

Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP)
The David and Lucile Packard Foundation



“Promoting Family Planning & Reproductive Health at
the Workplace through Public-Private Partnership”

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The TUCP-Packard RH Project is the only trade union-led Reproductive Health Program in the Philippines. TUCP remains to be the strongest advocate for workers' rights and RH at the workplace. The following summarizes the project's milestones from July 2008 to July 2009:

a) RH@WORK is Decent Work!

Advocacy efforts of the project generated wider acceptance that RH@Work is Decent Work. RH@Work is institutionalized in the 2008-2010 Philippine Decent Work Common Agenda --the country's blueprint for the implementation of Decent Work nationwide. It is supported by tripartite constituents --workers, employers and government and other social partners. RH@Work is an important indicator to demonstrate achievement of the goals of the Common Agenda.

b) Sustained Accessibility of Workers to Reproductive Health Commodities and Services.

Six (6) union-run Family Welfare Clinics in different regions in the country and eight (8) partner company health facilities are accessible sources of family planning, RH and other essential medical-related commodities and services for workers.

5,420 new acceptors were motivated and recruited to practice modern family planning methods. Varied RH care services were provided to some 20,443 workers. 5,298 individuals were provided with FP information, counselling and referral. 9,728 accessed maternal and child health (MCH) services. 995 workers availed of STI management and counselling services. Some 161 young workers ages 18 to 25 sought services ranging from information, counselling, referral and actual RH-related medical services. 16 male workers consulted and were referred for further testing on prostate-related concerns. 4,245 workers were provided with other essential health and clinical services.

c) Continued FP/RH@Work Advocacy and Knowledge-Sharing

70,969 workers were reached with various FP and RH advocacy and knowledge-sharing activities including regular radio program at the union-run DYLA in Cebu. One hundred fifteen (115) HR practitioners and workers attended different orientation courses.

d) Strengthened partnership with national and regional government implementers, like-minded organizations and networks for purposes of improving workers access to FP/RH information and services and advocacy for a national RH policy.

The TUCP collaborates with tripartite partners --the Department of Labor and Employment; the Employers' Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP); and the Federation of Free Workers (FFW) and Alliance of Progressive Labor (APL) to achieve FP/RH indicators in the Philippines Decent Work Common Agenda. This is a **tripartite model of public-private partnership in implementing and sustaining the program.**

The project also succeeded in getting the support of the Formal Labor and Migrant Workers Council of the National Anti-Poverty Commission (FLMW-NAPC) to adopt FP/RH as a poverty alleviation strategy.

e) Enhanced Capacities of Trade Union Leaders as Frontline Advocate and Sources of Correct and Accurate FP/RH Information

Twenty-eight (28) new trade union leaders from Riverside Medical Center and Western Negros University were trained and engaged as advocates for FP/RH Care programs and services at the enterprise, regional and national level



28 Union Officers from the Academe and the Health Sectors underwent capacity building training on Leadership for FP/RH@Work

CONTEXT

The Bureau of Labor and Employment Statistics (BLES-DOLE) reported that the labor force of the country grew by as much as 2.9% or an additional 1.089 million bringing the total labor force at 38,432 million from 2008 to 2009. This is an increase of 0.3 percentage points in the 2009 Labor Force Participation Rate (LFPR) to 64.6% from 64.3% from 2008.

The country was fortunate to be minimally hit by the Global Financial Crisis. When other countries experienced negative growth in their employment rate, the country registered a modest growth of 2.6% (916,000). This is slightly lower from the previous year's registry of 3.8%. However, with a larger number of new entrants to the labor force, the growth in employment was not able to equalize the numbers which resulted into a slightly higher unemployment rate at .2% (7.6% from 7.4%).

Although new jobs were generated in the period of July 2008 – July 2009, lay-offs accounted for the low growth in the employment rate. Starting the 2nd quarter of 2008, the country experienced an increase in the rate of separation among employed individuals ranging from 7.46% (1st quarter, 2008), 8.57% (2nd quarter, 2008), 9.00% (3rd quarter, 2008), 8.45% (4th quarter, 2008) and 9.02% (1st quarter, 2009). The trend however changes by the 2nd quarter of 2009 wherein only about 7.53% were separated from work.

Those separated from work were either due to termination, closure of companies or employee initiated. In 2008 and until the 2nd quarter of 2009, a total of 3,874 establishments reported that they have permanently displaced some 90,788 workers due to the prevailing financial crisis.

Another 33,000 workers have accepted to work shorter working hours in companies affected by the GFC to ensure their employment.

Migrant workers (OFWs) were also not spared by the problems brought by the GFC. As of January 30 of this year, the DOLE Secretary reported that 5,404 overseas Filipino workers (OFW) have been displaced since October 2008.

33% of population, or 27.3 million Filipinos, are poor (an increase by 3% from previous data). Number has increased by 3.8 million. 27 out of 100 Filipino families are poor. Poverty in the Philippines is still a rural phenomenon; 3 out of 4 poor families are found in the rural areas (March 2008).

The 2008 National Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) statistics affirmed previous conclusions that the country may not be able to attain certain targets in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015. Among these are access to reproductive health care services and reduction of maternal mortality.

Although maternal deaths have been on a decline, the improvement in the reduction of “maternal deaths per 100,000 live births has slowed down, from 209 deaths in 1993 to 162 deaths in 2006,” (Midterm MDG Report, Philippines). This is still very far from the target of only 52 in 2015. This situation can be attributed by the following indicators:

- Low level of deliveries in Health Facility at 44%; and
- Only about 62% of total delivery is facilitated by a health professional.

“Access to reproductive health care improved at a modest rate for currently married women ages 15-49, from 49 percent in 2001 to 50.6 percent in 2006.” (Midterm MDG Report, Philippines). With the 2015 target set at 80%, the possibility of attaining it is considered low. The 2008 NDHS validates the 2006 result of the Family Planning Survey (FPS) where the results showed that the Contraceptive Prevalence Rate (CPR) stagnated at 50.7%. Alarming, the rate of traditional methods being used has increased to 16.7% from 13.2% in 2005 and 14.8% in 2006.

Furthermore, the 2008 NDHS showed that Total Fertility Rate is at 3.3 down from 3.5 as reported in the 2003 NDHS. Infant and under five mortality rates have gone down to 25 and 34 respectively, from 35 and 48 as reported by the 1998 NDHS.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The current project endeavours to address current FP/RH challenges including: (a) high unmet need for family planning and reproductive health services; (b) bringing balance between work-life responsibilities in conditions where workers are struggling to earn a living for the family while coping with the economic needs of dependents; (c) evolving work environment that challenges our “breadwinner” assumptions and increasing labor participation of women; (e) need for greater competitiveness of workers and industries; (f) reluctance among many employers to adopt an FP/RH which remains as one big barrier to the program; (g) persistent need for continuing advocacy and education of workers on FP/RH; and (h) the fact that social responsibility (SR) programs of enterprises in the Philippines still fail to address priority workers’ concerns such as FP/RH at the workplace, compliance to internationally accepted core labor standards, etc.

Generally, the program aims to improve **access to family planning and reproductive health services at the workplace** through the exercise of social responsibility in enterprises and better public-private partnerships. Specifically, it hopes to achieve the following short-term outcomes:

- a. Improved accessibility and delivery of FP/RH supplies **to new FP acceptors** and services to **workers** through the **five (5) union-run Family Welfare Clinics** and social marketing of contraceptives by way of establishing **new FP distribution outlets**, franchising of **PopShops** and collaboration with barangay health volunteers.
- b. Enhanced delivery of FP/RH information contact center, special economic zone, transportation, migrant and informal sector workers **through behavior change communication and** strengthened public and private partnership and dialogue.
- c. **Improved private sector support to FP/RH programs at the workplace** by strengthening public-private partnership/dialogue for FP/RH at the workplace at the national level and **in five (5) regions** through the promotion of SRE inclusive of FP/RH programs and services.
- d. **Built the capacity of local unions** to ensure the proper application of SR principles including the effective implementation of FP/RH at the workplace.

THE TUCP



The Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP) is the largest trade union center in the country. It is a confederation of 27 national labor federations, representing some 2,571 local unions nationwide, and 800 associations, cooperatives and informal sector members throughout the country, representing some 750,000 individual members. The TUCP's established organizational capability and ability to take a leadership position in public interest coalitions has led to the TUCP as prime partner in projects of various local and international funding agencies.

The TUCP is the first trade union organization in the country to implement a comprehensive health and welfare services for its members, and has been actively engaged in promoting Family Planning since 1984. USAID funding was provided as initial support that enabled the TUCP to establish and operate medical and dental clinics in various parts of the country, as well as train nurses and community-based health volunteers. These clinics and trained health volunteers provided information and services on FP, as well as primary health care, and outreach medical services. The program was implemented for eight years (from 1984 through 1992). Other international donors including UNFPA and the Packard Foundation later broadened these efforts. Currently, the TUCP operates five Family Welfare Clinics in Davao, Cebu, Bacolod City, Cavite, and Laguna, staffed by highly trained professional health officers. Their services include primary health care and medical outreach programs, and have evolved into comprehensive RH information and services, as well as management of reproductive tract infections (RTI), including HIV/AIDS at the workplace. In addition, it has initiated government-private sector partnerships to mobilize broader support for the program initiatives on FP/RH at the workplace.

TUCP's initiative at the workplace resulted in the inclusion of specific provisions that defines the commitment of employers to addressing the family planning and reproductive health care needs of their workers in the negotiated collective bargaining agreements, assuring quality FP/RH care benefits for some 300,000 enterprise-based workers. In 2004 the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Department of Health and Commission on Population conferred on TUCP the Best Practice Award among seven non-government organizations and a plaque of recognition for its pioneering efforts in instituting FP/RH programs at the workplace.

The TUCP was the lead organization involved in the crafting of DOLE Department Order 56-03, entitled "Rationalizing the Implementation of Family Welfare Program (FWP) in DOLE."

OVERVIEW OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Capitalizing from the gains in the first year of implementing the project, the TUCP RH program carried on with reaching out to more and more workers, their families and communities.

Despite of the many barriers --lack of a national policy and conducive environment for RH programs and varying degree of acceptance among target audience on the issue of RH – in delivering RH services and advocating for FP/RH@Work, modest gains have been realized.



Entitled "Dispelling Myths and Misconceptions," this one-day BCC activity within Hacienda San Diego in Silay City, Negros Occidental focuses on Family Planning, Sexually Transmitted Infections and HIV and AIDS. Some 100 union members from the sugar cane plantations attended the program

RH@Work is Decent Work!

One of the significant achievements of the project on the reported period is the acceptance of tripartite constituents and social partners that **RH@Work is Decent Work**.

TUCP successfully negotiated the inclusion of RH@Work in the Philippine Decent Work Common Agenda. The Agenda is the country's 2008-2010 blueprint for the implementation of Decent Work. Launched in October 2008 by tripartite constituents --workers, employers, and government, RH@Work is highlighted as an essential indicator of success of the Common Agenda. RH@Work is seen as an important factor in achieving the goals of social protection for workers.

Decent Work is a global advocacy of workers. It is a widely accepted workplace principle that needs to be adopted and supported locally and internationally. It highlights the promotion and respect for core labor standards, employment creation, social protection and social

dialogue. Decent work promotes opportunities for all women and men to obtain decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity.

It is hugely supported by the International labor Organization (ILO).

Sustained Accessibility of Workers to Reproductive Health Services

A total of 5,420 new family planning acceptors were motivated and subsequently provided services by the Reproductive Health Officers (RHOs) adding up to the roster of some 10,000 current FP users continuously serviced in the Family Welfare Clinics.

New FP acceptors are broken down as follows: Pills --3,022; IUD --216; Injectables --190; Condoms --1,557; and NFP --435.

In addition, the union-run Family Welfare Clinics provide varied RH care services to some 18,443 workers.

- 5,298 individuals were provided with FP information, counselling and referral.
- 9,728 accessed maternal and child health (MCH) services.
- 995 workers availed of STI management and counselling services.
- Some 161 young workers ages 18 to 25 sought services ranging from information, counselling, referral and actual RH-related medical services.
- 16 male workers consulted and were referred for further testing on prostate-related concerns.
- 4,245 workers were provided with other health and clinical services.

Six (6) Family Welfare Clinics (FWCs) sustain provision of comprehensive and quality RH care services to workers. These FWCs also bring services at vicinities accessible to workers –at the workplace and in communities. RH Officers (RHOs) take advantage of workers’ gatherings, seminars, meetings, elections and mass mobilizations, etc. to provide services.

Eight (8) clinics of Export Processing Zone locators in Laguna are assisted and provided with commodities by the RHOs of TUCP.

Three (3) PopShop franchises are sustained in partnership with DKT Philippines. The project brings FP and RH commodities through partnership with enterprise unions, company clinics and other organizations to serve as contraceptive distribution outlets. Eight (8) of such mini-distribution outlets are existing.

FP/RH@Work advocacy and knowledge-sharing

70,969 workers were reached through various FP and RH advocacy and knowledge-sharing activities including a regular radio program at the union-run DYLA.

One hundred fifteen (115) HR practitioners and workers have attended the different orientation courses focusing on the following programs: (1) Forum on Family Welfare:

PhilHealth Orientation; (2) Manager’s Forum: Family Welfare – FP and MCH; (3) Improving Family Health Services at the Workplace: An Update on Responsible Parenthood; (4) TUCP National Labor Forum on Decent Work for All; (5) International Commemoration Day for Dead and Injured Workers; (6) Decent Work for Women Workers in EPZs; (7) Roundtable Discussion on Promoting Work-Life Balance; and (8) Seminar on RH, Decent Work and Global Financial Crisis.

Positive health-seeking behaviour is promoted through several behaviour change communication (BCC) activities were undertaken by the RHOs, trained peer educators and company program implementers. Seventy-two (72) plant level BCC activities were conducted reaching 1,745 workers.

Strengthening Partnership

On strengthening Public-Private Partnership towards Sustaining FP/RH at the workplace, the project has been successful in three areas:

a) **Collaboration with tripartite constituents – government, workers and employers**

As a tripartite partner and member of the Decent Work National Tripartite Advisory Committee (DW-NTAC), the TUCP seized the opportunity and made sure that family planning and reproductive health indicators are part of the Decent Work Common Agenda. The Agenda, being an official tripartite work program, effectively achieved a tripartite model of private-public partnership for the implementation and sustainability of the FP/RH@Work Program.

The Philippine Tripartite Constituents include the Department of Labor and Employment representing the government; the Employers’ Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP) as employers’ representative; and the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP), Federation of Free Workers (FFW) and Alliance of Progressive Labor (APL) as active labor groups. The Philippine Office of the International Labor Organization (ILO) is also part of this partnership.

b) **Strengthened partnership with regional government implementers, likeminded organizations, and networks**

FP/RH@Work issues and concerns are brought to the forefront through TUCP actively collaborates with these partners in the development of policy recommendations that are hoped to ultimately lead to a national RH policy. Such policy recommendations were transmitted to policy-makers for consideration.

Among the collaborative activities or “Calls to Action,” where TUCP and its affiliates played important role include the following: (a) The call for the passage of a comprehensive reproductive health policy; (b) Appeal to the government to strengthen its services and facilities to address maternal deaths due to pregnancy-related complications; (c) Advocacy for greater government investment for RH Services and accelerated services for job



TUCP voiced support on the call to end the incidence of maternal deaths during the Candle-lighting Memorial held on World Population Day

placement as an immediate way to ensure that individuals will be able to provide for their RH needs and those of their families; (d) Commemoration of those who have died because of HIV and AIDS-related causes; and (e) Call for improved HIV and AIDS services.

c) Engagement of the Formal Labor and Migrant Workers' Council of the National Anti-Poverty Commission (FLMW-NAPC) in support of FP/RH@Work Programs as effective anti-poverty strategies

The TUCP has been responsible in proposing and leading discussions on FP/RH@Work at the Formal Labor and Migrant Workers Council of the National Anti-Poverty Commission resulting in a Council Resolution supporting the passage of a national FP/RH Policy. The Resolution pushed for sound FP/RH@Work Programs as an anti-poverty strategy.

The FLMW-NAPC is comprised of twenty-five organizations of formal labor --workers in private enterprises and public sector employees, and overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs).

Continuing Education and Development of Trade Unions Leaders as Frontline Advocates and Source of Accurate FP/RH Information

The project has and continues to succeed in motivating trade union leaders to take the lead in ensuring FP/RH care services at the enterprise, regional and national levels. Several industries are very active in RH@Work specifically companies located in EPZs, transports, agricultural and other industrial settings. The project has recently added into the list union leaders at the Riverside Medical Center, a teaching tertiary hospital in Bacolod City and Western Negros University.

A "Leadership Training/ Seminar on FP/RH@Work for Union Members in the Academe" was conducted to increase the level of knowledge and appreciation of union leaders on reproductive health, Decent Work and Work-Life Balance.

CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

a) Unions, including their coalitions and networks' role as workplace advocates for FP/RH are essentially important, particularly when workers' rights and welfare are under attack.

Workers put premium on their health and welfare. The same cannot be said to many employers. To the latter, business bottom line comes first. In times of crisis like the current global economic slowdown, non-monetary benefits, including reproductive and family planning are sometimes used as negotiating leverage of workers, if only to keep employment and help enterprises survive.

The Department of labor and Employment issued a Department Order on Labor Flexibility to help enterprises make adjustments to survive.

Regular employees were retrenched or offered early retirement only to be replaced with contractual workers. Shorter work hours, work shifting, pay cuts, and suspension of other benefits were implemented as coping mechanisms. Working conditions and benefits of contractual workers can be abysmal, in some cases, bordering to inhuman.

The TUCP, its affiliates and networks sounded the alarm. The TUCP expressed disagreement to the Department Order as it is seen to be prone to abuse. Regular jobs and welfare benefits will be compromised. A 11-point proposal was submitted to government including call on the following: (1) stricter and heightened implementation and monitoring of core labor standards to improve social protection of workers; (2) Assistance to small and medium sized enterprises as they are host to many, many workers who are most in need of assistance; and (3) attention should be paid to the plight of those in the informal economy, women, youth and children.



Companies in EPZs with model FP/RH Programs were awarded with Plaque of Recognition during the Manager's Forum on Family Welfare – FP and MCH. POPCOM R-4 Director Lolita Layser and Project Manager Rafael E. Mapalo led the awarding. Guests in the program were representatives from the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Employers Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP) and Local Government of Iloilo.

b) Decent Work is an excellent prospect to institutionalize and sustain FP/RH programs at the workplace.

Decent Work is gaining stronger support among workers, employers and government in the Philippines, in the ASEAN Region and in the world. With the technical and financial support of tripartite partners, the Decent Work Country Program can serve as vehicle to strengthen and enhance the availability and accessibility of quality FP/RH information and services at the workplace.

d) Promoting Family Planning and Reproductive Health as poverty alleviation strategy

The FLMW-NAPC has expressed support for FP/RH@Work as a sound anti-poverty alleviation strategy. This should be pushed and supported further to help the FLMW-NAPC and the other thirteen (13) NAPC Basic Sector Councils to scale up their advocacy activities and secure government funding. The other 13 NAPC Basic Sector Councils include one each for the Children, Youth, Women, NGOs, Farmers, Fisher Folks, Workers in the Informal Sector, Cooperatives, Elderly, Urban Poor, Indigenous Peoples, People with Disabilities, and Victims of Disaster.

e) Strengthening FP/RH@Work as a response to the challenges of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

The deadline to achieve Philippine MDG targets is fast approaching. The country's response constrained by the lack or absence of an enabling policy environment and strong opposition from certain sectors. There is a need for more aggressive actions to meet MDG deadlines. FP/RH@Work should be strengthened to complement government programs to meet the demands and needs of the Filipino individuals, couples and families. Support for expansion to reach individual industries/workplaces, which ultimately are the most accessible sources of services for workers, should be supported.