

Trade Union Congress of the Philippines  
*The David and Lucile Packard Foundation*



**“INTENSIFYING ADVOCACY FOR FAMILY PLANNING  
& REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AT THE WORKPLACE”**

**2003-26064**

**SUMMARY REPORT**

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## WHO WE ARE

The Trade Union Congress of the Philippines [TUCP] is by far, the largest trade union center in the country. It is a confederation of twenty-seven [27] national labor federations, representing some 2,571 local unions nationwide, and some 800 associations, cooperatives and informal sector members throughout the country, representing some 750,000 individual members.

Through the years, the TUCP has evolved into a sophisticated and capable organization that has proven to be effective in achieving democratic objectives in the Philippines. 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 FP 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. The program was implemented from 1984 - 1992. Other international donors, including UNFPA and the Packard Foundation later broadened these efforts. Currently, the TUCP operates Family Welfare Clinics in Davao, Cebu, Ormoc, Bacolod City, Cavite, Laguna, and the National Capital Region, staffed by highly trained professional health officers.

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 at the workplace, 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 which had implemented adolescent reproductive health and family planning programs and plaque of recognition for its pioneering efforts in institutionalizing FP/RH programs at the workplace. The TUCP is also the forefront of the advocacy campaign for a policy review and consultations in the implementation of FP at the workplace and 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.



*Of late, the Philippines has been tagged to have the most number of breast cancer cases among women in Southeast Asia. Not only has this alarmed TUCP but has provided stronger resolve to strengthen its now expanding reproductive health and family planning program for workers.*

*In this picture are women workers belonging to a union under the Associated Labor Unions, an affiliate of the TUCP. ALU-TUCP is an active project partner.*

## WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE

The TUCP- Packard Foundation RH Project at Workplace remains as one source of pride for trade union members in the country. Not only are workers assured that organizations like TUCP and the Packard Foundation are serious about workers' welfare but that a specific FP/RH Program is actually being funded and implemented to benefit them, their families and communities. Such program has even become a model for non-TUCP unions and funding donors in their efforts to commence similar programs at the workplace.

In January 2004, the Trade Union of the Philippines commenced the implementation of the project entitled "Intensifying Advocacy for Family Planning/Reproductive Health in the Workplace", with fund support from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation. Among other things, the project aimed to build on the gains of the first TUCP-Packard project which successfully ended in December 2003 while scaling up its efforts to reach the working youth. Currently, the project operates eight [8] Family Welfare Clinics [FWC] in the National Capital Region and in Regions IV, VI, VII [two FWCs], VIII, IX, and XI.

These FWCs are staffed by highly competent professional health officers who provide information and services in FP, as well as primary health care, and medical outreach programs which eventually evolved into comprehensive RH information and services such as management of reproductive tract infections, including HIV/AIDS at the workplace. Company workers, union members and their dependents/families and young workers from both the formal and informal sector benefited from the project.

The project aims to implement comprehensive and sustainable family planning and reproductive health programs in the workplace. Hence, it pushes for the expansion of the delivery of company-level FP/RH information and services to 100,000 workers and employers by strengthening the capacity and outreach of five [5] workplace RH coalitions in providing technical support for company-level programs, referrals to FP/RH services and effective behavior change communication activities and materials.

It seeks to increase of current client load of the eight [8] Family Welfare Clinics through outreach activities and availability of improved quality of care and socially-priced contraceptives. It aims to build and strengthen the capacity of 450 local unions to effectively negotiate the integration of FP/RH services into collective bargaining agreements, mobilize support from the management and other stake holders, social marketing of FP/RH commodities and ensure the effective implementation of plant-based RH programs and services.

The project advocates for improved access of at least 80% of young workers in targeted industries to youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health services and information through youth-to-youth and youth-to-adult interactive events.



*TUCP believes in the right of workers to comprehensive information not only on matters related to core labor standards and rights at work but to reproductive health and family planning as well. The project's behavior change communication component ensures easy-to-understand information apt for our target publics, i.e. workers, their families and members of their communities. [In this photo is one of TUCP's trained service providers helping workers understand their fertility by using illustrative IEC material.]*

# OUR MILESTONES & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In brief, the following summarizes the project's accomplishments and milestones in the course of its implementation:

*New FP/RH Programs in 357 workplaces, 26 organizations of workers in informal employment and 154 youth organizations.*

While the project focuses its efforts on advocating for FP/RH programs in formal places of employment, the project expanded its services to three barangays or villages (with an estimated total population of 144,000) where union members and their families reside. We have also strengthened our presence and participation in 26 groups of workers in informal employment and 154 youth organizations with over 12,000 young people. These young people belong to the Pag-asa Youth Association of the Philippines (PYAP).

*Conquering the airwaves and reaching over one (1) million workers with correct and accurate FP/RH information.*

Over a million workers including the general population were reached with correct and accurate FP/RH information through radio and other methodologies. These methodologies include in-plant FP/RH orientations targeting workers and union members in general, one-on-one counseling during field clinics, TV and radio guesting, participation in local and national events, peer education, distribution of information materials, contraceptive self-reliance orientations and promotion of the PopShops, focus group discussions in communities, RH Appreciation Courses and DOLE Department Order 56-03 for workers and employers and interactive discussion sessions which are facilitated by peer educators.

Our field personnel in Cebu have become adept with their special work as anchors to the regular monthly FP/RH program at the union-run radio station whose audience reaches down to some part of Mindanao. The cost of airtime is 100% supported by the Associated Labor Unions as counterpart.

Another innovative and highly effective mode of RH/FP information dissemination done by the project is guest appearances and participation in mall tours in major shopping malls around Metro Manila



*Understanding the need for more creative and appealing methodologies of FP/RH information dissemination, we have ventured into theater education. Selected young people were trained on creative arts and were tasked to do FP/RH education to their fellow youth through street plays, songs poetry and the like. Several presentations had been successfully staged in communities in Cebu and Davao. These were held during barangay fiestas and other occasions. They had also been tapped to present during seminar and workshops as 'infotainers.'*

[Ground-breaking attempt to reach workers in the country's sunrise industry](#)

The project did a series of consultations and dialogues with business process outsourcing companies (BPO) - the country's sunrise (emerging and fast-growing) industry that, over a short period of time, has grown with over 200,000 workers. This is the very first attempt of any organization to reach out to the industry.

17 human resource officers representing 11 call centers were oriented on RH. The participating companies include the largest in the industry, i.e. People Support, Sykes Asia, and Hinduja Telemarketing among others. Discussion focused on reproductive health; the rationale and importance of RH@Work; legal framework for program implementation and current efforts at the workplace. The immediate result was the development of individual action plans detailing specific activities that the participants would undertake on RH taking into consideration the available technical support from POWE<sup>2</sup>R<sub>H</sub> (Peoples Organization for Workers and Employers' Empowerment on RH).

TUCP, in collaboration with POWE<sup>2</sup>R<sub>H</sub> has recently done orientation sessions/dialogue with HR managers with two of the fast-growing call centers in the country, i.e. Hinduja TMT Ltd. and Infonxx Philippines.

['Nurses/Midwives-on-foot:' Bringing quality FP/RH care services to over 43,908 workers.](#)

Our trained service providers acting as 'nurses/midwives-on-foot' who are regularly doing field clinics hugely contributed to achieving 73% of the project's target on service delivery. As of October 2006, **43,908 union members, their dependents and non-unionized workers benefited from services** that the unions and the project offer. FP/RH information and services are further made even more accessible by the installation of FP/RH booths in fairs on special occasions and the conduct of medical missions as well as engaging community-based volunteers (Barangay Health Workers) on information and service delivery.

The project also takes advantage of national and local campaigns and events such as Labor Day celebration, World AIDS Day, International Commemoration for Dead and Injured Workers, Ligtas Buntis, etc. to provide workers FP/RH information. The biggest of such national affair this year so far had been the 01 May 2006 Labor Day celebration where TUCP and DOLE organized a one-day Jobs and Livelihood Fair attended by over 12,000 job seekers and labor advocates. For the event, the project organized a team of medical health professionals from the DKT Philippines, Occupational Safety and Health Center, Employees Compensation Commission, and the Quezon City Health Department in addition to project health personnel making family planning and reproductive health as one of showcased services for workers.

In consultation with the DOLE, FP/RH concerns are now included into labor standards monitoring and assessment checklist/tools being used by the government labor inspectors.



*The project has planted the first seeds towards instituting FP/RH programs within call centers in the country. Orientation and dialogue with HR and personnel managers of at least 11 call centers had been held. [In this photo are students of the TUCP Workers' College undergoing English Language proficiency training with the hope of landing jobs as call center agents.]*

### *Sustaining contraceptive self-reliance through the PopShops*

The recently-installed PopShop franchises (from DKT Philippines) in three (3) family welfare clinics are gaining positive headway towards contraceptive self-reliance (CSR) for the project. The PopShop and its promotion has likewise helped in bringing about attitudinal change among workers, i.e. from ones who are dependent (relying on government-provided FP supplies) into ones who are taking charge and purchasing FP commodities for themselves. For a period of about 12 months, the three PopShops have sold various birth-spacing commodities worth over P65,000.

Social marketing of contraceptives at the community level is addressed through the engagement of Barangay Health Workers and leaders of community-based organizations. This had been formalized through a signing of a memorandum of agreement between and among the leaders of the abovementioned organization and city health and elected barangay leaders.

### *4,081 New Family Planning users at the workplace*

The difficulty in recruiting FP users is not isolated at the workplace. Opposition to modern methods of birth spacing is enormous. The Catholic Church for one has not wavered on its battle against artificial contraception. It takes every opportunity with the media to espouse arguments against family planning. Pastoral letters are read during Sunday masses in countless churches expressing the message that using artificial contraception is a sin. In addition, Abay Familia - a Catholic organization has recently written a letter requesting the Department of health to ban IUD because they claim it as abortifacient. On the other hand, government's poor support for the promotion of the FP program is widely felt even with the dwindling supply of free contraceptives.

The first three methods of choice are pills, condoms, and IUD.

### *Improved RH Provisions in 215 Collective Bargaining Agreements*

Beginning with this project's implementation in 2004, there are now a total of 215 CBAs negotiated with FP/RH provisions. While unions were successful in making RH as part of companies' welfare program for workers through the CBA, recently, unions are even more successful in securing sizeable amount of funds for their RH & FP activities.



*More and more men trade union leaders are taking charge and speaking positively of family planning and reproductive health. For organizations like trade unions that are largely male-dominated, having male advocates teaching and counseling fellow male workers and influencing collective bargaining agreements in support for FP/RH, is a positive gain of the project.*

*In this photo, a trade union leader is shown reporting on Del Monte Union's programs on occupational safety and health that includes FP/RH.*

The following provision of Evergreen Farms Inc. Workers Union's CBA, illustrates this:

*"Section 2. The COMPANY agrees to continue with its present program and campaign for Family Planning or Reproductive Health for the benefit of the employees covered by this Agreement. For this purpose, the COMPANY shall provide a total of P10,000.00 per year for the duration of this Agreement, and the UNION and its Federation agrees to undertake family planning program to assist the National Government's objective of lowering the population rate.*

*Section 3. The COMPANY further agrees to continue with its present practice of providing educational and recreational facilities whenever practicable and feasible for the enjoyment and benefit of the employees covered by this Agreement. The COMPANY shall grant the UNION educational subsidy a total of P25,000.00 per year for the duration of this Agreement, to be managed by the Federation."*

### [1,098 Union trainers trained through the TUCP integrated training program](#)

Integrating FP/RH in various TUCP capacity-building activities in addition to trainings funded under the project led to development of 1,098 union leaders and advocates. These trainings include the following: (a) FP/RH Training for Shop Stewards; (b) Young Adult Peer Education on FP/RH, (c) Seminar/Workshop on Participation-Oriented Safety Improvements by Trade Union Initiative (POSITIVE); (d) Community Skills Upgrading, Entrepreneurship and Reproductive Health; (e) Training on FP/RH for Community-based Volunteers; and (f) Regional Advocates Training on Organizing and Corporate Social Responsibility & Regional Training on Child Labor Monitoring for CL Monitors and Union Representatives; (g) Young Adult Peer Education and Theater Presentation: Training on YSRH for Informal Sector Workers; (h) Integrated RH Training for Service Providers; and (i) Gender Sensitivity Training for Health Service Providers.

### [Gaining grounds on RH for adolescents and youth through collaborative work](#)

Various activities and events were conducted and supported by the project in its effort to reach out, inform, organize, and build the leadership of the youth. Part of these initiatives includes ARH orientation to high school and college students, young adult peer educators' trainings, and forums. Likewise, partnerships with other institutions (i.e. schools and colleges) were done to reach out and engage the youth.

For example, in collaboration with the De La Salle University under the Community Welfare Training Service Program, 104 college freshmen students were mobilized for RH activities. Their initiative resulted to the conduct two half-day FP/RH education programs in Tondo, Metro Manila for about 20 urban poor mothers.

The project has reached a total of 57,677 young people.



*The project's participation in public events has contributed to greater awareness and appreciation of the general public on the need for FP/RH information and services at the workplace. In celebration of this year's (2007) International Women's Month, the TUCP collaborated with various NGOs on the conduct of a women's health caravan. In addition to commemorating the event, the caravan was also a call for voters to choose political candidates who are supportive of FP/RH. Along the way, dialogues (with DOH and the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines) as well as a press conference were held. [The above photo is TUCP's float calling for support on FP/RH at the workplace and exhorting the employers to listen and be sensitive to the voice and concerns of women workers.]*

## CHALLENGES & LESSONS LEARNED

1. **Rumors and misconceptions are still prevalent** especially in terms of more permanent methods and contraception. There is a need for the project to do more FP/RH promotions and education to clarify these misconception among workers.
2. In an era of economic uncertainty, **FP/RH programs at the workplace will be the least priority of companies**. The drive to survive and compete in a highly globalizing environment will be the aim of every company. Sometimes to the detriment of workers' welfare and concerns. There has to be continued effort to do advocacy to convince workers and company owners on the importance and cost-effectiveness in doing family welfare / family planning programs and its relation to 'decent work.'
3. **Advocacy for RH at all levels is necessary**. While the project maintains strong advocacy at the workplace, participation at different levels of advocacy is a must. At RHAN, where TUCP serves as secretariat, we have learned that a unified voice does win positive results. Recently, our unified voice at RHAN has pushed the DOH into coming up with a definite stand on not banning IUD in the country as opposed to the letter of Abay Familia.
4. **Union initiative to collectively bargain and negotiate** remains as the best approach for workers to achieve support for FP/RH services. Even as compliance to existing laws at the workplace is low, a unified workers' organization in enterprises can make FP/RH services happen. Armed with correct information and knowledge of their rights, unions can serve as the fiercest FP/RH advocates at the workplace.
5. In reaching more workers and their families, **bringing FP/RH services at the community level is important**. In doing so, workers from both formal and informal employment can benefit from the program. Similarly, bringing these services at workers' places of employment increases access and utilization of services. This is the rationale behind why the service providers under the project are encouraged to act as "nurses/midwives-on-foot."