

FROM THE GROUND UP



PROFILES OF WOMEN ADVANCING LOCAL ECONOMIES



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INTRODUCTION

There is a growing consensus among political and thought leaders that women play a critical role in any country's economic stability. Institutions including the World Bank have documented that promoting women's equal opportunity in the labor force and public life catalyzes a nation's growth. Investing in women also greatly enhances the well-being of children, who are more likely to survive and thrive if their mothers are healthy and educated, leading to a more stable future.

For over 35 years, the Centre for Development and Population Activities (CEDPA) has understood the potential of women to lead change within their communities and countries. Working hand in hand with women leaders, local partners, and national and international organizations, CEDPA builds the capacity of women to become leaders in their communities and nations.

CEDPA's proven Global Women in Management (GWIM) workshop, first offered in 1978, is a month-long training for mid-level women managers from nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). The workshop is designed to build on participants' leadership potential and to strengthen project management and technical skills needed to run any organization.

In 2005, the ExxonMobil Foundation began funding the GWIM program through its Women's Economic Opportunity Initiative, a global effort to equip women in developing countries with education and training, access to key resources, and support structures needed to fulfill their economic potential and help drive economic development in their communities.

Sharing the initiative's goal, CEDPA expanded the GWIM workshop to include entrepreneurial and business skills and integrated post-workshop activities. In the new GWIM program, participants not only strengthen their competencies in program management, leadership, fundraising and institutional sustainability, but also examine strategies and opportunities for entrepreneurship; explore models in microcredit, village banking and microenterprise development; analyze various financing models; adapt and apply tools and approaches for program sustainability; and develop advocacy and community mobilization strategies.

In addition, to provide a support system for participants after they graduate, CEDPA launched an alumni coaching

program and began offering a professional coach to all GWIM graduates. The GWIM coaching workshops have trained a cadre of senior-level alumni with solid coaching skills as well as expertise and experience in women's economic programs. Ninety-three seasoned coaches have worked with over 500 CEDPA alumni worldwide to help them overcome performance barriers, advance to leadership positions and strengthen personal and professional networks.

With ExxonMobil Foundation's support, in six years CEDPA has conducted one alumni advocacy, four coaching and 14 GWIM workshops in Brazil, Cameroon, Egypt, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria and the United States, reaching more than 480 women leaders from 59 countries. CEDPA creates a supportive and participatory learning environment for the exchange of best practices and experiences, strategy development and skills building among the participants. Many develop strong ties and maintain contact with fellow workshop participants, broadening their vision and fostering a global sense of community among women.

Program results are documented through post-workshop evaluations, follow-up surveys, and ongoing communication with GWIM alumni. To date, in surveys administered six to 12 months post-GWIM workshops, 74 percent of respondents report using their new skills and learning to a great extent. In addition, 33 percent reported job promotions, 71 percent increased their job responsibilities, and 77 percent initiating change in their organizations which they attributed to their GWIM participation. Further, 90 percent continued to network with other alumni and 40 percent have become CEDPA coaches.

From the Ground Up highlights the stories of 13 GWIM alumni hailing from around the globe. The stories are borrowed from formal case studies conducted as part of the GWIM program evaluation. Some of the alumni teach vocational skills that help fellow women earn a living. Some mobilize women to participate more actively in policy making. One even ran for public office after her workshop experience.

These profiles illustrate how strengthening the capacity of women leaders at the grassroots level can change lives and advance economies through bolstering the reach of community and national level organizations.

ANDREIA

ANDREIA RABETIM

Intersectoral Relations Manager, Vale Foundation

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

2005 GWIM 40 Alumna (Washington, D.C.)

When Andreia Rabetim applied for the 2005 GWIM workshop in Washington, D.C., she was a manager at an NGO that prepares disadvantaged youth in Rio de Janeiro for the working world.

She could relate to their situation: Her father died when she was 13, and Andreia worked after school as a secretary to help support her family. She eventually earned a scholarship to a prestigious federal school and became the first in her family to earn a university degree.

Andreia knew when she graduated that she wanted to help others, so she was happy when she was hired at the NGO. Helping young people overcome obstacles such as those she had faced was so rewarding that she even turned down a higher-paying position with the private foundation of Vale, which is the world's second-largest mining company.

When an opportunity arose to improve her leadership and management skills through a GWIM workshop, Andreia was excited because she knew this could further enhance her ability to reach young people. She never expected that the workshop would inspire her to change her life.

At the workshop, she learned to look at the big picture. She understood that "it's not only about the vocation. We cannot only think with our hearts" but must also consider "how to structure our goals."

"Even today, there are moments that remind me of what I learned about strategic communication, and that is good for my work."

— Andreia Rabetim

The workshop made Andreia realize that she could touch the lives of so many more people. She now understood the importance of integrating the public, private and civil-society sectors, that the sum was greater than the individual parts. "[GWIM] gave me the energy, and I thought I could do more," she says. "I could see ... the integration of everything."

Andreia returned to Rio armed with a new, holistic perspective and accepted the job with the Vale Foundation. In her new position as the intersectoral relations manager, she was responsible for forming alliances with local, state and federal agencies as well as civil-society groups.

But Andreia had much more in mind. She worked with her team to design a new methodology for integrating the public, private and civil-society sectors in the regions where Vale operates. Here's what resulted: a four-stage plan that was fully adopted by the organization and a shift in the overarching strategic approach.

MINING IS A KEY INDUSTRY IN BRAZIL, EMPLOYING 14 PERCENT OF THE LABOR FORCE, OR ABOUT 14 MILLION WORKERS.

Foundation president Silvio Vaz credits Andreia for engaging an eclectic array of individuals and interests, from municipal officials to local NGOs, and focusing them on a common goal: designing and implementing programs that benefit Vale mining community members.

"She is able to integrate all those parts," Silvio said of the diverse management groups. "I put together a lot of great personalities, but strong personalities – people who know about agriculture, entrepreneurship, personal plans – a lot of consultants," he says. "But they were strained. ...She was able to integrate them and help them work together."

Such an effort requires top-notch communication skills, and Andreia credits GWIM for hers. "Even today," she says, "there are moments that remind me of what I learned about strategic communication, and that is good for my work."

In addition to developing and facilitating strategic alliances, Andreia is involved in developing direct-service programs, including those designed to empower women as a way to improve an entire community's quality of life. She helped launch two women's vocational associations in Pará, Brazil's second-largest state and one of its poorest.

Through these groups, the foundation provides approximately 85 women with technical assistance, seed money and materials to handcraft eco-friendly jewelry and to form direct linkages with buyers, avoiding middlemen whenever possible. As a result, women who previously had little or no income can now generate about 500 reais (U.S. \$290) per month, which is slightly above minimum wage. "Working with women is important," says Andreia. "Women can be opinion makers who can more easily change the reality of communities."

The activities of these women's associations are not stand alone. In reality, they are only part and parcel of Vale Foundation's new vision of institutionalizing socioeconomic development. Andreia and the foundation's goal is to create 30 community-specific "knowledge stations" in the north and northeastern states of Brazil, the poorest part of the country.

The knowledge stations equip community members to build context-specific skills and assets whether by selling handcrafted goods, improving farming irrigation systems or providing designated areas for harvesting fruits and vegetables and planting tree nurseries.

Andreia is proud of her part in improving communities in the Amazon. Vale's regional manager for Pará says, "We could not be where we are today with the project without Andreia's contributions. She really integrated all of the different sectors ... and now she is also fundraising for the communities."

At GWIM, Andreia focused on her own personal development. "I learned how to plan my life," she says, "to think about where I am at, what I want to do in the future, and how I can achieve my goals. ...GWIM gave me the courage to say, 'I will change my life.'"

Now that she has done that, she is changing the lives of many others as well.



TITIK

TITIK HARTINI

Executive Director, Association for Community Empowerment

Jakarta, Indonesia

2009 GWIM 48 Alumna (Washington, D.C.)

Had Titik Hartini conformed to her father's expectations, she would have married straight out of high school, remained in the Indonesian farming village where she was born, and raised children in a polygamous household just like his.

Instead, she took her mother's advice: Though she herself was the second of two wives in a Muslim family and had no formal schooling, Titik's mother urged her daughter to maintain independence in terms of income as well as decision-making.

With a bachelor's degree in political science, a master's in women's studies and years of grassroots mobilization work on behalf of women, she had surpassed her mother's most ambitious dreams for her by her mid-40s. But it was through participating in a 2009 GWIM workshop that Titik vastly expanded her reach in accomplishing her life's mission: to empower Indonesian women to stand up for themselves within and outside the home.

"In our religion, women are always in the second position," Titik says. "In the community, most of the people in the public role are men. This division reduces women's access to resources and also limits their ability to participate in public policy."

She was well positioned even before GWIM to promote women's rights across Indonesia, a nation of 17,000 islands. As executive director since 2004 of the Association for Community Empowerment (ACE), Titik oversees initiatives that help poor and vulnerable communities enhance their economic and social well-being via partner organizations. ACE has 27 national NGO members and more than 200 local partners that together have reached nearly a quarter of a million families in 20 of Indonesia's 30 provinces.

But during her 12-hour workdays, Titik's emphasis on managing rather than leading ultimately limited the organization's potential. GWIM helped her see the difference.

"During the workshop, I had time to reflect on myself. Before the workshop, I didn't know which was a priority for me: to be a leader or a manager," says Titik. "Now, I think more clearly about my position, and I recognize that as a director I need to be mostly a leader, and sometimes a manager."

With that shift in perception, Titik understood the need to train her staff so she could delegate. She used GWIM tools and templates to streamline budgeting and finance, proposal writing, and monitoring and evaluation. With

these responsibilities off her plate, Titik shifted her focus from the day-to-day to the larger picture.

Leveraging her newly enhanced fundraising and networking skills, Titik doubled the amount her organization raised from one year to the next after GWIM. Since 2009, the association has been awarded funding from ExxonMobil, the Ford Foundation, the Embassy of the Netherlands and the United Nations Development Programme. One employee says staff members have "seen her spirit decide to do something new, and then go get funding to do it."

Titik's impact since GWIM extends far beyond improving her organization's management and fundraising. She used the same tools to build the capacity of ACE's local NGOs and partners across Indonesia, which in turn train local women. Topics include business management as well as public policy.

One of Titik's goals is to ensure that local governments take gender into consideration when allocating funds. Thus, borrowing from GWIM materials, ACE's programs now include components to educate women about the policymaking and governing process; teach them how to analyze and understand local budgets; and foster development of their confidence so that their voices are heard.

As a result, women are speaking up from rural islands to Jakarta's slums. On the island of Lombok, a partner NGO shifted its strategy following ACE's training. Now, in addition to income generation, it helps women gain access to government funds to solve entrenched economic

development issues. According to one staff member there, "ACE has done more than just transfer knowledge; they've given us skills, so that we can make better strategies for approaching the government."

Following the ACE-designed training, one Lombok women's business association has become extremely active in local policymaking and advocacy. Women now make up 40 percent of attendees at local government planning sessions. And the association recently became the first women's organization to directly access government funds when it won a grant for 350 million Indonesian rupiah (U.S. \$39,000) from the government's poverty reduction program to support the local weaving industry.

Urban women are benefiting, too. Through door-to-door canvassing in one of South Jakarta's poorest neighborhoods, another NGO partner has mobilized more than 600 women to form small business associations and trained them in business management and cooperatives. According to the NGO's director, the women are more self-confident and now "express their wants and needs to local leaders."

In addition, many members started or strengthened businesses such as baking, sewing, weaving, catering and selling handmade silk flowers. The groups also launched savings programs to make small loans to members for business capital improvements, education or family needs.

Titik credits GWIM for giving her the tools to elevate her work beyond managing projects that support poor Indonesians' income-generating activities. As the number of women leveraging their advocacy skills multiplies, Titik is increasingly optimistic about their collective ability to transform society's perception of gender roles. This level of empowerment is beyond anything her mother or she could have imagined.



"During the workshop, I had time to reflect on myself. Before the workshop, I didn't know which was a priority for me: to be a leader or a manager. Now, I think more clearly about my position, and I recognize that as a director I need to be mostly a leader, and sometimes a manager." — Titik



LADY NNE

LADY NNE BASSEY ABRAHAM

President/CEO, Our Ladies Development Centre

Uyo, Nigeria

2005 GWIM 40 Alumna (Washington, D.C.)

Lady Nne Bassey Abraham realized through GWIM that empowering women is more than simply encouraging them to engage in policymaking. It's also about engaging public officials and other key partners in women's development initiatives.

Involving stakeholders and garnering support from powerful allies greatly enhance any development effort's success, she learned. Following her participation in the 2005 GWIM workshop in Washington, D.C., she has made local government outreach and liaison work an integral part of her focus in Nigeria as president and chief executive officer of Our Ladies Development Centre (OLADEC).



Using communication skills she refined at GWIM, she now makes a point of informing state and other elected officials about news involving her organization's projects, which focus on entrepreneurship skills training and micro loans. For every new development or announcement, she sends a letter to the governor and local representatives. Her persistence is starting to pay off. Officials have begun attending her events and offering statements of support. Nne hopes to turn those encouraging words into financial support very soon.

In addition, she has strengthened her organization's emphasis on grassroots mobilization. More than 10,000 women and youths are involved with OLADEC's projects in Akwa Ibom, the largely rural southern Nigerian state where the center is located. Women, although they constitute nearly half the state's 3.9 million residents, traditionally have had little or no voice in local governing.

Nne's organization is changing that by ensuring that at least one woman from each of the state's 2,250 villages attends twice-a-month local policymaking meetings. So far, roughly 6,000 women in the network attend local meetings regularly and have launched youth groups to help build their vocational and advocacy skills. More than 4,000 young Nigerians are taking part.

Nne does not limit her political empowerment work to Akwa Ibom. She has led three-day workshops in each of Nigeria's 36 states, educating women about public and private resources they can tap to improve their families' quality of life. She encourages them to get involved or become more active in OLADEC's network as well as local women's associations and cooperatives.

One of her new programming ideas, implemented since her GWIM training, is "Lift Me Up." The pilot anti-poverty program identifies women with demonstrated need and helps them secure the training, land and money to start down the road to self-sufficiency.

With start-up loans of 120,000 naira (U.S. \$783), women invest in farmland and animals such as poultry, pigs, fish and sea snails. The women learn how to grow food crops and raise animals for their own consumption and for sale. The goal is to raise the annual income of each participant to at least 200,000 naira (U.S. \$1,300).

As Nne continues to complement her income-generation projects with public policy workshops and support, she is helping Nigerians do more than just raise money. She is teaching them to raise their voices and be heard.

CLAUDIA

CLAUDIA JEUNON

Corporate Social Responsibility Manager, Industrial Federation of the State of Rio de Janeiro

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

2007 GWIM 43 Alumna (Washington, D.C.)

As corporate social responsibility (CSR) manager for the Industrial Federation of the State of Rio de Janeiro, Claudia Jeunon has plenty of experience developing social projects; counseling companies on CSR management; and facilitating collaboration among government agencies, NGOs and other institutions. She applied to GWIM for the opportunity to exchange ideas with women from around the world and to improve her advocacy skills.

Claudia was born in Rio de Janeiro and grew up there in the 1960s, a time of military rule in Brazil. "When you grow up in this environment, you either accept everything or you ask questions about everything," she explains. "I was part of this second group."

That curiosity and thirst for learning drew her to apply to GWIM, but with 25 years of work experience under her belt, she did not expect to learn so much from the workshop. "One thing I learned a lot in the program was leadership," she says, adding that "when you are a manager, you are evaluated by what people with you do, not by what you yourself do."

Learning to adapt her leadership skills to different personality styles was a particularly important lesson she learned at GWIM. When she returned to Brazil, she referred to the learning styles tool to evaluate her team.

"Now I have a better relationship" with them, she says. "My boss obviously saw more harmony in my group."

Leveraging her team's newfound effectiveness, Claudia has successfully fostered relationships between private businesses and NGOs in poor communities. The potential for charities to obtain corporate funding is not insignificant. Two-thirds of Brazilian companies surveyed in 2005 reported making social investments, ranging from small individual donations to sponsorship of larger projects.

She and her team help NGOs clarify their mission and programming and enhance their efficiency to make them more attractive to investors. As a result of this project, more than 25 NGOs employing nearly 3,000 people – about 80

percent of them women – have partnered with 41 companies to increase their impact. In addition, Banco Santander now grants NGOs microcredit for income-generation activities at a reduced interest rate – two to three percent, compared with the market interest rate of 12 percent.

A second major CSR project run by Claudia trains women to market their handicrafts on a large scale by enhancing their skills in pricing, management and exporting. The federation also allows artisans to showcase their products during two fashion industry weeks, providing direct exposure to potential buyers. Three of the eight participating craft groups have developed professional links with buyers, increasing the women's income by about 20 percent.

Beyond managing her own team at the federation, Claudia now serves as a CEDPA coach, mentoring more recent GWIM graduates throughout Brazil. "Coaching," she says, "is a way of giving what you receive" from GWIM. In that role, she works with women from across the country, whether close by in Rio de Janeiro or from the Amazon or Sao Paulo.

"You are able to share because you sew a web," she says. "I think that's amazing."



JACQUELINE

JACQUELINE ODIADI

Executive Director, Development Support Institute

Lagos, Nigeria

2008 GWIM 45 Alumna (Abuja)

Jacqueline Odiadi knew what it took to run an NGO. She had previously served on the board of one in Lagos, Nigeria, focusing on legal rights and justice, so she knew how these organizations operated. She was confident that she and her longtime friend could establish an organization that would fill the need for capacity building that she saw in her community.

In 2004 they founded the Development Support Institute (DSI). Leading DSI's efforts, Jacqueline had no doubts about her ability to strengthen the skills of the women in her community. The practicing commercial attorney began to refer to herself as "a community development advocate and practitioner." After all, DSI's mission is to "equip women and youths for economic development and self-reliance."

So, in 2008 when Jacqueline and her co-founder, Stella Francis, submitted a proposal to ExxonMobil for project funding, they were not anticipating the suggestion that they should attend a GWIM workshop in Nigeria before receiving the grant.

As a self-proclaimed bookworm with a love of learning, Jacqueline viewed this suggestion as an opportunity to sharpen skills she already had. But the 2008 workshop did more for Jacqueline than improve her skills; it opened her eyes.

Jacqueline came to GWIM with several DSI successes under her belt – including training nearly 200 women in 2007 in basic vocational skills such as sewing and soap-making, as well as agriculture and animal husbandry techniques. But the GWIM workshop helped catapult Jacqueline beyond this tactical, project-by-project approach.

In July 2008, she emerged from the four-week program – CEDPA's first in Nigeria – a more confident leader and strategic thinker with a new sense of direction and focus for DSI.

"I can answer basic questions about why am I in the community development sector – 'Why am I doing what I'm doing?' And 'Is it worth it?' In that sense, I can describe the direction of DSI," she says. "I can chart a course for the organization." And the course she charted after the workshop was ambitious.

Upon her return to DSI's headquarters in Lagos, Jacqueline and Stella, who also attended the workshop, immediately crafted an action plan to align with their newly clarified vision for DSI. They then developed a detailed implementation timeline, clarified staff responsibilities and divided tasks among DSI's five paid employees and four volunteers.

Jacqueline also incorporated into her workshops the techniques she learned from the GWIM facilitators, who related to participants as equals, motivators and caretakers. "Without being overbearing, the CEDPA facilitators were able to guide workshop participants as they learned new skills," she says, and by the end of every session "we were where the facilitators wanted us to be."

Participants of DSI's workshops conducted before and after its co-founders completed GWIM say that

Jacqueline's training techniques have improved, particularly in how she teaches communications skills and conflict management. "Although I am not able to fully do it justice, I try to keep the quality of DSI trainings up to CEDPA standards," Jacqueline says.

Since GWIM, DSI has developed a new workshop, called the Entrepreneurship Development Program, which helps already established merchants sharpen their skills and expand their businesses. Participants in the advanced-level trainings – mostly women – are handpicked, with input from local government officials and other local NGOs.



IN SOME REGIONS OF NORTHERN NIGERIA, AS FEW AS **20 PERCENT** OF FEMALES HAVE ATTENDED SCHOOL.

Just as she has shared what she learned at GWIM, Jacqueline encourages DSI participants to leverage their new skills, not just to improve their own livelihoods, but to make a difference in their communities. The graduates take her suggestions to heart.

One graduate of the new Entrepreneurship Development Program, a woman named Lovet, started her own business according to local demand, producing and selling soap, air freshener and mosquito repellent. She is currently planning trainings on production methods and business skills for rural women in the Niger Delta region.

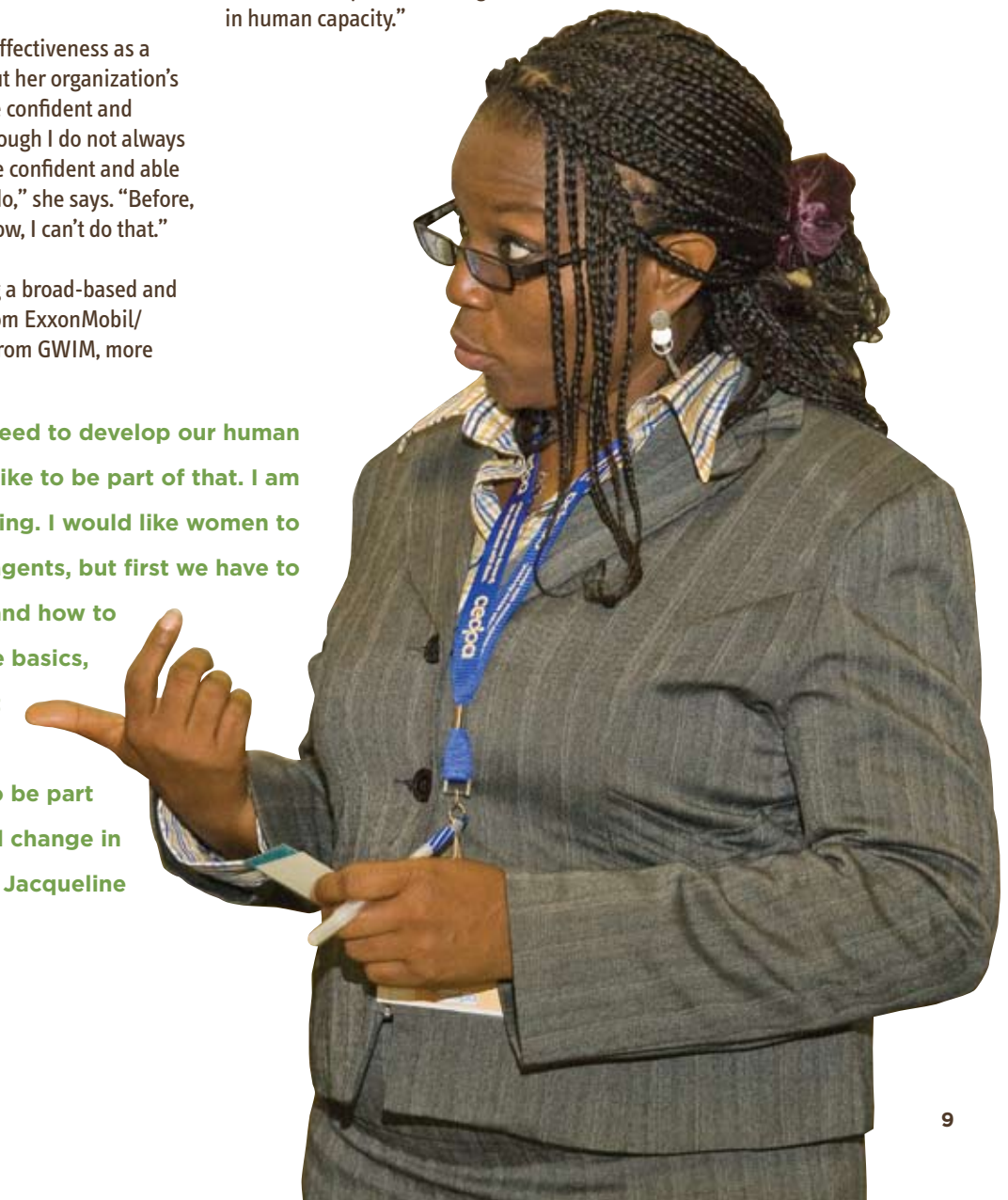
GWIM also helped boost Jacqueline's effectiveness as a fundraiser. With enhanced clarity about her organization's mission and programming, she is more confident and persistent with potential donors. "Although I do not always have enough resources, I am now more confident and able to go out and still do what I set out to do," she says. "Before, I would have said, 'We should wait.' Now, I can't do that."

Jacqueline is now skilled at overseeing a broad-based and far-reaching program. With support from ExxonMobil/Nigeria and the lessons incorporated from GWIM, more

than 500 entrepreneurs have participated in at least one of DSI's signature economic development workshops.

Jacqueline believes wholeheartedly in the power of knowledge as a poverty alleviation tool. As Nigerians, she says, "we need to develop our human resources, and I would like to be part of that. I am passionate about training. I would like women to become effective change agents, but first we have to know what we want to do, and how to do it. If we do not have the basics, we will just keep talking about it without actually doing anything. I would like to be part of that developmental change in human capacity."

As Nigerians, "we need to develop our human resources, and I would like to be part of that. I am passionate about training. I would like women to become effective change agents, but first we have to know what we want to do, and how to do it. If we do not have the basics, we will just keep talking about it without actually doing anything. I would like to be part of that developmental change in human capacity." — Jacqueline



ALICIA

ALICIA DEL SOCORRO MENESES

Former Political Candidate

Cali, Colombia

2009 GWIM 49 Alumna (Rio de Janeiro)

Being part of a community of strong women from around the globe at GWIM's 2009 workshop in Brazil shifted Alicia del Socorro Meneses' self-perception. She realized her key role as part of a broader worldwide movement to further women's economic empowerment, and she now wholeheartedly embraces her potential to lead and inspire other women, in Cali and beyond.

"I'm not alone," says Alicia of her GWIM revelation. "We are a community of women. Women need space to do work with autonomy, with freedom, with safety."

Upon returning to Colombia after the GWIM workshop, Alicia made history: She became the first female candidate from a poorer community – a *mujer del barrio* – to be nominated for a departmental-level congressional seat.

Indeed, her roots could not have been more humble. Alicia and her two sisters were raised by their grandmother in an impoverished rural town of about 1,500 people. Her mother, supporting her daughters on her own, worked as a domestic helper. Alicia never went to school and, following in her mother's footsteps, accepted a housekeeping position at age 10.

Five years later, she moved in and eventually married her boyfriend, who was 10 years her senior. By the time she was 18, she had two babies. Desperate for work, she and her husband moved their family to Cali, Colombia's third-largest city.

Life was a constant struggle, but by her early 30s Alicia began to take control. She divorced her verbally abusive husband, obtained a job at a community service organization and eventually completed her primary and secondary education. She was the first member of her family to earn a high school diploma.

For 20 years she worked tirelessly on behalf of communities in Cali. She lobbied the local government to house families, pave roads and install water connections in her district of Aguablanca, an underserved community in the outskirts of Cali. She managed nearly two dozen women's associations that pool savings to fund income-generating activities such as selling empanadas and renting party equipment. She also administered a micro-credit project called the Asociación Semilla de Mostaza (Mustard Seed Association).

The workshop, however, opened Alicia's eyes to a wider world that she never could have imagined. "GWIM was the best of the best," she says. "I learned so much from the other women. ...We see our problems with closed eyes – the corruption and problems we face are so painful. I have been a victim of this life, and I never knew that possibilities existed."

Alicia returned home from GWIM with not only a new set of management tools, but with a global support system that



THE PROPORTION OF COLOMBIAN HOUSEHOLDS HEADED BY WOMEN IS GROWING, FROM **24 PERCENT** IN 1991 TO **30 PERCENT** IN 2002.

encouraged her to push herself to new heights. So when Colombian presidential candidate Sergio Fajardo recruited her as a possible congressional departmental candidate for his political party in the 2010 elections, she realized that accepting the nomination was the best thing she could do to promote her lifelong cause: empowering women economically.

While campaigning, Alicia frequently cited analogies she learned at GWIM: "Women have always been like bonsai – beautiful, yet we don't grow and stay in our place. We have to be like eagles and raise our heads, open our wings, and fly, not like chickens, which live with their heads down." These words helped carry her through some difficult times while running a fiercely competitive political campaign.

She even referred to GWIM materials for strategies such as maneuvering the occasionally unavoidable challenging relationships in politics. "Now I feel confident," she says. "I refer to these exercises when I have a doubt."

Her constituents clearly responded positively to Alicia's inclusive style. She received a steady stream of phone calls during the campaign, not only from national and international reporters requesting interviews, but also from community members seeking to discuss their concerns. Regardless of how busy she was, Alicia made a point of responding to each call personally, believing strongly that a true leader is someone who listens to all parties.

"Women have always been like bonsai – beautiful, yet we don't grow and stay in our place. We have to be like eagles and raise our heads, open our wings, and fly, not like chickens, which live with their heads down." — Alicia



Although Alicia's political party did not win the mid-March 2010 elections, she found the process invigorating and learned a lot about leadership. "Even though I did not win, I am proud of myself, of being able to run a transparent [campaign]," she says.

Alicia now plans to forge ahead with her microfinance and women's entrepreneurship work. What is clear is that throughout her campaign and earlier years of community work, she has established herself as a role model and influential leader in the Cali area. The community members she has touched say Alicia is "selfless ... a motivator ... someone who helps people move forward ... [who] believes in equality and treats everyone equally ... someone who never becomes discouraged."

ASIH

ASIH PUJI RAHAYU

Regional Project Manager, Foundation for Mother and Child Health

Jakarta, Indonesia

2008 GWIM 46 Alumna (Washington, D.C.)

Asih Puji Rahayu started as a secretary at the Jakarta-based Yayasan Balita Sehat (the Foundation for Mother and Child Health) when it was founded in 2001. The foundation's programs directly benefit well over 500 needy children and at least five dozen mothers.

Despite her promotion to office manager at the foundation and her proven success at running its nutrition, education and income-generation projects, Asih did not feel truly confident in her leadership abilities until late 2008, when she completed a GWIM workshop.

Asih grew up in a small town in Central Java and dreamed of becoming a nurse, following in her mother's footsteps. When she did not pass the required exam to get into nursing school, she resigned herself to becoming a certified secretary instead. Despite other achievements in her life, she carried a gnawing sense of professional inadequacy for two decades.

The Washington, D.C.-based workshop was Asih's first trip outside Indonesia. In the beginning, as one of the youngest and least experienced participants, she worried she would not measure up to the others. But she set her worries aside once she experienced CEDPA's participatory methodology that encouraged the women to learn not only from the facilitator-provided lessons, but also from each other.

The session on leadership resonated greatly with Asih. She finally understood that university degrees were not required to be an effective leader, and that there were different styles of leadership. The key was identifying the style that worked best for each individual.

"Knowing my personal leadership [style] is what I learned the most," says Asih. "It's okay to do your thing with whatever your style is."

With her confidence reinforced and self-knowledge deepened, Asih returned to the foundation. She decided her role should be to support and encourage her staff, not to take responsibility for every detail. For example, after GWIM, she hired a full-time finance person, removing that task from her plate.

Employees noticed and appreciated the positive change in Asih since her return. Her supervisor and co-founder of the foundation noticed that she was "more confident" and "more free to share her ideas because of her confidence."



SINCE 2003, **MORE THAN ONE-QUARTER** OF INDONESIAN CHILDREN UNDER FIVE ARE UNDERWEIGHT.

Asih was promoted to regional manager for all programs in Jakarta and Timor.

Following her promotion, Asih spent a good portion of the last two years leading the foundation's expansion to areas of West Timor where families live on an average of U.S. \$10 per month. With her team and local community members, she established seven early learning centers, trained 14 preschool teachers and enrolled more than 200 children.

"We would like to see the mothers we've trained train other women so our impact is greater."
— Asih

Asih and her colleagues also trained more than two dozen community health workers in nutrition and child health assessment, who then launched a feeding program serving more than 400 children each week. Future plans include training roughly 165 more health workers to train others, teaching farmers how to raise chickens to improve family nutrition, and launching a business and entrepreneurship skill-building workshop for mothers.

In South and East Jakarta's urban industrial areas, Asih's work included starting two preschools that provide a total of 80 students with an education and a nutritious lunch. In addition, through two income-generation groups comprised of the students' mothers, the foundation provided training in handicraft design, production and marketing; business and finance skills; and health issues such as nutrition and family planning. Some participants learned to sew, bought one or more sewing machines and now run businesses in tailoring or fabricating handbags out of recycled material.



"We would like to see the mothers we've trained train other women so our impact is greater. The problem is the lack of space for this," says Asih. "We expect the local authorities to give some small space, which could be turned into a shop or classroom."

As further evidence of her new leadership abilities, Asih deftly steered the foundation through the economic downturn of 2009, which had led to a drop in individual donations and grants. She collaborated with the foundation's board to make some tough programmatic decisions to minimize costs.

Also, realizing that the foundation's external image was key to attracting new funders, Asih spearheaded a revamp of the organization's print and online materials, using tools from GWIM's strategic communications session. Since its launch, the newly redesigned Web site has led to inquiries from several possible corporate and foundation donors.

Asih is not intimidated anymore by representing the foundation to external audiences or by interacting with donors. "I am more confident and calm when speaking with donors," she explains. "I'm able to listen carefully and pick out the key points I think they want to hear."

No longer doubting her ability to lead, Asih has been able to incorporate the lessons she learned at the GWIM workshop into her daily life. The changes are benefiting her organization and the communities where she works, but the most visible change is in how Asih views herself.



ILEANA

ILEANA MEJIA

General Coordinator, Mamonal Foundation

Cartagena, Colombia

2006 GWIM 41 Alumna (Mexico City)

“I learned so much from being with people from different geographic, educational and professional backgrounds, and learned from their distinct realities,” says Ileana Mejia about the 2006 Mexico City GWIM workshop she attended.

The global aspect of the workshop and the skills she learned inspired Ileana to build upon all she had accomplished in the first two decades of her career by taking major strides to advance herself professionally.

She had always been ambitious. Even as a child, Ileana sensed that she would have a professional career. Her family valued education, so she followed in her uncle’s footsteps and studied industrial engineering at university.

After GWIM, Ileana decided to apply for an executive-level position at the NGO where she was working. She was selected and promoted to general coordinator of the Mamonal Foundation, which promotes social and economic development in communities in the Mamonal-Cartagena region.

She started out in the foundation as an educational coordinator. Now she not only oversees the foundation’s full portfolio of 51 projects, but she is responsible for resource distribution, strategic planning and board relations.

One project Ileana oversees is a family vegetable garden initiative in Pasacaballos, a community of roughly 2,500 families near Cartagena’s industrial zone. What started as a public-private partnership to help about 200 families combat hunger and improve nutrition has reached more than 500 families and expanded to advance economic opportunities.

GWIM also influenced Ileana’s motivational management style. One of her staff members says that “she has done a great job planning and administering strategically; the process is more concrete, and there is an emphasis on results and finding ways to measure our targets while simultaneously maintaining a pleasant work environment.”

Clearly, what makes Ileana successful in her new role is that she encourages staff as well as program participants to feel ownership and take initiative. One project coordinator says: “Before, she was more engaged in the details of our operations. ...Now she has an ease with delegating tasks

to maximize the work we do. She also comes to us more and wants to listen to our opinions.”

Ileana’s collaborative style extends beyond her own staff. Her vision is to integrate the foundation’s entire program portfolio. She accomplishes this by spearheading alliances with national and international agencies and organizations in the private, public and academic sectors.

For example, she and her team leveraged myriad partnerships to design a scholarship program that pays for Cartagena’s economically

disadvantaged youth to attend post-secondary school vocational trainings and prepares beneficiaries for “real world” work through life and education skills trainings. Moreover, the foundation leverages private-sector involvement to facilitate recruitment and hiring of its program graduates. As a result, more than three-quarters of the program’s 120 graduates have secured jobs.

Under Ileana’s leadership, the foundation has expanded its project portfolio to roughly U.S. \$2 million in 2009, leveraging an additional U.S. \$1 million in funding through public and private partnerships.

“The single most important change I observed when Ileana returned from the workshop was that she became more strategic in her thinking and vision for the foundation,” says one project coordinator. “The foundation was more closed. ...Now she has worked towards globalizing it.”



NSEKPPONG

NSEKPPONG ARCHIBONG UDOH

Executive Director, Community Partners for Development

Uyo, Nigeria

2008 GWIM 46 Alumna (Washington, D.C.)

Nsekpung (Nse) Archibong Udoh first became interested in community service when she noticed that roughly half the teenage girls in her community were pregnant. Recognizing that women are the key to economic development, she said, “There is a need to address this issue because if we lose this age bracket, we’ll run into problems.”

After several years volunteering to train girls in income-generating activities, in 1998 Nse landed a full-time job at Community Partners for Development, which runs programs combating poverty by focusing on human rights and sustainable development in Nigeria’s Akwa Ibom State. Nse managed programs designed to improve girls’ and women’s lives through small-business and micro-credit initiatives, reproductive and family health education, and women’s political empowerment.

By the time Nse arrived in Washington, D.C., for the 2008 workshop, she was the executive director of her organization and had spent a full decade helping empower women in her country. Now it was her turn: She got her own much-needed boost in confidence at GWIM. Nse realized that “you could make it if you decide to make it” – a lesson she has since applied to her own life and now tries to convey to her staff and beneficiaries as well.

She appreciated that CEDPA facilitators set a positive and collaborative atmosphere among staff and trainees alike. “In CEDPA, there is respect,” she says, adding that no one person is more important than another. Nse now strives to set a similar tone at her organization, which has improved her relationships with colleagues and partners.



Nse says the workshop gave her “skills to package myself differently as a leader.” In addition to tweaking her management style, she has polished her external communication and presentation skills based on what she learned at GWIM.

While Nse was still at the workshop, CEDPA invited her to address a U.S. congressional panel about conditions facing girls and young women in the Niger Delta. She told the panel how civil unrest has affected their lives and how critical education and training are to reduce poverty and enhance community health.

Bolstered by that public speaking experience, Nse has stepped up her outreach to potential NGO partners and funders alike. She led a workshop for her staff on proposal writing, pulling from what she had learned at the workshop. She and her team won several grants from the United Nations Democracy Fund, Jhpiego and ExxonMobil to support projects that will advance the organization’s three key areas of women’s empowerment: income generation, health and politics.

One of the grants will support the organization’s new Women’s Economic Empowerment Project, which helps identify economic opportunities in Akwa Ibom villages and trains women to take advantage of them. Through needs assessments and discussions with stakeholders, project staff are able to identify income-generating activities that use the skills and raw materials found in each village. For example, based on the resources available to them, one group started growing and processing cassava to sell within the community.

Thanks to GWIM, Nse sets the bar high for herself, for her staff and for the women her organization serves. With her support and drive, they will all have an opportunity “to make it.”

LUCIANE

LUCIANE TEIXEIRA DA CRUZ

Program Coordinator, Center for Integration Enterprise School

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

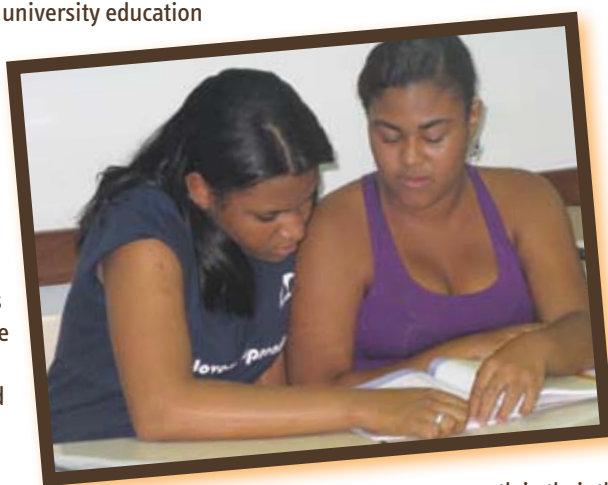
2008 GWIM 47 Alumna (Mexico City)

Since the late 1990s, Luciane Teixeira da Cruz has devoted herself to what many view as the key to Brazil's sustained economic stability: teaching young people the skills needed to find work and be successful in the professional workplace.

While Brazil has weathered the global economic downturn better than some countries, with unemployment continuing its steady, six-year decline to under eight percent today, some estimate that as many as one in five employable youth between the ages of 15 and 24 cannot find work. Despite a law passed in 2000 requiring businesses to invest in youth professional development, many worry that young people who seek jobs unsuccessfully will give up and never join the workforce, creating a larger economic crisis down the road.

Luciane's desire to open doors for young people stems from her own youth. She grew up in the interior of Espirito Santo State, which had no businesses or public transportation, and little opportunity for employment. Luciane, the daughter of a teacher and the owner of a small store, left behind everything she knew – her family, her friends, her home – so she could get a university education in the capital.

Today, Luciane has been working at the Centro de Integração Empresa Escola (CIEE) – the Center for Integration Enterprise School – in Rio de Janeiro for 12 years. However, she attributes her career achievements in the last couple years to the 2008 GWIM workshop she attended in Mexico City.



After completing GWIM, Luciane began to leverage the communication and planning skills she learned at the workshop. She outlined a strategic plan for her department and shared her vision with her supervisor. The end result? A promotion within CIEE.

"Only after participating in the GWIM program was I promoted to the position of program coordinator, despite the fact that ... I was already overseeing programs all over the state of Rio," she says. "It was only when I came back that I was able to prepare my strategy and present the strategy" to the center's management and "get a better job, a better salary."

She now supervises 27 staff members and manages three programs that work with youth on university placement, apprenticeships and internships. In her new position, she has helped improve the center's cost-effectiveness and overall reach. She has expanded its youth programming, fostered better communication among departmental teams, enlarged its office space, upgraded equipment and, most important, promoted deserving staff members to management roles.

"I think she is more strategic today," one colleague notes. "In the past, she used to get involved in all areas.

...Now she has created other positions so she can delegate responsibilities and concentrate on the macro issues. When she returned, she put a lot of effort in expanding our scope, our special projects. I think this is linked to the fact that she is able to have a broader picture."

The broader picture is evident. From 2008-2009, CIEE worked with over

200,000 youth in their three program areas. In 2008 alone, the center placed 23,000 youngsters in internships or jobs with nearly 3,000 businesses. And the apprenticeship program, which one colleague says had languished, grew by 120 percent after Luciane took the reins.

TWENTY-SEVEN PERCENT OF BRAZILIANS ARE UNDER AGE 15
MAKING JOB CREATION AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH CRUCIAL.

"Once we give tools for these youth to be able to position themselves better in the work market," Luciane says, "they will ... have new job possibilities and income generation. They will change the economy."

With increased confidence in her abilities beyond her day job, Luciane now also volunteers on the Municipal Board of Children and Adolescent Rights. In what she says was initially a challenging and unfamiliar role, she collaborates with about 20 institutions on youth-related public policy issues – using the advocacy skills she learned at GWIM. "This has been a very positive experience," she says.

Luciane joined the board because the GWIM workshop gave her an opportunity to reflect on her passions and strengths and how to apply them to improve her situation. She wanted those around her to have the same opportunity. Luciane not only held a discussion with staff members to share some lessons featured at the workshop, but she also now models these skills, such as listening. As one colleague puts it, "She is a very democratic leader."

For example, the youths shared with her a major obstacle to participation in the center's programs: They could not afford transportation or meals. So, Luciane obtained funding from GWIM's sponsor, Esso (ExxonMobil's affiliate in Brazil), to help subsidize these costs, and she re-introduced a mentoring component to make sure that young program participants continued to feel they were being heard.

"What is most gratifying," she says, "is to receive a youth who never thought of the possibility of changing their life, their reality, but after participating in our program and working with our staff, they go back with another behavior towards life. They go after their ideals. They believe in the idea of transforming."

The real reward for Luciane and her colleagues will never be a paycheck or status. "It will be when we see youth are able to take care of their own lives, that they're able to change their lives and their families," she says. "And we see that happening a lot."

"I think she is more strategic today. ...In the past, she used to get involved in all areas. ...Now she has created other positions so she can delegate responsibilities and concentrate on the macro issues."
— A work colleague of Luciane



CHIEF IMO

CHIEF IMO ISEMIN

President, Uforo Small Business Owners Association

Uyo, Nigeria

2007 GWIM 43 Alumna (Washington, D.C.)

In 1995, Chief Imo Isemin founded Uforo Small Business Owners Association, which supports women and youth via skills training, micro lending and association building. She launched the organization after several years of doing ad hoc trainings in Uyo, a city of half a million people and the capital of the southern Nigerian state of Akwa Ibom.

Imo's goal was to improve the economic welfare of women and youth in southern Nigeria by providing vocational training and micro lending to individuals, and organizing communities and associations of business people.

“‘Uforo’ means prosperity, because I believe in the prosperity of our people and naturally the women,” she says. “I believe if the women are prosperous, if the women have a steady source of income, it has an impact on the family and on society.”

Over time, she proved to be an inspiration for women around her. Not only did she pave the way for other women in her family and her community to attend secondary school, she went on to obtain bachelor's and master's degrees in economics. And, before moving with her husband to Uyo, she had built a successful banking career in Lagos.

Her admiration within the community was evidenced by the multiple chieftain titles bestowed upon her in recognition of her development work. Further proof came when one of Imo's friends submitted a GWIM application on her behalf without telling her. The four-week workshop turned out to be a positive experience that changed her entire perspective on her role in the community and how she manages her organization.

“You could not go to GWIM without being changed,” Imo says. “It is a life-changing experience.”

Since the 2007 workshop, she has used the skills, ideas and inspiration from GWIM to professionalize her organization and ratchet up her fundraising efforts. Based on what she learned, she streamlined operations at the nonprofit.

“My work improved with the training at CEDPA,” says Imo. “When I started, I didn't have an accountant, I didn't have other people. When I came back from CEDPA, I started putting things in place.”

Not only did she hire a financial officer to develop a bookkeeping system, but she put into practice other GWIM ideas such as drafting manuals for each staff position as well as one each for human resources, staff training and accounting. She also hired a program manager, restructured other office staff positions and implemented a reward-based system to motivate employees.

Now, Imo strives for a management style that is stable and fair and encourages her employees to build a career at the organization. She learned to delegate tasks, and she always gives her team the benefit of the doubt. Her employees have noticed a change since the workshop. “She has an elevated level of professionalism with her employees and is a better listener,” says Imo's daughter, who is a Uforo project coordinator.

Imo admired, and now replicates, the subtle facilitation and motivational skills she learned from the facilitators at the GWIM workshop. “No one forced me to do anything, and yet encouragement was there,” she says of the workshop. “You want to do it. You want to be a part of it. You want the program to succeed.”

The workshop session on fundraising skills also made a big impression on Imo. With funding she obtained from ExxonMobil, Uforo now provides tailor training as well as start-up kits of a sewing machine, material and capital to underprivileged youth to launch businesses. Most participants set up their own tailor shops, and some have plans to train more young seamstresses.

Since the workshop, Imo realized she needed to work with other women's organizations. She understood the necessity of combining efforts to improve the rights of women, and that, if women are to succeed, they must develop partnerships and networks.

MORE THAN HALF OF AKWA IBOM STATE RESIDENTS LIVE BELOW THE POVERTY LINE.

Uforo now has 13 association and co-op members and has trained four classes of approximately 30 young men and women from around Akwa Ibom in six-month training sessions – for a total of approximately 120 new young business owners.

Over the past several years, Imo has helped many women start businesses, gain a voice in their family and community, and earn income from newly acquired skills. With the combination of her community involvement, dedication to poverty eradication, and skills acquired from GWIM, she is touching the lives of women at every level in her community.

“The [GWIM] leadership skills help[ed] me to get people to work together. We have been able to form several grassroots organizations,” says Imo. “My joy comes from seeing somebody [else] succeed.”



“I believe if the women are prosperous, if the women have a steady source of income, it has an impact on the family and on society.” — Chief Imo



CONCEPCIÓN

CONCEPCIÓN MATABANCHOY

Technical Assessor, Association for Farmer Development

La Cocha, Colombia

2008 GWIM 47 Alumna (Mexico City)

At a GWIM workshop shortly after her 60th birthday in 2008, Concepción “Conchita” Matabanchoy bolstered her growing conviction that serving one’s community is not about being subservient. It’s about embracing leadership and inspiring others to be strong. Conchita had battled all her life between her own ingrained, traditional views on gender roles versus her passion to help lift others out of poverty. GWIM, she says, really tipped the scales toward the latter.

Born and raised in La Cocha, a subsistence farming community in southwestern Colombia, Conchita dropped out of school in fourth grade to help her mother with household work. Observing social injustices in her area, one of the poorest and least developed regions of Colombia, Conchita vowed early on to help catalyze her community’s economic development.

At 18, she married the love of her life, Edmundo, and continued her submissive role, now as a dutiful housewife. Though he tried not to be like his *machista* peers, Edmundo also eventually fell into a traditional gender role as head of household when Conchita continually declined to express her opinion.

But she gradually found her voice through participating at meetings convened by community development organization promoting local farmers’ economic advancement. “My self-esteem improved. I began to feel confident and believed in myself, and I was able to work,” she says. Even when her husband gave her a “work-versus-marriage” ultimatum, Conchita held her ground. “Surprisingly, he accepted it.”

The organization, called the Association for Farmer Development (el Asociación para el Desarrollo Campesino), was a perfect fit for Conchita, given its mission: to help community members “design” a life based on

their own dreams via an inclusive, shared process. The end product is what the association has dubbed *mingas* – community-driven, tailored, holistic initiatives for enhancing quality of life via agricultural improvements, animal husbandry, youth support, better communication and infrastructure, and more.

What resonates for Conchita, particularly after the 2008 workshop, is the association’s focus on empowering community members to identify their own challenges, opportunities and solutions. She has realized that the best way for her to help residents improve their quality of life in her native Nariño Department is to serve as facilitator, role model and advocate, a lesson she learned at GWIM.

The workshop, Conchita says, “helped me evaluate myself, think about all the things I still needed to learn, how to be a good leader ... how to do political advocacy, how to develop and design a project, and what to do with others.”

“You begin to look, to see, to not try to be above others but to promote equality. That is a good leader – to construct with others and be part of a team. ...Our organization adopted a methodology of sharing so everyone benefits from these experiences. This way, egoism can’t exist.” – Conchita

Conchita uses CEDPA’s philosophy and materials to give trainings on tools such as developing an action plan. She regularly convenes an array of community members – such as her association colleagues, farmers, school officials and youth groups – and encourages them to collaborate.

She says, “You begin to look, to see, to not try to be above others but to promote equality. That is a good leader – to construct with others and be part of a team. ...Our organization adopted a methodology of sharing so everyone benefits from these experiences. This way, egoism can’t exist.”

MORE THAN HALF OF COLOMBIA’S 44 MILLION RESIDENTS HAVE A HOUSEHOLD INCOME BELOW THE POVERTY LEVEL. IN RURAL AREAS, **80 PERCENT** LIVE IN POVERTY.

In all, Conchita’s association has facilitated the development of seven *mingas*, involving more than 250 families in Nariño Department. The economic benefits to the community are evident. *Minga* women’s associations now manufacture and sell organic products such as pomades, shampoos and paper at local markets, reaping U.S. \$2 to U.S. \$3 per item. With animal husbandry and agricultural production dramatically enhanced, families now farm more than they consume, so they can sell the surplus at a market in nearby Pasto, the capital of the Nariño Department. A guinea pig sells for as much as 15,000 Colombian pesos (U.S. \$8.30), trout sells for about 9,000 Colombian pesos per kilo (U.S. \$5), and eight kilos of blackberries can fetch 13,000 Colombian pesos (U.S. \$7.20).

But more than just enhancing families’ income, the association is catalyzing a ground-up shift in gender roles, as women play an increasingly important role. As one *minga* member from the town of Chachagui says: “Before, we were housewives and mothers. Now we feel capable to do work and be part of the association. We make action plans for our different activities. ...As a group, we are more effective to advocate for ourselves.”

In fact, the *mingas* are transforming neighbors’ overall sense of community. One *minga* member from Conchita’s hometown says: “We have unity and solidarity now. Before, we were losing our sense of community. ...[Now] we see each other twice a month, helping each other with our harvests, sharing ideas and just chatting.”

This empowerment model is tried and true, whether engaging Colombian farmers and neighbors or convening women from around the world in management positions such as Conchita’s: In a supportive environment where ideas flow freely and aiming high is encouraged, the potential to effect change increases exponentially.

Conchita says GWIM “was beautiful from the beginning. We had the opportunity to share with each other. We built a tree – the roots – our achievements; learning from other women was important ... and everyone was supportive. Their affection helped me.”

With a growing list of additional Nariño communities inquiring about the *minga* process, Conchita plans to continue replicating this successful, participatory approach to economic and social change.



EMEM

EMEM NKEREUWEM

Project Coordinator, People in Arts Initiative

Eket, Nigeria

2006 GWIM 42 Alumna (Washington, D.C.)

“I became a different person,” says Emem Nkereuwem, who coordinates vocational skills trainings in southern Nigeria, when asked how her GWIM experience affected her.

During the month-long workshop in Washington, D.C., Emem says she realized that “you are responsible for your community so ... you cannot just do what you want to do.” With a heightened sense of individual responsibility, she returned to Nigeria with a more organized and focused perspective.

Emem started her career as an art teacher. While she enjoyed teaching, she wanted to do more to help Nigeria’s youth, many of whom are unemployed and, she feels, have been neglected by society. “People need skills beyond their education,” she says, or they risk getting “lost in the maze of poverty.”

She was delighted to find the job as a project coordinator at People in Arts Initiative, a community-centered NGO in Nigeria’s Akwa Ibom State. She uses her creative arts degree to help young people develop income-generating skills such as sewing, batik and tie-dyeing, soap-making and carpentry, among other things. The group chooses skills that are in demand and do not require significant upfront investment to turn into money-making enterprises.

Infused with new energy and ideas since her 2006 GWIM training, Emem is helping to expand her organization’s programs, which have reached more than 900 people and are still growing. “I have been able to get a lot more confidence since the [GWIM] training. I am bolder and more focused, and I’m more creative in terms of program development,” she says.



In addition to its vocational skills training, People in Arts has a program that encourages Nigerians ages 9 to 18 to express themselves in writing. Eighty have taken part so far, and 20 of their manuscripts are to be published next year.

“I am brimming with new ideas for expanding and enhancing our programs,” Emem says. “Where [before] I thought there were no possibilities, now I feel like there are endless opportunities to touch people’s lives and build partnerships.”

In addition to programmatic contributions, she has taken over a larger portion of writing proposals and raising funds at People in Arts. She even consults for other organizations on proposal writing, passing along the tools and techniques she learned at GWIM.

With funds Emem helped raise, plans are under way to build a permanent training center. “Someday we’ll invite CEDPA to show them this is the foundation they laid for us,” she says with pride.

GWIM lessons and tools even help Emem in her personal life. “I can balance my family and work better. I can communicate better with my children.

I learned to help my children develop and work through choices rather than handing out instructions,” she says.

At home, at work and in the community, Emem is unstoppable.

“Every day, everything I do is a reflection of what I got” from GWIM, she says. “I know that I have a future and I have an impact to make on my community. That’s what the training does. It gives you an added sense of responsibility to change your community.”

CONTINUING THE INVESTMENT

The GWIM program has hundreds of amazing alumni with stories very similar to the ones highlighted here. The participants take what they have learned during the workshops back to their communities, use it to improve their organizations and share that knowledge with others. But the program does not end there.

CEDPA and the ExxonMobil Foundation recognize the importance of reinvesting in GWIM alumni beyond their participation in the workshops. Through a variety of follow-on activities, some alumni receive additional skills training to become GWIM coaches and advocates, serve as resource persons for other workshops and collaborate with ExxonMobil affiliates in implementing community-based projects in their home countries.

Since 2005, more than 35 GWIM alumni have been trained and engaged as coaches, joining a cadre of 58 alumni from other CEDPA workshops. CEDPA coaches cite increased confidence, professional growth, strengthened communication skills and expanded networks as benefits accrued from their coaching experiences. They also affirm the value of coaching for women in developing countries, where opportunities are rare for women-to-women relationships that offer objective and supportive professional dialogue.

In June 2010, GWIM alumni from six ExxonMobil priority countries participated in CEDPA’s Advocacy for Women’s Economic Empowerment Workshop. The alumni worked with colleagues from the government and the private sector to design and implement country-level advocacy plans. During the Women Setting the Economic Policy Agenda summit at the National Press Club in Washington D.C., international donors and experts joined the alumni to discuss political realities and opportunities for policy change in their respective countries. Through skills training and dialogue with these experts, alumni deepened their understanding of the critical role advocacy can play in fostering women’s economic advancement.

On a continual basis, CEDPA looks to GWIM alumni to implement workshops, partner on funding opportunities and recommend potential GWIM candidates. Alumni routinely serve as technical experts and speakers at CEDPA workshops, sharing their projects and lessons learned with current participants. CEDPA also engages alumni as consultants to assist with data collection and partner identification for proposals and, as evidenced in the profiles, ExxonMobil affiliates select alumni as partners on community-based projects. Additionally, when other international implementing agencies seek reliable NGO partners in a particular part of the world, CEDPA recommends alumni from the country of interest.

Substantial development challenges remain for women in developing countries. Despite improvements in literacy, health care and political participation, women make up two-thirds of the world’s illiterate and 70 percent of its poor. They are underrepresented in almost all policymaking bodies worldwide. For their needs to be addressed effectively, women must become a force at every level, challenging legal, political, cultural and social barriers to their access to and control over resources. The GWIM program’s proven results show the way to build this force is to invest in building the capacity of women. For this reason, CEDPA and the ExxonMobil Foundation’s Women’s Economic Opportunity Initiative will continue to invest in the future of development, building from the ground up.

The women in these profiles and hundreds more were able to participate in the GWIM program thanks to the generous support of the ExxonMobil Foundations' Women's Economic Opportunity Initiative.

ABOUT EXXON MOBIL CORPORATION

ExxonMobil, the largest publicly traded international oil and gas company, uses technology and innovation to help meet the world's growing energy needs. ExxonMobil holds an industry-leading inventory of resources, is the largest refiner and marketer of petroleum products and its chemical company is one of the largest in the world. Globally, ExxonMobil provides funding to improve basic education, promote women as catalysts for development, and combat malaria and other infectious diseases in developing countries. The ExxonMobil Women's Economic Opportunity Initiative is a global effort launched in 2005 that helps women in developing countries fulfill their economic potential and drive economic and social change in their communities. In 2008, together with its employees and retirees, ExxonMobil Corporation, its divisions and affiliates, and ExxonMobil Foundation provided \$225 million in contributions worldwide, of which more than \$98 million was dedicated to education. Additional information on ExxonMobil's community partnerships and contributions programs is available at www.exxonmobil.com/community.

ABOUT CEDPA

Internationally recognized for improving the lives of women and girls in developing countries for over 35 years, CEDPA works through local partnerships to: increase educational opportunities for girls and youth; ensure access to lifesaving information and services related to reproductive health, maternal health and HIV/AIDS; and strengthen women's leadership in their nations. With a growing network of 5,300 alumni and partners in more than 150 countries, CEDPA is building a groundswell of change agents for effective international development.

www.cedpa.org

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