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# Manila Women's Forum

A Network of Women Professionals

July 2005

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## Ethnic Weaving in the Philippines

By Lisa Kircher Lumbao

**A**lthough Susan Nishihira has sadly left the Philippines, she continues to help organize great programs such as the talk on June 20 by Tammy Takagi on Philippine tribal textiles. In addition to seeing many beautiful examples of hand-woven textiles that Tammy had on display, it was a special treat to watch a woman weaving on a back strap loom throughout the whole evening. She was weaving in the Ifugao technique and was fully dressed in tribal textiles so we could see how these special pieces are used.

After Tammy's talk, several of us got

down on the floor and tried our hand and working the back strap loom, and were amazed at how complicated the set-up is. Tammy said it takes longer to set up the loom with all the threads in the right place than to do the weaving.

When Tammy arrived in the Philippines in 1971 from Japan she was newly married, spoke very little English, and knew no one. While she and her husband intended to stay for only 3 to 5 years, her husband's joint venture with a local textile company continued on and on. Their three children, two of whom are now married, were born at Makati Med and graduated from International School Manila.

One of the first people Tammy met

when she arrived in the Philippines was also at the June MWF meeting – Margaretha Gloor, a founding member of the Museum Volunteers of the Philippines (MVP). Since MVP was just getting started at that time, Margaretha asked Tammy to invite members of the Japanese community to join the group. Tammy's networking skills are the reason MVP attracted and continues to have a large number of Japanese members, many of whom are very active in the organization. Tammy later founded an organization similar to MVP called FILIPICA that is made up of about 500 Japanese who study Filipino culture.

In 1974 Tammy met Mr. Anton Postma who was helping the Hanuno Mangyan Ethnic Group of Mindoro, she began to help market their textiles

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*Weaver Josephine Awing from Kalinga province demonstrates her craft for MWF.*



### Next MWF Meeting

**When:** 6:30 p.m., Monday July 18, 2005.

**What:** Ms. Kanchan Sadhwani of System Brahma Satya will speak about a holistic approach to health and living where the individual learns to heal herself and attain her highest potential, alleviate stress and negative emotions, and manage pain.

**Where:** Manju Gagoomal's home, 27 Tanguile Road, North Forbes Park, Makati City.

**Bring:** A contribution to the potluck dinner.

**August meeting:** 6:30 p.m., Monday August 15, 2005

# City Youth Support Program:

Raising awareness about sexual health, teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases

An Advocates for Youth pilot campaign in Muntinlupa City

By Kristina Dziekan

**W**hy would over 1,000 out-of-school youths spend a stiflingly hot Saturday in a school assembly hall or gym? They gathered for an education of a different kind - to learn about and discuss issues of sexual health and the results of the 2003 National Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) as well as the 2002 Young Adults Fertility Survey, research both funded by USAID.

The educational event was organized as part of an awareness raising campaign initiated by the Advocates for Youth Philippines Foundation piloted together with the Mayor's office Muntinlupa City. On May 14 and 21 four half-day sessions were held at different schools in Muntinlupa, each attended by over 300 out-of school youths from 2 barangays per session. Dr Corie Raymundo, Professor of the University of the Philippines Population Institute and project coordinator of the Young Adolescent Fertility and Sexuality survey delivered a tour-de-force presentation on sexual health issues and risks and the results of the two national surveys.

The attendance clearly testified to the keen interest of youths in reproductive health education. There was a positive buzz at each of the sessions and the formal presentation was followed by highly interactive discussion and open debate.

It became clear from the questions and reactions of the youths that many of the facts they heard in the presentation about reproductive health were new or surprising and that the results from the two national surveys presented an eye-opener to most. In particular, the following survey findings prompted much reflection by the youth;



Top: Out-of-school youths gathered for a talk on sexual health issues. Above: Dr. Corie Raymundo (third from right) and her team. Bottom photo, left to right: Kristina Dziekan, Marita Espiritu (Advocates for Youth Project Assistant), Cyndy Tan-Jarabata (Advocates for Youth President), Gabriel Jarabata, Cyndy's son.



- \* 1 out of 4 girls are already mothers at age 19
- \* 1 out of 2 girls are already mothers among the ages 20-24
- \* 30% of all births occur in women aged 15-19, most to single mothers
- \* It is estimated that 400,000 induced abortions are performed each year, 36% of which occurs among the young women's group.
- \* Only 1 out of 4 women practice family planning
- \* Only 2/10 men use condoms during their first sexual experience
- \* Current knowledge about sexually transmitted diseases and in particular HIV/AIDS is limited. For example, only 4/10 women and 6/10 men know that

condom use can reduce the risk of HIV infection. And only 3/10 women and men know correctly that sharing food with an HIV infected person or mosquito bites cannot transmit HIV.

The urge to know was stronger than the embarrassment of asking explicit questions about the many facets of sexual relationships and sexual health. Many questions were put forward about fertility and contraception, about

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Okay - here's the thing about July. It has to do with heat, dogs, and muzzling.



"All women count." Sure. But read this manifesto of sorts...

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## KaWoMeNaN

Selected and Edited  
by Beaulah Pedregosa Taguiwalo

### The Dog Days of July

Do you know that the ancient Romans believed that the great heat of the month of July, and the diseases and calamities that came with it, were somehow connected with the rising and setting of the star Canicula—the Little Dog in coincidence with the sun? Thus, the period between the 3rd of July and the 11th of August came to be called Dog

Days. This ancient notion, and the real effect of the extreme heat on canine flesh and blood, probably explains why town magistrates often order dogs to be muzzled around the beginning of July.

### Mothers and Grandmothers

Women everywhere in the world are at the heart not only of the family and the community but of the economy, as mothers, wives, partners, grandmothers, rural workers and subsistence farmers, nurses, teachers,



Joanne de Leon / Isis International Manila

Illustration by Joanne de Leon / Isis International-Manila. E-mail feedback to [communications@isiswomen.org](mailto:communications@isiswomen.org)

cleaners and millions of other workers. Yet we always come last in economic priorities, along with the children we raise. As a result, the caring work, basic for human survival, which we spend much or most of our lives doing, is trivialized and ignored. According to official definitions (International Labour Office), raising a child is not counted as "work" but being in the military and killing is.

### City Youth... (From page 2)

the risk of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), how to recognize different types of STDs and their effect, and how to avoid contracting an STD. Sometimes, there was giggling or teasing from peers when questions were asked, but everyone was listening intently to the answers.

On the final Saturday, all youths from the 8 barangays came together for a drama competition organized by the Youth Affairs office in Muntinlupa City. Each of the performances was an enthusiastic exploration of different concerns about sexual intimacy: first romance, the peer pressure to "have sex", the difficulty to communicate with partner, peers or parents about questions, feeling and concerns regarding sexuality, the emotional battles when faced with tough choices about intimacy, future plans, contraception or unplanned pregnancy, the many taboos that still exists in today's society. The winning performance was from Barangay Alabang.

The events were rounded up with an ad-hoc collection of the attendee's thoughts about sexual intimacy. The

comments made truly capture the spirit of the sessions and were thought-provoking take-home messages from individual youths to their peers:

- \* Sex is a lifetime commitment
- \* I am a responsible youth and sex has a lot of responsibilities that I am not ready for
- \* Sex can wait, I have better plans for my future
- \* There's a right time for sex and that time is not now
- \* Having sex does not prove that he loves me
- \* Sex comes with great responsibility
- \* Sex is easy to do, studying is harder. Sex can wait
- \* There are some great opportunities ahead like finishing school, having a good career, helping out my family. Sex will deter me from these opportunities.
- \* Real love means respect, right time and responsibility.
- \* Being literate at school is better than literate at sex.

Advocates for Youth envisions the youth to have a productive life free from early pregnancy, STD and HIV/AIDS by campaigning a national leadership that encourages healthy and responsible decisions among the

youth. For details, please call 807-1708, 0917-8387238, email at [a4yphils@yahoo.com](mailto:a4yphils@yahoo.com) or visit their website [www.youthadvocates.net](http://www.youthadvocates.net)

### The Manila Women's Forum

The Manila Women's Forum (MWF) is a cross-cultural network for women. It provides opportunities to build friendships, to talk to women of various cultures, and to share information about resources. Our meetings are intended to provide intellectual stimulation and lead to personal and professional development. All women are welcome to join. The current officers are **Lisa Lumbao**, Chair, Programs, Treasurer, and Newsletter. **Susan Nishihira**, Programs. **Beaulah P. Taguiwalo**, Newsletter, Website.

Cost of membership is P300 per year. Members receive a copy of the current mailing list in addition to the newsletter, which is also sent to non-members. A contribution is collected at each monthly meeting: P20 for members, and P40 for non-members. Please contact Lisa Lumbao at Tel. 812-3932, Tel/Fax 813-0168, or at [lumbao@mozcom.com](mailto:lumbao@mozcom.com) for more information about MWF.

Visit our website – a work in progress  
[www.geocities.com/manilawomensforum](http://www.geocities.com/manilawomensforum)

*Ethnic Weaving...* (from page 1) and handicrafts. She then met representatives from other ethnic groups from the northern and southern parts of the country and began selling textiles made by ethnic groups from throughout the country at two weaving sales each year, before summer and Christmas vacation. She still holds these sales every year to help the weavers earn money for their children's school fees.

During her talk, Tammy described the various textiles she had brought and explained what distinguishes the work of each ethnic group. She said most of the textiles are made of cotton, except the abaca used by the T'boli, which is unique to the Philippines. In the past, the weavers would also spin and dye their own cotton thread, but now most buy it. Children as young as 3 years old usually help their mothers prepare the looms, but once the weaving starts men and children are often not allowed to enter the weaving room. Bells are usually rung to ward off evil spirits that could hamper the work.

Tammy does her own weaving and gives away her creations as gifts. She also facilitates the sale of looms and organizes weaving lessons. In addition to her love for weaving, Tammy is a talented painter, photographer, and singer. Her latest project is the Textile Documentation Project to develop a textile museum at Silahis in Intramuros. Thank you Tammy for a wonderful evening and we look forward to seeing the textile museum!

*Right: MWF Chair Lisa Lumbao tries her hand at the back strap loom.*



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