

The Colombo Plan – Gender Affairs Programme

Sharing Best Practices on
Women’s Economic
Empowerment in Indonesia
15 – 21 September 2019



South-South and Triangular Cooperation Programme in Gender Affairs

On the 15th of September, in accordance with a 3-year agreement between the Government of Indonesia (GoI) and the Colombo Plan’s Gender Affairs Programme (CPGAP) to strengthen regional cooperation through capacity building programmes in the field of gender and children, representatives from 12 Colombo Plan (CP) member countries began a 6-day training programme on the best practices of Indonesia’s home-based industry. CPGAP had invited its member countries’ gender focal points, of which 1 member country observer from Afghanistan and government officials from 11 member countries responded to attend the training programme: Bangladesh, Bhutan, Philippines, Iran, Laos, Malaysia, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Vietnam.

Background Information

The GoI endorsed the Home Industry Development policy, providing women with alternative solutions to financially support their family. Accordingly, since 2016 the Ministry of Women Empowerment and Child



Protection (MoWECP) has been supporting 21 Cities/Regencies by piloting areas in the development of women-led home-based industry. In the past few years Indonesia has successfully added to the number of women in the home-based industry and broadened economic access for women by enabling them to conduct income-generating activities.

This training programme showcased Indonesia’s best practices in Women’s Economic Empowerment through its examples of home-



CPGAP team members from the Colombo headquarter and Kabul office were in attendance, along with the head representative from a CPGAP implementing partner organization, Women for Afghan Women (WAW), to learn Indonesia's best practices in the field of Women's Economic Empowerment, and to shed light on the current home-based industry initiatives piloted in the city centers of Afghanistan. During the training programme, CPGAP's Director, Ms. Tooba Mayel, and CPGAP Programme Officer, Ms. Shiema Zikria, presented two initiatives implemented by their partners, Voice of Women Organization (VWO) and WAW.

As Afghanistan's security remains precarious and its society upholds patriarchal social and cultural norms, Afghan women continue to bear the harshest misfortunes. However, women-centric organizations such as VWO and WAW have provided vulnerable and marginalized women with the support and services required to respond to their sufferings.

To improve women's livelihood, VWO's ongoing Tanoorchin Project trains women in bakery and catering, as well as other practical skills, building leadership skills and economic independence of beneficiaries of the Women's Protection Centers (WPCs). In addition, the profit generated from the bakery and catering sales goes back into the WPCs safeguarding the sustainability of such facilities and services. WAW is also committed to improving the lives of the beneficiaries of the WPCs, especially once they are no longer within the protection of the WPCs. Accordingly WAW reinforces women's economic empowerment by ensuring they are capable of generating a steady income through marketable and socially acceptable vocational trainings, such as sewing. Such trainings are provided to women in the WPCs as well as women who are closer to reintegration, i.e. women lodging in halfway houses and transitional houses.

Amongst the capacity development programme's attendees were representatives of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) who presented their laudable contribution to the region in the field of women's economic empowerment. During the event CPGAP held side discussions, with ASEAN and the Government of Indonesia (GoI), on joining forces to achieve similar goals in the field of gender affairs in the region. CPGAP and the GoI's Ministry of State Secretariat and the Ministry of Women Empower and Child Protection proposed continuing their partnership through another agreement focused on strengthening south-south and triangular cooperation programme to improve the lives of women and children within the region.



Puri Damai Herbal Terapi

Traditional Balinese Herbal Medicine Therapy Center

The first place visited in the district of Gianyar by the representatives of the GoI, CPGAP, and CP's member countries was a home-based herbal medicine therapy center known for utilizing traditional Balinese herb methods that have been around for hundreds of years.

All products consist of organic ingredients grown from the family's own garden. The products are produced, packaged and sold within the perimeters of the household. Products treat numerous ailments from cancer, heart disease, diabetes, and kidney issues to aesthetic problems such as hair loss, signs of aging and weight reduction.

The profits made from the sales are put back into the business and the community.

Barong Cookies

The second field visit in the Gianyar district was the home of Barong Cookies located in Ubud. Barong Cookies originally started as a small bakery project of 10 women from the community. Currently, Barong Cookies employees 20 women from the community, who make, bake, package and transport the cookies to supply shops in the Denpasar International Airport and tourist markets around the island.

The cookies come in six flavors: plain, coffee, rice, salty and sweet, coconut and sugar palm, as well as mango and white chocolate. Each cookie is imprinted with a "Barong Character", which is a lion-like creature and character in the mythology of Bali, Indonesia, symbolic of health and good fortune.

Barong Cookies has aspirations to grow as a company to supply all of Indonesia but currently the main challenge they face is their limited space. Their inadequate space prevents their ability to take on more orders, which has kept them in a revolving fund standing.





Tenun Bali Putri Ayu

The third field visit was to a home-based weaving factory located in Kabupaten Gianyar, Bali, a conveniently located tourist hub for arts and crafts.

Hand-woven ikat fabrics are very common in the region; however, in Bali the market for such unique and stylish fabrics is lucrative as it attracts tourists who visit the island year-round. Such distinct fabrics can be utilized for many purposes, e.g. bed set, table cloth, fashion statement attire, shawl, etc., making it more marketable than other Balinese souvenirs.

The factory was initially a family run business that grew to include many members from the community to assist in the production and dyeing of the yarn including the hand weaving, tailoring and selling of the fabric.

As many tourists visit the location, the home-based weaving factory is able to make a good profit as well as sustain its business. The family has an alternative smaller shop in Denpasar, Bali, yet they maintain most of their earnings come from their home-based location.

Bara Gold & Silver

Bara Gold & Silver, now a flourishing home-based business, initially began as one woman's desire to be unique and stylish. The owner, an enthusiastic and ambitious businesswoman, told her story while her staff worked in the background.

Bara is her youngest son's name. In Balinese culture, the youngest son will take on the responsibility of looking after his mother and father. Thus, the name Bara is fitting, as her business is also her baby, an idea she saw grow before her eyes into a nationally renowned jewelry brand.

At the start, Bara Gold & Silver's marketing techniques were done via social media or word of mouth. Today, you can find the eye-catching statement pieces in international runway shows and throughout Indonesia.





To conclude the capacity building programme on the 'Sharing of Best Practices on Women's Economic Empowerment in Indonesia' the participants from the CP member countries developed and presented their country's Women's Economic Empowerment efforts as well as an action plan aimed at incorporating the newfound knowledge and best practices.

CPGAP aims to support the observer and participant member countries in developing their action plans to better suit their national policies and endeavors in the coming year, whether is through trainings, workshops, technical assistance and/or direct empowerment programmes.

The Colombo Plan Secretariat – Gender Affairs Programme wants to thank the Government of Indonesia and its representatives from the Ministry of State Secretariat and the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Children Protection for all their commitment and commendable work.

And a special thank you to our implementing partners and member countries for joining us for this special event.