the environment need recognition and policy support from governments. The push for agro-fuels to reduce greenhouse emissions and provide rural livelihoods has ironically serious adverse implications on food security, the environment and the rural economy.

The privatization of agricultural extension and the lack of effective agricultural extension services deprive those in the remote areas of needed services. Rural infrastructures, including transport and water supply for domestic and production purposes, remain inadequate and are often sidelined by other high-impact priority projects.

One of the biggest threats to rural development is the impact of trade policies. Trade does not lead to development when it results to the displacement of the rural peoples; to environmental degradation due to monocropping and chemical use; to further indebtedness of farmers; and to loss of livelihoods due to unfair competition.

Learning from Some Best Practices

All these obstacles and constraints highlight the grim realities and the urgency for the needed action, policy- and otherwise. The fact is that there are too many lessons learned and unlearned all over. Nevertheless, there are good practices all around, whether in agricultural technologies, social processes, policies and laws. We also have to discourse and reflect on all this.

 In the meantime, allow us to highlight what painfully still needs to be done.

The challenge for agricultural science and engineering is to provide good science and sound technologies to farmers in very diverse socio-economic and ecological systems. Much of the needed knowledge already exists within the scientific and engineering communities. However, the knowledge often does not reach those that could benefit

Understanding rural vulnerability is critical now**,** more than ever before, as we attempt to deal with the looming problem**s** of rising food costs and the changing climate.

For the Scientific and Technology Community, including the Universities, to be effective in helping or responding to agriculture and rural issues, there is need for a better understanding of the livelihood dynamics in rural communities, which as we all know are not homogeneous. And yet, many continue to implement a one-size-fits-all intervention. For the small-scale farmers, it is essential that any technology introduced be low-cost and appropriate for their particular site-specific applications.

To enhance technology uptake by the poor and rural women in particular, there is a need for basic disaggregated statistics on livelihoods and the people's coping mechanisms. This requires data that are collected on a longitudinal basis with databases that are updated regularly. Unfortunately, we know that such information is not readily available because of insufficient investment**s** in research and development. The whole infrastructure for data collection at the household level is weak. Consequently, there is poor use of research outputs and many continue to plan on the basis of inaccurate data generated from short-term research studies**,** thus leading to reactive policies that fail to address the long-term problems.

These are just a few of what we understand or perceive as a flawed "playing field" which the academic and scientific community should help address. What is the stake of the community in these issues? In light of the urgent need for a more integrative approach to end rural poverty, the role of the academic and scientific community in addressing these issues is vital and has to be strengthened.

data and build up information databases so that the information is locally owned and used for improved targeting and proactive policy development or for creating a platform that allows interaction and constructive dialogue between government and other major development players. Countries in the north have immensely benefitted from technologies and policy advice from think-tanks. This then begs the question: "How can developing countries learn and adopt such mutually beneficial interactions between the working peoples and the academic/scientific community?"

Conclusion

In conclusion, allow us to outline some areas of collaboration which the rural NGOs can forge with the academe:

1. Agricultural extension services and technology support. Can we deepen our dialogue and exchange on this in the immediate future and learn from the best practices from Asia and the world over?   A dialogue between rural CSOs and the academe will lead to understanding, and hopefully we will be moved to cooperate – to do better in what we already all along knew – that we have to integrate our work. *AsiaDHRRA's members in the Northeast – Korea, Japan, and Taiwan, are mostly university-based. We have long witnessed how effectively they have performed their role in pushing agricultural development in their respective societies and communities – among students, farming families, and agriculture institutions and policy makers.*

2. ***Support to policy advocacy through research and documentation.*** We do a lot of researches to advance our work, both for program

CSO-averse governments also tend to listen mainly to the academic elites. ASEAN for one is a good example of this, though thankfully, it has started to look beyond the academic elites as sources of information and advise. How can we leverage on your strength? On the other hand, how do you maximize the rich learning ground that we are capable of offering – for your teachers and students, and your leaders — such that your learning journeys are anchored on the realities faced day-by-day by the "working peoples". I think that we will also help give credibility to your community, and add even more relevance to your role in nation building.

3. *Capacity building.* There are some specific skills areas that we think you are best qualified to give – research and documentation. We sorely need in our work in the Mekong region skills in case documentation. There are opportunities for expanding or replicating good practices, but most of these are not properly documented to serve such a purpose. We provide the logistical support**;** you provide us the talent or expertise to enhance local/national capacities in some developing countries – not by doing the job itself (which is what drives the development consulting industry or business)**,** but by training or transferring skills to local people.

4. *Nurturing new generation development workers.* Send us your students for OJTs. We need more young people to be exposed to the kind of work that we do. Our few OJTs are from the northeast countries who are now very much engaged in rural development work.

For the media community,

1. *Please pick up our worthy stories.* We know that you do this, but it remains selective, not institutionalized, and largely driven by the degree

of sensationalism.   When the food crisis hit the cities, people got alarmed. It was broadcast everywhere. Yet this same issue of food insecurity has hounded many of our rural poor for ages. The actions now being taken by governments, mouthed by financial institutions, have long been the crusade of the organized rural sectors, with intermittent attention from the media. Help shape public opinion towards a more sustainable living and a just world.   Anchor your critical role on the realities, work and calls of the majority who are poor. As nation builders, media must show a preferential bias for the poor.

2. ***Help build our capacities to meet your requirements.***   Help us learn how to write newsworthy materials**,** how to understand your world and to leverage in your industry.

3. ***Put value to the growing calls for regionalism.*** Allow more space in your papers/programs for regional understanding. Help us make people see beyond their national boundaries for greater understanding and solidarity as ASEAN or Asian peoples.   The same call applies to the academia. Help in making ASEAN known to ordinary Southeast Asians. With a Charter, ASEAN is now more legally accountable to our governments and to us, as peoples.   All of us have to know about ASEAN so that we can ensure that it is on the right path in its commitment towards a caring and sharing community. We have to help make ASEAN accountable to the working peoples.

To conclude, we hope we can explore long-term partnerships with both the academic and media communities. We look forward to national and regional dialogues with interested groups in the near future. We hope that we can find champions among you along this line.

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In A Globalizing ASEAN

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ABSTRACT

Guided by the 2003 Bali Declaration framework of developing a system of regional governance that is democratic, inclusive and sensitive to the needs of the working peoples, UNI-APRO and ASETUC have pursued, among others, an aggressive program of trade liberalization, establishment of safety nets for the working peoples, campaigns for an ASEAN 'Social Charter,' and a broad Trade Union- Civil Society Organization (TU-CSO) coalition reforms.

UNI-APRO and ASETUC likewise address the needs of migrant and service workers by a) anticipating and identifying emerging trends and concerns in the liberalization of services in the ASEAN under the PIPs, AFAS, MRA, GATS and their likely impact on service sector unions and workers, especially those under the UNI-APRO umbrella, and b) touching base and organizing possible dialogues with the ASEAN leaders and officials on the shape and direction of ASEAN integration, in general (e.g., on the content of the proposed ASEAN Charter), and ASEAN service sector liberalization, in particular.

Thus, the regional programs of UNI-APRO and ASETUC have

region in recent years.   The idea is to help   strengthen, if not lead, the movement to build a Social ASEAN.

The governance challenge in ASEAN

ASEAN or the ten-country Association of the Southeast Asian Nations has marked its 40th anniversary with the possible adoption of an ASEAN Charter in the ASEAN Leaders' Summit in Singapore.   The ASEAN Charter, which supposedly contains the ideas propounded by an ASEAN group of 'eminent persons' (EPG), is the first serious attempt of the ASEAN to veer slightly away from the so-called consensual and harmless 'ASEAN way' of making decisions and introduce a rules-based system of regional governance. However, the draft of the ASEAN Charter that UNI-APRO and its allied organization, the ASEAN Service Trade Union Council or ASETUC, still reflects a relatively weak regional governance structure with very limited representation space for trade unions and civil societies.

The governance dilemma in the ASEAN is best illustrated today by Myanmar, the poorest country in the region with a per capita of US $200.   Ruled by a narrow clique of military rulers, Myanmar has consistently managed to embarrass the ASEAN for the latter's failure to stop Myanmar in suppressing the democratic aspirations of the Burmese people and in violating the basic labor and human rights of the workers. Myanmar is one of the few despotic countries in the world which still systematically uses prison and forced labor in public projects.

If Southeast Asia, as stated in the 2003 Bali Declaration, is to become a

and its people must develop a system of regional governance that is democratic, inclusive and sensitive to the needs of the working peoples, especially those living in the countries lagging behind in the development process.   This has been the general framework that has guided UNI-APRO and ASETUC in the policy engagement and dialogue that they have pursued with the ASEAN Leaders, ASEAN Secretariat and other organized sectors in the region.

Questioning a narrow ASEAN's liberalization agenda
And its social and labor impact

One of the areas of UNI-APRO/ASETUC engagement is the economic sphere.

ASEAN is now actively pursuing an aggressive program of trade liberalization, within the bloc and vis-à-vis its so-called Dialogue Partners. Within the bloc, the ASEAN is building upon the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) project, which has reduced intra-ASEAN tariffs to 0-5 per cent, by launching a trade-and-investment liberalization program related to eleven (11) Priority Integration Projects (PIPs), namely: ICT, garments and textiles, automotive, fishery, agri-based, wood-based, rubber-based, E-ASEAN, aviation, tourism and health care industries[1]. The ASEAN has also declared that, by 2015, it shall have become an 'economic community' (AEC), which means there shall be a free flow of goods, capital, skilled labor and, possibly, a common ASEAN currency.

The ambitious PIP and AEC programs are supplemented by a confusing set of bilateral and regional free-trade talks with the ASEAN's Dialogue partners, giving rise to the phenomenon of the so-called Asian 'noodle

negotiations with China, Japan, South Korea, United States, Australia-New Zealand, European Union, India and Russia, the individual ASEAN countries are encouraged to hold bilateral free-trade-cum-investment talks with these countries such as the various 'economic partnership agreements' (EPAs) that Japan is concluding with each of the ASEAN countries.

The foregoing noodle bowl of intermeshing free trade talks within the ASEAN bloc and with various trade partners appears fascinating. However, the negative social and labor impact of the emerging free trade arrangements is not being addressed, much less discussed in official ASEAN circles.

This is the reason why UNI-APRO and ASETUC have been raising the social and labor alarm bells. In particular, UNI-APRO and ASETUC have been calling the attention of ASEAN governments and other sectors to the following realities:

1. Economic liberalization can fuel growth, but it can also lead to deadly economic bubbles such as what happened in the mid-1990s, when financial liberalization in the region led to the 1997-98 Asian financial crisis. Today, there are signs once again that bubbles in the stock markets, real estate markets and currency markets have developed, due partly to the work of the speculative hedge funds and private equity companies. And yet, the ASEAN has not developed a program to insulate the region from a possible herd-like regional crisis once these bubbles burst.

2. More importantly, the ASEAN has not yet fully learned the

lesson is the need to rein in or regulate the movement of speculative capital, which is now being abetted by the ASEAN's full financial sector liberalization under the ASEAN Framework Agreement on Services (AFAS), a clone of the WTO's General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS).

3. Another major lesson from the l997-98 Asian financial crisis is the need to have safety nets for the working peoples. Safety nets mean protective shields against loss of jobs, economic dislocations and business closures. Most of the post-crisis 'positive' measures promoted by the ASEAN are programs on skills development and human resources development. Such programs cannot be a substitute for meaningful safety nets.

4. ASEAN, like the rest of East Asia, is growing rapidly. The problem is that the growth is uneven, exclusionary and even jobless for some ASEAN countries. As documented by the UNDP, ILO and even the Asian Development Bank, inequality has deepened within and across the individual ASEAN countries and the regional bloc as a whole.

5. One glaring socio-economic problem in the ASEAN is the wide development disparity among the ten member countries. As a 2007 ILO Report puts it: (See Table 1)

    Between 2000 and 2006, GDP in the ASEAN region grew at an average rate of 5.7 per cent…

    But significant gaps remain. In 2005, per capita GDP in Singapore was 2.6 times greater than it was in Malaysia and 3.5 times more than in Thailand. And the latter two are the third and

community is even more striking. In 2005, Singapore's per capita GDP was more than 11 times higher than that in Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, and Myanmar. Closing this gap will take a long time. Assuming that recent trends continue, reducing the per capita GDP gap between Singapore and Cambodia by 25 per cent, for example, would take 15 years. A reduction by 50 per cent would take about 34 years.

Table 1. Selected economic ASEAN indicators
(as of 12 June 2007)

Country	Total land area	Total population	Population density	Gross domestic product at current prices	GDP per capita at current prices
	thousand km^2	thousand	persons per km^2	US$ million	US$
	2006	2006	2006	2006	2006
Brunei Darussalam	5,765	383	66	11,845.7	30,928.8
Cambodia	181,035	13,996	77	6,105.2	436.2
Indonesia	1,890,754	222,051	117	364,258.8	1,640.4
Lao PDR	236,800	6,135	26	3,527.4	574.9
Malaysia	330,257	26,686	81	156,924.2	5,880.4
Myanmar[1/]	676,577	57,289	85	11,951.0	208.6
Philippines	300,001	86,910	290	117,457.1	1,351.5
Singapore	699	4,484	6,433	132,273.4	29,499.6
Thailand	513,254	65,233	127	206,645.1	3,167.8
Viet Nam	330,363	84,222	255	60,965.2	723.9
ASEAN	**4,465,505**	**567,390**	**127**	**1,071,953.2**	**1,889.3**

Source: ASEAN Statistics, http://www.aseansec.org.

6. Development gaps are not likely to disappear with the ASEAN pursuing the various liberalization programs mentioned earlier. The experience of Mexico under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) is instructive.   After 13 years of NAFTA liberalization, Mexico's industry and agriculture have 'hollowed out', the main reason why Mexico is the world's largest sender of migrant workers, majority of whom are cross-border migrants in the United States. On the other hand, the EU did it differently. The EU has a Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and a Regional Policy aimed at fast-tracking development in the lagging regions so that they can catch up. The CAP and Regional Policy are backed up by billions of euros earmarked by the EU Commission for agricultural support systems (including the controversial subsidies), infrastructures, education, environment, health and so on. In contrast, ASEAN has no similar EU policies and funds.

7. ASEAN is hoping that somehow economic liberalization, in trade and investment areas, will lead to a regional levelling in development. This is not likely to happen, for the main economic actors in a liberalized regional market are the transnational corporations (TNCs). The TNCs tend to invest and do business in the most developed places, not in the so-called 'missionary areas'.

8. Worse, under liberalization and globalization, the operations of TNCs, unregulated, tend to hurt workers and unions. First, the production TNCs are always in search of cheap, malleable and productive labor. So, they keep hopping or relocating or

outsourcing production from one country to another such as what has been happening in the case of the garments, textiles and electronic assembly industries. This leads to the phenomenon of a Race-to-the-Bottom, which tends to lower labor standards and roll back unionism and labor rights. Second, the TNCs, by gobbling up smaller players through mergers, acquisitions and consolidations (MACs), tend to reduce jobs and monopolize markets.

9. The Race-to-the-Bottom phenomenon is exacerbated by the failure of the ASEAN, ILO, ADB and various national, regional and international bodies to observe international labor conventions.

Campaigning for an ASEAN 'Social Charter'
And forging a broad TU-CSO coalition for reforms

It is in the context of the foregoing that UNI-APRO and ASETUC have been campaigning since 2002 for a different charter – an ASEAN *Social Charter*, which is a proposed bill of rights for the ASEAN workers. The idea is to challenge the ASEAN Leaders and governments to recognize and enforce the following:

1. *The ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (l998)*. The Declaration reaffirms the universal core labor rights that nations, regardless of their level of development, must respect, namely, freedom of association and collective bargaining, non-discrimination at work, prohibition of forced labor and

2. *The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (l948)*. Under Article 23, the Declaration provides: — 'Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favorable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment. Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work. Everyone who works has the right to just and favorable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection. Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.'

3. *The Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action (l995)*. The Declaration calls for governments 'to place people at the centre of development and direct our economies to meet human needs more effectively', and to promote full employment and sustainable and productive livelihood and work, freely chosen by both women and men.

4. *The Declaration of ASEAN Concord II (Bali Concord II, 2003)*. The Declaration reaffirms the goals of a peaceful and prosperous regional community through the development of an 'ASEAN Community' composed of 'caring societies' and that the ASEAN has been formed 'for the well being of its member states and people'. Through the ASSC component of the ASEAN Community, the ASEAN declares its

education, training, science and technology development, job creation, and social protection'. It also seeks to 'foster cooperation in social development aimed at raising the standard of living of the disadvantaged groups and the rural population'.

In 2006-07, the UNI-APRO submitted and discussed the above in the national and regional consultations conducted by the EPG and the succeeding 'High-Level Task Force' on the official ASEAN Charter.

Further, the UNI-APRO realized the importance of forging a broader social coalition in order to succeed in shaping a Social ASEAN. Thus, in 2005, it was the only trade union group that participated in the first ASEAN Civil Society Conference (ACSC) held in Kuala Lumpur. This ACSC was able to submit a ten-point demand to the ASEAN Leaders. Several of the ACSC demands, including the call for the ASEAN observance of the universal labor rights, were those made by UNI-APRO.

Subsequently, UNI-APRO has been active in either initiating or participating in various trade union-civil society forums and conferences such as the 2nd ACSC held in Cebu; the regional conferences on AFAS; the TU-CSO dialogues with the IMF-World Bank in 2006 (held in Singapore) and the 5th ASEAN People's Assembly (APA). In all these forums, UNI-APRO had been vocal in its general advocacy of 'putting people at the center of ASEAN integration'.

In calling for an ASEAN with a human face, UNI-APRO has been demanding for an overhaul of the one-sided one-size-fits-all trade and investment liberalization agenda being pursued by the ASEAN in its

unequal, exclusionary and can even be jobless.   Instead, UNI-APRO has been calling for the formal recognition and observance by the ASEAN of the special-and-differential treatment (SDT) clause as a guiding principle in all trade and investment agreements and programmes, they be regional, bilateral or multilateral. The idea is to let ASEAN member countries calibrate their trade, investment and development policies in accordance with the development requirements of their own people. After all, the challenge is how to put people in the center of regional integration.

Addressing the needs of migrant and service workers

In the specific area of unionism and industrial relations, UNI-APRO has expanded its advocacy for the labor-right-based ASEAN Social Charter to include the advocacy for the specific rights of migrant and service workers. This is one reason for the formation of the ASEAN Service Trade Union Council (ASETUC).

As it is, the service sector is the largest sector in the economies of the ASEAN countries. With the ongoing service sector liberalization among the ASEAN member countries – through the PIPs, AFAS, mutual recognition agreements (MRAs) and the unilateral and bilateral liberalization programs by the individual countries – workers and unions being formed by UNI-APRO in the service sector are likely to be affected in a radical or profound way.

Among the objectives of ASETUC are: a) to anticipate and identify emerging trends and concerns in the liberalization of services in the ASEAN under the PIPs, AFAS, MRA, GATS and their likely impact on

APRO umbrella, and b) to touch base and organize possible dialogues with the ASEAN leaders and officials on the shape and direction of ASEAN integration, in general (e.g., on the content of the proposed ASEAN Charter), and ASEAN service sector liberalization, in particular.

Among the critical concerns being strategized by UNI-APRO and ASETUC is the migration issue in the ASEAN. Most of the migrant workers in the region are in the sector – construction, distribution, entertainment, professional services and household services. Moreover, the labor markets of the individual countries are increasingly being liberalized and globalized. UNI-APRO and ASETUC are thus trying to develop, not only protection, but also, organizing and bargaining programs for the migrant workers.

Eventually, UNI-APRO and ASETUC must prepare for organizing region-wide, for a regional economy means a regional labor market composed of diverse nationalities.

Conclusion

The regional programs of UNI-APRO and ASETUC have evolved in response to the dynamic changes occurring in the ASEAN region in recent years. The idea is to help   strengthen, if not lead, the movement to build a Social ASEAN.

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Endnote

[1] More recently, logistics has been added to the PIP list.

Awareness-Raising Among Seafarers:
An Innovation from the Apostleship of the Sea (AOS)

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ABSTRACT

A social dialogue for seafarers at a critical time of labor market process provides a timely mechanism for regulation and consensus building to promote values and decent work agenda with good prospects for ASEAN integration. The form of social dialogue mechanisms based on the author's experience are: the College/University-based seminar at the level of graduating maritime students organized by the Apostleship of the Sea, and a pilot program of Residence-based social dialogue at the seafarers' grassroots level conducted by ACPOSSOP.

For over 10 years, the AOS has institutionalized, at the level of graduating maritime students, a Para-legal and Value Formation Seminar. The seminar in about 50 schools nationwide is a form of an extra curricular non-academic social dialogue now institutionalized in maritime schools. It started about 1995 with technical cooperation of the International Labor Organization (ILO) and help of Senator Ramon B. Magsaysay Jr. The dialogue was on values, international/local labor standards, labor market regulations/governance, seafarers' welfare and family affairs with representatives from government and private sectors.

Meanwhile, the ACPOSSOP conducted values and decent work dialogue to grassroots level of seafarers in institutional residences as outreach dialogue outside of the academic circle. The information exchanges are on values and decent work plus maritime issues on ASEAN culture and religion, international and ASEAN security, trade unionism and labor relations. Participants range from ordinary seaman to officers from various schools, training centers, with affiliations from various trade unions and manning agencies/shipping lines.

Key words: Social dialogue, awareness raising, values and decent work

Introduction

The tremendous expansion of global trade and tourism in the last three decades has led to a parallel expansion in the seafaring industry of Southeast Asia and the world. There are more than a million seafarers aboard global cargo, passenger, cruise and other ships. There are millions more in the domestic seafaring industry of insular and coastal countries around the world. In the ASEAN region, the Philippines is a leader, with over 300,000 of its seafarers deployed in thousands of ocean-going vessels; however, Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam also have large pools of domestic and international seafarers.

And yet, many seafarers, especially those on board international vessels that escape the scrutiny of the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF), have limited awareness of their rights as seafarers. There are at least two major reasons — their relative isolation (sailing the high seas for months) from the world once hired, and their limited access to labor and legal information on and off the board. Similarly,

spouses of seafarers have limited awareness of the seafarers' rights because there are no institutions established to provide these spouses relevant orientation seminars. Moreover, programs aimed at raising the seafarers' knowledge of their rights and their capacity to assert those rights do not touch on a crucial and yet often neglected area of a seafarer's labor education – the strengthening of a seafarer's values and those of his/her family's.

This paper is an attempt to share an innovative labor education program developed by the Apostleship of the Sea (AOS) for Filipino would-be seafarers. AOS is a global right advocacy group for the seafarers. The AOS labor education program, dubbed as "sectoral social dialogue", is offered at the maritime educational institutions, just before the students graduate and become full-pledged seafarers. It is supplemented by other AOS programs on value formation for seafarers and their families.

Overview of the Philippine Seafaring Industry

The Philippines is the top supplier of seafarers in the world maritime fleet, accounting for at least a quarter of a million seafarers at any given time. An equal number of registered seafarers are on standby as reserve force, ready for immediate deployment.

The system of overseas deployment of Filipino seafarers now spans almost four decades. It started as a government program through the then National Seaman Board (NSB), which was set up by the late Labor Minister Blas F. Ople as part of the martial-law thrust of reducing the ranks of the unemployed through the "temporary export of manpower". The program has continuously expanded and involves a number of government agencies engaged in the training/upgrading of seafarers and the accreditation and regulation of seafarer deployment.

The lead agencies are: Commission on Higher Education (CHED), which supervises maritime schools; Professional Regulations Commission (PRC), which issues professional licenses; Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA), which provides for seafarers' identity documents; Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA), which accredits manning agencies; Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA), which has protection and welfare programs for OFWs; and Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), which is engaged in skills upgrading and skills certification. Other government offices are: the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) and its diplomatic missions and consulates in various countries, Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) and Philippine Ports Authority (PPA).

The POEA, as the lead agency in the seafarers' labor market, has a one-stop shop for all agencies involved in the processing of deployment papers. The POEA also has a "standard employment contract" or SEC, which it tries to promote as the minimum standard contract for all overseas Filipino workers (OFWs), land- or sea-based. Aside from its overseas welfare programs, OWWA has a re-integration and repatriation programs. TESDA and CHED have "ladderized" curricula, which enables the more talented seafarers and others to pursue higher levels of education.

The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) is the overall coordinating department. Attached to DOLE for policy coordination are: POEA, OWWA and TESDA. Other DOLE agencies attending to the seafarers' needs are the National Labor Relations Commission (NLRC), Office of Maritime Affairs, and the Maritime Training Council (MTC), and their respective regional offices and other instrumentalities of these agencies.

From the private sector, the leading actors are the manning agencies, which serve as the local hiring agencies for their overseas principals, and the international shipping lines, which are the ultimate employers of the seafarers. This explains why labor cases involving seafarers always put the international shipping lines and the manning agencies together because the latter are jointly and severally responsible for the hiring and deployment of seafarers.

The "Sectoral Social Dialogue" Approach in Awareness-Raising

Despite the comprehensive government role in seafarer development – from training to re-integration – as reflected in the mandates of the various agencies listed above, employment and personnel problems of seafarers such as observance of employment contracts, work relations with their supervisors and captains and others do crop up from time to time. Employee-employer relations conflicts are, of course, unavoidable in any work setting in all industries, domestic and overseas, land- or sea-based. The challenge is how to minimize such conflicts and how to resolve them peacefully, speedily and at least cost or disturbance to both sides.

Crucial in this context is the level of awareness of the seafarers themselves about their rights and obligations as workers under Philippine labor laws and international labor and maritime conventions. After all, the enforcement and interpretation of these rights depend to a great extent on the workers' understanding or appreciation of relevant laws and conventions.

Unfortunately, this is precisely one of the weak areas in a seafarer's education due to their relative "isolation" from the world and their limited

access to information about these laws and conventions and how to apply them in their individual work cases. The general orientation of the major agencies, public and private, involved in the seafaring industry is also on how to develop and upgrade the skills of seafarers and how to market or deploy these seafarers. Ironically, OWWA has a welfare fund and the DFA and the DOLE's labor attaches have the mandate to look after OFWs, including seafarers, with problems in their jobs overseas or on the high seas.

It is against this backdrop that the AOS initiated in the mid-1990s a program for the labor education of would-be seafarers. Dubbed as "sectoral social dialogue", this program is implemented with the help of maritime educational institutions and packaged as a form of "extra-curricular dialogue" on matters with "social dimension". The program targets would-be seafarers immediately before their initial entry into the maritime industry and seafarers who have taken apprenticeship training abroad.

The "sectoral social dialogue" is presented as a form of sectoral consultation on key policies and practices related to migration and the roles of various actors on how to address social and labor issues and concerns in the seafaring industry. The dialogue-consultation process involves exchanges of information, observations and experiences on policies, practices and governance among seafarers, maritime officers and resource persons from government agencies and law firms. It also involves trade unions, families of seafarers, international organizations, academe and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Sometimes individual members of manning agencies attend these dialogues-consultations.

One outcome of these dialogues-consultations-sharings is increased awareness by the seafarers and the participating sectors on policies,

practices and governance affecting social and labor dimensions of migration. It is in this sense that the "sectoral social dialogues" become empowerment instruments for the seafarers and even for the other "conscientized" participating agencies. The sessions provide invaluable points of learning contacts between and among seafarers and social partners, which, in the end, help to cultivate positive values for all and to promote the ILO's decent work agenda for the maritime industry.

Some of the specific issues covered in the dialogues-consultations include various employment processes, repatriation and/or reintegration of seafarers, apprenticeship training, related courses such as customs administration and hotel/restaurant management (HRM) and so on. However, the core contents of the various dialogues-consultations are the varied situations on board – social, security and labor. Also discussed are the values of the seafarers and their families as well as what constitutes decent work in the industry. On the latter, key issues are relevant labor laws and international labor and maritime conventions.

Key Themes: Church's Social Teaching and ILO's Decent Work Agenda

The sectoral dialogues-consultations usually revolve around two major themes – the Church's social teachings and the ILO's decent work agenda.

The AOS, being a Catholic international organization, draws inspiration from the teachings of the Church. Some of the topics taken, therefore, are faith-based discussions of life's purpose and existence as well as the traits, characteristics and behavior of Christian peoples. Also discussed are character building and the strengthening of spiritual faith.

As to the improvement of working and living conditions on and off the board, the sectoral dialogues-consultations are generally inspired by the ILO's Decent Work Agenda, as highlighted in the ILO's 13th Asian Regional Meeting (ARM) in Bangkok (2001). Key decent work thrusts outlined in the ARM meeting are:

- Productive employment as the sustainable route out of poverty;
- Promotion of decent work through all stages of life;
- Establishment of rights at work and good governance;
- Addressing discrimination and vulnerabilities;
- Strengthening tripartism and social dialogue, and
- Responding to crisis, disasters and conflicts.

An illustration of a discussion on labor laws and the ILO's decent work agenda is shown in the discussion outline (see Annex) of one of the AOS resource persons, Isabelo Samonte.

Institutionalization of Sectoral Social Dialogue and Partnership-Building

How was the foregoing program of dialogues-consultations developed?

As already mentioned, the principal initiative came from the Philippine chapter of the Apostleship of the Sea or AOS, a Rome-based international seafarer advocacy organization with a presence in more than 150 countries. In the Philippines, the AOS national office is in Davao with network offices, chaplaincy and centers in Manila, Cebu, Cagayan de Oro, Batangas, Iligan, Iloilo, Maasin, Tagbilaran, General Santos, and San Fernando (La Union).

The AOS has developed dialogues-consultation programs in two principal venues – the maritime schools and the "centers" of seafarers.

1.   *Dialogues-Consultations in Maritime Schools*

The AOS conceptualized, initiated and organized a nationwide maritime school-based awareness-raising program in the country in the second half of the 1990s, with the support of the International Labour Organization (ILO), International Transport Workers Federation (ITF) and volunteer resource persons, including the assistance of Senator Ramon B. Magsaysay Jr., who also financed the publication of an "Ahoy Manual for Seafarers".

Since the main targets here are the graduating maritime students or apprentices, the AOS contacted and negotiated with the various maritime schools and institutions in the country in the holding of these "sectoral social dialogues", oftentimes also dubbed as "value formations" and "para-legal seminars" for seafarers. There are at least 26 cooperating maritime schools (see Annex B) nationwide, which now offer an "extra curricular non-academic social dialogue" as conceptualized by AOS. The dialogues/seminars are conducted year-round.

In the initial years, the ILO had a technical cooperation with AOS in the development and conduct of paralegal and value formation program. This technical support has been continued, in a private capacity, by the principal author of this paper, a retired ILO official who serves as the principal AOS resource person on ILO and IMO maritime conventions, the consolidated Maritime Labor Convention and its maritime security provisions, social protection, labor relations, tripartism, freedom of association and collective bargaining.

Since the program was launched, it is estimated to have reached at least half a million seafarers. Government agencies which have actively participated in the dialogue program are POEA and OWWA, while in the private sector the most active are the ITF, non-government organizations like the All Christian People of the Sea and Seafarers Organization of the Philippines (ACPOSSOP), Seamen's Wives Association of the Philippines Inc. (SWAPI), and other local unions and private action groups. Of course, AOS faculty volunteers and organizers are coordinating the year-round programs. Other resource persons come from law firms, trade unions and maritime officers, who are school faculty members.

In the conduct of the paralegal seminars in the early years, the ITF and other local unions lent support. The POEA and OWWA, with their regional offices, also provided the program with resource persons.

2.   *Dialogues-Caucuses in Seafarer "Centers"*

Apart from the school-based dialogues-consultations, the AOS also organizes further dialogues and caucuses among seafarers who form or gather themselves in centers based in these schools, trade union offices and some NGOs.

These dialogues-caucuses seek to explore or develop institutional mechanisms for further seafarer consultations and information exchanges, a natural and logical offshoot of the body of knowledge gained from the school-based dialogues-consultations. In short, it is a means of maintaining communication between and among seafarers in order to exchange views, observations and experiences in the maritime industry. It is also an instrument to build a community of seafarers based

on Christian values as a way-of- life and to keep advancing the decent work agenda for better quality of life. This could serve as consensus-building in improving policies, practices and programs.

The center-based activity was initiated by the authors in 2005 following the launching by AOS of the Stella Maris Center (SMC) for seafarers. This is now being pilot tested in other centers and informal groups. This time, the discussions are at the level of the returning seafarers **w**ho are awaiting redeployment while residing at the SMC. The discussions on values and decent work are at the grassroots level of seafarers, from various types and ranks of work, involving unionized or non-unionized seafarers.

The dialogues-caucuses are outreach services outside of the academe. Aside from those held at the SMC, there is an ongoing pilot testing of the program at Asilo St Vincent de Paul, an orphanage which has skills training programs and a dormitory for sea- and land-based OFWs.

One outcome of the dialogues-caucuses is the formation of "Social Dialogue Caucuses of Independent Seafarers", some of which are formed and affiliated with the ACPOSSOP. An on-going initiative is being formed for a fishermen's group. This is focused on the social dialogue on the ILO's Work on Fishing Convention, which was also discussed in the center-based caucuses.

The information exchanges are on values, decent work, various maritime issues, culture/religion, international/ASEAN maritime security, trade unionism, labor relations and other related work concerns. Participants range from ordinary seaman to officers coming from various schools and training centers, and with affiliations with various trade unions and manning agencies/shipping lines.

The way-of-life concept being shaped and developed for the seafarers is anchored on faith-based values that include perspective on life's purpose and relevance, personal character and spiritual values. The concept inculcates the culture of helping each other in the enforcement of standards, protecting one another and strengthening of faith. These have inspired norms and agreements to support and achieve the decent work agenda - by promoting maritime security, work standards, fundamental rights, quality of employment, social protection and quality policies.

A major issue for the partners in the social dialogue is the need to strengthen new NGOs or labor organizations like the ACPOSSOP, which was formed under the auspices of AOS and which has developed into a full-blown organization. The organization has sprung from the caucus of independent seafarers and fishermen, who felt marginalized and not covered by the big trade unions in the maritime sector.

Those who are already members of other trade unions are welcome to join as supporters of the movement to cultivate values and promote decent work. Of course, non-union members are encouraged to join as regular and active members. The legitimacy of the group has been reinforced by the accreditation of the ACPOSSOP by the Labor Department in 2007. The new organization tries to bind together independent seafarers and fishermen who are marginalized and unorganized.

Strengthening of Communication and Information Exchange

AOS and its volunteers seek to increase the multiplier impact of the dialogues-consultations and dialogues-caucuses. One way to do this is to strengthen seafarer advocacies at sea through the use of the ISAN

(International Seafarers' Assistance Network) project (www.seafarerhelp.org), which makes available free telephone communications for seafarer issues and problems. Another way is through the wider use of projects and programs, including studies, on the decent work agenda of the ILO, ITF, AOS and the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

Also, there are efforts to disseminate information through newsletters, e.g., *Dyaryo Marinero*, the PR TOPNET and the *Dyaryo Arkipelago* of ACPOSSOP for seafarers and fishermen advocacies. The *Dyaryo Marinero* has promoted materials on social dialogue and advocacies through the paralegal seminars and caucuses. It has also initiated one project to create awareness through a directory of citations for those who help in the dialogue process as voted upon by the participants and institutions involved in the seminars, dialogues and caucuses in the centers. The list of personalities and institutions is called the "*Order of the Golden Light of the Sea*" (Annex C).

Consensus-Building and eEcumenism

Although a worldwide Catholic advocacy group, the AOS openly espouses ecumenism or unity of all faiths on value formation. It also tries to build, not impose, consensus, which is the essence of the "sectoral social dialogue" process.

Thus, on culture and religion, the faith-based approach **is** tempered with an open ecumenical information exchange and mutual understanding to adjust to the diversity of races and religions that form shipping crews. AOS has taken into consideration the challenge of unity in Asean diversity. It respects the Muslim culture of Indonesia and Malaysia**;** the Buddhist religion of Thailand, Laos and Myanmar**;** the eclectic ideology in

Singapore; Catholicism and other denominations in the Philippines and Vietnam, and the various faiths and cultures in the Asean and outside.

Replicability in the ASEAN

Are the dialogues-consultations and dialogues-caucuses replicable in the ASEAN?

They are replicable, but organizational formats will naturally vary from country to country. The important things to remember are the dialogue essence of the program; the partnership nature of the conduct of the program; the focus on value formation and decent work agenda, and the spirit of tolerance and ecumenism among the actors.

In the ASEAN countries, some AOS centers may wish to adopt similar initiatives if the program is not yet in place. This is not difficult given the existing AOS centers and facilities in the region, such as, the AOS Seafarers Center in Jakarta and AOS Chaplaincy in Cilacap in Indonesia; AOS Stella Maris Centers in Phuket, Songkhla, and Sriracha in Thailand; AOS Chaplaincy in Singapore and AOS Chaplaincy in Port Kelang, Malaysia. The program or concept can also be extended to non-AOS centers and chaplaincies or missions in other ASEAN countries like Vietnam, Cambodia and Myanmar. In the Philippines, the AOS SMC services in Manila, Cebu and Davao can be extended to Batangas, Cagayan de Oro, Iligan, Iloilo, Maasin, Tagbilaran, General Santos and San Fernando (La Union).

In the ASEAN itself, seafarer advocacy can be advanced through the concept of social dialogue under the non-binding multilateral framework for the ILO's decent work agenda, which requires a coordinated national approach in promoting international standards, guidelines and best practices in labor migration/integration, including labor market, labor/ human rights, labor standards, investments/remittances, social protection, skills development, etc.

Some ASEAN countries have, in fact, already adopted frameworks and modalities to achieve ILO's decent work agenda, e.g., Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs) for the Philippines, Indonesia, and Vietnam, and National Plans for Action for Decent Work (NPADWs) for Indonesia and Thailand. In this connection, AOS can be enlisted to share its experiences in awareness raising and lend direct/ indirect support in setting up innovative labor education programs such as the sectoral social dialogue described above.

Conclusion

The AOS dialogues-consultations and dialogues-caucuses show the possibilities on how to advance labor education in the seafaring and possibly other industries. It also shows that labor education need not be a question of labor education conducted by labor educators, meaning labor leaders or organizers. It can be a multi-sectoral partnership and the content can be empowering to the seafarers as well as to the participating dialogue/resource partners.

Further, the sectoral social dialogues can graduate into social caucuses of the poor and marginalized, in order to sustain activities for the promotion of positive values and decent work.

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Annex A

Brief Notes on ILO/IMO Conventions Dealing with Seafarers

Isabelo Samonte
Retired ILO officer and AOS volunteer faculty

Backgrounder on the ILO

The Commission on International Labour Legislation of Paris Peace Conference in 1919 recommended the creation of ILO. In 1946, the ILO became the first UN specialized agency. It has a tripartite structure that promotes social justice and better living conditions. One of the priority focus of ILO for ten years now is the Decent Work Agenda. The ILO has an International Labour Conference (ILC) held yearly in Geneva with tripartite delegations. The ILC elects the members of an executive council, the Governing Body that meets 2-3 times a year in Geneva. The ILO has a permanent secretariat, International Labour Office (ILO) with headquarters in Geneva headed by a Director General. It has regional, sub-regional, and country offices.

The ILO Governing Body is being advised by a Joint Maritime Commission. This Commission is involved in the ILO's consolidation of 60 or more maritime labour Conventions and Recommendations into one framework instrument, the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC). The MLC has been adopted and enforced and awaiting ratification from various countries.

The ILO has a maritime team that looks after programs on the industries that include shipping, fishing, ports and inland waterways transport. ILO's centerpiece program now even in maritime deals on decent and

productive work. Besides reports and studies and technical services, ILO's maritime activities are on promoting standards.

On IMO and other organizations

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) is a UN agency on the maritime industry based in London. It has a presence in the Philippines which looks after some of the countries in the Far East and Southeast Asian region.

The International Transport Workers Federation (ITF) based in London is an international federation of unions that looks after the seafarers.

The Apostleship of the Sea (AOS) is a Vatican based international organization with 300 centers in about 100 countries. AOS is a founding member of the International Christian Maritime Association (ICMA).

The IMO Conventions

Presently, one of the most relevant IMO conventions is the Standard of Training Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers more known as STCW. Among the more significant international standards or conventions are: Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), Prevention of Collisions at Sea (COLREG), Prevention of Pollution from Ship (MARPOL), Safe load limit of ships (Load Lines), On safe carriage (Safe containers), International Maritime Satellite Org. (INMARSAT), Search and Rescue Operation (Maritime SAR) and the water ballast convention. The most recent requirement of IMO implemented on July 1, 2004 was the International Ship Port Facility Security Code (ISPS Code) in addition to the International Security Management Code (ISM Code).

ILO Conventions and Recommendations

*I*n addition to the core conventions on fundamental rights, some of the more important ILO Conventions and Recommendations (some also reflected in the MLC) are:

1. **General**
    C 147 Merchant Shipping (Minimum Standards)(1976)
    C 108   Seafarers' Identity Documents (1958)
    C 145 Continuity of Employment (Seafarers)(1976)
    R 154 Continuity of Employment (Seafarers) (1976)
    C 178   Labour Inspection (Seafarers) (1996)

2. **Entry/Admission to Employment**
    C 58   Minimum Age (Sea) (Revised) (1936)
    C 138   Minimum Age (1973)
    C 182   Worst form of Child Labour
    C 16   Med. Exam of young persons (sea) (1921)
    C 73   Med. Exam (Seafarers) (1946)
    C   9   Placing of Seamen (1920)
     C 179   Recruitment and Placement of Seafarers (1996)
    C 22   Seamen's Articles of Agreement (1926)

3. **Training**
    R 137   Vocational Training (Seafarers)(1970)
    R 139   Employment of Seafarers (1970)

4. **Competencies**
    C 53   Officers' Competency Certificates (1936)
    C 69   Certification of Ships' Cooks (1946)
    C 74   Certification of Able Seamen (1946)

5. Employment Conditions

C 180   Seafarers' Hours of Work, Manning of Ships (1996)

R 187   Seafarers' Wages, Hours of Work, Manning of Ships(1996)

C 91   Paid Vacations (Seafarers)(1949)

C 146   Seafarers' Annual Leave with Pay (1976)

C 23   Repatriation of Seamen (1926)

R 27   Repatriation (Ship Masters and Apprentices) (1926)

C 166   Repatriation of Seafarers (Revised)(1987)

R 174   Repatriation of Seafarers (1987)

6. Safety, Health & Welfare

C 68   Food and Catering (Ships' Crews)(1946)

C 92   Accommodations of Crews (Revised)(1949)

C 133   Accommodations of Crews (Suppl. Provisions)(1970)

R 140   Crew Accommodation (Air Conditioning)(1970)

R 141   Crew Accommodation (Noise Control)(1970)

C 134   Prevention of Accidents (Seafarers)(1970)

R 142   Prevention of Accidents (Seafarers)(1970)

C 163   Seafarers' Welfare (1987)

R 48   Seamen's Welfare in Ports (1936)

C 164   Health Protection and Med. Care (Seafarers)(1987)

R 106   Medical Advice at Sea (1958)

7. Social Security

C 8   Unemployment Indemnity (Shipwreck) (1920)

R 10   Unemployment Insurance (Seamen) (1920)

C   55   Shipowners' Liability (Sick and Injured Seamen) (1936)
C   56   Sickness Insurance (Sea) (1936)
C 165   Social Security (Seafarers)(1987)
C   71   Seafarers' Pensions (1946)

It would be noteworthy to look at the implementation of some of the ratified conventions like ILO Conventions No. 87 and No. 98 on freedom of association, protection of the right to organize and the right to organize for collective bargaining. Also worth looking into are the maritime conventions on recruitment/placement, repatriation, competencies, minimum age, and social security.

Annex B

P artial list of schools that participated in para-legal and value formation seminars organized by the Apostleship of the Sea (AOS)

- Philippine Merchant Marine Academy (PMMA),Zambales
- Maritime Academy for Asia and Pacific (MAAP), Bataan
- Philippine Maritime Institute (PMI), Manila
- Philippine Maritime Institute (PMI), Quezon City
- Naval Architecture and Maritime Educational Institution (NAMEI) Manila
- Technological Institute of the Philippines (TIP), Manila
- Technological Institute of the Philippines (TIP), Quezon City
- Asian Institute of Maritime Studies (AIMS), Manila
- PHILSIN Colleges Foundation, Manila
- West Bay College, Muntinglupa City
- University of Perpetual Help (UPH), Las Pinas City
- University of Perpetual Help (UPH), Binan, Laguna

- Fatima University (FU), Valenzuela City
- Pangasinan Merchant Marine Academy (PAMMA), Dagupan City
- Lyceum of Batangas, Batangas City
- Pangasinan College of Science and Technology (PCST), Calasiao, Pangasinan
- International Colleges of Asia, Dagupan City
- Pan-Pacific University of Northern Philippines (PUNP), Urdaneta City
- Polytechnic University of La Union, Agoo, La Union
- Northern Luzon Colleges, San Fernando, La Union
- Manuel Enverga University, Lucena City
- Inter-Global Colleges Foundation, Lucena City
- Mariners Polytechnic Colleges Foundation, Baras, Metro Naga, Cam. Sur
- Mariners Polytechnic Colleges Foundation, Rawis, Legaspi City
- Bicol Merchant Marine College, Sorsogon
- University of Cebu, Cebu City
- Holy Cross Colleges, Davao City

Annex C

"The Order of the Golden Light of the Sea"
(Outstanding personalities who participated in the seminars and caucuses on institutions conducted by the *Dyaryo Marinero*)

- Late DFA Secretary Blas F. Ople, former Labor Minister, Constitutional Commissioner, Senator, Senate President Pro-Tempore and Senate President; Past President of ILO's International Labour Conference in Geneva
- Senator Ramon B. Magsaysay Jr.
- Rev. Fr. Savino Bernardi, CS, (Scalabrinian), Director/ Chaplain, Apostleship of the Sea (AOS)Manila

- Bro. Alfonso "Dodong" de Castro, Value Formator, President, All Christian People of the Sea and Seafarers Organization of the Philippines (ACPOSSOP)
- Rev. Fr. Jack Walsh, (Maryknoll), Director/Chaplain, Apostelship of the Sea (AOS) Philippines & AOS Davao
- Rev. Fr. Roland Doriol, SJ (Jesuit), Former Director/ Chaplain, Apostleship of the Sea (AOS) Cebu
- Sister Maruja S. Padre Juan, MSCS, Former Assistant Directress, Apostleship of the Sea (AOS) Manila; NGO Officer in Mexico and India
- Ms. Minda O. Gomez, NCR President, Seamen's Wives Association of the Philippines, Inc. (SWAPI), Vice-President, Seamen's Wives Foundation, Inc. (SWIF)
- Late RP Ambassador to Laos, Mario I. Galman, former Senior Programme and Information Officer, ILO Manila.
- Sister Shirley Torrente, (SGSP), Former Assistant Directress, Apostleship of the Sea (AOS)Manila
- Atty. Dennis R. Gorecho, Sapalo, Velez, Bundang & Bulilan Law Offices, Manila
- Sister Lucita "Lou" Saligumba, (SGSP), Assistant Directress, Apostleship of the Sea (AOS) Manila
- Ms. Trelly Mayor, former Education Officer, Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA)
- Mr. Marvin Caitas, former staff, Apostleship of the Sea (AOS) Manila

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Prof. Chan Lean Heng is a popular educator and an Associate Professor at the School of Social Sciences in University Sains of Malaysia in Penang. Her areas of concern and engagement are transformative change, gender, labor and capacity building for sustainable participatory development. She is particularly passionate about making accessible and comprehensible knowledge for transformative action to the non-academic community. She has been and is actively engaged in participatory research, and participatory training with various grassroots, local, regional and international organizations. Currently her educational work includes education for sustainable development for/with UNESCO. Apart from her own work with women and workers as well as areas relating to community/popular education and occupational social work, she has undertaken research consultancies for the Commonwealth Foundation, ActionAid-UK, UN-ESCAP, UNESCO, ICAE, HIVOS and the World Bank.

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Hari Nugroho is a lecturer of *Employment and Industrial Sociology* at the Department of Sociology, University of Indonesia and the head of LabSosio Centre for Sociological Studies. He got his MA in Development Studies from the Institute of Social Studies, The Netherlands with specialization on human labor market and local social political changes on workers' life. His recent articles as co-author are *The Flexibility Regime and Organised Labour: The Experience of Indonesia* and *Fleksibilitas Pasar Kerja dan Tanggung Jawab Negara (Labour Market Flexibility and the State's Responsibility) (2007).* A paper he wrote entitled, *Undermining Power: The Impact of Labour Market Flexibility and Political Decentralization on Industrial Workers in Indonesia* (2007) was also presented at the 8th Asia Pacific Sociological Association Conference in Penang, Malaysia.

Dr. Ofreneo is an academic - professor and chair of the Department of Women and Development Studies, College of Social Work and Community Development, University of the Philippines, Diliman. She has published many books and articles on globalization, women and work, informal economy, social protection, debt and poverty, economic empowerment, gender mainstreaming, gender and trade, etc. She is also an advocate working with grassroots women's organizations, and currently the Regional Coordinator of Homenet Southeast Asia, a national networks of home-based workers in the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, and Laos.

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Mr. Mohamed Shafie Bp Mammal is the President of the Union Network International. Malaysian Liaison Council (UNI-MLC). He is also the Secretary General of the ASEAN Service Employees Trade Union Council (ASETUC). He holds a Diploma in Public Administration from the Institut Teknologi MARA and had attended courses related to trade union, industrial relations and labor. His vast experience in management of trade unions has given him national and state awards, postings in private and public sector, and be part of investment promotion and business teams in South Africa, India, Thailand, Philippines, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Ghana, Vietnam, Timor Leste, USA and Japan.

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