

October is National Children's Month

The Philippines celebrates National Children's Month this October. This year's celebration is aimed at commemorating the Filipino children to emphasize the importance of the role of the child within the Filipino family and Philippine society. The theme for this year's celebration is "Bright Child: Buong at Mapagkalingang Pamilya".

The nationwide celebration of National Children's Month was started in 1993 with the issuance of Proclamation No. 267 by President Fidel V. Ramos declaring the month of October of every year as National Children's Month. The Order recognizes the need for the Filipino people to celebrate and recognize the Filipino children as the most valuable asset of the nation.

Various activities are slated nationwide to commemorate the event. Some of these activities are promotion of child health services by the Department of Health, photo exhibit on children at La Salle Zobel in Alabang and at the Philippine Children's Medical Center, groundbreaking of the Legazpi City Youth Center in Region V, medical and dental mission for children and art competition by the Office on Muslim Affairs and Hope for the Youth Foundation, essay writing and poster making contests, forum on children's rights, quiz bee and trade fairs.

The Council on the Welfare of Children is spearheading this year's celebration.



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UNICEF Regional Adviser Mark Hereward (2nd from left) meet with NEDA Chief Librarian Flor Don-Santos (leftmost), UNICEF Info Officer Tito Rodriguez (2nd from right) and other CPC-V and NEDA staff members

UNICEF official visits NEDA

Mr. Mark Hereward, The UNICEF Regional Adviser on Planning, visited NEDA to attend the National Steering Committee of the CPC V. Mr. Hereward who is based in Bangkok, was accompanied on his visit by Mr. Tito Rodriguez, UNICEF's Information Resource Management Officer.

Mr. Hereward was given an update on the status of the implementation of the ChildInfo project and the Millennium Development Goals or MDG monitoring, specifically with regard to the SOMIS database.

During the briefing, representatives from the Social Development Staff discussed the concept and status of

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Philippines-Canada Development Fund A Shared Vision and Commitment

The Philippines-Canada Development Fund (PCDF) recently provided assistance to two projects of the Departments of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and Interior and Local Government (DILG).

The Street and Urban Working Children Project (SUWCP) of the DILG aims to contribute in uplifting the socioeconomic conditions of the street and urban working children in the cities of Bacolod, Iloilo, Cebu, Marikina and Zamboanga, Cagayan de Oro, Davao, Cotabato and General Santos in Mindanao through the provision of school supplies and rice assistance for disadvantaged children in the Social Development Centers (SDC) and capability building of SDC staffs, social workers, street education volunteers, and barangay councils. The PCDF has committed P6.3M to the project.

Project Hope for Bajao Families a DSWD project, aims to establish development opportunities for and improve the economic well-being of Bajao families in Zamboanga City and Lamitan in Basilan. The project has several components: social preparation,



Canadian Head of Aid Gerard Belanger (center) during the MOA signing for DSWD's Street and Urban Working Project (SUWCP) and Project Hope for Bajao Families (PHBF). Accepting the check is DSWD Secretary Dinky Soliman (right) while PCDF Chair and NEDA Deputy Director-General Augusto Santos (left) looks on.

establishment of culturally-sensitive communities, livelihood and other basic social services and networking and advocacy. The PCDF has committed P1M to the project.

The PCDF is the result of an agreement between the Canadian and Philippine governments to jointly fund and manage a facility to provide support to private and public sector initiatives toward responsive governance and reduced poverty in the Philippines. The

PCDF, more specifically, aims to promote the judicious use of resources to reduce poverty through, among others, better access to basic education, the development of micro and small enterprises, and the proper management of the environment. It also supports the democratic processes in the country by strengthening national, regional, and local governments.

Since its establishment, the Fund has committed P824 million

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Completion Rate - is the percentage of first year entrants in a level of education who complete/finish the level in accordance with the required number of years of study. Estimated by the Department of Education indicates that the elementary completion rate is at 66.33% while at the secondary level, completion (based on First Year) is estimated at 71.01% for SY 2001-2002.

PROTECTING THE CHILD

Do you know that millions of Filipino children today are overworked and underpaid, physically and psychologically abused, deprived of the opportunity to study and to play?

Innocent and helpless little ones – unable to defend themselves from the injustice inflicted upon them by the very ones who should protect, nurture and care for them – vulnerable to the harshness of a life lived in poverty.

Statistics show that one out of every six children aged five to 17 is a child laborer, and two thirds of them are in the rural areas. Similarly, 2.4 million out of the 25 million children work in a hazardous environment and half a million of them expressed the need for improved working conditions.

Under Republic Act 7658, no child below 15 years old is allowed to work except, “when a child works directly under the sole responsibility of his parents or legal guardian where only members of the employer’s family are employed; or when a child’s employment or participation in public entertainment or information is essential.”

Moreover, statistics again show that of children aged 10 to 14 years, around 1.9 million work in a commercial enterprise and another 250,000 kids, aged five to nine, are also active in the workplace.

Data show 63% of working children are engaged in agriculture, 18.6% in wholesale and retail

establishments, 9% in private households, 5.2% in fishing and 4.6% in manufacturing. The rest are in mining construction and quarrying.

The sad part is, the numbers are growing each day. These clearly depict the immense hardship which Filipino children are subjected to. Unfortunately, the family that is supposed to be the primary source of the children’s sense of trust and security is itself beleaguered. In most instances, it can no longer adequately provide even the children’s most basic needs like food, education, housing, and an atmosphere of love, affection and nurturance. Its capacity to protect the children and enhance their development and participation rights is also affected.

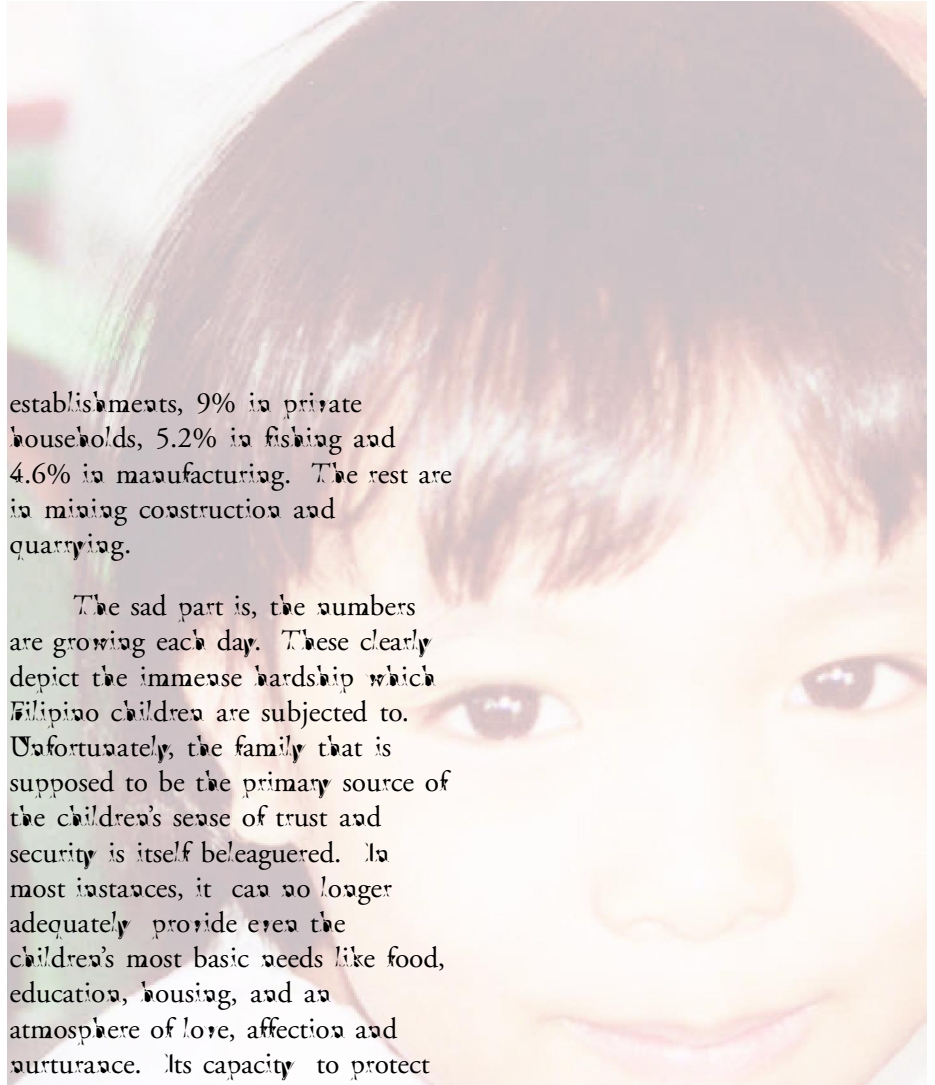
In most cases, poverty is the root of child labor in the Philippines. It has also been linked to the economic performance of the country.

According to a recent study, macroeconomic policies to support growth and job generation contribute in reducing child labor occurrence.

Moreover, some observers believe that the government has enough policies and programs to address this growing menace but they are not firmly implemented. While others believe that even government policies are inadequate.

Furthermore, due to limited resources, the government could not completely tackle the enormous task of combating child labor.

Countless studies have been done. Ideas have been taken into



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Knowledge Management, Governance and Children's Rights

By Augusto S. Rodriguez
(first of three parts)

Knowledge is power, and the real power that goes with it embodies the very core of good governance. The use of information and knowledge to better promote good governance becomes the yardstick of competition among global economies. The productivity of knowledge is going to be the determining factor in the competitive position of an entire nation. Thus, the so-called knowledge economy was coined.

There are three interlocking forces that drive and steer the knowledge economy:

(1) **Globalization** – markets and products are more global. Products by Nike and McDonalds are known the world over. Today, even “resourcing” is becoming global, thus many companies outsource manufacturing and software development to distant locations.

(2) **Information/Knowledge Intensity** – efficient production relies on information and know-how. Over 70 per cent of workers in developed economies are information workers. Many factory workers use their heads more than their hands.

(3) **Networking and Connectivity** – developments such as the Internet bring the ‘global village’ ever nearer. The merging of computing and communication or connectivity leads to “knowledge explosion” such that the problem faced by managers and decision makers is getting the “right” information from tons of information available.

The reality now is that developing nations are again catching-up with developed countries not only in growth of national income but also in the management of knowledge. The great divide, according to the World Bank, is now between the rich, knowledgeable and well-informed countries versus the poor, ignorant and uninformed nations. Closing the gap is not easy since developing countries are pursuing a moving target, as high-income industrial countries constantly push the knowledge frontier outward. For developing countries to “leap frog” through knowledge management, as some theorists would suggest, seem to be far fetched, given tremendous efforts exerted by developed countries in this arena.

Developed countries have already completed the tedious and difficult stage of data conversion from paper to electronic format. They have instituted data and information capture mechanisms to automatically store information in electronic format for easy access and sharing. Today's economy, which various observers describe as ‘knowledge economy’ or ‘information society’, is being driven and spearheaded by developed countries. They set the rules, norms, standards and practice in the information society.

Developing countries, the Philippines included, who can barely catch up with the basic necessities of food, clothing and shelter, are again fence sitters, watching the world pass by. However, they need not fret on these developments. The proper attitude is to look at these advancements as an opportunity – turn the wheel at its best advantage. Rather than re-create information and reinvent existing knowledge, poorer countries have the option of acquiring and adopting much information and knowledge already available in richer countries. This, in a way, narrows the so-called knowledge gaps and balances information asymmetry, predominant in developing countries. To unleash the power of knowledge, governments must recognize and respond to these twin issues, often simultaneously.

The author recognizes the World Bank's perspective on narrowing knowledge gaps and breaking information problems between the “two worlds”. There are three critical steps that developing countries must adopt to bridge existing knowledge gaps and information failures cited above:

1. **Acquire knowledge** – this involves tapping and adopting knowledge available elsewhere in the world, for example, through an open trading regime, foreign investment, and licensing agreements – as well as creating knowledge locally through research and development and building on indigenous knowledge.
2. **Absorb knowledge** – this involves, for example, ensuring universal basic education, with special emphasis on extending education to girls and other traditionally disadvantage groups, creating opportunities for lifelong learning; and supporting tertiary education, especially in science and engineering.
3. **Communicate knowledge** – this involves taking advantage of new information and communication technology increased competition, private sector provision, and appropriate regulation and ensuring that the poor have access.

These entail further improvement of systems and standards, and empowerment of people and institutions. Main players in governance—governments, bilateral donors, multilateral institutions, non-government organizations and the private sector—among developing nations should take active participation. They must forge partnership to strengthen and institutionalize mechanisms such as accounting standards, disclosure requirements, credit rating agencies, and for enforcing contract performance, through effective laws and courts that will address issues of knowledge gaps and information problems.

All things considered, can knowledge be a predictor of governance quality and development in developing countries? Placing knowledge at the heart of governance is not an assurance of growth and development but it can do wonders both in public and corporate governance.

Putting knowledge at the core of development efforts, will bring benefits in two ways:

1. Increase social benefits through more effective provision of public goods, including better air and water quality, greater educational attainment and higher enrollments, improved health and nutritional and expanded access to essential infrastructure. These benefits will accrue to the poor as well as to others in society;
2. Better functioning markets—for credit, education, housing, and land—that more efficiently coordinate resources and allocate opportunities across society. These improvements will benefit the poor the most, because they bear more than their share of the burden of information failures.

Considering development from a knowledge perspective reinforces some tests relevant to the state of governance among developing nations, such as the value of an open trade regime and of universal basic education. The World Bank also stresses that this kind of outlook focuses our attention on needs that have sometimes been overlooked in a developing nation: scientific and technical training, local research and development, and the critical importance of institutions to facilitate the flow of information essential for effective markets.

Approaching development from a knowledge perspective, that is, adopting policies to increase knowledge, can improve people's lives in many ways besides higher incomes. It gives people greater control over their destiny. It provides well-being to a failing society.

Knowledge management as any fresh concept would, is going through phases of maturity and various forms of adaptation. It is an evolving practice. It is however, a very new concept in developing countries such as ours, and its practice is still predominant in developed countries. Its precepts resound usually among corporate organizations, least among public institutions. The academic and research community has just started to incorporate it in some of their courses and reading lists. Its application has been centered on the use of information technology in a business environment setting, with the final objectives of competition and profitability in the business.

The Philippines has yet to fully integrate into the Information Age. For apparent reasons, the Philippines has continuously struggled to improve its civil institutions, including predictability of laws and policies, transparency, judicial independence, and capacity to fight corruption. But these institutional failings should be taken favorably well, especially in the management of knowledge.

In this study, knowledge management will be tackled within the context of the rights of the child. The protection of the rights of the child is a serious public administration concern because the government is bounded by the Constitution and other laws to safeguard the rights of marginalized sectors of society, children in particular. The policy capability, clear and transparent decision-making, devolved central authority, and presence of voice mechanisms are governance dimensions that should remain as the touchstones in the promotion of child's rights. The use and management of knowledge is a means to this end. Information and knowledge management is both a tool and a strategy to address the protection of children's rights and enhancement of children's participation.

With Knowledge Management as guiding principle, efficient and smooth implementation of knowledge management practices and functions related to child's rights and protection could be achieved. This means updated data on programmes and projects on children will be available and information on the status of the world summit goals on children is accessible. In fostering the creation and acquisition of knowledge, local governments have a special role in supporting potentially productive research on children, while establishing the necessary conditions for the others sectors—civil society, private sector, in response to market forces—to apply the new knowledge created. With a viable network of children advocates constantly pushing on issues pertaining to children, policy and decision-makers will prioritize children's concerns.

(to be continued)

Operationalization of the ARMM Peace and Development Information and Knowledge Center

By Rohanisah N. Rashid

The Regional Planning and Development Office – Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (RPDO – ARMM) with the assistance of the UNICEF established the ARMM Information and Knowledge Center. The Center initially focused on the Social Sector particularly women and children. Seeing the need to expand the coverage to include other sectors, the RPDO proposed the upgrading of the ARMM Information and Knowledge Center (IKC) into ARMM Peace and Development Information and Knowledge Center (PDI-KC) to UNDP.

The UNDP had positively responded to the proposal by providing the ARMM PDI-KC with two sets of computer with complete accessories intended for data banking of Peace and Development Communities (PDCs) in ARMM. The other two sets of computer provided by UNICEF were maintaining the ChildInfo database in monitoring children's and women's rights in ARMM.

The ARMM PDI-KC now serves as the regional repository of information and materials (references, posters, leaflets, pictures, statistical tables, thematic maps, reports, and other information) on women and children, PDCs, and other socio-economic status of the ARMM. Accessible information and documents at the center are the following: data on social, economic, development administration, and infrastructure sectors; information, books and references on children and women; Regional, Provincial, and Municipal Profiles of the ARMM; ARMM Maps; Relevant posters regarding children and women; brochures of Regional Executive Agenda (REA), Regional Economic and Development Planning Board (REDPB) and its Sectoral Committees; ARMM Accomplishment Reports; basic information on PDCs, Investment Program of the PDCs; peace and development experiences, best practices and success stories of PDAs in community organizing, participatory local development planning and investment programming, resource mobilization, peace advocacy and in general – the transformation of post-conflict areas into Peace and Development Communities.

The ARMM PDI - KC In action ...

The ARMM PDI-KC is extending Technical Assistance for the establishment of Knowledge Centers to the provinces of ARMM such as Maguindanao, Sulu, Lanao del Sur, and Marawi City. These provinces have initially established its Knowledge Center to generate information focus on children and women. However, only Sulu and Maguindanao are maintaining the ChildInfo database.

To date, a total of two Knowledge Network Meetings were already conducted. The first meeting was held on January 23, 2004 and the second meeting was held on April 1, 2004 purposely to gather and update data/information, and to discuss issues and concerns regarding the effective operation of the Knowledge Center.

Just recently in preparation for the operationalization of the upgraded Knowledge Center, an ARMM Forum on Peace and Development was conducted last April 30, 2004 primarily to come up with recommendations on how to support and sustain the ARMM PDI-KC. It also aimed to provide venue for knowledge and information sharing regarding PDCs in the ARMM and to identify possible areas of coordination and collaboration in support to PDCs, children and women in ARMM. The Forum was



The 5x5 meters Peace and Development Information and Knowledge Center inside the Administrative Building of RPDO-ARMM



Knowledge and information sharing during the ARMM Forum on Peace and Development moderated by Mr. Lininding M. Lao, CSE, Chief ADD of RPDO-ARMM

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participated by the selected Regional Line Agencies (RLAs) in ARMM. It was also participated by the Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) like Notre Dame University (NDU) of Cotabato City, Kadtabaaga Foundation for Peace and Development Advocates Incorporated (KFPDAI), and UNIMDP3. Also, a Project Development Writeshop for Peace Program was conducted last May 18-19, 2004 which was successfully facilitated by the ARMM PDI-KC. This was participated by the selected PDAs in Maguindanao who were members of the Kadtabaaga Foundation for Peace and Development Advocates Incorporated (KFPDAI). It primarily aimed to assist KFPDAI to package project proposals.

Last 25 May 2004, the ARMM PDI-KC was formally inaugurated. Dir. Diamadel Dumagay, Executive Director of the RPDO – ARMM was happy that the UNICEF and UNIMDP jointly provided assistance to the RPDO to fully operationalize the Knowledge Center. He said that through the KC the ARMM can now build its information and database updated that may transform the ARMM region to become competitive with to other regions in making plans and investment programs.



Group activity of the participants during the Project Development Writeshop for Peace Program held at ARMM PDI-KC

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to various projects. To date it has six completed projects and 10 ongoing projects. These are :

Project	Implementor
1. Convergence for Poverty Eradication Development	Alliance of Northern Mindanao for Health
2. Development Partnership for Armed Conflict Victims	Department of Social Welfare and Development
3. Diversified Integrated Farming Training Program	Salesian Society of Don Bosco Dumaguete
4. Integrated Return and Rehabilitation Program for Civilian War Victims of Mindanao	Assisi Development Foundation, Inc.- Tabang, Mindanao
5. Local Government Support Program II	Agri-Team Canada
6. Microfinance Project for Rural Women: The ASA Way	MILAMDEC Foundation, Inc.
7. Mindanao Program for Peace and Development	Philippine Development Assistance Programme
8. Upland Farming Model Villages Project	Department of Agriculture through the Davao Integrated Development Project
9. Wamang Kabataan at Komunidad	Cabrera Alternative School Foundation
10. Zamboanga Peninsula Upland, Lowland and Coastal Resource Management Project	NEDA

This year, PCDF is celebrating its 15th foundation anniversary. It continues its quest for opportunities to improve the lives of the marginalized and vulnerable sectors of the Philippine population. It steadfastly adheres to its goal of making a significant difference in the lives of Filipinos.

the ChildInfo database and the www.philchildinfo.org.ph website and the status of MDG monitoring. Also on hand were representatives from the Development Information Staff's Knowledge Center headed by Ms. Flor Don-Santos who discussed the KC Link Newsletter – its concept, design, content and specific target audiences. Also present during the briefing were guests from the Information Technology Coordinating Staff, NEDA Regions I Va and I Vb and CWC representatives.



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account. Concerned sectors are well aware and they know what to do. But the problem of child labor and its related issues continue to persist.

As an ILO study put it, "Much is already known yet more action needs to be done".

Promoting children's rights and the Child-Friendly Movement requires a network of informed advocates. Yet, when basic information on children is required, there is no definite center where one can access all the needed information. Presently, information and statistical data on children can be obtained from separate institutions such as the Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC), National Statistics Office (NSO), National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB) and others. With the introduction of the Child Info software in 1999, Child Info network users have been expanding steadily. National agencies, regional offices and LGUs have been creating Child Info databases; but these have not been shared adequately with other users. There is therefore a need for a facility and a system to consolidate these databases for easy and common access so that data can be further analyzed for effective dissemination, advocacy, sharing and utilization in development planning activities. The NEDA Children's Knowledge Center was created to address such needs.

The NEDA Children's Knowledge Center will serve as a National Database Repository and function as an ideal facility to save, store and easily retrieve Child Info database through a website. The

website will operate as the repository of Child Info databases created by national, regional, local institutions and Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) as well as international organizations such as the East Asia and Pacific Regional Office (EAPRO) or UNICEF.

The objectives of the NEDA Children's Knowledge Center are:

1. To promote children's rights and the Child Friendly Movement or CFM by providing a place, a venue and a mechanism whereby information on children can be easily retrieved with the support of resources and personnel.
2. To improve access to information by establishing a system of data collection, storage, processing and interpretation for use in decision making, social mobilization and advocacy; and
3. To serve as a monitoring, evaluation and feedback system on information gathered on children.

The website will also contain sample maps, fact sheets, feature articles on children and women. It will also have tutorials on Child Info and lessons on how to prepare reports, and other advocacy materials.

The children we care for today will care for the nation tomorrow. Thus, they must be nurtured and allowed to grow and develop in dignity, protected from the threats to their well-being and free to express themselves and participate in their development.

The task of realizing these conditions lie on us, today.

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