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## Building capacity and national ownership

Implementing CEDAW, so women can live free from discrimination and enjoy their human rights, is what governments who sign on to the Convention agree to do. Implicit in this agreement, however, is also an understanding by governments and the CEDAW Committee, that while deliberate measures must be taken to show progress, full implementation cannot be expected in a short time.

Previous chapters have described innovative national strategies and examples of practices by governments and civil society to make progress on women's rights and gender equality. To realize their full potential, however, these efforts must also possess the roots of sustainability. There are two mutually reinforcing factors influencing sustainability—national capacity and national ownership. Growing the capacity of stakeholders in terms of skills, knowledge and resources, increases their ability to effectively pursue CEDAW implementation, while promoting ownership of the process increases their interest in and willingness to keep doing so.

Capacity development has been the cornerstone of the UNIFEM programme on CEDAW implementation in Southeast Asia. Since its inception in 2004, the programme has firstly focused on supporting its government and NGO partners, to strengthen and expand their knowledge of CEDAW and women's rights and help them develop practical skills to apply that knowledge. Secondly, it has worked to encourage national ownership of the CEDAW implementation process by supporting a broad range of initiatives by a variety of stakeholders. Within the context of transformative social change, this strategy has sought to assist stakeholders to engage in a continuity of action that is essential to keeping the momentum alive. It also enhances the capability of stakeholders to dynamically and independently adapt their strategies to suit different contexts and meet changing needs as these evolve over time.<sup>1</sup>

“ Growing the capacity of stakeholders in terms of skills, knowledge and resources, increases their ability to effectively pursue CEDAW implementation, while promoting ownership of the process increases their interest in and willingness to keep doing so ”

Several key positive outcomes towards sustainability have emerged. These include the development of a reservoir of national resource persons and locally generated resource materials; an increasing institutionalization of the Convention within national structures like government and academic systems; and burgeoning networks of civil society actors committed to working together to monitor implementation and track government accountability.

## Expanding national knowledge and expertise

The increase in activity around CEDAW implementation over the last decade has been both cause and consequence of a growing pool of CEDAW experts and resource persons in all seven countries that the UNIFEM CEDAW Southeast Asia programme is working with.<sup>2</sup> A wider awareness of CEDAW, within governments and NGOs, has stirred interest in a deeper understanding of state obligations, how the Convention can be applied to advance women's rights, and a desire to develop expertise in this area.

National Women's Machineries (NWMs) in particular have received significant capacity—building support—in fact, many have taken on a CEDAW advocacy role with other government departments and agencies. In countries like Cambodia, Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand, NWMs are now replicating successful CEDAW training programmes across the government bureaucracy, using their own human and financial resources.

This availability of national CEDAW resource persons has helped to decrease dependence on international experts, and to strengthen commitment to locally generated resources, strategies and achievements. CEDAW resource pools can consist of organizations or individuals, or both, often with varying degrees of knowledge and skills—the common denominator, though, is a shared aim to use their strengthened capacity to multiplier effect, so that CEDAW becomes a ubiquitous, living framework for equality.

Several strategies have been used to develop these resource pools, some of which are outlined in this chapter. They are complemented by a wide array of local resource materials produced by governments and NGOs, such as basic guides and backgrounders, training modules and manuals for different target audiences, informational materials using local case studies, and reviews of national legislation and policies using a CEDAW lens.

## Law students in Lao PDR become gender advocates

Once every two months, a group of about 15 individuals, who call themselves the CEDAW Resource Pool, meet up to exchange ideas and think up projects they can collaborate on to further women's rights in Lao PDR. The group, which started meeting regularly in 2006 after several of its members attended basic training workshops on CEDAW, is an informal network that draws people from diverse backgrounds including the non-profit world, government and academia. "It's a very organic process," says Ny Luangkhot, one of the founders of the group. "We meet as individuals who are interested in the same thing—CEDAW and gender equality—and we use our different experiences and skills to work together to raise awareness about CEDAW."

One initiative the group embarked on in 2007 has taken off beyond their wildest expectations. At one of the regular resource pool meetings, Ms. Luangkhot, who is a development consultant and trainer by profession, met Inthana Bouphasavanh, who works at the law faculty of the National University of Laos, on a legal education project funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). Ms. Bouphasavanh also belonged to the faculty gender committee, but felt this group was rather passive, and was keen instead to work directly with the students on promoting gender issues. So she and Ms. Luangkhot organized a general talk on equality in September 2007 for the law faculty which, to their surprise, drew a large student turnout. Noting the interest, Ms. Luangkhot then held a more in-depth training workshop on gender and CEDAW in December. When several students (about 40 of them) expressed a desire to become 'trainers' for their peers on CEDAW, Ms. Luangkhot organized a training-of-trainers (TOT) workshop to get them started. "It wasn't easy for them to do this," she said. "Because of their school schedule, we could only hold the training on weekends, when many of them had other priorities to juggle as well. Plus, it was quite far for some of them to travel. So we knew that the ones who came were really committed."

Armed with their new knowledge, and fired up about starting something action oriented to put what they learned into practice, the students started planning a CEDAW-themed youth event to take place on 25 November during the Sixteen Days of Activism to End Violence Against Women. With Ms. Luangkhot's and Ms. Bouphasavanh's guidance, they came up with a strategic plan that included a budget and fund-raising targets. As an informal group, however, they soon hit a snag. It proved next to impossible to raise funds since donor agencies were reluctant to entertain any requests for funding from groups that were not officially registered.

Then something extraordinary happened. Although it was unheard of for students to set up their own formal organization, the law students went ahead and applied to the university anyway. To everyone's surprise, they received

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*Members of Student Gender Group of the National University of Laos*

Photo by Leigh Pasqual - UNIFEM

approval, and the 'Kuum Bod Badd Ying Xai Khong Nak Suk Sah' or 'Student Gender Group' was born, becoming the first ever official student organization in the country. Under this new rubric, they went door to door to different donors and managed to raise the money they needed.

The November event was a resounding success. A 700-strong audience, including many teachers, enjoyed a mini-concert, a drama

on trafficking performed by street children, and an audience quiz on gender stereotypes. Well-known youth singers performed for free, and the whole event went on for six hours, much longer than expected.

The Student Gender Group (SGG) is now getting requests to help with other public events, including from international donors who are already tapping them to organize a similar event for the 2009 Sixteen Days campaign. The students are also busy planning training sessions for their fellow students—the group will undergo more advanced TOT training on CEDAW in July 2009, and in September will conduct peer workshops for students of the law faculty as well as some private secondary schools in Vientiane. In addition, SGG members are working on formulating their legal status (through by-laws) as a group, which is required by law.

As for the CEDAW Resource Pool, this successful initiative has given them even more inspiration for other projects. Currently in the works is a proposal to set up a women students' centre, and another to develop an information booklet that explains gender terminology in Lao and English for people working on gender and development issues.

## Successful approaches to building sustainable capacity and ownership: Training, mentoring and learning-by-doing

### Training: A foundational need

Training workshops on CEDAW and women's rights are considered a basic first step, given the historically low level of CEDAW awareness in Southeast Asia. They have been used to enable governments and NGOs to better understand and apply the Convention to their national contexts, and in turn to use their strengthened capacity to educate and train others. Since the

inception of the CEDAW Southeast Asia programme, hundreds of government officials and NGO staffers have participated in CEDAW training workshops. Even the staff of NWMs and women's NGOs, who are the driving force for the advancement of women in each country, have needed to start from basic training on what CEDAW is and how it is different from other international agreements such as the Beijing Platform for Action.

In the government, trainings have been extended to sectoral agencies such as the Ministries of Justice, Finance and Planning, Education, Health, Agriculture, as well as law enforcement agencies, the judiciary, and parliamentarians. Within civil society, training has been expanded from national-level to local-level organizations, as well as those working with excluded women such as indigenous and ethnic minority women, migrant women workers, disabled women, women living with HIV/AIDS and women living in conflict situations. In addition, members of media organizations, and NGOs whose mandates are not specifically on gender issues, have also undergone CEDAW training to encourage more gender-sensitive approaches to their work.

Basic CEDAW training sessions, while contextualized to suit country situations and different target audiences, nonetheless possess several common features across the board. A typical training workshop usually begins with a discussion of the notions of gender and gender discrimination, followed by an examination of the basic concepts of human rights, the international human rights system, and the responsibilities of states to respect and protect these rights. CEDAW is then introduced and discussed in relation to other international agreements with gender equality goals such as the Beijing Platform for Action and the MDGs. Its principles and articles are examined in relation to the domestic context, often through the use of case studies to show how it can be applied to advance women's rights in particular areas such as education, health care and employment. Finally, the role of the state in meeting its CEDAW obligations is addressed, including the requirements of the reporting process, the purpose of the Concluding Observations, and the need to develop strategic, practical actions to implement specific measures and monitor progress.

Apart from providing basic training to a wide range of government officials and NGOs, for longer-term impact and sustainability of capacity building efforts, a Training of Trainers (TOT) approach is also being used in many countries to further develop and multiply the national pool of resource persons who are able to continue carrying out training on CEDAW.

Many NGOs around the region have received support to build their capacity to train others on CEDAW and women's human rights. UNIFEM has drawn on the expertise of CEDAW experts and resource persons from the International Women's Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific (IWRAP-AP) and other NGOs and academic institutions to run TOT sessions for NGOs, many of whom are now conducting training for others in the NGO community on their own. Such NGOs include the CEDAW Working Group Initiative (CWGI) in Indonesia, the Foundation for Women (FFW) in Thailand, and Gender and Development for Cambodia (GADC). In some countries, NGOs are also being tapped by government institutions to conduct TOT sessions for their staff.

The promising ripple effect of the TOT approach can be seen in Cambodia, for instance. GADC is an NGO specializing in training on gender and development issues. With UNIFEM support, after several of its trainers underwent TOT training on CEDAW, they then provided subsequent TOT training to other NGOs and to various government entities including the Cambodian National Council for Women (CNCW) and the gender mainstreaming action groups (GMAGs) in various line ministries. This has allowed the CNCW to expand its training capability within the government sector. According to a CNCW senior representative, it is a much more strategic use of resources which allows them to cast a wider net—each CNCW trainer, for example, is tasked to train at least 50 persons within their ministries, who are both senior and junior level officials and half of whom must be men. Trainers are also sent out to local government offices at the provincial level.

The Association of Indonesian Regency Legislative Councils (ADKASI) has also adopted a TOT approach. ADKASI has a mandate to build the capacity of its members serving in legislative councils. Rather than asking UNIFEM to support external trainers to provide CEDAW workshops to its members, ADKASI requested support to train some of its own members as CEDAW trainers. The members that have received TOT training on CEDAW are now conducting training for local parliamentarians in the country's many provinces, especially on the application of CEDAW in local government processes. In Timor-Leste, the National Institute of Public Administration (INAP), which is responsible for training civil servants on a range of government-related issues, has developed a core group of staff as resource

persons on CEDAW. The group underwent advanced TOT training in late 2008 to become trainers, and they have also developed a CEDAW module, which has been integrated into INAP's core training curriculum, and is already being used in training for staff of various ministries.

The useful impact that CEDAW training is having within government and civil society is evident from the range of follow-up initiatives taking place in many countries that are expanding on basic knowledge and adapting it to evolving needs and priorities. For example, after undergoing training on CEDAW, the Thai National Human Rights Commission, an independent body that investigates whether policies and laws, and their implementation, are discriminatory or violate human rights, has started using CEDAW in its recommendations to government and parliament on legislative reform. The Commission is also partnering with the Rebibhadanasak Judicial Research Institute of the Office of the Judiciary to conduct workshops for judges and public prosecutors to raise their awareness of how cultural values and beliefs can influence individual perception and the interpretation of law, and how this in turn can skew the outcomes for women in sexual or domestic violence cases.

In Timor-Leste, the Office of the Ombudsman for Human Rights and Justice (PDHJ) has undergone training to ensure that CEDAW is incorporated into its programmes, practices and services. Selected staff members have been trained as resource persons on CEDAW, an important step in helping them to better address complaints of the violation of women's human rights that come before the office. They have also undergone further training on OP-CEDAW, and how it might be used to address gaps in access to justice for Timorese women. Since the PDHJ has also recently begun conducting its own training, co-organized with relevant government agencies, on basic human rights concepts and international human rights treaties for community leaders, police and army officers, and teachers, integrating CEDAW within this training is helping to promote dialogue and understanding on women's rights, especially at the *suco* (village) level.

Knowledge is also being shared among NGOs from different countries to enhance the quality of their training on CEDAW. A regional workshop, 'CEDAW Training Material Development', was organized in December 2006 in the

Philippines for ‘beginner’ CEDAW trainers, facilitated by the Women and Gender Institute of Miriam College (WAGI) and UNIFEM. Participants shared their experiences and lessons learned in carrying out CEDAW training in their countries, and heard from gender training experts from different fields such as the justice system and academic curriculum development. In-depth discussion on training methodologies and training design took place, with participants expected to apply this to designing their own training programmes, including identifying participant profiles and needs, formulating objectives, identifying resource persons and determining which content, methods and materials to utilize.<sup>3</sup>

Recommendations that came out of the meeting were instructive. They included:

- carrying out needs assessments prior to training sessions and even during training sessions to ensure that training design is appropriate, relevant and flexible;
- expanding training, especially on gender sensitivity and gender analysis, to other branches of government like the judiciary and legislature;
- integrating CEDAW into the curriculum of schools and universities;
- developing training manuals and modules based on local experiences and case studies;
- linking CEDAW to other international instruments such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child, ILO Conventions, the MDGs and the Beijing Platform for Action;
- using ‘echo’ training to reinforce understanding and to nurture a group of national CEDAW resource persons.

## Building the capacity of Acehese activists to influence local law reform

As a result of its recent special autonomy status with Indonesia, the region of Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam (Aceh) now has the right to develop its own local by-laws or *qanun*. This has created opportunities to integrate gender equality perspectives within the *qanun* development process using CEDAW.

In 2007, a UNIFEM-supported project was initiated to seize these opportunities by developing a core group of Acehese advocates who focused on the convergence of Islam and CEDAW around equality and rights as the framework to enhance legal protections for women.

A key capacity-building activity of the project was a training series on 'CEDAW and Islam'. Participants for this training came from various backgrounds, including grassroots groups, local NGOs, local government, academia and *ulama* (religious leaders). A learning-by-doing approach was employed through the setting up of a steering group that would be responsible for planning three consecutive workshops which progressed from basic knowledge on CEDAW to analysis and application of CEDAW in situations of discrimination, to the final development of a working framework that integrated gender equality principles in Islam and CEDAW. The steering group worked with resource persons to discuss the content and format of the workshops, ways to contextualize the training, and effective teaching methodologies for the target audience. They also devised feedback mechanisms after each training session to shape future sessions.



*Khairani, a women's human rights advocate in Aceh discussing CEDAW*

Photo by UNIFEM

The end results were not only increased knowledge among the wider group and improved skills in analysing policy, legislation and sociocultural practices in Aceh using CEDAW, but also an enhanced capacity of the steering group to develop and conduct training on CEDAW. Furthermore, a pool of CEDAW resource persons who could provide technical assistance on incorporating gender equality into *qanun*-making was identified, for further activities such as advocacy with government and *ulama*, legal drafting and strategic interventions in the *qanun* process.

## Mentoring: Sharing practical knowledge

Another approach to building knowledge and skills on using CEDAW that has met with positive results is mentoring, where trainees are matched with experienced resource persons after basic level training to further their learning and allow them to seek ongoing advice as they advance. Mentors make themselves available to offer guidance beyond immediate training activities and thus are able to help address questions or challenges that may crop up as trainees attempt to expand and apply what they have learned.

Siriporn Panyasen of the Association for the Promotion of Women and Youth Development (WAY Lampang) in Thailand is part of a group of CEDAW resource persons mentoring grassroots women who want to participate in local politics. As the leader of a local government unit herself, she is able to share her practical experience with electoral candidates and the newly elected, on the nuts and bolts of local government electoral and administrative systems. She says that mentoring for her includes making many trips to visit the women she mentors in different villages, and being on-call for technical assistance on campaigning and dealing with local administrative processes. The mentoring offered by Ms. Panyasen and other resource persons like her has been expanded through the Women's Network for Gender Responsive Governance (WNGRG), set up in 2008 to connect women activists, candidates and elected leaders at the local level with women's organizations at the national level to exchange knowledge and share ideas.

In the Philippines, which in comparison to other countries in the region has a significantly large and dynamic reservoir of CEDAW expertise to draw from, due in large part to its strong women's movement, mentoring is used often as a means to grow capacity. Several prominent Filipino women have served as CEDAW Committee experts and are often called on to mentor government officials and civil society groups on CEDAW implementation. As mentors, they regularly share their expertise on implementation of the Convention and their first-hand experience of the review process. Aurora Javate de Dios, a former CEDAW Committee expert, has served as technical advisor and mentor on the government reporting process, offering ongoing guidance on the drafting of the report and on preparations for the government dialogue with the Committee. From 2005 to 2006, for example, Ms. Javate de Dios and Rosario Gonzales-Manalo, then CEDAW Committee Chair, were tapped as mentors for staff and commissioners of the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW), and other line government agencies, particularly in the lead-up to the country's CEDAW review session in 2006.<sup>4</sup>

There has also been regional mentoring at work. The Women's Legal Bureau (WLB) of the Philippines, which spearheaded the civil society effort to submit the first Optional Protocol case in Southeast Asia, has been mentoring other Filipino NGOs on the OP-CEDAW process. After the WLB facilitated a regional meeting on the subject, they were also asked by NGOs from Thailand—led by the Teeranat Kanjanaauksorn Foundation (TKF) and the Human Rights and Development Foundation—to provide technical assistance and mentoring support to their effort to submit a Thai case to the CEDAW Committee. Mae Buenaventura of the WLB said that since the meeting, there have already been several interactions with her Thai counterparts, who are seeking advice especially on the research and evidence-gathering needed to substantiate their case.

### **Learning-by-doing: Using real-time events to develop skills and knowledge**

A third useful capacity-building strategy has been the use of real-time events as hands-on learning opportunities to support stakeholders' understanding about women's rights. This has been successfully employed in the area of gender-responsive governance, for example, where grassroots women leaders in Thailand and Cambodia were

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trained to incorporate CEDAW concepts and principles into their campaigns and policy platforms while they were running for election. Other local women activists developed on-the-job skills to organize community forums, and mobilize other women to vote and support female candidates. In Indonesia, an NGO review of electoral laws, followed by an advocacy campaign to urge for legal reform to increase women's participation in politics, led to key amendments being made to two laws. These now provide for a mandatory 30 percent quota for women candidates in new political parties, and a 'zipper' system that requires that one out of every three candidates on party lists be female. The process of conducting the review, which used a CEDAW lens, was useful in terms of strengthening NGOs' CEDAW-based research ability, and in contributing to the body of available information and evidence on the situation of women in Indonesia. Other CEDAW-framed research studies and reviews were carried out with similar effect in Thailand, on gender bias in judicial decision-making, and in the Philippines, on laws related to women's economic rights.

Related to this is skills-building on documentation, specifically on the systematic collection and analysis of data to develop evidence-based case studies. While the use of case studies is not uncommon among civil society groups to help explain difficult concepts and relate these to everyday life, most tend to be anecdotal and not well documented (scant figures, lacking attribution, and poor details for example). NGOs are learning how to accurately and systematically record incidents of discrimination and rights violations, and use these to not just develop case studies, but to also serve as concrete data for reporting on and monitoring of CEDAW implementation

The University of the Philippines Centre for Women's Studies (UP-CWS) has been working with women's rights NGOs in the Philippines to hone their skills on writing up case studies both on discrimination against women and on good practices in implementing CEDAW. A recent workshop in December 2008 brought a group of NGO representatives together as a follow-up to an earlier training on monitoring CEDAW. Participants were asked to come to the workshop with a case study that they developed using assessment tools that were provided at the previous training session. Wilma Rojas from UP-CWS, and the facilitator of the workshop, said that case study development was an important way to track levels of understanding about CEDAW and improve NGO capability to promote substantive equality for women. "Most NGOs in the Philippines are familiar with using case studies, but often these are anecdotal and not analysed from a CEDAW perspective. Our workshop is focusing on documentation skills to ultimately create a collection of different case studies that cite and relate to CEDAW, which NGOs will have as a resource to use in their advocacy, and which we can also use as inputs in the next NGO shadow report process," she said. "Gender issues are not always easy to see on the surface—we often need to look below the surface and good case studies help us to do that."

The CEDAW reporting process has provided governments with one of the best practical learning opportunities. Governments have received technical assistance and support on state reporting and, in the process, have expanded their capacity to coordinate and write their own reports. This has removed reliance on external consultants, and made it a more consultative and collaborative process among different government sectors. The mock sessions that help governments prepare for their presentation to the CEDAW Committee, and activities that involve preparing responses to Committee questions on their reports, and improving data collection and analysis are other examples. These activities have

helped contribute towards increasing national ownership for the reporting process and the overall implementation of the Convention.

For NGOs as well, more than attending any training or workshop, the process of compiling the shadow report itself has greatly enhanced their capacities in terms of expanding their knowledge of gender concerns and relating their areas of work to the Convention. They have been exposed to the workings of the international human rights treaty system, and learnt how to navigate the CEDAW process to make their voices heard. They have also developed a variety of skills in systematic data collection and analysis, report writing, and network building and facilitation.

### Lessons learned: Effective training

Several useful lessons have been learned in the course of the many training activities around CEDAW and women's rights that have taken place over the last several years. Many of the lessons outlined below, while drawn from the experiences of government and NGO partners within a CEDAW training context, are also applicable to training on other issues and in other contexts.

#### *Providing follow-up training to reinforce understanding*

One-off general training workshops tend to have limited impact on audience levels of understanding, because the Convention's framework and principles can be initially difficult to follow, especially for those with an already poor baseline understanding of gender and rights concepts. Participants may walk away knowing that the Convention exists and requires certain government obligations, but they may not fully understand how to connect it with their everyday lives. Consecutive or follow-up training, held with the same group of participants, addresses this gap. Follow-up training is useful to test participants' true understanding of key principles, and to then delve into how CEDAW can be applied in different contexts. The dynamic development of CEDAW resource pools is reliant on consecutive training.

#### *Providing ongoing professional learning for trainers*

The number of trainers and their respective depth of knowledge about CEDAW vary from country to country, and organization to organization in the region. A limited few have professional training backgrounds, while many tend to be both new to the Convention and its principles, and unskilled in the art of training itself (such as government staff who have been given new roles as in-house trainers). Furthermore, many trainers, whether male or female, may lack gender sensitivity, especially when they do not possess prior knowledge or experience on gender and women's rights issues. It is therefore invaluable for trainers to undergo ongoing training themselves, even while they are training others. Beyond deepening their understanding of women's rights and gender equality concerns, trainers will benefit from building skills in workshop planning, content design, facilitation, delivery of material, evaluation of impact and adult learning methodologies. Regular training will also provide opportunities for trainers to explore the application of CEDAW in different situations and how to explain CEDAW to different stakeholders effectively. Peer learning and peer critique among trainers can be helpful to further develop training capabilities.

*Ensuring appropriate trainers for target groups*

Stakeholders in different countries have highlighted that how trainers are perceived by trainees, especially in terms of their qualifications or expertise on the subject, is a key consideration in seeking to achieve positive training results. If trainers are not seen as especially knowledgeable on the topic, or having the necessary professional background to legitimize their instruction, participants could devalue the importance or relevance of the training. This is especially true in the justice sector, where it is difficult for anyone without a legal background to be accepted by judges or prosecutors as legitimate trainers. NGOs that have succeeded in this area have typically been those with strong legal expertise and experience.

Another example is training provided to indigenous and religious communities—here, the language, cultural background and religion of the trainer can seriously affect how he or she is regarded by participants. NGOs in the Philippines and Thailand who do workshops in Muslim communities say that unless trainers themselves are Muslim, it is extremely difficult for participants to feel like they can relate to what is being said. Sometimes, the sex of the trainer is also a factor. In a number of countries, male trainers said that male participants appeared more receptive to what they were saying—they felt that it was easier to remove the stigma attached to the word ‘gender’ that many men feel, when it was being discussed by another man.



Participants role-playing at a NGO workshop on monitoring CEDAW implementation in the Philippines

Photo by Leigh Pasqual - UNIFEM

*Using a participatory training approach*

According to numerous trainers, this type of approach has helped to enhance the training experience of participants and facilitate better understanding of the content of the training. The participatory approach refers to using less lecture style and more audience involvement formats, which requires participants to engage in a more direct and active way with the workshop’s content and process. Elements of the participatory approach include small breakout/

working group discussions that report back to the wider group, role play, group presentations, ongoing question and answer segments, and getting participants to continually articulate their understanding of key concepts during the course of the workshop. This approach has been found especially helpful to break the ice between participants, stimulate sharing of ideas and better gauge the level of awareness and interest in the subject.

However, most NGOs who use the participatory approach stress that the context is important when determining the level of participation expected. In rural areas, for example, participants may not be as confident as those in urban settings, and may be more uncomfortable with sharing their thoughts, asking questions or voicing their concerns. The cultural context is also important—social norms and practices (including religious ones) in some communities can affect participation. In indigenous Muslim communities in Cambodia, for instance, NGOs who included music and dance elements in their workshops as icebreakers found that these were inappropriate since they were considered socially unacceptable for women in these communities.<sup>5</sup> In general, some countries in the

region like the Philippines and Indonesia have social cultures that are more familiar and comfortable with the participatory style, while in other countries like Lao PDR and Viet Nam, where social cultures tend to be more reserved, participants are more familiar with the lecture format, and may need time to get used to the participatory approach.

### *Introducing CEDAW and women's rights through contextual entry points*

In many training activities across the region, the use of contextual entry points has proved critical to introducing CEDAW and the concepts of rights and gender equality to training participants. Relating the Convention to familiar situations, concerns or areas of work transforms it from something abstract to something easier to relate to. This also helps to mitigate perceptions that CEDAW is something foreign and incompatible with local beliefs and practices.

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Entry points can include the different priorities of governments at the national and local level. In the Philippines, for example, the Gender and Development (GAD) budget policy is a key focus area for local government, and training includes ensuring that local GAD provisions intersect with the CEDAW framework. ADKASI trainers in Indonesia have used local governance issues, such as budgeting, public service delivery, and education and health care access as entry points to educate local parliamentarians on how to apply the CEDAW framework.

Legislation has been a useful entry point to discuss CEDAW in several countries. Here, CEDAW is often introduced as an international law that substantiates and complements domestic legislation to protect women and further their rights, particularly in the light of state obligations. The Law on Gender Equality in Viet Nam and the Law on Women and Development in Lao PDR, for example, are related to the CEDAW framework and principles during training for legislators and government staff. Legislation on domestic violence is often connected to CEDAW to explain the rights women have to seek justice against their attackers, and how to claim those rights.

Women and governance is yet another entry point that has been used in countries such as Cambodia, Indonesia, Thailand and Timor-Leste, where elections have been good opportunities to encourage greater female participation in public life. Here, CEDAW has been introduced to validate advocacy for more women in decision-making, to explain the concept of non-discrimination and the merits of gender equality, and to substantiate the call for temporary special measures to level the playing field for women.

Many NGOs use specific concerns that women pinpoint in their communities as entry points. In ethnic minority groups in Thailand, CEDAW has been introduced through discussions about discriminatory cultural practices, poor access to education and health care, government policy on forestry management, and the right to citizenship. In rural, indigenous communities in the Philippines, CEDAW has been tied into discussions about livelihood and land rights, early marriage and polygamy.

## Development of local resource materials

In recent years, governments and NGOs have spent considerable time and effort on producing a variety of resource materials for the national context. In several countries, for a long time, not even the text of the Convention was available in the national language, let alone any document relating the different kinds of discrimination that the Convention addresses to the everyday lives of women in each country. This contributed to people's perception that the Convention was a 'foreign' ideal. The localized resource materials have several uses, including furthering public awareness on CEDAW and women's rights, serving as learning tools and guides for capacity development, reviewing or highlighting national actions to advance women's rights, and supporting advocacy for reform of discriminatory laws, policies and programmes.

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Training manuals or modules either already exist or are in development in all seven UNIFEM programme countries, tailored to specific audiences and contexts. Some have been developed by NWMs, such as the Ministry of Women Empowerment of Indonesia, and the CNCW in Cambodia, while others have been produced by NGOs, and are being used to train civil society groups as well as government agencies. Training materials on CEDAW and the Cambodian MDGs are being used to train trainers from several government ministries including information,

labour, health, education and agriculture, fisheries and forestry. In Indonesia, different modules exist for national government officials, local district administrators, NGOs and journalists, while in the Philippines a training manual has been developed specifically for the judiciary. In Lao PDR, separate manuals are being finalized by the National Commission for the Advancement of Women (NCAW), the Ministry of Justice (MOJ), and the Lao Women's Union (LWU)—all are being adapted for different target audiences and emphasize different substantive areas. The MOJ manual, for example, which is being used to train members of the judicial system and the police, focuses on the application of CEDAW within domestic laws, especially the Law on Women and Development. It also uses domestic violence as an issue focus. By contrast, the NCAW manual is more focused around the meaning of state obligations, and the monitoring of CEDAW implementation through state reporting and the Concluding

Observations. The LWU manual is intended for use at the village level, to raise public awareness about women's rights and to train local village mediation units (VMUs) on avoiding discriminatory practices. The focus of their manual is gender mainstreaming within village processes, and case studies draw from practical areas of work for VMUs, such as gender-based violence, divorce and land or inheritance disputes.

Several assessments, research studies and reviews on gender issues have been undertaken, expanding the body of national data and information on the situation of women. Country gender assessments such as those carried out in Cambodia, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam have helped to gather more sex-disaggregated statistics to measure gaps in, and the impact of, policies and programmes for women, and whether substantive equality is being achieved. A review of laws in the areas of governance, violence against women, the economy and access to justice, carried out by governments and NGOs in Cambodia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam, has significantly helped to identify existing direct and indirect discriminatory legal provisions that do not comply with or contradict the Convention. A regional guide is currently in development that examines the legislative compliance of domestic laws with CEDAW in Cambodia, Indonesia and Viet Nam, with a view to creating a set of legislative indicators for Southeast Asia to inform recommendations for legal reform in accordance with the Convention. In Timor-Leste, a research study is in progress using a CEDAW perspective to examine Timorese culture, attitudes and practices towards women in a variety of contexts—rural and urban settings, matriarchal and patriarchal societies and among male and female village leaders.

To enhance the utility of local resource materials, they must be made available in local languages and dialects. This is especially important for materials produced for public education. Key CEDAW documents such as the text of the Convention, Concluding Observations, and General Recommendations need to be translated from English, often not only into national languages but sub-national ones as well, to ensure as wide a reach as possible. In the Philippines, for example, translations of the Convention exist in Pilipino and six other local languages, while in Timor-Leste translations are now available in Portuguese, Tetum and Bahasa Indonesia. Several countries have also produced public education resources to reach non-literate populations, including posters and leaflets that use drawings and diagrams instead of words to illustrate key messages.

## Government-NGO engagement on capacity-building

In some countries, NGOs who are already established as qualified trainers on a variety of topics have begun adding CEDAW to their programmes, and in most cases developing specific CEDAW modules that are offered both for stand-alone training on CEDAW, or integrated into other training programmes around gender equality and women's rights. They are being increasingly tapped as resource persons by other NGOs and by government. Among others, NGOs like GADC in Cambodia, FFW and WAY Lampang in Thailand, and PILIPINA and WAGI in the Philippines have either provided training sessions or specific training modules on government request.

WAGI was asked to customize a CEDAW training programme for government agencies, carried out in early 2006, to prepare for the Philippines' upcoming CEDAW review in August that year. The training helped participants to understand the obligations of the state to CEDAW, and how to implement commitments to women's rights through gender-responsive government policies (such as the GAD policy). Thailand's Office of Women's Affairs and Family Development (OWAFD) has adopted a training module on CEDAW and women's rights developed by the FFW into its regular training programmes for government staff, particularly those working on CEDAW reporting in each department and ministry. It also adopted training modules on women's participation in local politics produced by Association for the Promotion of Equal Rights, and in 2007 and 2008 co-organized training workshops with NGOs on CEDAW monitoring and reporting, and on women and gender-responsive governance. In Cambodia, the NWM requested training from GADC and the NGO CEDAW Committee for the GMAGs in various line ministries to follow up on recommendations made in the CEDAW Committee's Concluding Observations.

## Institutionalizing CEDAW in national institutions of learning

*“ An important strategy for facilitating national ownership of CEDAW has been to target institutions of learning to embed CEDAW and the notions of gender equality and respect for women's human rights in their curriculum ”*

An important strategy for facilitating national ownership of CEDAW has been to target institutions of learning to embed CEDAW and the notions of gender equality and respect for women's human rights in their curriculum. The hope is that this will contribute to nurturing next generation leaders, professionals and government officials who understand the critical importance of CEDAW and act to promote and protect women's human rights through their work.

In recent years, numerous initiatives have received support to integrate CEDAW within government training systems and academic curricula. This is helping to make implementation less arbitrary, and less dependent on *ad hoc* decisions, the preferences of individual leaders or the thrust of particular government administrations. It is leading to strengthened national ownership of the implementation process, as political will becomes embedded in a more systematic way. It is also helping to change attitudes and cultivate a culture of respect for the rights of women. Moreover, institutionalized training and capacity is proving helpful in limiting the negative effect that high staff turnover within government can have on the sustainability of efforts.

## **Government training institutions**

Government training institutions, such as the Ho Chi Minh National Academy of Politics and Public Administration in Viet Nam, the Philippine Judicial Academy (PJA), and the National Institutes of Public Administration in Indonesia and in Timor-Leste, provide training to new and existing cadres of public servants on the policies and systems of government. These institutions have begun to reflect CEDAW in their training materials and curricula, helping to increase its prominence as a core human rights treaty and a practical framework for gender equality.

Dang Dung Chi, Deputy Director of the Research Institute of Human Rights of the Ho Chi Minh National Academy of Politics and Public Administration in Viet Nam described how CEDAW had recently become part of the human rights curriculum that his institute manages. “Since CEDAW is now integrated into our human rights training which is compulsory for all government trainees, everyone is expected to know about it. This is not only at the national level—provincial and commune leaders also must undergo the training. We are also being requested more frequently now to disseminate information on CEDAW to other institutions.” He says that he is pushing for more space for CEDAW in other curricula, and hopes it will become a separate course on its own in the near future.

At INAP in Timor-Leste, a training module on CEDAW was developed through several rounds of pilot testing with civil servants in three local districts. The module has been integrated into the core training curriculum for all new recruits, as well as courses related to career promotions. Twelve INAP trainers have become key CEDAW resource persons for the government administration, and have, since October 2008, been rolling out CEDAW training to all government ministries and state agencies, including government staff at the district level.

CEDAW is being institutionalized within academic and practitioner training for members of the judicial system in the Philippines. The PJA, the training arm of the Supreme Court, has been working with the Ateneo Human Rights Center to conduct regular seminars on gender sensitivity, CEDAW and the courts system for judges, lawyers and court personnel. The seminar training manual is being used as a key tool, and parts of it are now also being used in continuing legal education courses which are mandatory for all lawyers. A companion to the training manual created for the judiciary, *CEDAW Benchbook*, is also now being used as a core resource by the PJA in its regular training programmes.

### **Academic institutions**

Universities and other academic training bodies have begun incorporating CEDAW into their curricula and the training programmes they provide to national institutions. UP-CWS has been leading these efforts in the Philippines. They have focused on promoting ‘gender-fair’ education through review and revision of various aspects of the educational system to challenge inequities and discrimination based on sex, using the CEDAW framework. In 2006, UP-CWS began a project with regional gender resource centres to train college-level teachers on integrating CEDAW into their academic work, and developing or revising existing course syllabi to include CEDAW principles.<sup>6</sup> A related objective was to create a group of teacher-trainers who could then train others on how to use CEDAW in their classrooms and lesson plans.

A national seminar brought college teachers from eight regions together to devise eight model syllabi that incorporate CEDAW in different subjects, such as political science, sociology and history. The syllabi were then pilot tested with students, who also underwent pre- and post-evaluation surveys to gauge their reactions and level of understanding. Feedback forums followed (expanded to include more teachers than those at the initial seminar) to discuss the results, further refine the syllabi, and exchange teaching strategies that worked. This was then documented in a compendium of teacher guidelines and course syllabi. The compendium has most recently been used in a CEDAW workshop for the Commission on Higher Education, and top officials of state universities and colleges.<sup>7</sup>

According to Leny Ocasiones, who teaches sociology at the University of San Carlos, the teacher seminar was most useful because it was practical in showing just how to include the Convention within her course. “In my class on general sociology, for instance, I could bring in CEDAW when we talked about social equality.” She said the evaluation test with her students showed that at least half of them had a better understanding of women’s rights at the end, going from none at the beginning. “And it also made for some lively discussion between the boys and girls—most of the girls started questioning stereotypes, for example. I think this is definitely a good starting point.”

Another initiative to institutionalize CEDAW is being developed by the Association of Schools of Public Administration in the Philippines (ASPAP), an umbrella organization of about 100 member institutions offering courses on public administration and governance (PAG) throughout the country.<sup>8</sup> It provides guidance to its members on curriculum development, research and faculty capacity building. In 2007, the organization started a project to develop a CEDAW training course to mainstream CEDAW within the PAG curricula of its member schools. Says Derly Fernandez, the lead consultant on the project, “Gender and CEDAW are already informally introduced in PAG teaching, mainly because public servants need to be familiar with all our legislation related to gender concerns. But it’s not systematic in any way. We felt that a more formalized approach that offered proper resource material for teachers that is user-friendly and tailored to the Filipino context would go some way towards institutionalizing CEDAW in our member schools’ curricula.”

“*In my class on general sociology..., I could bring in CEDAW when we talked about social equality. ... [I]t made for some lively discussion between the boys and girls—most of the girls started questioning stereotypes. I think this is definitely a good starting point.*” – Leny Ocasiones, University of San Carlos, Philippines ”

Since PAG schools have the freedom to develop their own curriculum, there is no guarantee that they will want to use the course, she says, although many have shown an interest. The course includes four modules on human rights, women’s rights as human rights, the CEDAW framework and the practical application of gender and human rights to development and governance. Modules can be used together, or separately

as sections within other courses (such as budgeting, local government administration or human resource management). Some schools have already started using some of the modules, and some modules have also been incorporated into outreach training programmes for national and local government.

Achie Luhilima of Convention Watch, an NGO affiliated with the University of Indonesia, has been working on incorporating CEDAW into the law school curriculum, as well as training judges and would-be prosecutors on the applicability of the Convention within Indonesia's domestic legal system. Convention Watch has trained members of the justice system at the district and regency levels in a number of provinces, including Bantaeng, Jakarta and West Java. Ms. Luhilima said that the trainings have focused on showing that Indonesian law already contains many of the principles in CEDAW. "We try to get them to see that CEDAW is nothing new; that as an international bill of rights for women, it also fits in with our domestic laws." Ms. Luhilima is a big believer in going after the younger generation, whether they are law students or young judges and prosecutors. "The older judges are much more conservative, they say things like 'gender is Western' or 'there is no word for gender in Bahasa Indonesia'. Gender is still considered 'women's issues' and not 'human issues'. The younger generation is much more open and accepting about the concept of gender equality, and more willing to acknowledge that discrimination against women does exist."

## ENDNOTES

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1. Definitions of sustainability in UNIFEM programming have been drawn from *UNIFEM Programme: Facilitating CEDAW Implementation in Southeast Asia*, Evaluation Report, Universal Management Group, 2008.
2. These countries are Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, the Philippines, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam. Discussion in this chapter refers specifically to initiatives, actions and activities in these countries only.
3. *Summary Report: Regional Workshop on CEDAW Training Materials Development*, Miriam College-Women and Gender Institute, Philippines, 2006.
4. *Going CEDAW in the Philippines - The UNIFEM CEDAW Southeast Asia Programme 2005-2008*, UNIFEM, Philippines, 2008, p.7.
5. *Monitoring Report on 'Woman Outreach to Woman' (WOW) Project*, Committee to Promote Women in Politics (CPWP), Cambodia, 2008.
6. Regional gender resource centres are sub-national networks comprised of 70 percent academics and 30 percent government agencies and NGOs. They were initiated by UP-CWS and NCRFW to provide a variety of services at the local level, including academic research, resources persons, training and technical assistance on gender and development, and direct services such as counselling and legal referrals.
7. *Activity Report: Integrating the CEDAW Framework in the Teaching, Research and Extension Programs of the Regional Gender Resources Centers*, UP Center for Women's Studies and the UP Center for Women's Studies Foundation, Inc., Philippines, 2006.
8. There are over 200 schools offering courses on public administration in the Philippines, with varying levels of academic quality. The national Civil Service Commission sets the qualifications required of civil servants, but does not regulate or set standards for curricula. One of the roles of ASPAP is setting standards in curriculum development that it encourages its members to follow in order to achieve benchmark quality, according to Dery Fernandez of ASPAP in the Philippines.