

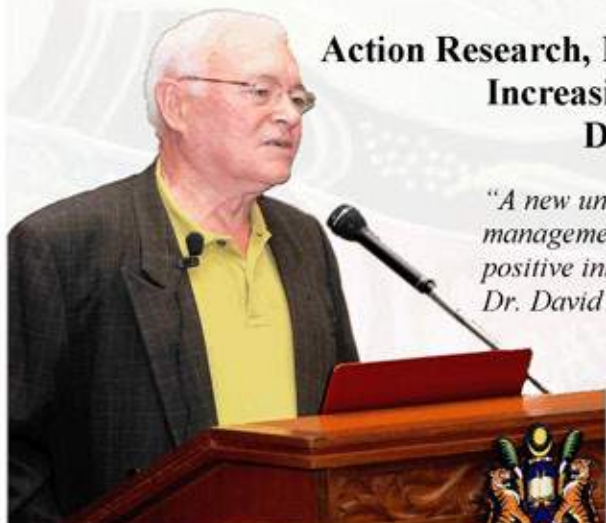


KANITA MATTERS

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Action Research, Microfinance and Poverty Reduction: Increasing Academic Relevance by Dr. David S. Gibbons*

"A new university, with the right vision and supportive management can contribute to national development, with positive international repercussions".

Dr. David S. Gibbons

(*This report is based on the lecture delivered by Dr. David S. Gibbons at the International Public Lecture at the *Dewan Persidangan Universiti*, Universiti Sains Malaysia on 19 October 2011).

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On 19 October 2011, about 200 guests from all over Malaysia filled *Dewan Persidangan Universiti* (DPU), Universiti Sains Malaysia to listen to Dr. David S. Gibbons, an individual who has significantly contributed towards and played a pivotal role in pioneering and developing microfinance endeavours in Malaysia. It was a welcoming sight to see the hall packed with audience who came specifically to witness the return of the founder of Malaysia's micro-credit programme to deliver a lecture on USM's pioneering role in replicating the Grameen Bank Project.

In his capacity as the Chairman of CASHPOR India, and through *Projek Ikhtiar* in 1986 which he and Prof. Dato' Sukor Kasim coordinated, and his relentless drive, Dr. Gibbons was able to bring the micro-credit to the poor in North-east Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, a major poverty region in India.

The relevance of his lecture has attracted international audience especially among practitioners from the Negros Women for Tomorrow Foundation (NWTF) of the Philippines, as well as local Micro-credit Providers who came to get Dr. Gibbons's insight into the challenges confronting the microfinance industry in general and the recent outcry with regulatory constraints in India. Among those in the audience are some of the latest entries into the Microcredit orbit in Malaysia namely Bank Simpanan Nasional, Bank Rakyat, SME Bank, Agro

Bank, *Yayasan Bina Upaya of Perak (YBU)*, *Yayasan Dar Al Qard Al Hasan of Selangor* and *Projek Titian Saksama Rakyat of Penang (PTSR)*. Prof. Dato' Omar Osman, the newly appointed Vice-Chancellor of Universiti Sains Malaysia, Prof. Tan Sri Dato' Dzulkifli Abdul Razak, the Vice-Chancellor of Al-Bukhary International Universiti (AIU) and former Vice-Chancellor of USM, Prof. Ahmad Shukri Mustapa Kamal, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Academic Affairs & International Affairs and Prof. Dato' Susie See Ching Mey, Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the Division of Industry and Community Network (BIJM) were among the USM official patrons who attended the lecture. The remaining audience comprised a number of professionals in the microfinance industry such as microfinance institutions, commercial banks, National Bank of Malaysia, Universities, Federal and State governments, development agencies, NGOs and students.



From left: Dr. Hirut Bekele Haile, Prof. Dato' Sukor Kasim, Prof. Datin Rashidah Shuib, Dr. David S. Gibbons, Prof. Dato' Omar Osman and Prof. Tan Sri Dato' Dzulkifli Abdul Razak

(Continued from page 1)

Dr. Gibbons reflected on the role of action research which he spearheaded to complement existing programme to reduce poverty. He also reviewed the role of the Centre for Policy Research, USM (CPR) in replicating the Grameen Bank Approach in reducing rural poverty in Peninsular Malaysia. The action research initiated in 1985 in North-West Selangor and known as *Project Ikhtiar* was the first Grameen replicator in Malaysia which attempted to reduce poverty in Malaysia. He cited challenges he faced with Prof. Dato' Sukor Kasim when they first tried to secure financing from *Bank Pertanian* but he was thankful and appreciated the contributions of various people and sectors who believed in their quest. These challenges included among others resistance from the local elites about the of focus of micro-credit on the poor and women; initially poor people were not enthusiastic to join the project and those who did had problems of loan repayment. Despite the said problems, by September 1987, *Amanah Ikhtiar Malaysia (AIM)* was established to institutionalise *Projek Ikhtiar*. Today *Amanah Ikhtiar Malaysia (AIM)* is almost financially-sustainable. He appreciated the technical assistance provided by the Grameen Bank staff in overcoming some of these problems, alluding to the importance of support in replication of projects. Dr. Gibbons added that this action research had significantly contributed to the replication of Grameen Bank type programmes in different socio-economic contexts. He recognised the contribution of USM in the establishment of regional microfinance network- Credit and Saving for the Hard-core Poor (CASHPOR), which provided microfinance training and capacity building to member organisations. The formation of CASHPOR further promoted more start-up in microfinance institutions (MFIs) in the Philippines, South Africa, newly-independent East Timor and in Eastern Uttar Pradesh India, the poorest region of the poorest country in the world. The MFIs start-ups reached and benefited significant proportions of the poor in their operating areas.

One of the challenges currently faced by microfinance institutions in terms of achieving financial sustainability and accessing loan funds, have to do with the microfinance "crises" in India, which saw some poor borrowers (particularly women) committing suicide out of over indebtedness. He attributed the problems to the unhealthy competition and poor regulation and "heavy-handed bureaucratic-political response". To be successful in poverty reduction, he suggested that minimum conditions in the area of government relation, regulation, funding and maintaining social goals have to be enforced.

The unceremonious removal of Prof. Muhammad Yunus, the Nobel Peace Prize Laureate and the Grameen Bank's Managing Director by the Government of

Bangladesh earlier this year did not depict the real picture of the microfinance crisis. Dr. Gibbons was of the opinion that the microfinance industry was not in crisis but was experiencing a bad maturing of a new industry. The issue of competition for-profit among MFIs especially in India has become the norm and the non regulation of the industry has brought about the problem. The problem was further aggravated due to interference from bureaucrats and politicians. In India, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the Government have intervened and this will definitely reduce the excesses of over-commercialisation there. On the issue of the Nobel Laureate Prof. Mohammad Yunus, it is actually a matter of domestic politics which has nothing to do with the microfinance industry around the world.

In the words of Dr. Gibbons, the benevolent microfinance genie has been released and has spread widely around the world and it will not go back into the bottle. Microfinance has no doubt transformed the lives of millions of poor women and their families around the world. Wherever and whenever poor women need capital to create self-employment and increase household income, the microfinance industry will spring-up to meet their demands. Women are known to be good borrowers and have been repaying the loan faithfully with the intention of providing better lives for themselves and their children. Microfinance is an economic revolution and it will continue to play a major role in providing an opportunity for the poor to improve the livelihood of poor women and their families.

Dr. Gibbons paid tribute to the importance of USM in creating economic history in Malaysia by introducing and supporting the Malaysian Microfinance; something that all of us at USM can and should be proud of. But with the challenges faced by the micro finance industry, Dr. Gibbons urged the academic fraternity to be proactive and to conduct action driven research in order to formulate new and better innovative products or processes for the microfinance industry. This will enable the Microfinance industry to become more matured and able to meet the challenges facing the industry.

The launching of the coffee book table by Prof. Dato' Omar Osman, the Vice-Chancellor of Universiti Sains Malaysia, at the end of the lecture was an apt addition to the public lecture. The coffee table book is the first in Malaysia to document USM's aspirations through Dr. Gibbons and Prof. Dato' Sukor Kasim and foretells the journey, trials and tribulations as well as contributions of USM to the microfinance industry and most importantly to the bottom billion of the world.

(Prepared by Dr. Hirut Bekele Haile, Post-Doctoral Fellow, KANITA and Mr. Mohamad Nazri Musir, KANITA's Project Manager for Micro-pinj)

Profile:

David S. Gibbons, Ph.D is no stranger to Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM). He began his career in USM in 1970 at the then School of Comparative Social Sciences (now School of Social Sciences), and in 1973 transferred to the Centre for Policy Research (CPR) (now the Centre for Policy Research and International Studies, CenPRIS) where he assumed the role of the Deputy Director of the Centre.

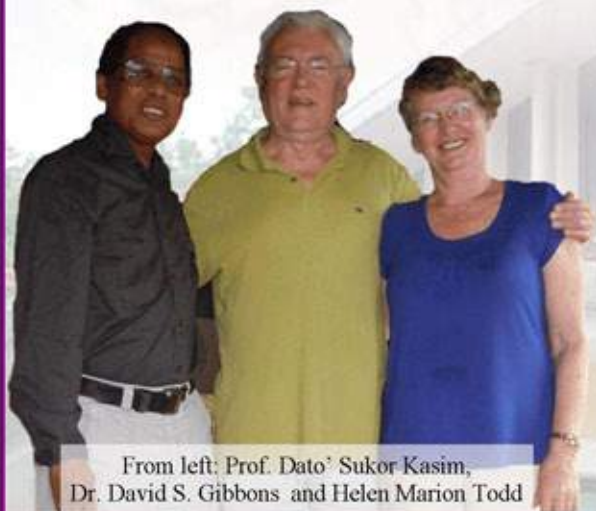
It was at CPR that Dr. Gibbons and Prof. Dato' Sukor Kasim, (the latter is currently a faculty member of the Women's Development Research Centre (KANITA), USM and leads KANITA's microfinance projects), worked as a team to upgrade the lives of the poor, landless rice farmers in the Muda area of Kedah. He was the founder and Managing Director of *Projek Ikhtiar* which later became *Amanah Ikhtiar Malaysia (AIM)*, the first successful international replication of the Grameen Bank methodology for poverty reduction. Dr. David S. Gibbons was also a Member of the Policy Advisory Group of the Consultative Group to Assist the Poor (CGAP) of the World Bank. In 1989 he was awarded the *Darjah Setia Di-Raja* medal by the Sultan of Kedah. Dr. Gibbons is the author and co-author of several books, papers and training manuals on microfinance and related

issues, most notably, *The Grameen Reader* (ed.) (1992), *Banking on the Rural Poor in Peninsular Malaysia* (ed., with Sukor Kasim) (1990) and *Cost-effective Targeting: a draft training manual for identifying and motivating poor women* (1995).

Born in Vancouver, Canada on 12 July 1940, Dr. Gibbons is currently a Malaysian citizen, residing in Seremban, Negeri Sembilan as well as having a residence in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, India. He obtained his Ph.D from Princeton University, USA. Dr. Gibbons is married to Helen Marion Todd who is also an active microfinance practitioner. They have four children and six grandchildren.



Dr. David S. Gibbons
in the 70s



From left; Prof. Dato' Sukor Kasim,
Dr. David S. Gibbons and Helen Marion Todd

GLOSSARY

- **What is Microfinance?:** In its simplest form, microfinance provides basic financial services, such as credit and deposit-taking, on a very small scale, to historically marginalised populations that do not meet the criteria to do business with conventional banking institutions. This covers people whose lack of access to collateral means they cannot qualify for credit, and includes the world's poor, whose number over one billion and who live on less than \$1.25 per day. Microfinance encourages economic stability through income generation rather than subsidies. (Source: <http://wmionline.org/aboutus/whatmicro/whatmicro.html> [Accessed on Dec 14, 2011])
- **Poverty-Reduction?:** Protecting advances that have already been made, as well as accelerating and sustaining progress requires far-reaching changes. In the face of global shocks, crises and climate change, reducing the vulnerability of nations takes on renewed importance. In this context, UNDP focuses its poverty reduction efforts on supporting countries to accelerate progress towards MDGs and making growth and trade work for everyone. (Source: www.undp.org/poverty [Accessed on Dec 05, 2011])
- **What Is a Microfinance Institution (MFI)?:** A microfinance institution (MFI) is an organisation that provides financial services to the poor. This very broad definition includes a wide range of providers that vary in their legal structure, mission, and methodology. (Source: <http://www.cgap.org> [Accessed on January 06, 2012])
- **Financial Inclusion:** The Bank's efforts towards promoting financial inclusion is focused in enhancing access to basic banking services; and to financing; and undertaking financial education, and to build greater and awareness on financial matters and management. (Source: <http://moneystreet.com.my/News/Archive/2011/12/9/31/governors-speech-at-the-launch-of-bank-negara> [Accessed on January 06, 2012])

HIGHLIGHTS

International Joint Seminar “Towards Good Governance and Leadership: Decent Livelihood for Women”

Date : 28 July 2011

Venue: *Dewan Persidangan Universiti* (DPU), Universiti Sains Malaysia

An International Joint Seminar entitled “Towards Good Governance and Leadership: Decent Livelihood for Women” was organised by KANITA with the Department of Governmental Studies of the Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta (UMY), Indonesia. The event was one of the activities planned as part of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between the two universities. The broad objective of the MoU is to engage in joint research and publication on governance and leadership pertaining to gender issues and challenges. By working together, both universities hope to understand how structures of governance can influence policies that contribute toward fair and just distribution of development benefits among women and men.

Fourteen papers were presented during this one day event which was attended by sixty participants, including twenty delegates from Indonesia.

The keynote panel, which comprised Prof. Datin Rashidah Shuib from USM, Dr. Cecilia Ng from Good Governance & Gender Equality Society (3Gs), Penang, and Prof. Tulus Warsito from UMY, engaged in a conceptual discourse on governance and leadership, especially on how these concepts relate with the issue of gender equality. The three speakers viewed these concepts from different angles: the character of women’s leadership for social transformation, federal government structures as challenges to women’s representation in local government decision-making and feminist contributions to critical perspectives in international studies and the limits of women’s leadership in the context of transnational conflict and war.

In the second panel, critical analysis of women’s participation in livelihood activities were discussed based on migration research undertaken in Indonesian villages by two presenters; Prof. Diana Wong from KANITA, USM and Mutia Hariati Hussin from UMY. Empowerment of women was explored by Dr. Hirut Bekele Haile based on women’s participation in microfinance programmes. The final paper in this panel looked at protection against ill-health, particularly on the quality of reproductive health, and the role of local governments.

The third panel explored the structures and cultures that influence decision-making processes and women’s representation. Two papers by Titin Purwaningsih and Nur Azizah from UMY covered the contradictions of expanding electoral and representative democracy subjected to kinship capture in direct local elections and neo-liberalism’s hold on policy approaches. A paper by Dr. Noraida Endut focused on the bureaucracy by studying gender mainstreaming as a strategy for increasing women’s participation while another paper by Nur Syakiran Akmal Ismail and Rozita Arshad from Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM) sought to unpack the “deep structure” limitations at the state-level governance.

The final panel by Dr. Nor Hafizah Selamat from USM and Dr. Dyah Mutiarin from UMY interrogated governance approaches to poverty-reduction. At the macro-level, one of the challenges mentioned was the identification of appropriate measures of poverty that is specific to women’s experiences in order to demonstrate male-female gaps more clearly. Meanwhile the paper by Zaireeni Azmi from KANITA looked at the micro-level in which various challenges were raised regarding the evaluation of outcomes of the FELDA re-settlement scheme as well as the sustainability issues of poverty-reduction approaches.

(Prepared by Dr. Marina Durano, Post-Doctoral Fellow, KANITA)



Group photo of the seminar

Public Seminar on Social Inequalities and Democratisation

Date : 23 August 2011

Venue: *Dewan Persidangan Universiti* (DPU), Universiti Sains Malaysia

A public seminar on gender, social inequality and democracy was organised by KANITA together with Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN) on 23 August 2011 at *Dewan Persidangan Universiti* (DPU), Universiti Sains Malaysia. DAWN is a network of feminist scholars, researchers and activists from the economic South working for economic and gender justice and sustainable and democratic development. DAWN provides a forum for feminist research, analyses and advocacy on global issues (economic, social and political) affecting the livelihoods, living standards, rights and development prospects of women, especially poor and marginalised women, in regions of the South.



From left: Prof. Gita Sen, Prof. Datin Rashidah Shuib and Dr. Lin Mui Kiang

The first panel of speakers discussed the challenges faced in reducing gender inequality. Dr. Lin Mui Kiang, from the United Nations (UN) Malaysia Country Team, presented the highlights of the report, *Malaysia Millennium Development Goals 2010*. The second presentation was given by Prof. Gita Sen from the Indian Institute of Management in Bangalore, India. Prof. Gita Sen demonstrated the contradictions that arose in the Indian context when affirmative action for the backward castes competed for attention with poverty-stricken Indians who did not have the same entitlements. She also shared how the anti-corruption movement has expanded to

include broader sets of development issues and an even broader section of the citizenry seeking justice. The main challenge for gender equality may be located in the need to express the demand more forcefully as a matter of social justice.

The second panel tackled the gendered challenges of democratisation as well as the politics of power and accumulation. The session was inspired by the post-colonial histories of Malaysia and Madagascar that went into diverse and perverse paths of democratisation. Party politics and social movements have in their own way opened up space for new forms of deliberative norms to take root but these spaces are fragile and threatened by processes of primitive accumulation at national and global level. Both speakers will discuss how the pursuit of gender equality and women's empowerment finds itself squeezed in between competitive actions of party elites, diluted in populist demands and marginalised in social movements, against the background of the globalisation of struggles over resources. In Madagascar, Ms. Zo Randriamaro, a human rights and feminist activist, lamented the weakness of women's movements in articulating their demands in processes of electoral reform despite a history of women's leadership before the colonial period. Ms. Randriamaro also highlighted weaknesses in women's ability to defend land claims amidst the immense pressures faced by Madagascar to sell valuable land as the political leadership attempts to court foreign investment. Prof. Francis Loh Kok Wah, Prof. of Politics at the Universiti Sains Malaysia, highlighted the success of the Malaysian women's movement in overcoming ethnic divisions when they launched a campaign against domestic violence. There are also lessons to be learned from challenging North-South international politics that needed civil society organisations to dismantle attempts by developing country leaderships to use this difference to justify undemocratic processes. Finally, the construction of democratic institutions and structures remain important even as they have been sources of disappointment for citizenship practice.



From left: Ms. Zo Randriamaro, Prof. Francis Loh Kok Wah and Dr. Cecilia Ng

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(Prepared by Dr. Marina Durano, Post-Doctoral Fellow, KANITA)

Introducing Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) Workshop

Date : 10 November 2011
Venue : Berjaya Penang Hotel



Token of appreciation from Prof. Datin Rashidah Shuib to Dr. Judy Shoba Naidu a/p Robert Rajah

The one day workshop on 'Introducing Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB)' was organised by Women's Development Research Centre (KANITA) together with Good Governance & Gender Equality Society (3Gs), Penang and Municipal Council of Penang (MPPP) on 10 November 2011 at Penang Berjaya Hotel. The workshop was fully funded by the Municipal Council of Penang (MPPP) as part of the funding on situation analysis on MPPP's main activity, the Cleaner Greener Penang (CGP). This workshop was attended by 20 key and senior officers and councillors including Dr. Judy Shoba a/p Robert Rajah,

Director of Urban Services, Public Health and Licensing who also represented the *Yang Dipertua (YDP)* in giving the welcoming speech. Academic and administrative staff of KANITA, 3Gs, Women Centre for Change (WCC) and the Finance Department, *Majlis Perbandaran Seberang Perai (MPSP)* led and facilitated the workshop. The objectives of the workshop were to introduce to and to increase the understanding of the participants the concepts and tools of GRB. It was also aimed to enhance the capacity of the participants to implement GRB in their work process.

The Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) is introduced to the Penang local council which is one of the two local councils (the other one is the MPSP) that will be piloting the GRB in specific areas. This is also in response to the need to ensure that gender mainstreaming strategy will be inculcated in the various institutions and agencies of the State of Penang. To achieve this goal, adequate and strategic allocations of financial resources are vital involving the state and municipal council budgets. The importance of GRB is to recognise the significant differential needs of men and women, girls and boys and the different services that are needed as well as the different ways different people used and benefited from existing services.



MPPP Participants responding to 'Gender Needs' exercise

(Prepared by Ms. Siti Waringin Oon, Social Research Officer, KANITA)

University-Community Engagement Project

Women's Development Research Centre (KANITA) has received a grant under the University-Community Engagement Flagship 2011 entitled "Gender and Entrepreneurship Orientation: Empowering Single Mothers towards Sustainable Entrepreneurship". The project commenced in June 2011 with the amount of RM 70, 070.00 for the 1st year and is headed by Assoc. Prof. Intan Osman. Around 20 single mothers who are interested and have the drive to be involved in entrepreneurship are expected to join the project. The aims of the project are to provide a programme that will create awareness, build knowledge and skills in entrepreneurship to all participants through training and coaching. At the same time, it is to create an entrepreneurial model that will be using a gender framework for single mothers and policy makers. It is believed that this project has potentials to improve participants' economic status and wellbeing as a result of having access and control on resources – the empowerment element.



The project leader, Assoc. Prof. Intan Osman

(Prepared by Ms. Siti Waringin Oon, Social Research Officer, KANITA)

CONFERENCES/ WORKSHOPS

Global Business and Social Science Research Conference

Date : 20-21 June 2011

Venue: Radisson Blu Hotel, Beijing, China

The two day conference sponsored by the World Business Institute, Australia was attended and participated by 80 delegates from 23 countries of the world including Australia, Bangladesh, Cameroon, Canada, China, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Iran, Ireland, Korea, Malaysia, Mauritius, Pakistan, Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, UK, USA and Zimbabwe. Malaysian delegates comprised academicians and researchers from USM, UKM, UUM, UMP, UMK and UTM. The conference tracks focused on Accounting & Finance; Management; Banking & Finance; Marketing and Economics. Assoc. Prof. Intan Osman of KANITA, USM presented a paper on Entrepreneurial Aspirations and Empowerment of Rural Women in Ecotourism SMEs: A Preliminary Analysis which she co-authored with academicians from USM, UITM and UNITEN. This Management track attended by 15-20 participants had five other paper presentations with questions and answers centered around methodologies and findings

After the conference, Assoc. Prof. Intan Osman and her son who came with her stayed for another 2 days to tour Beijing and the neighbourhood, visiting the Temple of Heaven, Tiananmen Square and The Great Wall of China. They also experienced underground train and bus rides within Beijing city destinations.

(Prepared by Assoc. Prof. Intan Osman, Lecturer, KANITA)

Mid-term research workshop of the project "Contemporary Chinese Migration In Southeast and East Asia"

Date : 7-11 August 2011

Venue: Hanoi, Vietnam

Prof. Diana Wong and her Research Officer, Ms. Ooi Pei Wen attended a workshop in Hanoi, Vietnam with the other collaborators from Japan and Vietnam, of the research project on Contemporary Chinese Migration in Southeast and East Asia. The meeting was organised by the research coordinator, Southeast Asian Studies Regional Exchange Program (SEASREP) and was funded by the Japan Foundation. It was to report on the ongoing research of each of the three research sites in Malaysia, Vietnam and Japan. The workshop was also attended by the members of SEASREP from other Southeast Asia countries such as Thailand and Indonesia, as well as a representative from the Japan Foundation. Prof. Diana Wong presented the progress report on the Malaysian site at the workshop; the report for Vietnam was presented by Prof. Nguyen Van Chinh of Hanoi National University while the report on Japan was presented by Prof. Gracia Liu-Farrer of Waseda University. The reports presented were of a high quality and provided the basis for very fruitful discussions on several common themes which emerged, such as the role played by agents, and the significance of minority and cross-border migration in the Southeast Asian context. Of particular interest to the Malaysian team was the report on the People's Republic of China (PRC) students in Japan and on the cross-border Chinese traders in Vietnam.

(Prepared by Ms. Ooi Pei Wen, Research Officer, KANITA)

International Forum on Women in Science and Technology in Muslim Countries

Date : 20-22 September 2011

Venue: Swiss Garden Hotel, Kuala Lumpur

The forum was jointly organised by the International Science, Technology and Innovation Centre for South-South Cooperation (ISTIC), the NAM Institute for the Empowerment of Women, Malaysia (NIEW) in collaboration with UNESCO, ISESCO, Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (MOSTI), Malaysian National Commission for UNESCO, Academy of Science Malaysia and Organization for Women in Science for the Developing World. Attended by 221 delegates from various Muslim countries, the forum was able to address a range of critically important themes relating to gender equality and gender empowerment in the Muslim countries. It is intended to specifically apply a positive country-level approach by presenting success stories in Muslim countries such as Malaysia, Turkey, and other countries where significant progress in the empowerment of women has been generally acknowledged not only in the OIC region but also throughout the world. The forum succeeded in deliberating the topical structure under the overarching framework of political, social and economic environment with the Government as enablers; Science and Technology as a broad based education platform; and with women playing their roles in the transformation of societies.

(Continued from page 7)

Focusing on three main themes: Women in Science, Technology and Innovation; Women in Health and Education and Women in Leadership and Role of Young Women as Agents of Change, the forum had brought together senior and young representatives and experts from governments, international organisations, research organisations, academies of sciences, organisations of women in sciences, organisations of women in health, higher education institutions, and non-governmental women organisations. There were keynote addresses, forum presentations and discussions addressed and led by renowned public and private corporate figures including amongst others Dato' Ir. Lee Yee Cheong, Chairman of ISTIC Governing Board, Tan Sri Datuk (Dr.) Rafiah Salim, Director of NIEW, Hon. Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed, Deputy Director General of ISESCO, Dr. Lidia Brito, Director, Division of Science Policy and Sustainable Development, UNESCO and Prof. Asma Ismail, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation), Universiti Sains Malaysia. The presentations addressed the status, issues, problems and recommendations of the topics given. In this forum, Assoc. Prof. Intan Osman of KANITA was invited to participate and serve as a rapporteur in a three member group led by Dr. Asma Abdullah, lead consultant of Culturematters and an Industry Advisory Panel (IAP) of KANITA. The group completed a comprehensive conference report for ISTIC in early Nov 2011.

(Prepared by Assoc. Prof. Intan Osman, Lecturer, KANITA)

Workshop on Understanding Sexual Harassment at Workplace



Dr. Noraida Endut during the session

Date : 7 October 2011
Venue : Seminar Room 1 & 2, Institute for Research in Molecular Medicine (INFORMM), USM

The half-day workshop was jointly organised by KANITA and the School of Industrial Technology (PPTI), USM. The main objectives of the workshop were aimed to educate the staff of PPTI to obtain a better understanding and increase awareness of all the issues surrounding sexual harassment and the fact that USM does have a sexual harassment policy. At the same time, it is to create a safe and conducive working environment for men and women at PPIT.

A total of 89 participants of PPTI's staff from different groups; academicians and administrators took part in the workshop. The Dean of PPTI, Prof. Rozman Hj. Din as one of the participants gave an opening speech emphasising on the need for the staff to understand the meanings and interpretation of Sexual Harassment behaviour at work place and how to address the issues if they arise. Prof. Datin Rashidah Shuib, Director of KANITA, began the workshop with the introduction of sexual harassment concept by giving real life examples to gauge the participants' understanding and perception on the issue. The interactive workshop then encouraged the participants to share and discuss their views regarding sexual harassment issues during the discussion session facilitated by Dr. Noraida Endut. The issue was debriefed by Dr. Noraida Endut at the end of the session by emphasising the importance of members of the organisation to recognise appropriate and inappropriate workplace behaviours. Most of the participants agreed that steps should be taken to prevent harassment and the organisation must be prepared to respond effectively to a variety of harassment circumstances.

(Prepared by Ms. Zaireeni Azmi, Lecturer, KANITA)

International Conference on Historical, Humanities and Social Sciences (CHHSS)

Date : 21-23 October 2011
Venue: Ramses Hilton, Cairo, Egypt

International Conference on Historical, Humanities and Social Sciences (CHHSS) was held at the Ramses Hilton, Cairo, Egypt starting from 21 until 23 October 2011. It was organised by the International Economic, Development and Research Conference (IEDRC). Women's Development Research Centre (KANITA) submitted two papers for this conference entitled "Factors affecting health seeking behaviour among Kelantanese women on pap smear screening" authored and presented by Siti Waringin et al and "Understanding and experiences of sexual harassment amongst university students: A case study of undergraduates in Universiti Sains Malaysia" authored by Noraida Endut et al was presented by Zaireeni Azmi. These two papers will be published in an ISI index proceeding journal.

(Prepared by Ms. Siti Waringin Oon, Research Officer, KANITA)

KANITA IN-HOUSE ACTIVITIES

KANITA Seminar Series

Contemporary Chinese Mobility to Malaysia

Date : 8 September 2011
 Venue : Rafidah Aziz Conference Room, KANITA
 Presenters : Professor Diana Wong and Ms. Ooi Pei Wen

Prof. Diana Wong and Ms. Ooi Pei Wen, Research Officer, presented a work-in-progress report on their ongoing research into "Contemporary Mainland Chinese Mobility to Malaysia". The research is part of a larger study on contemporary Chinese mobility that includes Malaysia, Vietnam and Japan, funded by the Japan Foundation, and coordinated by SEASREP (Southeast Asian Studies Research Exchange Program). Given the fact that to date, little is known on the topic, the research aims at an initial mapping of the phenomenon, and is still in the exploratory stage. The preliminary findings categorised Chinese (PRC) nationals in Malaysia into four main categories, namely Chinese Muslim, students, entertainment workers and traders. The presentation then focussed on the category of Chinese students, who currently constitute the largest group of international students in the country. There are about 400 of PRC students currently on USM campus. Most of them come from north and central China. A questionnaire survey with a sample size of 1000 is currently being conducted, covering students from both public and private universities and colleges in order to find out about their socio-economic background and their experiences studying in Malaysia. Preliminary findings indicate that a significant percentage of the Chinese students in Malaysia are Hui Muslims, raising issues regarding their Chinese Muslim identity in the Malaysian context, as well as their transnational religious and trading networks.



Prof. Diana Wong and Ooi Pei Wen during the presentation

(Prepared by Ms. Ooi Pei Wen, Research Officer, KANITA)

Accounting for Gender Results: Challenges in Implementing The Philippine Gender and Development Budget Policy

Date : 14 November 2011
 Venue : Rafidah Aziz Conference Room KANITA
 Presenter : Jeanne Frances I. Illo, Gender and Development Consultant

Jeanne I. Illo (Ph.D), a Philippino was invited to conduct a seminar on "Accounting for Gender Results: Challenges in Implementing The Philippine Gender and Development Budget Policy". Illo specialises in gender analysis planning and budgeting, development of gender, development guidance and tool and many more. The seminar was chaired by Prof. Diana Wong, KANITA's Visiting Professor and attended by the centre's academicians, administrators, post-graduates and a representative from Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development (KPWKM), Ms. Umi Fadhilah Hamzah. There were about 20 attendees.



Jeanne I. Illo

Jeanne reviewed the Philippine gender budget policy as it has been implemented by national agencies. The foci have been on implementation processes, difficulties met, performance and results on the implementation of policy and getting resources for implementation. The Philippine Government launched the Gender Mainstreaming three years ago with the GRB as a critical element.

The government is committed to continue on Gender Mainstreaming ensuring good governance while respecting, protecting and fulfilling human rights as well as getting voices of the people heard. She reflected on how important it is to see the Budget Mainstreaming goes through Gender Budgeting because only 1% goes to gender. Although Gender Budget is integral to political and technical processes, it is also a process of inclusiveness, participation, transparency and accountability. One of the questions raised during the seminar was the mechanism of GRB whether it should be in the forms of separate activities, or integrated into existing programmes, and how to ensure the resources flow that would reflect the link of GRB between inputs, processes and outputs and ultimately the outcomes.

(Prepared by Ms. Nur Diyana Tanwir, Research Officer, KANITA)

IN PERSON WITH DR. MARINA DURANO



Dr. Marina Durano has a Ph.D in Economics from the University of Manchester in the United Kingdom (UK) and a post-doctoral fellow of KANITA at the time of the interview. She has been working on gender issues in financing for development for several years, including examining gender issues in international trade policies. Dr. Marina also is a member of the Executive Committee of Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN). Before joining DAWN, she was the Asia research coordinator for International Gender and Trade Network-Asia, where she analysed gender issues in international trade policy. She was a member of KANITA's GRB team working with the Penang local authorities on the institutionalisation of gender responsive budgeting.

KM: Can you tell us how did you come to know KANITA and applied for the post-doctoral fellowship?

MD: I am not new to KANITA. A couple of years ago I had the opportunity to come to Malaysia for Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN meeting. DAWN is a network of feminist scholars, researchers and activists from the economic South working for economic and gender justice and sustainable and democratic development. I was one of the DAWN women in the seminar hosted by KANITA on the global economic crisis. Dr. Cecilia Ng, who has known and worked with DAWN for a long-time, recommended KANITA and persuaded me to join.

KM: What had been your role as KANITA's Post-Doctoral Fellow?

MD: Actually, KANITA wanted me to initiate Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) in Penang. GRB recognises the advantages of adapting public budgets to the differential needs of men and women, girls and boys who are users of public services. I think I managed to contribute substantively to KANITA's new area of expertise. During my stay here, I've been able to play a key role in the team that convinced the Seberang Perai Municipal Council (*Majlis Perbandaran Seberang Perai or MPSP*) and, now, the Municipal Council of Penang Island (*Majlis Perbandaran Pulau Pinang or MPPP*), to engage in a pilot project on GRB. In a short period of time we accomplished a lot. From introducing the issue to getting of funding from the municipal councils and, together with Good Governance and Gender Equality Society (3GS) Penang, we conducted two GRB-specific trainings and produced a publication about GRB.

KM: What other contributions did you make during your stay?

MD: You know that the main expectation from a Post-Doctoral Fellow is publication. I contributed a chapter to a book entitled *New Visions for Global Governance* coming out next year published by Routledge. An article is also coming out next year in the *Journal of Gender Studies on Official Development Assistance in Asia*. The journal is featuring all the speakers of a Public

Seminar on Gender and Macroeconomics in Asia sponsored by the Ochanomizu University in Tokyo, Japan. I have been very busy editing a book together with Prof. Gita Sen of the Indian Institute of Management Bangalore that will be published by Zed Books and is also expected to come out next year. The publication process takes quite a long time and the fruits of my labour will only be fully harvested after I have left KANITA.

But there is one thing that I am also quite proud of that is already out. It is an analysis that I did of a Philippine historical document written by Dr. Jose Rizal addressed to the women of Malolos, a town north of Manila, which was the seat of the first Philippine government in the 19th century. This piece, which uses the Capabilities Approach developed by Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum as a framework will be published in a special issue of the *Philippine Review of Economics* commemorating Rizal's 150th birth anniversary.

I've done quite a bit of travelling also. I gave seminars at the Women's Studies Institute of China and the China Women's University in Beijing last June, just a week after attending the Annual Conference of the International Association for Feminist Economics. I went to Cambodia where the DAWN Training Institute was held and participated in by 27 young feminists from around the world, including one Malaysian working with the All Women's Action Society Malaysia (AWAM). My recent travel was to Korea to present a paper at an International Seminar on Gender Equality, Aid Effectiveness, and Sustainable Development sponsored by the United Nations Development Programme and the Korean Institute for Gender Equality Promotion and Education.

KM: The last few years have witnessed how the global world is interconnected. The economic crises, particularly the rise of food prices, unemployment, fuel crises have been seen everywhere. In some countries, this led to public outcry and uprising. How do you see these issues as a Macroeconomist?

MD: Many commentators see the current global economic and financial crisis as spawning opportunities for reform and transformation for a better world.

(Continued from page 10)

Specifically reacting to the origins of the crisis, a Bretton Woods moment has been declared by those seeking structural changes in the international financial architecture. Others have declared the demise of the neoliberal consensus, which was headlined by policies promoting privatisation, liberalisation and deregulation following structural adjustment programmes applied during the later decades of the 20th century. Feminist activists have also voiced similar hopes at the same time that they acknowledge the complexity behind the contestations of power over global economic governance. These contestations define the parameters by which future global governance of the development architecture can facilitate the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment. Amidst these political and economic contestations, the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment faces many challenges. Will the twenty-first century give birth to a better world like a phoenix rises from the ashes?

KM: What do you think is the role of Women's and Gender Studies and Research Centres in this complex and uncertain period?

MD: Many decisions are being made in centres of power where women's voices are not heard. I think that women's and gender studies and research centres have to continue working to fill a gap in the analysis of the

impact of macroeconomic policies so that the feminist views become an integral part of the policy debates. It will also be helpful for women's and gender studies to bring in constructive proposals for the re-making of social contracts and global governance architectures so that these institutions support and promote social justice and human development.

KM: Dr. Marina, thank you so much for sharing your experiences and thoughts. KANITA wishes you all the best in your future career.

MD: It is my pleasure.

(Prepared by Dr. Hirut Bekele Haile, Post-Doctoral Fellow, KANITA)



Dr. Marina Durano together with Prof. Datin Rashidah Shuib

KANITA FAMILY NEWS

Congratulations to KANITA's System Analyst, Siti Shahrizatil Husna Shahrudin and her husband, Mohd Hidzir Shamshul Bahrin on the birth of their son, Muhammad Hafiy Haziq on 27 August 2011. We also would like to congratulate Norshilawati Mohd. Shibi and her husband, Mohd. Fikri Saad on the birth of their twin, Muhamad Alif Reza and Muhamad Alim Reza on 13 June 2011.

KANITA welcomes three new staff: Mohamad Nazri Musir, our new Project Manager for Micro-pinj. Previously he was with Universiti Malaysia Pahang (UMP) and just joined KANITA early April 2011. Our two new staff Abdul Ghaffur Abdul Aziz and Azimah Abdul Manap who also joined KANITA on 15 June 2011 as Admin Assistant. Nur Mursyida Mahadzir and Rosli Dzulkifli have also joined KANITA as Research Assistant for KANITA's Micro-pinj project.

KANITA would like to welcome two post-graduate students who just registered with KANITA, Reyhaneh Baghari from Iran and Vimalaswari Ramasamy, from Malaysia and Vimalaswari Ramasamy who is an Industrial Ph.D candidate.

KANITA took the opportunity to congratulate Lai Wan Teng for her success in getting a scholarship from the German Academic Exchange Program (DAAD) to further her studies at the Ph.D level in University of Bonn, Germany for three years starting 1 September 2011.

Sadly, KANITA bids goodbye to one of our Post-Doctoral Fellow, Dr. Marina Durano who has been with us for nearly a year. We wish her all the best in her future undertakings and may she be well and healthy always.

(Prepared by Hasniza Mohd Hassan, Executive Officer, KANITA)

List of Professional Seminar Series in 2011

- **25 January 2011**, *Gender in Water Sector: Sharing of the Research Findings at Cap-Net Pretoria, South Africa* by Lai Wan Teng
- **11 February 2011**, *Researching Women's Lives: Sharing the Norwegian Experiences of Studying Malaysian Women* by Prof. Merete Lie
- **10 March 2011**, *Gender-Equitable Public Policy: Challenges to Policy Design Amidst Contestations in a Multi-Polar World* by Dr. Marina Durano
- **14 April 2011**, *Targeting Women in Microfinance Programmes: Transforming or reinforcing gender inequalities? Evidence from Ethiopia* by Dr. Hirut Bekele Haile
- **25 April 2011**, *Missing women? Challenging the Low Female Labor Force Participation Rates in Malaysia* by Anja K. Franck
- **27 May 2011**, *Rise of Womanhood: Rethink Power and Empowerment from within - An Expressive Body Approach* by Aida Redza
- **8 September 2011**, *Contemporary Chinese Mobility to Malaysia* by Prof. Diana Wong and Ooi Pei Wen
- **21 October 2011**, *Gender Responsive Statistical*

Systems for Penang Local Government by Dr. Margarita F. Guerrero

- **14 November 2011**, *Accounting for Gender Results: Challenges in Implementing the Philippine Gender and Development Budget Policy* by Jeanne I. Illo

List of Graduate Seminar Series in 2011

- **10 January 2011**, *Gender and Islam in Malaysia: Leadership Access for Muslim Women* by Crystal Corman
- **4 May 2011**, *Gender and Islam in Malaysia: Women's Participation in Religious Discourse* by Crystal Corman

List of Journal Club Presentations in 2011

- **19 August 2011**, *La Via Campesina: The Birth & Evolution of a Transnational Social Movement* by Montawadee Krutmechai
- **6 September 2011**, *Migrant 'Illegality' and Deportability in Everyday Life* by Lai Wan Teng

KANITA**VISION**

Transforming society towards gender equality and social justice

MISSION

As a Centre of Excellence, KANITA is committed to research, advocacy and community engagement utilising and promoting a gender and social equality framework. It strives to impact the academe, the state, women and the society at large and in particular, the bottom half billion.

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Happy New Year 2012!!!