

COMPLETION REPORT

Strategic Planning for the

Samahan at Ugnayan ng mga Manggagawang Pantahanan sa Pilipinas (SUMAPI)

Organized by SUMAPI with support from the ILO-DOMWORK Project

Bahay Ni Isis, Marunong Street, Barangay Central, Quezon City

I. Rationale

The Samahan at Ugnayan ng Manggagawang Pantahanan sa Pilipinas (SUMAPI) is a democratic, mass-based organization composed of domestic workers, both adult and children, from the National Capital Region, Batangas, Bacolod, and Davao.

Organized in 1995 by the Visayan Forum Foundation, it was initially composed of survivors of abuse and worst forms of child domestic labor and served as their support network. During recent years, SUMAPI has expanded to an estimated membership of 8,000 domestic workers with new core groups in Iloilo and Cebu.

The process of building the institutional capacity of SUMAPI has been hindered by the same factors that make domestic workers prone to abuse such as trafficking and forced labor: their relative invisibility, mobility, low level of education and information on available protective mechanisms, and low self-esteem emanating from society's bias and lack of appreciation of the importance of domestic work.

SUMAPI and Visayan Forum have developed organizing and training strategy that enables the organizations and its leaders to overcome the above-mentioned hindering factors. However, it is still imperative to continue building on the capacity of SUMAPI as an institution and ensure sustainability of its initiatives. This is relevant because of the increasing importance of the role of SUMAPI in the national campaign against trafficking. As SUMAPI embarks on an aggressive campaign to protect their members against abuse, forced labor, and trafficking, to promote the welfare of domestic workers in general, and to gain dignity and respect for its sector, it also needs to re-assess its direction, identify and build on its core competency, develop plans towards sustainability, and enhance its organizational structure.

II. Objectives

The Strategic Planning aims to:

1. Provide a venue for SUMAPI to analyze issues surrounding domestic work, assess organizational capacity, and factor in international, national, and local situations into SUMAPI directions, structure, and future actions
2. Determine the strategies and focus of SUMAPI for the next two years
3. Develop plans towards strengthening of SUMAPI capacity to manage and implement direct actions to protect members against forced labour and trafficking and enhancing operational guidelines, decision-making processes, and other internal processes.

At the end of the planning session, the expected outputs are:

1. A Strategic Plan with clarified/refined Vision-Mission-Goals-Strategies and core principles that will define the organization
2. Logical framework that will serve as guide for operational planning per chapter
3. Clearer lines of coordination and decision-making

III. Participants and Facilitators

Twelve key SUMAPI officers from the Batangas, NCR, Bacolod, Iloilo, and Davao chapters took part in the Strategic Planning. The participants are either elected leaders of their chapters or organizing officers for SUMAPI. These leaders are empowered by their chapters and trained by Visayan Forum to decide on organizational matters.

Also taking part as facilitators and resource persons are members of the Visayan Forum Executive and Management Committee led by the President. Acting as main facilitator is the National Organizing Officer of the Visayan Forum Foundation.

IV. Methodology and Preparatory Activities

Prior to the conduct of the Strategic Planning, all SUMAPI chapters were required to conduct an analysis of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats within their own areas of operation. A vital part of the Opportunities and which served as the jump-off points for the pre-planning activities are the results of the National Domestic Workers Summit, specifically the National Agenda for Domestic Workers, the framework of action as enunciated in the Social Compact, and the matrix of recommended actions. Specifically, SUMAPI analyzed the matrix of recommendations and studied how these can be carried or complemented with the Strategic Plan of SUMAPI. From the SWOT analysis, the leaders developed concrete recommendations that were also approved by their chapter members.

The agenda was developed by the key officers of SUMAPI. From the agenda, a program of activities was developed by the Visayan Forum and the National Officers of SUMAPI, including its President and Board Members.

The planning process utilized participatory methods. It maximizes existing technologies of participation such as group workshops, plenary and small group discussions, meta cards, and other creative methods.

V. Highlights of the Strategic Planning

The activity started with setting the tone for the planning exercises. The National President of SUMAPI extolled the members to participate and work even through the night to ensure the quality of output of the planning exercise.

The SUMAPI officers laid down their expectations for the planning process (all of which were integrated into the planning process). The group then discussed and approved the planning agenda, process, and target output. The agenda was modified in terms of order of discussions to ensure that priorities are discussed first.

Analysis of Issues

The first agenda of the planning is to present an analysis of issues and concerns, both internal and external, which will serve as the starting point for the development of strategic directions and concrete actions.

Mr. Roland Pacis, the International Campaigns and Advocacy Manager of the Visayan Forum and one of the first organizers for SUMAPI, outlined the various developments at the international and national campaigns for the promotion of the rights of domestic workers. He also assisted the group in identifying how these developments will affect SUMAPI and their members.

According to Mr. Pacis, the challenge for SUMAPI, Visayan Forum, and their partners from the government and civil society, is how to ensure that empowerment is at the center of all programs. He observed that most programs are service oriented and more of the traditional dole-out type, which from the collective experience of SUMAPI and VF, do not lead to actual structural reforms nor to substantial improvement in the individual lives of domestic workers. The solution may lie with SUMAPI as the most organized and empowered organization of domestic workers. There is a need to ensure that all support programs such as educational assistance and even rescue and recovery of abused domestic workers are integrated with strategies to organize the sector. The best advocates for reforms for the domestic work sector are the domestic workers themselves.

He outlined the various challenges for SUMAPI, given recent developments. He mentioned that SUMAPI is at the center of the National Domestic Workers Summit and should help ensure that the output of the Summit such as the National Agenda and the Social Compact are translated into concrete programs and policies. The Philippine Time-bound Program and the DOMWORK Projects have enabled social partners to come together and helped catalyze and initiate reforms such as local ordinances and inclusion of domestic workers into the decision-making process for domestic workers, at the local and national levels.

Taking off from this input, SUMAPI proceeded to analyze their own institutional capacity vis-à-vis challenges and opportunities outlined by Mr. Pacis. From the discussions, seven challenges for sustainability were identified:

- The need to draw more active participation from domestic workers themselves, from their employers, and from key partners

- The need to train more leaders and second-liners who will be capable of managing the organization
- The need to enhance existing direct services to members, either through strengthening and expanding existing referral and support mechanisms, or through development or strengthening of SUMAPI core services
- The need to reach out to domestic workers who are not SUMAPI members in order for them to have access to protective services
- The need to help in developing the enabling environment for these initiatives in the form of laws, ordinances, or programs designed specifically for domestic workers
- The need to develop the skills and upgrade existing systems and coordinating mechanisms across chapters for more effective resource management
- The need to develop skills and identify other opportunities for funding support and group enterprises

Setting the Direction

After identifying these challenges, the leaders then went on to identify the core principles that will bind the organization together. After discussions, SUMAPI outlined four principles that will define their organization: that domestic work is an honorable profession and that it contributes to nation building, that they have intrinsic rights, that actions should be undertaken to protect child domestic workers, and that they are entitled to benefits and protection afforded to other workers. These core beliefs were expanded and refined by a drafting committee composed of the National President Mila Tibubos, Board Member Marayag, and the Head of the VF Organizing and Training Unit.

SUMAPI then undertook an exercise where they will define their role and their niche. SUMAPI decided that they will serve as the domestic workers' second family, as the protector and facilitator of services and programs for the sector, and as the voice of the domestic workers in lobbying and advocacy for their rights.

These were then used to review the Vision, Mission, and Goals of the organization. Several modifications were made to ensure that these are in consonance with the core principles of SUMAPI and that these are attuned with their defined niche.

Coordinating Mechanisms

Prior to translating goals into concrete actions, VF President Ma. Cecilia Flores-Oebanda, described how VF and SUMAPI will continue to work together. According to Ms. Oebanda, VF has programmed the next two years into assisting SUMAPI to enable them to stand on their own feet. However, this does not mean that VF and SUMAPI will part ways after two years. She mentioned that SUMAPI, like the Bantay Bata sa Komunidad and CLASP, are part of the same family owing to their common history and principles. As such, VF will continue to provide support to SUMAPI and will help ensure that the targets of SUMAPI for the next two years will be achieved. The support will come in the

form of continuing capacity-building programs, assistance in resource mobilization and management, and guidance in terms of networking at the national and international levels.

SUMAPI, led by Mila Tibubos, proceeded to discuss the organizational chart of SUMAPI. Changes were made to incorporate new chapters and core groups and to reflect operational realities, specifically on the role of the Board of Directors.

Translating Goals into Targets and Concrete Actions

SUMAPI referred to their goals and ascribed milestones or targets for the next two years (please see log frame on Outputs). They then developed recommended actions towards achieving these targets.

Recommended activities also focused on developing capacity of leaders towards resource management and mobilization. The DOMWORK program is expected to help answer this specific need of SUMAPI by providing support for the training of leaders. The area training will help SUMAPI identify possible modes of group enterprises and self help, map existing support services from government, NGOs, and other partner institutions, and pave the way for the enhancement of systems.

VI. Follow-up Activities

The group was not able to finish the logical framework, specifically on indicators. It was agreed that chapter meetings will be held to discuss the strategic plan and develop chapter plans in accordance with agreements.

A select committee from SUMAPI NCR finalized the logical framework and distributed it to members for approval and to the VF Executive Committee for suggestions. VF Regions were also instructed to assist SUMAPI in developing operational plans per chapter and to integrate agreements into their own plans and programs.

It was agreed that the Strategic Plan and operational plans will be presented, discussed, and approved during assemblies to be held from February to March 2006.