

Acting Together: An Assessment of the Philippine Official Development Assistance GAD Network¹

31 July 2010

The Official Development Assistance Gender and Development (ODA-GAD) Network is an informal group that was formed in 2002 by gender and development (GAD) focal persons from bilateral and multilateral development agencies. Over the past eight years, the network has embarked on several initiatives, some with far-reaching application, while others had more immediate effects.

In 2009, the network agreed to review its various efforts. The assessment aims to take stock of the progress and/or results achieved by the various initiatives of the network, inform the network's future work planning, and identify areas for improvement. To achieve these, an initial list of initiatives was drawn up. This was vetted with the network members. The list was expanded as additional information was provided by the members. This paper presents the major findings of the study and explores areas for action and improvement.

HISTORY AND BACKGROUND²

Objectives and Focus

The network was founded to serve as a forum for sharing information and experiences and useful practices on gender and development. It would also be a forum for exploring possible collaboration and enhancing complementation of Official Development Assistance (ODA) programs. These objectives would later be expanded to include development of capacities of network members to apply the tools that it would develop.

One focus of the network was compliance with the provisions of Republic Act (RA) 7192 (otherwise known as the Women in Development and Nation Building Act, 1991) regarding ODA funds. Another area of interest is support for gender equality programming and mainstreaming efforts of members. There were likewise thematic discussions on emerging gender equality issues and current issues that consume the interest of members, such as gender and local governance, judicial reform, Mindanao programming, violence against women [VAW], reproductive health, economic empowerment, environment, among others. Lastly, the network discussed strategies on influencing major development agenda or events, such as the Philippine Development Forum.

¹ This is a revised version of a paper prepared by Jeanne Frances I. Illo, PCCO-CIDA Gender Equality Adviser, as a commitment of the Canadian International Development Agency (Manila) to the ODA-GAD Network, dated 13 July 2010. The author acknowledges inputs from Network members during regular meetings and specific inputs from AusAID, CIDA, GTZ, NEDA, UNFPA, USAID, and Romina Sta. Clara, formerly of the European Commission. For a List of Acronyms, see last page of the paper.

² This section is based on a brief history of the network that was written by Myrna Jarillas, CIDA (Manila) Senior Program Officer, in February 2006.

Membership

In January 2002, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) convened a meeting of donors to establish consensus on the usefulness of an informal network on Gender Equality. This meeting was attended by eight agencies that included four bilateral (the United States Agency for International Development [USAID], Japan International Cooperation Agency [JICA], Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency [SIDA], CIDA) and four multilateral (the World Bank [WB], United Nations Children's Fund [UNICEF], United Nations Development Fund for Women [UNIFEM], and United Nations Population Fund [UNFPA]). Among these pioneers were three former National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW; now known as the Philippine Commission on Women, or PCW) officers: Ermelita Valdeavilla (then with UNIFEM), Mayvelyn Bartolome-Remigio (then with UNICEF), and Myrna Jarillas (CIDA). The group also included a male member, Jose Tiburcio Nicolas (WB), who would be pivotal to pushing and supporting earlier efforts of the network.

The first meeting agreed to establish a network and to extend invitation to other donors, including international non-government organizations (NGOs) such as the Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO). On the second meeting two other multilateral agencies, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the International Labor Organization (ILO), joined the group. Several others have since joined the network, which now lists some twenty member organizations.

In the past five years, the agencies that have been most consistent in their participation are four UN agencies (ILO, UNICEF, UNIFEM, and UNFPA), CIDA, and the European Commission (EC). Other active members include ADB, Spanish Agency for International Cooperation and Development (AECID), Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), German Technical Cooperation (GTZ), JICA, USAID, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNAIDS, and UN Habitat. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Korean International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), New Zealand Aid Agency (NZAid), WB, and World Health Organization (WHO)-Philippines sometimes participated in network meetings or activities. The Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) has also attended a few meetings. The network has always been dependent on the commitment of both agencies and their GAD focal persons. The agencies have to allow their GAD officers to go to network meetings and to commit staff time and, in some cases, financial resources. In some cases, the GAD focal persons needed to lobby their agency heads for continued participation in the network and support to initiatives, such as the network statement to the Philippine Development Forum.

Almost from the beginning, the donor member organizations of the network have been joined by two government agencies that are mandated to promote gender equality and women empowerment. Under RA 7192 and, more recently, the Magna Carta of Women (RA 9710, 2009), NCRFW has the primary responsibility of implementing the government's GAD policy, including joint oversight with the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) and the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) for the domestic gender budget policy. Meanwhile, NEDA is responsible for the implementation of the ODA gender budget policy.

Operational arrangements

Chairing and hosting of subsequent meetings of the network are done on a rotation basis. Members will also take turns serving as network Secretariat and Convenor. For continuity and to ensure

documentation and tracking of agreements, term will be for at least one year. The first convenor was CIDA. Subsequently, three multilateral agencies have served as Secretariat. The first was WB, which was represented then by J.T. Nicolas. (Upon his departure in 2005, WB named Maria Loreto Padua as his replacement.) Holding the post from 2001 to 2005, WB also funded several network activities. Since 2006, the UN Gender Mainstreaming Committee (GMC) has been Convenor and Secretariat. Two consecutive GMC chairs—UNICEF (Nicholas K. Alipui) and ILO (Linda Wirth)—have served as Convenors and their respective agencies, the network Secretariat.³ During the 13 July 2010 Network meeting, the members agreed for AusAID to be the next Convenor. For the next two years, therefore, AusAID would serve as the Network Convenor and Secretariat.

INITIATIVES AND RESULTS

Since its formation in 2001, the ODA-GAD Network had two major collaborative projects, and several regular activities. The harmonization of GAD checklists of the member organizations was one; the other was the Joint Country Gender Assessment in 2007-2008. Its regular or periodic activities involved the monitoring and assessment of GAD initiatives of ODA agencies, advocacy with the Philippine Development Forum (PDF), and the conduct of learning sessions.

Harmonizing GAD Guidelines and Checklists

Most donor agencies have a Gender Equality or Gender Equity Policy, which calls for the integration of gender concerns in development assistance. The implementation of the policy is generally guided by gender checklists, both generic and sector- or activity-specific. In mid-2003, the network members decided to do something about the proliferation of checklists. NEDA offered to anchor the activity, UNDP to fund the technical assistance, and all the members to contribute. The effort to harmonize these checklists resulted in the development of the Philippine Harmonized Gender and Development Guidelines.⁴ This predated the 2005 Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Paris Declaration, which called for harmonization and aid coordination.

Development of the Guidelines

The harmonization of GAD checklists project began in September 2003 under the leadership of NEDA, specifically Erlinda M. Capones, Director of the Social Development Staff (SDS).⁵ NCRFW, ADB, AusAID, CIDA, EC, JICA, WB, the UN Country Team (specifically, ILO, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, and WHO), and VSO-Philippines were actively involved in designing the project, vetting several draft versions,⁶ and pretesting the semifinal draft in February 2004. The UNDP provided a small

³ Providing key Secretariat support for their respective agencies were Grace Agcaoili (UNICEF) and Ana Valencia (ILO).

⁴ NEDA, NCRFW, ODA-GAD Network, 2004, *Harmonized Gender and Development Guidelines for Project Development, Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation* (Manila: NEDA). A second edition of the Guidelines was published in 2007. An expanded version was printed in 2009.

⁵ She would be ably assisted by SDS staff, including Allan O. Millar, Rhoda C. Tiongson, and, more recently, Aleli Joy N. Cortez.

⁶ Singled out by NEDA to have provided specific contributions during the preparation and finalization of the guidelines were J.T. Nicolas (WB), Romina Sta. Clara (EC), and Suzanne Wendt (ADB).

grant to NEDA to hire a local consultant (Jeanne Frances I. Illo),⁷ while ADB funded the pretest workshop and the printing of the Guidelines. After the ADB printing, EC reproduced the CD version of the Guidelines.

After almost two years of applying the Guidelines, NEDA, PCW and the network reviewed it, and suggested ways to improve and make it more user-friendly. The original version was a one-volume publication that consisted of three parts: generic guidelines for project or program identification, design and formulation; sector-sector design checklists; and checklists for project and program implementation, management, monitoring and evaluation (PIMME). NEDA and the network agreed on the separate GAD checklists for eight sectors or subsectors:

- Agriculture
- Natural resources management
- Infrastructure
- Private sector development
- Social sectors (4): education, health, housing and settlement, and women in areas under conflict

The second edition was packaged differently, with the first part serving as the main text, and the PIMME and the various sector-specific design checklists as separate pullouts. Moreover, three new sectors were added:

- Justice
- Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)
- Microfinance

The selection of the new checklists was guided by the following considerations: current and growing donor and government interest in funding justice reform, expanding ICT sector and large number of ICT projects, and huge investments in microfinance projects that both government and ODA donors touted as their gender project.

NEDA anchored these efforts to update and expand the Guidelines again – this time with a grant from ADB. The grant (Improving Project Quality at Entry [Gender]) was part of the ADB’s Harmonization and Managing for Results Technical Assistance to the Philippine government. Although the Guidelines could be downloaded from the NEDA website, there was a strong demand for the publication. The 2,000 print and 500 CD copies proved to be insufficient, and, in early 2009, NEDA received a grant from AusAID to reprint 2000 copies of the Guidelines. This recent version included three new checklists that were developed by ILO for the labor and employment sector. These are:

- Decent Work Labor and Employment
- Child labor
- Migration

⁷ At that time, J.F.I. Illo was the Coordinator of the Women’s Studies Program of the Institute of Philippine Culture, Ateneo de Manila University. She was assisted by Frances Chariza I. de los Trino. J.F.I. Illo would also be involved in the revisions of the Guidelines in 2007 and 2009.

Application of the Guidelines

Since the adoption by the Philippine government and the network of the Guidelines in 2005, several donors have begun to require consultants or project design teams to consider the Guidelines. Some of these donors have also used the design GAD checklists in preparing and/or reviewing project designs. The application of the PIMME checklists came more slowly. In fact, it was not until mid-2006 when NEDA requested the submission of GAD monitoring reports that required the rating of projects at design and implementation stages that ODA agencies actually began to use the PIMME checklists. By 2009, some 18 agencies have reportedly applied the design and PIMME checklists (see section on GAD monitoring).

While more and more ODA agencies—primarily network members—have incorporated the Guidelines into their gender toolkit, implementing Philippine government agencies have yet to systematically use it in their programming and monitoring. This is a challenge for the PCW. As agreed with NEDA, it would be responsible for promoting the Guidelines with national government agencies’ domestically-funded programs and projects, while NEDA would be responsible for the application of the Guidelines to foreign-assisted projects. The inclusion of the Guidelines in the Implementation Rules and Regulation of the Magna Carta of Women (Rule VI, Section 37(A.2 and A.3)) is probably the needed impetus for the effective adoption of the Guidelines by government agencies and local government units (LGUs.)

The Philippine experience with the Guidelines has caught the attention of donors, and not only their missions or posts in the Philippines. An early example is provided by Hilda

“Everyone wanted the ‘purple book’!”

Tidalgo (ILO) who brought her copy of the Guidelines to an ILO regional meeting and whose participants reportedly wanted similar tools developed in their countries. A similar enthusiastic response was noted during the December 2006 Asian Regional Meeting of CIDA Gender Equality Advisers. In June 2010, Bernadette Cariaga, AusAID/Manila Gender Focal Person, was invited by AusAID/Canberra to present the Guidelines as the tool the Philippine government and ODA donors use to help programs to be gender responsive. The Guidelines received an overwhelming reception from the participants. As B. Cariaga related, “Everyone wanted the ‘purple book’ (Guidelines)!” But the most telling was the invitation for NEDA to present the Philippine experience with the Guidelines in a roundtable discussion during the OECD/DAC High Level Forum in Accra, Ghana, in September 2008 (see box 1).⁸

Capacity development

Effective use of the Guidelines partly depends on the capacity of NEDA, Philippine implementing agencies, and ODA agencies to apply it in their programs or projects. Right after completion of the original version of the Guidelines in 2004, network members realized that they needed to feel confident about promoting the Guidelines within their respective agencies. In this connection, WB funded capacity

⁸ The roundtable discussion was organized by the OECD/DAC High Level Forum (HLF) Task Team on complementarity/rationalizing aid delivery under the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness, chaired by Germany. Called Roundtable 3 “Harmonisation: Optimising aid delivery, complementarity, division of labour” (RT Harmonisation), the session sought to address the question of how to collectively do business differently at the country level, in order to contribute to improved aid effectiveness. The roundtable tackled two issues, one of which was promoting harmonised approaches on cross-cutting issues (such as gender equality). (Source: “Draft Synthesis Report, Roundtable 3: Harmonisation. Optimising Aid Delivery, Complementarity, Division of Labour.” Third High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, Accra, 2-4 September 2008)

Box 1. The Harmonized Gender and Development Guidelines Go to Accra

NEDA was invited by the chair of a Task Team to present the Philippine experience with the Harmonized GAD Guidelines during the September 2008 OECD/DAC High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness held in Accra. The NEDA presentation took place in a roundtable discussion on harmonization, and focused on how gender as a cross-cutting issue can be mainstreamed by making use of the partner country system and regulations. NEDA identified as enabling factors the following: (1) the continued support of senior officials and “policy champions” within Government, (2) the importance of supportive donors and a functioning thematic GAD network which helped to strengthen Government leadership on the issue and to foster co-ownership of donors of the GAD guidelines, (3) the need for a broad consultative process to ensure acceptability and appropriateness of guidelines to various sectors, and (4) the continuous provision of capability building on the use of the guidelines.

The draft Report on the Roundtable on Harmonization points to a consensus among the participants that “Mainstreaming cross-cutting issues seems to be most effective (i) **under partner country leadership** and (ii) through **partner country policies, procedures and institutions**. Committed **donors can facilitate and support** the mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues [emphases in the Report].” The Report went on to say, however, that “When it comes to more systematically merging cross-cutting issues and aid effectiveness principles the general feeling was that - despite convincing individual case examples - more **analysis and collective learning is still needed**. It was apparent that the **level of knowledge and good practice** guidance in this area is **still in its infancy**. One practical suggestion was to **task the DAC to further pursue the necessary groundwork** and the related dissemination and sharing of experience [emphases in the Report].”

development sessions for the network. The first was a half-day session that walked members through the Guidelines, and discussing questions that they may be asked. The second was a two-day training program in October 2005 on the application of the Guidelines, complete with hands-on project review exercises.

A few months after the launching of the Guidelines, NEDA (E.M. Capones) presented the Guidelines to the donor community. However, it became evident to a number of network members that agency technical officers and staff needed to be ‘trained’ in the Guidelines. Although not actually network activities, these agency-level training sessions were discussed by and, later reported to, the network. Among the ODA agencies that invested resources in these capacity-building activities are UNICEF (September 2005), WB (February 2006, March 2008), ILO (May 2006), AusAID (August 2008), CIDA (March 2009), and GTZ (June 2009).

While network members were intent on building their competence in the Guidelines, NEDA also embarked on developing the capacity of its officers and technical staff at the central and regional offices. Three major initiatives are worth noting. The first took place in June 2005, and involved several NEDA Staff directors, regional directors, as well as technical staffs. Funded by a grant from WB, the workshop required the preparation and use of NEDA project documents during the application sessions. The second consisted of a series of ADB-funded trainers’ training workshops that spanned several months from October 2006 to January 2007. These workshops included participants from the NEDA central and

regional offices and other national and regional government agencies. A special session was organized for the PCW staff.

This ADB technical assistance saw several regional trainers running the training in their respective regions. Mostly financed by GAD funds of NEDA regional offices, regional line agencies, and LGUs, the regional workshops helped to further develop the confidence and capacities of several region-based GAD advocates. These capacities were on display in a training session in the Guidelines that NEDA organized for its new technical staffs. Funded by the UNDP, the session was managed by NEDA-SDS, and facilitated by two participants during the NEDA-ADB trainers' training.

The European Commission supported the continued rollout of the ADB-supported trainings to regions. These sub-national training sessions involved the Gender Resource Centers (GRCs) and other PCW partners in the regions.

Among the national government agencies, at least three pursued the roll-down of the training. The first was the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), which tapped its GAD budget to organize at least three sessions for its central office, regions, and attached bureaus and agencies. One session—for the Foreign Assisted Projects Office (FASPO)—remains to be convened. The two other agencies were the Department of Health (DOH), with partial funding from a PCW-UNFPA project; and the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD). The DOH workshop was conducted by a team that included the department's representative to the NEDA-ADB trainers' training, while the DSWD had resource persons from PCW and NEDA.

Monitoring Gender Responsiveness of ODA Projects and Portfolios

Efforts to map out gender initiatives of network members began in early 2005. This was led by UNIFEM (Luz Rodriguez), which financed the hiring of a consultant (Annie Serrano) to do the study. Unfortunately, very few submitted the completed templates.

The next set of efforts started in 2006. It covered the entire portfolio of ODA agencies and focused on how responsive this is to relevant gender issues. Led by NEDA, the Harmonized GAD Guidelines was used to monitor compliance with RA 7192, with additional questions on what gender issues had been identified in the design document, and how these were being addressed at the implementation stage.

The number of donors that submitted the GAD report was initially low, at seven in 2007. The number, however, increased to 15 in 2008 and 18 in 2009.⁹ Of those that submitted their GAD monitoring reports in 2009, sixteen (16) were network members: ADB, AECID, AusAID, CIDA, EC, JICA (which, together with JBIC, was included in the Embassy of Japan submission), FAO, GTZ, ILO, KOICA, NZAID, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, USAID and WB. The other two, German Development Bank (KfW) and UNIDO, are not currently network members. Cooperation of ODA agencies has been essential to NEDA's preparation of its report vis-à-vis compliance with the ODA funding provision of RA 7192 to the PDF and Congress. As important, too, was the briefing that NEDA organized in late 2008 for the Network to ensure common understanding of the evolved GAD checklists. This one-day activity was

⁹ "2009 NEDA Report on the Classification of Official Development Assistance (ODA) Projects According to Gender-Responsiveness." No date.

funded out of an EC grant to NEDA and PCW for website development and for strengthening compliance to RA 7192 and mainstreaming commitments for aid coordination. The EC support ran from late 2007 to late 2008.

In connection with the preparation of the GAD monitoring report to NEDA, donors used different modes in applying the Guidelines to their projects and in involving their partners or contractors. A number (including WB and USAID) usually ask their contractors and/or implementing partners to accomplish the checklists, with the agency gender focal person incorporating the GAD ratings and other project inputs into the agency's GAD monitoring report. Each year, USAID's implementing partners – grantees, contractors and cooperators – participate in a Gender Workshop that uses the Harmonized Gender and Development Guidelines to assess the responsiveness of USAID programs and projects in the Philippines and to develop a Gender Action Plan for all ongoing and planned activities. The results of the Workshop serve as inputs to the USAID annual gender report to NEDA that classifies donor projects according to their gender responsiveness. Similarly, UNICEF requests its component heads and ILO its project leaders to prepare the checklists while the gender focal person prepares the summary report for NEDA.

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Meanwhile, AusAID initiative managers work with their contractor to conduct a gender assessment of the project or initiative and to come up with an agreed GAD rating. This rating is further challenged or discussed with AusAID Gender Focal Person and the gender local adviser.

For its part, CIDA has incorporated the checklists to the gender equality monitoring that its gender equality adviser undertakes every year. During the monitoring visit to a project, the adviser engages the project partner in a review of their performance during the past 12 months using the PIMME GAD checklist. This review also becomes a venue for discussing issues related to promoting gender equality or gender and development in various aspects of project implementation.

Two network members have used the Guidelines and its GAD checklists beyond reporting to NEDA. AusAID, for instance, has applied the GAD score based on the checklists to its projects' Quality at Entry (design) and Quality at Implementation (PIMME) reports. Meanwhile, as discussed above, CIDA has used the Guidelines as a major monitoring tool.

Recent network meetings discussed the different modalities. Sharing the gender monitoring and reporting with key program staff and implementing partners ensured that competence is developed among a larger group instead of just one person. This way, the reassignment or replacement of gender focal person would not necessarily mean retraining the new person, at least in the Guidelines. The involvement of the project implementers or managers could also be a way of engaging the latter in a discussion of GAD issues that are relevant to their project and in the updating of GAD action plans. This has been

possible in face-to-face, joint project reviews (CIDA) or planning workshops with project managers (USAID and WB for some years).

The challenge to all network members is not just to use the Guidelines, but to act based on the results of the gender-responsiveness assessment of projects. This is a big issue, considering that accomplishment of checklists is probably viewed by many in terms of compliance rather than as an opportunity to improve performance and results in the area of gender equality, women empowerment, or gender and development in general. There are examples of how this can be done, including the preparation and monitoring of GAD action plans based on the results of the gender assessment of projects, technical assistance during monitoring visits, and feedback to grantees, partners, or contractors. Another good example of how project or initiative managers can use the gender rating is provided by the READY project.¹⁰ A few weeks after the AusAID initiative manager completed her gender assessment of the project, she conducted a gender-issue-surfacing exercise with the project stakeholders.

However, with her departure, AusAID faces the challenge of following up and sustaining the project's understanding, appreciation and mainstreaming of gender and development perspective.

Another good example of how project or initiative managers can use the gender rating is provided by the READY project. A few weeks after the AusAID initiative manager completed her gender assessment of the project, she conducted a gender-issue-surfacing exercise with the project stakeholders. However, when she left, AusAID faces the challenge of following up and sustaining the project's understanding, appreciation and mainstreaming of gender and development perspective.

In most cases, results of project partners' assessment of the gender-responsiveness of their project need to be verified. Requiring partners or contractors to submit documentary evidences could be one way. Another way would be for the gender focal person to do random visits of projects, along with the responsible program/project officer or initiative manager. Yet another would be to require project evaluation teams, as AusAID has done, to use the Guidelines in assessing the project vis-à-vis the 'gender equality' criterion.

Joint Country Gender Assessment

A second major collective enterprise of the network is the preparation of the 2008 Joint Country Gender Assessment.¹¹ The opportunity came when the network member from ADB (Karin Schelzig Bloom) presented an ADB plan to conduct a Country Gender Assessment (CGA). In the spirit of the 2005

¹⁰ Project READY is being implemented by UNDP through the National Disaster Coordinating Council, Office of Civil Defence (NDCC-OCD). The OCD in turn, works with the Collective Strengthening of Community Awareness for Natural Disasters (CSCAND) agencies which includes the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (PHIVOLCS), National Mapping and Resource Information Agency (NAMRIA), Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB), Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA).

¹¹ ADB, CIDA, EC, NCRFW, UNICEF, UNIFEM, and UNFPA (2008), *Paradox and Promise in the Philippines: A Joint Country Gender Assessment* (Manila: Asian Development Bank, Canadian International Development Agency, European Commission, National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women, United Nations Children Fund, United Nations Development Fund for Women, and United Nations Population Fund).

Paris Declaration, the network enthusiastically endorsed a joint CGA, with some members volunteering to take care of coordinating a section and/or writing chapters under each section. Moreover, an advisory board was constituted, with ADB as the lead agency. For this network project, a number of member organizations contributed staff, adviser's or consultants' time.¹² This included CIDA, EC, UNFPA, UNICEF, PCW, and UNIFEM. In addition, these members, plus ILO, supplied documents and materials that the designated writers could use. For its part, ADB hired two consultants, one (Sara Aulin) to contribute substantively to and coordinate the CGA, and another (Jean Encinas Franco) to prepare the basic data chapter and to write the migration chapter. It also funded the printing of the volume. The project's main Philippine government partner was the PCW, led by Emmeline Verzosa.

Part of the CGA process was consultation with various stakeholders. A total of four consultations were conducted: three (one each for Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao) as part of the preparation, and a fourth, for presentation and validation of the draft CGA. All the consultations, along with the documentation of the proceedings, were funded by the EC. Other network member organizations, however, contributed staff and adviser's time for facilitating one consultation and/or sessions. UNICEF was in-charge of the Visayas consultation, while CIDA was responsible for facilitating the Mindanao consultation.

Network members were provided copies of the CGA that they could share with their respective headquarters, Mission/Post officers and staff, and project partners. To date, the CGA has been used as basis of the Gender Assessment that multilateral and bilateral agencies have prepared as part of their country development programming exercises.

Advocacy with the Philippine Development Forum

The network began to engage the PDF in 2006, although a few individual member organizations have mentioned or called on the PDF to address key gender issues related to the theme of the Forum. Donor statements read in succeeding Forums echoed key calls of the network, particularly the adoption of the Harmonized Gender and Development Guidelines by donors.

For three PDFs since 2006, the network has prepared a Statement that members brought to the Forum. The 2006 and 2007 Statements listed as signatories: AusAID, CIDA, EC, JICA, Embassy of Sweden/SIDA, the United Nations System, USAID, WB, NEDA and NCRFW; AECID signed the 2006 Statement, but not that for 2007. In 2009, more network members officially supported the Statement. The consistent signatories were joined by AECID, the German Development Bank (KfW), GTZ, KOICA, and NZAid. Unfortunately, the 2009 PDF was cancelled.

Each year, the network constitutes a small group to draft the Statement to the PDF. The costs of the activity are mainly staff or adviser's time and meeting-related expenses (transportation and snacks). These

¹² Members with coordination responsibilities were CIDA for Section 1, UNIFEM for Section 2 and EC for Section 3. Individual members with writing responsibilities included Grace Agcaoili (UNICEF), Auralyn Anorico (UNFPA), Jeanne Frances I. Illo (CIDA), Maria Lourdes Quintos (UNAIDS), Luz Lopez Rodriguez (UNIFEM), and Romina Sta Clara (EC). Consultants Aurora Javate de Dios and Donna Paz Reyes, both of Miriam College, and Manuela Silva (PCW) also contributed significantly to the CGA. The PCW contributed an annex on its gender mainstreaming efforts.

are often shouldered by the network member organizations that are represented in the drafting group, making these their contributions to the network activity.

The group prepares an initial draft based on broad agreements on the focus of the Statement during a network meeting. They circulate the draft, and revise it to reflect comments of network members. This can involve several rounds of consultations by emails. A final version is circulated again to secure the official support of network member organizations. This process usually takes a total of six to eight weeks. As the experience in 2009 suggests, the longer the time allotted to gather member organizations' support, the more 'signatures' can be secured.

The focus of the Statements varied according to the PDF theme. Two calls, however, can be found in all the Statements: continued support for the Harmonized Gender and Development Guidelines, and regular participation of NCRFW/PCW in the PDF. The Statements also became more complex. For instance, the 2006 Statement had only four calls (see box 2). In 2007, the Statement had seven calls, namely:

- Adopt women's human rights as stipulated in the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals as integral to the priority agenda for development programming and fund assistance.
- Allocate funds and other resources for program strategies that address gender equity and equality issues, promote women's participation and improve the status of women.
- Ensure that program implementation partners will have undergone capacity building on gender-responsive planning and the Harmonized GAD Guidelines such that the program design and implementation plan submitted and approved have explicitly stated objectives, strategies and results on gender concerns.
- Include the NCRFW as a regular participant of the PDF.
- Establish monitoring and evaluation systems that will account for gender-equality outputs of assisted program.
- Submit to NEDA and NCRFW annual monitoring reports on program accomplishments with disaggregated data on gender budgets allocated and spent, and gender-related outputs completed, not later than January 30 annually.
- Publish and share with the broader public gender-responsive practices to heighten awareness of gender equality issues and gender-responsive programs in sustainable development cooperation.

Some of these calls have been reportedly incorporated by the PDF Working Group on Social Progress. If only indirectly, donor support appeared to have secured the adoption of the Harmonized GAD

Box 2. Calls in the Network Statement to the 2006 PDF

- The NCRFW be made a regular participant of the PDF
- The ODA-GAD Network be represented in the various working groups of the PDF to ensure the mainstreaming of gender equality concerns and issues in PDF discussions
- The PDF and all the donors support the Philippine government in promoting the application of the *Harmonized Gender and Development Guidelines*
- The Philippine government and the ODA donors report on donor compliance with RA 7192 in succeeding PDF

Guidelines, and the GAD monitoring to NEDA. This could be deduced from improved donor reporting beginning in 2008, as donors reported on their current and completed projects for 2006 and 2007. However, the call for the regular participation of PCW in the PDF, seems not to have gathered support, as PCW's attendance have, at least until 2008, depended on being nominated by the Social Progress Working Group. The other calls may have been supported by the PDF, but there is no documentary evidence to indicate this.

The Statement that the network prepared for the 2009 PDF called on specific PDF Working Groups to ensure that their respective work plans address the CGA recommendations, which numbered eight. In addition, it included six calls on gender-aware actions to mitigate the effects of the Global and Financial Crisis.

For two years (2007 and 2009), the network also prepared Technical Briefs for the PDF Working Groups in line with the PDF theme. Members volunteered or were assigned to produce the Briefs. In 2007, CIDA took care of two briefs (Gender and International Competitiveness, and Gender Concerns in Rural Development with a Focus on Mindanao), while NEDA crafted the third (Gender and Public Finance). For 2009, the Briefs focused on disaster reduction and preparedness, which was drafted by AusAID, and Gender Equality in Local and National Development Planning, which was jointly prepared by CIDA and PCW. Several other Briefs were planned but were never completed.

The technical papers were supposed to be gender inputs to Working Group discussions, hopefully before the PDF. The timing of the preparation of the papers, however, has been problematic. These papers were planned at the same time as the Statement. This meant that for the 2007 papers, at least, there was little time to discuss these with the pertinent Working Groups before the PDF, but opportunities for post-PDF advocacy abounded. The constraints to the optimal utilization of the papers differed in the two years. In 2007, there was no systematic plan on how to 'sell' the briefs to the Working Groups. In 2009, the network drafted an advocacy plan, but this was never implemented. The network should grapple with these challenges and seek ways of improving its advocacy strategies while there is time.

Learning Sessions

One of the avowed objectives of the network is sharing of experiences, useful practices, tools and the like that are related to promoting gender equality in development. To pursue this goal, the network members decided to schedule a learning session every so often. At least eight topics were covered by the various learning sessions (see box 3, below). The network members found the sessions very helpful, although these may not be of direct relevance to some. The preparation of action plans, either at the country program or project levels, however, apply to all network member organizations, and learning from each other on strategies that could help the implementation of the plans or strategies is a key area.

One concrete result of the learning sessions is the funding by ILO of the preparation of a research on women's unpaid work in the Philippines. The research involved a review of literature and existing studies on time use and other aspects related to unpaid work. A draft was circulated in early 2009 for

Box 3. List of Learning Session Topics

- Gender issues in the pursuit of international competitiveness (CIDA)
- Addressing rural development (WB)
- Participatory gender audit, or PGA (PCW, UNIFEM, ILO)
- Unpaid work (ILO)
- Integration of gender equality into the Philippine Country Program and the Gender Action Plan (AusAID)
- Integrating gender perspective in projects in Mindanao (USAID)
- Gender Equality Strategy in the Philippines and Gender Mainstreaming start-up resource kit (AECID)
- Local and sector application of CEDAW (UNIFEM, with PKKK)

comments.¹³ UNFPA (Pam Averion) and ILO/Geneva provided comments that have yet to be incorporated in the final version of the report.

Other Activities

Apart from major initiatives of the network, several members came together to mount events or campaigns. In 2005, UNIFEM, with CIDA support, and the WB Knowledge Development Centers spearheaded the ‘March-to-Ten’: Public Advocacy Campaign on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA), and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). UNIFEM and WB co-funded the campaign, with St. Paul’s University in Tuguegarao (Luzon), Siliman University in Dumaguete City (Visayas), and Notre Dame University in Cotabato City (Mindanao). This campaign reportedly produced donors and partners’ work plans on integrating CEDAW, BPFA and MDGs in the local development plans, curriculum and NGO advocacy activities. Moreover, the campaign partners have been tapped as resource institutions for localization of MDGs.

In 2008, UNIFEM, ILO and PCW, in conjunction with the Center for Migrants Advocacy and the Women and Gender Institute (WAGI) of Miriam College, organized the International Conference on Gender, Migration, and Development. The rest of the network members supported the preparation of some of the technical papers for the plenary session, funded the travel for resource persons, and participated in some of sessions. This conference produced the Manila Declaration that was presented to the International Forum on Migration.

Finally, the network has to make itself known and its outputs or product lines accessible to other players in development, particularly in the GAD arena. To achieve this, the EC provided technical assistance to NEDA to develop a website for the network (www.odagad.org), while members were expected to supply the content. A visit to the site in February 2010 revealed that the site has not been updated since mid-2009. However, the agreement with the host server had since expired and the website

¹³ Re-reading Philippine Data on Unpaid Work (Or, Who Benefits from Women’s Unpaid Work?), a draft research report prepared by Jeanne Frances I. Illo for ILO/Manila and the ODA-GAD Network, February 2009.

shut down since May 2010.¹⁴ Fortunately, the Harmonized GAD Guidelines can be accessed through the NEDA website, while the Joint Country Gender Assessment can be downloaded from the ADB website. What are not accessible are the ODA agencies' GAD monitoring reports to NEDA.

LESSONS AND AREAS FOR ACTION

The experiences of the ODA-GAD Network thus far highlight several lessons and areas for action that could be incorporated in the Network work plan.

- *Continuous commitment of member organizations.* This has allowed individual members to attend meetings regularly, provide funding for network activities or projects, and promote network advocacy in the PDF and similar forums. The Network, including NEDA and PCW, needs to explore ways of securing and, if possible, expanding the commitment of members organizations to its initiatives, particularly GAD advocacy with the PDF, in which very few individual Network members participate, and the financing or other forms of contribution to Network projects.
- *Expanding the membership base of the network.* The increase in the number of ODA agencies that adopted the Harmonized GAD Guidelines and submitted the GAD monitoring report to NEDA coincide with the increased membership in the network. The Network, through its Secretariat, should continue its campaign to attract more aid agencies to join, send representatives or participants to its capacity-development and other activities, and participate in periodic GAD reporting and similar efforts.
- *Building confidence and competencies.* The network experience with the Harmonized GAD Guidelines underscores the need to build appreciation and to develop capacities to apply GAD tools. Without gender-sensitive, competent women and men in aid agencies and implementing organizations (government, NGO, LGU, or community groups), the promise of tools will never be fulfilled. A key area of gender competency is gender analysis, a point that has also been stressed by the Implementing Rules and Regulations of the Magna Carta of Women. As network member organizations explore how to support the implementation of the Magna Carta, building skills in gender analysis and gender-responsive programming should be high in the list.
- *Making Network products accessible.* Its major outputs—jointly with NEDA and/or PCW—include the Harmonized GAD Guidelines and the Joint Country Gender Assessment. For these to be useful, they have to be accessible in various forms to different players in government, NGOs, GAD practitioners, and the donor community. Having a separate website was tried, but the site was automatically discontinued when the hosting agreement expired in early 2010. However, while in operation, the absence of a website administrator and the active involvement of Network members had prevented the regular updating of website content. The latter might have been a function of lack of information on how to access the website backdoor so as to upload materials or update content. Should the Network decide to revive its website, it would be crucial to understand what went wrong: the low engagement of the Network members in the maintenance

¹⁴ Carol I. Sobritchea, former EC consultant for the website content, personal communication, 31 July 2010.

and content management of the site, roles of the grant recipient (in the case of the EC grant, NEDA) with respect to sustaining the initiative (such as funding and system management), and the limited capacity of Network members to update the content of the site.

An alternative route, which is probably more sustainable, is uploading key GAD materials to websites that are regularly maintained by government agencies, particularly the Web portals of NEDA and PCW. This means deserting the idea of a separate Network website and members contributing directly or through the Network Secretariat gender materials and information to the agency sites. However, which of the materials will be uploaded and where in the site will be up to the agencies and their website administrators.

- *Having a plan.* Efforts of the network to promote awareness, appreciation, and commitment to act on gender issues among PDF Working Groups have fallen short. One reason could have been lack of a plan on how to go about it; another could be the absence of ‘messengers’ or ‘communicators’ who can engage the Working Groups on the Gender Technical Briefs that the network has already produced. The network needs to develop an advocacy plan, including how to implement and monitor this plan. The same thing goes to planning what the network can focus on during a particular year.
- *Acting together.* The network enabled several ODA agencies to accomplish key initiatives and produce results. Its experiences with the Harmonized GAD Guidelines and the Joint Country Gender Assessment demonstrate how important acting together can be. Having key government agencies like PCW and NEDA as members enabled the initiatives of the network to acquire strong legs and longevity.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AECID	Spanish Agency for International Cooperation and Development
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
BPFA	Beijing Platform for Action
CD	compact disc
CGA	Country Gender Assessment
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CSCAND	Collective Strengthening of Community Awareness for Natural Disasters
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DBM	Department of Budget and Management
DENR	Department of Environment and Natural Resources
DOH	Department of Health
DSWD	Department of Social Welfare and Development
EC	European Commission
FASPO	Foreign Assisted Projects Office
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GAD	gender and development
GMC	Gender Mainstreaming Committee
GRC	Gender Resource Center
GTZ	German Technical Cooperation
HLF	High Level Forum
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
ILO	International Labor Organization
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
JBIC	Japan Bank for International Cooperation
KfW	German Development Bank
KOICA	Korean International Cooperation Agency
LGU	local government unit
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MGB	Mines and Geosciences Bureau
NAMRIA	National Mapping and Resource Information Agency
NDCC-OCD	National Disaster Coordinating Council , Office of Civil Defence
NCRFW	National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women
NEDA	National Economic and Development Authority
NGO	non-government organization
NZAid	New Zealand Aid Agency
ODA	Official Development Assistance
ODA-GAD	Official Development Assistance Gender and Development
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PAGASA	Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration
PCCO	Philippines-Canada Cooperation Office
PCW	Philippine Commission on Women
PDF	Philippine Development Forum
PGA	participatory gender audit

PIMME	program/project implementation, management, monitoring and evaluation
PKKK	<i>Pambansang Koalisyon ng Kababaihan sa Kanayunan</i> (Rural Women's Congress)
RA	Republic Act
SDS	Social Development Staff
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VAW	violence against women
VSO	Voluntary Service Overseas
WAGI	Women and Gender Institute
WB	The World Bank
WHO	World Health Organization