

**Additional Inputs on and Synthesis of the  
“Workshop on Transformative Leadership,” November 28, 2003,**  
an activity held by the participants to the AWCFC Regional Conference on “Transformative  
Leadership for Co-operatives in Asia: Transforming Leadership, Transforming  
Co-operatives, Transforming Society,” November 26-28, 2003 in Bangkok, Thailand.

***Additional Inputs and Synthesis (with Call for Action) by Ms Remedios Ignacio-Rikken and Mr. Edgar Parnell)***

**Ms Remedios Ignacio-Rikken:**

1. Ms Rikken reminded the participants that gender is a global agenda. In fact, the areas of action in the Beijing Conference for Women continue to be included in the Millennium Goals that the UN had later identified.

2. On the Millennium Goals

Ms Rikken gave additional points on the Millennium Goals as these were mentioned several times as a reference in the discussions/reports:

>Gender as a Global Agenda

In the Beijing Conference, the following Areas of Action were defined:

- Women and poverty
- Education and training
- Women and health
- Violence against women
- Armed conflict
- Economy
- Power and decision-making
- Institutional mechanism and advancement of women
- Human Rights
- Media
- Environment
- The girl-child

...Compare these Areas of Action to the Millennium Goals that the whole UN defined

- Eradication of poverty and hunger
- Achievement of universal primary education
- Promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women
- Reduction of child mortality
- Improvement of maternal health
- Combat against HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- Environmental sustainability
- Global partnership for development

3. On the expression that “money liberates”

Ms Rikken explained that in subsistence families, gender could not be an issue because the issue is their next meal. Once their income improves, then new questions come in. She recalled to the participants the case presented in the Conference about the project in San Miguel, Bulacan, Philippines, which started with the basic need of the women to earn for their families. Afterwards, the gender factor came in and, in the long run, the men became partners of the women. When the women needed more knitting needles for their project, the men started to produce knitting needles. Ms Rikken related this situation to the presentation on women’s enterprises by the Credit Union League of Thailand (CULT) where she said that later CULT will see that the increase in women’s income will lead to some increase in gender/relational issues.

### 3. On the WEEF

Ms Rikken also refreshed the participants on the “Women’s Equality and Empowerment Framework (WEEF),” that lets one understand the stages and requirements towards gender equality. The initial stage is a welfare stage that spirals to the higher levels of access, conscientization, participation, and control as the process moves forward.

- a. Welfare – Focus is on material needs around reproductive roles: feeding program, family planning, dole- outs. Women are passive recipients of benefits.
- b. Access - Arises from inequality of access to resources, namely: land, labor, credit, services, and technology. Focus is on promoting equality of access according to the principle of equality of opportunity; it is a step towards women’s advancement.
- c. Conscientization – There is a view that the women’s low status and the traditional gender division of labor is part of the “natural order” or is “God-given.” Empowerment is recognizing that women’s subordination is imposed by a system of discrimination that is socially constructed. Conscientization is the process that builds women’s ability to critically analyze society.
- d. Participation – The gender gap is most visible and easily quantified. Participation means women, equally with men, are actively involved in the development process; women have equal participation in decision-making.
- e. Control - The gender gap is unequal power relations. Equality of control implies a balance of power so neither sex is in a position of dominance. In this level, there is increased participation, increased development and increased empowerment of women. When used to achieve increased control over the factors of production, it leads to equal access to resources.

Equality of control enables women to gain improved access to resources, allowing improved welfare for themselves and their children.

The EQUALITY OF PARTICIPATION and CONTROL are pre-requisites to make progress towards gender equality and welfare division.

### 4. On gendered governance

Ms Rikken presented this formula:

Women’s Participation + Governance = Good governance and improvement of women’s lives  
This is reflected in Mechanisms, Budget, Policies, and Programs

### 5. On the “Rights-Based Approach”

Another term to be clarified is the “Rights-based Approach.” The term is used now to connect human rights and development.

What are human rights? Human rights are those rights that every human being possesses and is entitled to enjoy, simply by virtue of being human. Put in another way, they are those rights which are inherent in our nature, without which we cannot live as human beings.

The 1993 World Conference on Human Rights reaffirmed that human rights are the birthright of all human beings. The protection of human rights is the first responsibility of government.

The rights-based approach to development is a way of looking at development. In this perspective, poverty is not just about absence of commodities and services to meet needs, but rather a question of disempowerment. Therefore, development should enable people to empower themselves to live the lives they value.

Development is the process of realizing human dignity. Human rights are standards for human dignity. Development seeks the full realization of rights including freedom from want, from fear— or the right to security, freedom from humiliation as opposed to having one's human dignity respected. The rights-based approach emphasizes that everybody has the right to development: Development is not charity; it is an obligation. Human rights imply human duties. Therefore, there are claim-holders and duty-holders in development. There are accountabilities in the development process.

A rights-based approach to development is both--A way of doing development: From needs to rights. And, integrating human rights in development practice. Thus, when we look at development with a HUMAN RIGHTS perspective, we see that the agenda to eradicate poverty through the economic empowerment of women is inextricably tied to the ability of government to protect and, more importantly, advance their human rights.

#### 6. On retired/ageing and youth co-op members

Ms Rikken asked what is the possibility of organizing the co-op members who are retired or ageing? And also, of having the youths for co-operatives, rather than the co-ops for the youth?

She related that she herself, even as being a feminist, has not come face to face with her issues as a young elderly. Maybe there is the need for people who have the same experience (as retired/ageing co-op members) to come together.

#### 7. On lifelong learning

On lifelong learning, Ms Rikken suggested that instead of planning, people should be passionate about an issue. They must pursue it, and when they look back and review what they have done, it becomes a medium for their continuing learning. In Asia, it had been enlightened men who get women organized, Ms Rikken said. Currently, talk is also starting about spirituality because as the issues of women and men were being brought out and discussed, there was also the realization that much of the issues lie, too, on the search for spirituality.

#### **Mr Edgar Parnell:**

1. Co-ops have a role in advocacy for agricultural co-operatives, that is, as a means for providing a voice for rural people. That advocacy is important in the context of unfair competition especially in the areas of subsidy and other elements that make it difficult for farmers in developing countries to compete.

The role of co-operatives in agriculture is to get the added-value of the projects. In the past, this role was the role taken by traders (go-betweens) and retailers. The farmer does not get the fair share.

If our farmers are to compete, we have to address the matter of quality, and then compete in terms of prices. To do that, we have to reduce the cost of inputs by collectively purchasing to get fairer prices.

There was something that struck me in the Philippines (*Mr. Parnell had some interaction with farmers groups in the Philippines prior to the Regional Conference—Ed.*). In practice, the farmers taking out loans are paying 40% to 50% interest per year. And if I compare that in Europe where they pay 9%, I see that there is a burden that the Filipino farmers are carrying. There is thus a pressure for co-operatives to be organized to take away the burden of the farmers.

2. The bureaucrats lay down the structures of the co-ops, as seen in the way the farmers are organized. The idea that there is a rigid structure of primary coops without allowing the development of co-ops in an enterprise basis is really inhibiting their development. Challenge the policies that define the structures of coops rigidly. Co-ops have to be able to define the structure that works for them.

3. On delinquency of loans and approaches that co-ops do take, it is useful to look back and see what has happened in other countries. I look at the work in Jamaica where credit unions are very

successful. There is very heavy emphasis on family budget training—that really helped address payments.

There should be policies that look at loans that are administered at local levels so that there is pressure on payment, which facilitates loan repayment. Huge cooperative banks owned by farmers and people all started when the people were much poorer.

My own grandmother worked in the mines at 9 years of age. My father used to work at 12. We can look to these experiences and see how these problems were addressed. Look at policies—use family pressure and education on family budgeting.

4. The move from transactional leadership to transformative leadership is a continuing process. It is a process we should invest heavily in. We need to recognize this, and the fact that is not achieved immediately as a target. We have to start where we are. We think of our leaders, and we get frustrated. But it is a process, and we have to invest in that process now.

5. Co-op leaders must learn to control their co-operatives and to be controlled by their members. If a leader is to carry out his or her duties, he or she must be able to develop the hard skills required to get the co-operative in a position where it could respond to the needs of its members. The goal must be in the future, the coop should be controlled by the members.

6. The only people qualified and with the right to set the agenda of the co-operative are the members. We have so many people telling us what to do. But, the right and duty lies on the members. We should not lose sight of that.

7. The solution to the problem lies in the problem. But to find the solution, we need to look outside before we look within. We have to encourage people in the co-operative to look wide and then look within. Then they will be able to organize the co-operative in a better way.

8. Today's solution will be tomorrow's problems. For example, the leaders today could be the problems tomorrow. In the past, governments were the problems so the non-government organizations or NGOs were created. But today, many NGOs are as bureaucratic as governments in the past. Small co-operatives think they need to become big co-ops. But when they become big, they tend to lose contact with their members. There are no set solutions when it comes to co-ops.

9. If you try to do everything, you end up doing nothing. So in the DO-IF-GS (development-oriented, issue-focused, gender-sensitive framework of AWCF for co-op transformative leadership), it is important for us to have focus. We cannot expect every coop to do everything. We should be able to have specialized co-ops to have some tasks done. Not all co-ops can be multipurpose. It is up to the members to define what the co-ops should do, and not for governments to dictate this.

10. Gender is more of an issue for men than it is for women. In the long term, many of the gender issues will only be addressed when men address the issue together with the women. If you start a process where there has been no conscientization, then you have to do it now with both women and men.

11. Cooperation is more important than many co-operatives. If we look at the co-operative approach, we focus on the co-op. But we forget that to have a successful co-op, we need to have cooperation among the members.

What makes members' cooperation work?

- a. Trust: we have to do things that engender trust
- b. Fairness: we have to make sure that what we do is fair and is perceived as fair
- c. Specific...about objectives and constantly remind ourselves of these
- d. Always remained focused on what you want to achieve; we should not be diverted too often
- e. We have to remain flexible in the ways that we act to achieve our objectives

- f. We need to deal promptly with any negative feelings about the co-op, especially among members
  - g. We have to be prepared to use sanctions but not vindictively against members pursuing their interest at the expense of the group. Reward those who play by the rules but make it difficult for free riders.
  - h. Cooperation must be voluntary. Members must be free to join and leave, but they should not be free to leave while leaving their burdens to other members of the coop.
12. Do not be too busy looking at the big picture that you cannot see what is on your nose. Things will only work, if the individual co-operatives work.
13. Co-op leaders without an active and informed membership is like a head without a body. Leaders are often ahead, running away from their members. Develop members at the same pace.
14. So one of the most important tasks of today's leaders is to prepare tomorrow's leaders.
15. Leaders who stop learning should stop leading. Important learning is difficult. Many leaders are keen on putting pressure on the performance of others but not on themselves. At the basic level of co-ops, the leaders need skills that they need to work hard on if they are to be successful leaders.
16. Slogans are not solutions. They are reminders. They are useful, but we should not be hanged up in matching slogans. Use them to remind yourself but not to solve the issues.
17. Five points for action for this conference:
- a. Please treat leadership development as a priority. Place it as a project and put up a trust (fund) for it.
  - b. Recognize and accept that lifelong learning is critical for organizations, but it has to start with ourselves. Learning organizations are successful. Those that do not learn die.
  - c. Can you help your organizations/co-operatives to be focused, and stay focused on services and benefits that will be delivered to the members and to the community?
  - d. Address the issue of gender and progress the issue with the men in your cooperatives.
  - e. Would you go back and make sure that you have the mechanism in the planning and decision-making processes in your co-op? Members should be able to input into the business planning process of the co-operative.