

The WDP: Challenges and Growth, 1994 - 1997

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I would like to share some issues and perspectives on the challenges experienced by the Women and Development Program during my term as a Coordinator, by raising the questions we as a collective all tried to answer.

What's in a name?

Women and Development (WAD) versus Gender and Development (GAD).

It was in September 1994 that we thought of renaming the Program: whether it would be Gender & Development or to maintain the same title, Women & Development. The "naming" has some implications. If you say **Gender and Development**, it implies giving equal importance to both women and men in terms of opportunities and studies. If you say **Women and Development**, it implies giving primary space or opportunities for women. Men are welcome, but not perhaps in such great number that they will drown out the voices of women.

In this debate on naming the Program, we realized that it is also laden with meaning and power. So, we thought we should decide in favor of women and retain the name, ***Women and Development Program***.

Who to teach?

Stemming from our target that we give space for women, we were able to encourage women participants from different sectors: women NGOs, people's organizations, women from the funding agencies (e.g., USAID, AIDAB, UNDP), women of different nationalities (e.g., Nepalese, Japanese, Vietnamese, Swiss students). The enrolment increased from 38 students to the current 50 plus majors.

Service students from other colleges also increased.

We have attempted to democratize learning through an open admission policy based on participants' needs and through the distance education program. We have service students in Baguio and Davao. Scholarships were provided to allow women to be able to afford the cost of a graduate education under the Women & Development Program.

We held a participatory curriculum review, together with the students and alumni in October 1994. Based on the suggestions to make the courses career- and skills-oriented, we were able to institute additional courses along this line. Courses like WD 231 (Gender-responsive Planning & Administration), WD 291 (Women and Development Research), WD 221 (Feminist Perspectives & Strategies in Organizing) are skills-oriented and relevant to the particular needs of development workers in women & development, social work and community development.

We have been very particular of our pedagogy which is feminist, both in theory and practice. We are conscious of the changing knowledge paradigms based on the ongoing analysis of social realities and the changes brought by local and international developments.

The Program has also tried to develop teaching materials reflective of our socio-cultural realities. The Distance Education modules are examples of these. The participants' theses/papers which tackled "cutting edge" issues relevant to women's lives and concerns are also worth mentioning. Topics such as incest, childcare, romantic love

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state of knowledge on women in the Philippines, the Ayta women in the context of Pinatubo disaster, women's ways of knowing, childcare, women in forestry, are among the contributions of students in knowledge-building.

At the same time, the faculty members and some students were able to pursue researches based on two major tracks - **on political economy** (e.g., industrial restructuring, globalization) and, **on sexuality & violence against women (VAW)**.

We have come up with major publications - the CSWCD update focusing on women and the UNDP publication which is a review of literature on Women/Gender issues in the Philippines (*A Woman's Work is Never Done, 1996*).

Who will teach?

The WDP has been existing with a limited pool of faculty with items. I was the first one to have a faculty item. Then, during my term Judy and Del were able to get faculty items. It took a long while before our faculty members had their regular items. The WDP has relied on affiliate faculty from the CD department. Hopefully, we will become a Department soon given our increased pool of faculty members and by having more regular faculty items to be able to respond to the expanding enrollment both in residential and distance education modes.

It is sad that despite the government circular on the Gender and Development (GAD) budget indicating that 5 percent of the U.P. Diliman budget will be allotted to GAD, the WDP budget is only P 820,000, including our salaries. This is just .30 percent of the 1997 U.P. Diliman budget which is P613 million.

How to teach?

This is one of our major concerns in the Program. The feminist pedagogy is

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supposed to be interactive, dialogic and based on experience. Getting women's voices out in the open and respecting those voices is part of the pedagogy.

Feminist pedagogy may not be compatible with distance education (DE) mode. But we now see a compromise through a face to face interactive tutorials as part of (DE).

We experimented on team teaching as well as different styles in handling classes. We practise pluralism and we have respect for differences in our pedagogy. We are sensitive to the fact that we come from various persuasions and have different teaching styles.

We did experience conflicts and problems but we recognize that it is part of a dynamic and evolving discipline like women's studies. We respect difference with certain bottom lines - we want the learning situation to always be empowering.

With whom and for whom?

We started from our own base here at CSWCD. We conducted gender awareness training in July 1995. In August 1995, we had a Trainors' Training on Gender and Development.

We also systematized fieldwork. We tried to reach out to the U.P. community through the Center for Women's Studies. We strengthened our links with the groups involved in the women's movement. One of the WDP's priority concerns is *violence against women* so, students were assigned to NGOs with the same thrust: the Women's Crisis Center, the Women's Legal Bureau, Arugaan. In the case of grassroots organizations, links with KMK, Urban Poor Associates, PATAMABA, Likhaan, among others, were maintained.

We have conducted fora which focused on various topics:

>incest (1994);

>gender issues among indigenous women; GATT & women's issues; pre and post Beijing discussions (1995);

>Capturing Women's Voices; Tracing Women's Ways of Knowing; Feminist Theorizing; Women & Globalization, Women in the Philippine Revolution; Researching Rape; Post-colonial Studies; Philippine Women's Movements (1996).

In 1997, we had a very interesting forum with Dr. Sylvia Estrada-Claudio, our newest faculty recruit, who is both a Ph.D. and a medical doctor, on her dissertation entitled "Sekswalidad, Pagkababae at Pagkatao." We did have other fora on reproductive rights, women and globalization, among others, in the same year.

At the same time, we managed to have extension classes with the NCRFW staff. **We are very much in touch with NGOs, with the international community, by sending delegates to the international conference on women's studies, the Beijing Conference, and still, we remain very close to the grassroots women within the broad spectrum of the women's movement.**

