BUILDING MULTIGENERATIONAL ACTIVIST LEADERSHIP AND LINKING THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC IN OUR ORGANIZING IN SOUTH EAST ASIA

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Context

- Historically colonized
- Strong roots: traditional, cultural, ethnic, and religious - fundamentalism
- Democratic governance system in process
- Developing industrial countries
- Strong influence of global forces; TNCs’ role in economy and politics
- Horizontal and vertical conflict
People

- Rural poverty; exploitation of women and children
- Strong influence of “invisible and hidden” power – values and beliefs – especially attitudes re women’s status and roles
- Politically illiterate, economically independent
- Divided by identity; politically exploited by elite
Community Organizing

• Individual – freedom from invisible power; building confidence, exploring strength and capacities
• Collective power – organize groups around specific needs and issues; exercise hidden and visible power
• Political consciousness – critically reflect on and analyze unequal power relations; bring up the “power within”; feminist perspective on the mainstream
Step 1: Economic empowerment as entry point

- In context of poverty, organize for access to cash, economic resources, and property, to increase bargaining power
- Cooperative or credit union; women’s access to and ownership and control of resources, leadership and decision-making, leading to independence
- Space to exercise equal power relations, good governance, and democratization; one person one vote, equal rights
- Alternate to capitalist system
Alternative to micro finance and credit model
• Start from our own, available resources
• Client is the owner
• Build collective (not individual) assets
• Share profits
• Use profits for social justice oriented activities
• Members cross subsidize each other
Multigenerational

• Sustainability of the struggle for equal rights; social change takes a long time – needs many generations

• Generation gap in experiences, knowledge and opportunities; challenges in power relations between generations, rural and urban, role model vs diva syndrome

• Lost generation – 80’s to 90’s; fading of the feminist perspective; Gender and Development slogan, developmental approach, donor agenda

• Build power from within; confident, creative, pioneering, rooted in the grass roots – power for social change
Multilevel – local, national, regional, global

- Globalization; shrinking world, borderless
- Transboundaries, poverty mafia; migration, trafficking
- Domino effect of problems and issues; conflict, fundamentalism
- Balancing the ASEAN – SEA government collective power, monitor the ASEAN blue print
- JASS-SEA; capacity building of local NGOs and individuals to organize at local level; network and forum at national and regional level
Next Steps: 2010-2011

- Strengthening leadership of young feminists
- Support young feminists to organize at local level
- Strengthening and support young feminists’ forum at national level and regional level
- Exploring arena to engage on ASEAN CSOs forum
- Networking with other networks in SEA region
- SEA Young Feminist Stories – writing and video
CHALLENGES

- Diversity of context (social, economic, political) – the movement strategy
- Diversity of cultures and languages – communication and networking
- Critical age of young feminists – lots of choices and opportunities; sustainability of process