

WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT IN THE PHILIPPINES: AN EVALUATION OF A UNICEF-EAPRO PROGRAM

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With the objective of enhancing the participation of low-income women in community affairs, the UNICEF-East Asian Pakistan Regional Office launched a three-year action program in Burma, Pakistan and the Philippines. Assessment of the effects of the Philippine experiment took the form of self-evaluation by women-participants and an independent survey by the Institute of Philippine Culture. With qualitative and quantitative data coming from participant-observer reports, program staff reports, the people's participation and the survey, the IPC hopes to finish its final evaluation and recommendations at the end of 1978.

Background

In November 1976, the Institute of Philippine Culture signed a contract with the United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF)-Philippines to undertake the evaluation study of UNICEF's three-year action program on enhancing the participation of low-income women in community affairs. Since at that time the program has had one year of operation in two pilot areas in the Visayas and Mindanao, a midway evaluation of the mobilized area was considered necessary to provide a basis for continuation or redirection, as well as ideas for planning action on the still unmobilized areas.

A significantly different feature of this evaluation study is a two-pronged approach consisting of self-evaluation of program effects by the women-participants and an independent survey to be conducted by a research agency, the IPC in this case. The women-participants will be trained to articulate their own data needs and to establish a simple data

gathering, analysis and storage system. They will manage these themselves with only minimal guidance from community organization workers. In effect, the two-pronged evaluation approach is also a program input.

This move to involve the participants in evaluating program effects is a departure from the traditional Philippine research which usually conducts a study without informing the object of study of its aims and results, much less allowing program participants to evaluate program effects. Respondents have complained about the absence of feedback on studies that involved them. The main reason for this condition is the prevailing but already waning belief among academicians that research results are too sophisticated for the respondents to appreciate, and that even if the respondents are to be informed of the results, they cannot do anything useful with this knowledge. The research proponents disagree with this traditional academic view.

The Program

In 1975, the UNICEF-East Asian Pakistan

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Regional Office launched a three-year pilot program in Burma, Pakistan and the Philippines. As nations with differing cultural and religious backgrounds, it was thought that these countries would serve aptly as testing grounds for projects to enhance the participation of low-income urban and rural women in development and thereby raise their status in society. Cebu City and Kibawe, Bukidnon are two of the three pilot areas in the Philippines because these areas have either women's grassroots community action program (or strong potential for such) and are relatively unreached by government and private services.

The objectives of the Philippine project are:

1. To increase the awareness of the role of women in community affairs;
2. To increase the appreciation of the role of women in development;
3. To increase self-confidence and self-reliance in conducting and managing community affairs;
4. To increase skills in organizational and managerial activities;
5. To increase contribution to family and community levels of living;
6. To create linkages with government and non-government institutions.

To sum up, these objectives are in two levels: (a) at the local level, to help Filipino low-income women improve their capabilities, broaden their opportunities and strengthen their motivation for advancement within the framework of involvement with community affairs; and (b) at the policy level, to accumulate knowledge and experience for development of policies and programs on the effective delivery of services to the people.

It is not the success or failure of community actions that is the concern of the project but the participation of women in the improvement of their society.

The Program Inputs

The program has no formal blue-print of

action for operationalizing its objectives. However, it has guidelines and policies and strategies, the principal ones being "people's participation" and "creating linkages between people's organization and government and non-government institutions." Precisely due to these strategies, the program assumed a play-it-by-ear interaction and transaction with the participants, improvising and adjusting along the way in their mutual aim of developing skills among the participants in managing their organization and the problem of their community. "Enhancing" then took the meaning enriching, developing, investing, reenforcing managerial skills in conducting organizational activities for the improvement of living conditions of families in the community.

The Transaction Between the Program and Participants

The enhancement program focuses on creating and supporting situations whereby women participants are drawn into active positions for determining the needs of the community and solutions for meeting these needs. With the assistance of community organization workers in the areas chosen, members of interested women's organizations prepare their respective project proposals. Where no community organization exists, women were encouraged to organize formally, since UNICEF deals only with groups.

In the process of negotiating with UNICEF for funds and/or supplies to underwrite their community projects, the women-participants are deliberately exposed to a series of requirements calculated to strengthen their collective efforts and give them a sense of efficacy. They must, for example, show proof that they have explored and exhausted all other means of assistance from both government and private agencies within the community, that they can manage the proper allocation of any assistance rendered, and that the assistance sought is for the community and the expressed need of the majority.

The assistance provided is often channeled through government agencies, thereby provid-

ing another opportunity for the participants to negotiate with officials of these institutions and consequently develop their skills in carrying out community actions.

Rationale

The program departs significantly from the traditional "welfare-oriented" type of programs in which ordinary people are mere consumers of services. Its basic approach stresses grassroots-level sharing in the entire process — planning, conceptualization, decision-making, implementation, and evaluation of issues and action affecting their lives. Instead of the usual dependence on government to determine, decide, plan and provide for the welfare of the people, the program trains the people to take part in the functions traditionally reserved for administrative elites.

The program creates linkages between government and private agencies and the participants by mobilizing both groups to negotiate directly with one another for the purpose of improving delivery of services to the community. Community organizations have very little chances of surviving without the support of government agencies while government institutions have generally remained ineffective due to lack of understanding of the needs of the people.

The Program Participants

The program is basically for the development of low-income women who are given a chance to be involved in planning, decision-making, and implementation of community actions. At most they have only been assigned supportive roles.

Members of indigenous low-income women's organizations have organized themselves with the assistance of community organizers in Cebu City and Kibawe, Bukidnon. Most of the women members are married with ages ranging from 19 to 60, with an elementary educational attainment, and experiences in negotiating with various agencies regarding land issues, and community living improvement.

The Research

The Problem

The research problem is to assess the effects of the program from June 1975 to June 1978. It is essential to know whether the program in fact enhanced the participation of women and in what ways the participants' level of change compared to the non-participants'. Assuming that there is a difference between the two groups, we need to know not only to what extent this can be attributed to the program; but perhaps more importantly how this type of program differs, if at all, from other types of community programs or from the situation in communities where the women are not organized.

At the end of the study, the results should provide answers to the following questions:

1. Has the program helped Filipino low-income women improve their capabilities, widen their own opportunities, and strengthen their motivations for advancement?
2. What methods or approaches have helped achieve the positive (or negative) results?

The paradigm below shows how the UNICEF program is conceptualized for purposes of evaluation.

The study focuses on the exposure of the community to the UNICEF through their community organizations as this study's independent variable, tries to measure participation and perceived improvement of living at the community level as the dependent variables. The independent variable can be ascertained by assessing the inputs of the program on a flow chart drawn from diaries, self-reported data, and other documents of the project from the donor and the recipients' points of view.

The indicators of the dependent variables fall into two types, the cognitive and the behavioral. The cognitive indicators include: (1) increased awareness and appreciation of the value of women's role in development, and (2) increased self-confidence and self-reliance in conducting and managing community actions.

The indicators of the behavioral type

Inputs	Outputs: enhanced participation	Ultimate objectives
1. Generating a project proposal for social service delivery through people's participation	1. Increased awareness and appreciation of women's role in community development	1. Development of women
2. Training in management of social service delivered	2. Increased skills in inter-organizational and intra-organizational management of group projects	2. Integration of women in national development
3. Training in evaluation of the program by participants	3. Increased self-reliance in managing projects 4. Increased linkages or creation of new ones between organization and government agencies	

encompass: (1) increased skills in organizational and managerial activities, such as identifying priority needs, utilizing existing resources, negotiating and implementing plans, evaluating and monitoring projects, and (2) increased contribution to family and community levels of living.

Operationalization of dependent and independent variables came only after the first and midway self-evaluation of the participants because the program and research proponents wanted primary variables.

Research Plans

Since the program provides for a two-pronged evaluation approach involving related research activities, the self-evaluation module of the research provides program participants the necessary training for assessing their progress or lack of it. For research purposes, this set of activities also serves as a source of qualitative data on the participants' perspectives. The survey module (baseline and evaluation) calls for a more quantitative study by the designated research agency, in this case the IPC. While the

two modules employ different techniques – the first qualitative, the second quantitative – their subject matter remains the same. Each research approach serves as a check on the other, and when integrated, will give a total picture of program effects.

Three research strategies carried out research plans, namely, participant observation, depth interviewing, and a sociological baseline focusing on the community, its organization and the characteristics of participants and non-participants. Similar non-UNICEF program communities were investigated in which other types of community program or no program at all may exist. Here only the survey method is employed. The UNICEF program communities are thus the experimental ones and the non-UNICEF, the control ones. The basic design calls for before-during-and-after approach. A quasi-experimental design is used. Because the research component was not added to this project until after a year of operation in the Philippines, pretest measures to match experimental and control groups are not available. In place of pretesting for Cebu and Kibawe,

midway measures were conducted. This insures adherence to the quasi-experimental non-equivalent control group design.

Limitations and Checks

The research faced the problems of self-reported data, limitations generally attendant to surveys, and the difficulty of attributing changes to the UNICEF program. Recognizing these problems, the IPC research group attempted to check these by several devices. These limitations and checks are discussed below:

1. Self-reported data do not have high validity, especially if they are retrospective reports. Because the program was started 1975, although no funding was given until 1976 and research was started only in 1977, accounting of past activities is the only possible technique of data-gathering. To offset lack of validity, different versions of events reported are taken from the participants, the program staffs, and the community organizers.

2. The following observations have reference to the survey module:

a. Increased participation may be developmental and a result of natural motivation. Checks are provided by a control group and midway measures.

b. To increase level of response accuracy, a test of participation was administered as an interview.

c. Selection factors in membership is always a problem in validity when groups are not pretested and randomized. Attempts to check this will be made through matching measures of experimental and control groups prior to interview.

3. It is assumed that UNICEF is not the lone variable affecting the success of the enhancement program. Success or failure cannot be attributed totally to the program, as further enhancement by other agencies may occur during the same period that is not part of the UNICEF program. Members would have left the community temporarily and engaged in activities like seminars or holiday trips that may fulfill the same objectives as that of the program.

But such cases will probably be exceptions to the rule rather than representative of the majority situation. Nevertheless, casuality is always stated tentatively. At best this study can show the degree of association between project inputs and participation variables. The use of control variables will further show under what conditions the program is making itself felt in experimental areas.

Research Activities

One of the first tasks was to reconstruct data since the start of the program in Kibawe and Cebu City. This was done through retrospective reports from participants and community organizers. In addition, a research assistant was assigned to reconstruct data from the UNICEF file.

Meanwhile, participant-observers were sent to the pilot areas to get a profile of both the participants and the communities as well as to prepare the participants for self-evaluation.

After three months of integration with the community, the participant-observer (PO) moderated the evaluation workshop. A month after, from the PO's documents, the people's evaluation reports and the program staff records, the independent and dependent variables were extracted and indicators of participation set up.

A questionnaire then was devised to measure increase in participation. This was pretested and the results yielded a scale of responses. Based on the objectives, the program staff's expectations and the women-participants' expectations of themselves in the program, the cut-off point was ascertained in every indicator of participation which shows at which point participation shows an increase.

Interviewing control and experimental groups were then conducted.

Summary

The evaluation of the UNICEF program by the IPC employed an interrelated two-module approach, one coming after another yielding data for the subsequent set of activi-

ties. The research approach is inductive and field-based. It has four levels of information, from the participant-observer report, the program staff reports, the people's perception, and the survey. Data are both qualitative and quantitative which allows in our opinion a broader and deeper interpretation.

We have midway results presently and we are in the throes of preparing a proposal for a final evaluation and a post-testing in May 1978.

Hopefully, at the end of 1978, IRC will submit to UNICEF a final evaluation of Cebu and Kibawe and its recommendations.