

CANADA FUND PROJECT BRIEF

1. Project Title : Panaghoy: A Cry for Justice
2. Location : Metro Manila
3. Project Sector : Strengthening civil society
Human rights
4. Budget : Php 1,218,700.00
5. Implementing Organization : Center for Women's Resources

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6. Duration : March 24, 2008 - April 30, 2009
7. Project Description :

The "Panaghoy" project is the CWR's support for the women victims of human rights violations who are seeking for redress. The venues for redress will be in two forms: (1) the capacity of women to become advocates themselves; (2) the available measures and laws of society that should be maximized by women to their advantage.

Compared to men, women victims of human rights violations are more vulnerable to various forms of abuses. Rape as a form of torture is common. There are documented cases that wives, sisters, and/or daughters of detained male activists are also arrested, harassed, and raped to break the activists' spirits and forced them to provide information or confess to a crime.

The women victims need to release their feeling of injustice and distress. They should venues where they can assert their democratic rights and have justice. This can only happen when the women victims realize their capacity as a formidable pressure group for the advocacy, promotion and protection of human rights issues. In this line, there is a need to enhance the capacity of the women (victims and/or vulnerable individual or group) through skills training and advocacy work. At the same time, a setting for redress still needs to be established - from a systematic databank of cases to the advocacy or information dissemination.

The "Panaghoy" project generally aims to enhance the capacity of women victims in Central Luzon, Southern Luzon and Eastern Visayas. These are among the areas in the country where the women are believed to be most vulnerable to human rights violations at present due to results and/or implications of armed conflicts.

The project will have the following components:

A. Core strategy:

Capacity building. Awareness raising and skills development are contributory to the empowerment of women. Building and enhancing women's fullest potential would result to a formidable force that will advance the call for respect for human and women's rights. The project would then set capacity building as its core component. Module design and development on social disaster management, documentation, and standard issues of the day will be produced. Training/seminars will be conducted on: human rights, women's rights, VAW (violence against women), basic women's orientation, history of women's oppression and other orientation activities relevant to the situation and condition of the beneficiaries.

The women will also be provided with para-legal training and para-counseling to become peer counselors for the other victims of human rights violations. As part of the para-counseling training, they will be introduced to the different laws available to them (e.g. writ of habeas corpus, writ of amparo). To enhance their potential as advocates, skills training on leadership and public speaking will be conducted. In this way, their skill to lobby for a legislative agenda will be developed.

Awareness Campaign and Monitoring. There are available venues for redress that women can make use of in seeking justice and for upholding their democratic rights. These are the laws enacted like the writ of amparo and the imposition of women's desk in each barangay under the GAD (gender and development) program of the local government. However, these measures are not well-disseminated and implemented. Thus, it is imperative to let the women know of these measures so that they could monitor and insist on their implementation.

B. Support Strategies

Databank on cases of women-victims of political repression. A gender-disaggregated documentation of data on human rights violation will be established so as to consolidate the information about victimization of women. The consolidated data will serve as the measure to know the necessary steps for the education and advocacy work. These will also help in determining the needs of the women victims and the kind of appropriate services that shall be provided for them. Acquisition of relevant reference materials will also be done. The established databank will serve as the source of a systematic file for easier acquisition of documents when needed.

Network building. Primarily, the CWR will maximize its program on AWE (Advocacy for Women Empowerment). The AWE program has been created by CWR since 2006, aiming to group together the professionals and young women who are supportive of the women's cause. The project will draw in professionals – primarily women in the legal, medical and psychological fields – as a support group for the women victims. They will be encouraged to get involved not only as counsels or counselors but also as provider of para-legal and para-counseling training / services in two levels: first, for the women-victims themselves and second, for women organizers and leaders who are also threatened by human rights violations. At the same time, they will also be invited to become supporters and advocates on the general campaign against all forms of human rights violations.

Information and advocacy for supporters. The project intends to solicit support from the public to have an expansive social pressure on the issue of human rights violations. To generate such support, awareness raising through information dissemination and campaign work will be an important component of the project. This will include packaging of human rights data gathered for dissemination in the media and other communication outlets; publication of data interviews and experiences of women victims; and organizing activities for victims (women, widows and orphans) such as soiree, forum, and a cultural show.

Coordination with local government officials and public agencies. Part of generating support would be getting the commitment of local government officials and public agencies. The CWR will maintain and sustain existing links with the government's Commission on Human Rights and the Department of Social Welfare and Development. In addition, it will coordinate with the women's desks of hospitals, and if and when necessary, the Philippine National Police and Armed Forces of the Philippines.

The CWR will offer training and orientation to government personnel to encourage them to establish a women's desk in their respective offices. To those who have already established women's desks, the CWR will offer training / seminar on, among others, basic human rights orientation, basic women's orientation and handling of cases on violence against women and children. Part of the project will be the lobbying to push for a formulation of a national plan or legislative agenda for the protection of and indemnification for victims of human rights violations.

8. Beneficiaries : 300 female, 300 children

9. Expected Results :

- For wider dissemination and public awareness:
 - publication of the consolidated data: journal
 - poster or simple primer on "Know Your Rights"
 - writing of feature articles for media dissemination
 - video production on the human rights situation of women
 - soiree or cultural show
 - forum
- A systematic databank on women human rights victims
- Counseling/ para-counseling for the victims; socio-cultural activities organized as venue for redress
- Training and seminars on human rights advocacy are conducted and attended warmly by the residents – especially women - in communities.
- Women from the different profession and the studentry had become advocates for human and women rights