

***Peeking through with a Gender Lens:  
Similarities and Peculiarities of Human Trafficking Cases in the Philippines***

Duke Thomas Gascon Dolorical, Ateneo de Naga University, Philippines

The Asian Conference on the Social Sciences 2014  
Official Conference Proceedings  
0549

## **Introduction**

Trafficking in Persons (TIP) is a prevalent social malady in the Philippines, being both an act and condition that is committed by perpetrators against unwitting, sometimes even knowing, victims. According to the TIP Report (TIPS) prepared by the US State Department, Philippines is a “source, transit, and destination country for men, women, and children trafficked for commercial sexual exploitation and forced labor”(US State Dept., 2009).

In 2006, the International Labor Organization estimates around 1.8 million Filipino workers of illegal status including trafficked victims (ILO, 2006). The government estimates on the number of women trafficked range from 300,000 to 400,000 (US State Dept., 2008).

Cases of TIP negatively impact states and other actors on both national and international scale. The UN TIP Protocol, which forms part of the Convention against Transnational Organized Crimes, defines TIP as “the transport of persons, by means of coercion, deception, or consent for the purpose of exploitation such as forced or consensual labor or prostitution.”

According to the UN GIFT an estimated U.S. \$31.6 Billion is the derived annual profit extracted by human traffickers from exploited and forced labor. Of this, US\$ 9.7 Billion or 30.6% of the total US \$31.6 billion is generated from the Asia-Pacific region (*Ibid*). The Philippines is one of the main source points of forced and sexual labor to wealthy countries. The Philippines is categorized by the U.S. State Department as Tier 2 in its TIPS watch list.

The Philippines being one of the signatories of the Palermo Protocol, have instituted legal and administrative mechanisms aimed at addressing TIP domestically. The Philippine legislature enacted in 2003 the Republic Act 9208 otherwise known as the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act. This is the country’s foremost legal mechanism designed to provide structure for mechanisms addressing TIP.

However, policies combating TIP and its implementation lack depth of understanding of the differing needs of male and female victims of TIP. These being the result of: (a) Existing policies’ failure to incorporate the Gender Perspective in addressing TIP, (b) The inability of relevant stakeholders to look into the issues and problems related to TIP from the lens of gender perspective, and (c) Existing misconceptions that society has regarding men and women in general.

Acknowledging that even men and boys are trafficked is an often overlooked detail of the entire picture of TIP. D’Cunha argues that “gender stereotypes that present men as powerful and operating in the public sphere, and women as passive and primarily relegated to the privacy of domesticity, feed the misconception in many societies that men migrate, but women are trafficked”.

This paper seeks to explore the realities embedded in human trafficking by answering addressing this overarching question: What are the peculiarities of cases of male TIP compared to female TIP in the Philippines? This paper shall then: (1) Identify and discuss the differences in terms of experiences and special needs of female from male

TIP victims and (2) Locate the gender perspective in the existing policies and responses of both governmental and non-governmental organizations in addressing TIP.

With an eye for the gender dimension of TIP, this paper shall focus on the differences of experiences and needs of male and female victims of TIP. It shall also examine different governmental & NGO policy-interventions and whether or not it incorporates the gender perspective in addressing this transnational crime.

This study shall therefore limit its analysis and scope to the differentiated male and female perspective of TIP as it occurs in the Philippines using the gender analytical frame in analyzing whether responses and policies of the government are gender sensitive and whether experiences of male and female TIP victims differ.

This paper utilizes the Gender Analysis as its frame of analysis. Gender Analysis is “a set of processes for assessing and deepening understanding about the differences in the lives of women and men, their participation in social and economic life, and the differential impacts on their lives of policies, programs and services” (Office for Women-Queensland Gov’t., 2009). This is important as in the Philippines, and everywhere else, women and girls are treated differently from men and boys.

Gender analysis is used to investigate the impacts of policies, programs and services to the well-being of men and women and is logically inclined to analyze gender roles according to four categories: (1) **reproductive roles**-household, and therefore uncompensated, work (Swiss Agency for Dev’t & Cooperation), (2) **productive role**, refers to activities of women and men that produce economic resources, in cash or kind (Ibid), (3) **community-management role**, refers to voluntary activities at community level to ensure the provision and maintenance of collective resources and infrastructures and (4) **constituency-based politics role**, includes political and advocacy activities at the community, local, national and/or international levels, within traditional structures. This work shall proceed in analyzing the gender responsiveness of interventions of (a) CSOs-NGOs and (b) Governmental Agencies.

## Defining Human Trafficking

According to Bruckert and Parent (2002), the definition of TIP as a transnational crime became uniform in the 80s and 90s, consolidating differing definitions by scholars. In efforts to fully understand this phenomenon and create a scientific and knowledge-based approach towards its understanding, TIP has been given internationally accepted definitions delineating it from other forms of illegal activities. This is due to the assumption that formal actors cannot frame tangible actions suppressing TIP in the absence of a clear definition and relevant knowledge related to this phenomenon.

According to Trainor and Belser (2006), TIP exists in an illicit global market dependent on the factors motivating demand and supply. Despite a set of internationally accepted laws and regulations designed to prevent it, trafficking continues as an exchange between traffickers and exploiters (Ibid). Victims of trafficking are treated as commodities “supplied” by recruiters and “demanded” by brothel or sweat-shop owners (Ibid). Demand for sexual services motivates the supply for trafficked prostitutes. The suppliers of these services are the brothel or sweat-shop owners.

Shahani (2013), discussed that from 2005 to 2012, there were around 1, 693 officially recorded cases of trafficking in the country. There exists an international and globalized market with significant power-differential gaps where the center has predatory demand for surplus human resource from developing countries (*Ibid*). In most cases, this widespread phenomena of fluid movements of people within and outside the country, is largely subservient to societal, economic and political infrastructures established by technological advance and globalization. Thus, the core-periphery analogy reintegrates magnetism of surplus labor from impoverished peripheral countries towards wealthy core countries where job opportunities are abundant and deficit in human resource due to declining fertility rates. The 12<sup>th</sup> most populous country in the world with limited job opportunities for professional and skilled workers, Philippines is among developing countries supplying cheap labor worldwide. The demand for cheap labor, according to Neomarxists, is enabled by neoliberal ideologies that capitalize heavily on imperialism, colonization and globalization. The confluence of these factors results in the prevalence TIP cases in the Philippines.

What inundates this movement of labor force from the Philippines to well-off states are: (1) growing demand for “caring labor”; (2) sophisticated policies for cultivating and marketing labor overseas; (3) concomitant dependence of the Philippine economy to OFW remittances to fuel domestic consumption, real-estate boom and economic growth (*Ibid*). Such an environment “opens multiple pathways for the workings of trafficking.” “There is a continuum of facilitation ranging from fairly transparent recruitment at one end to the flow through networks tightly controlled by organized criminal groups at the other” (Lee, 2005). An underground industry that facilitates this transnational crime capitalizes in its being a “low risk, high profit enterprise.”

“Given advances in communications, transportation and computerized banking, government policies that encourage migration, along with rising global demands for certain kinds of labor, traffickers can take advantage of larger supplies of humans, turning them into cheap and disposable –but eminently renewable—commodities” (Shahani, 2013). TIP could only thrive given the level of tolerance reflected in Philippine society’s societal infrastructures (*Ibid*).

#### A. Gender analysis of TIP in the Philippines

The differences of gender roles spell differences in the ways by which men and women victimized. Females are victimized due to the attributes attached to their reproductive roles, and their incapacity for self-determination caused by severe economic restrictions. These two gender roles combined, account for the primary reasons behind women being subjected to TIP. Men are equally trafficked according to their gender attributes. Demand for cheap labor is supplied by male victims in an effort to perform their roles as providers for their families. In a recent survey conducted by the National Police Commission (NAPOLCOM), there is a great disparity in terms of the ratio of female victims from male victims. Of the government case files by NAPOLCOM, there were only 3 males of the 123 victims (Leones & Caparas, 2001). Apparently, it is the fulfillment of reproductive (for women) and productive (for men) gender roles that are the main push factors for TIP in the Philippines. Filipina women are more prone to TIP than Filipino men given the disparities of gender roles each is assigned. A patriarchal society that condemns women to specific female gender role e.g. reproductive, is

epiphenomenal with the underdevelopment of other female gender roles which are confluent to their vulnerabilities to TIP.

Criminal elements working for owners of night clubs and brothels that cater to this “sexual” demand mobilize a vast network of recruiters to provinces and far-flung areas to recruit young women through promises of good employment. These are women unemployed, uneducated and heavily burdened by their reproductive roles at home. Traffickers use deception, indentured labor and force to traffic these victims. As the respondents have shared, fulfillment of female reproductive roles as carers for their family motivated them to seek employment abroad thereby being subjected to TIP in the process. Likewise, the need to provide for the needs of their families prompted male and female victims to access work abroad as there are no available jobs in their respective localities.

Male victims are unrecorded and are therefore lesser in number due to their reluctance to portray themselves as victims, a clear sign of weakness. This is reflected in the inexistence of a gender disaggregated data regarding TIP and the gender blind law enforcement measures and rehabilitative programs for TIP victims. Official records documenting the cases of male victims are not registered as cases of TIP but as ordinary labor cases. Undocumented cases may be attributed to the Filipino male’s cultural and societal preconditions, such as the concept of machismo that prevents them from willingly projecting themselves as victims. Inaccurate data pertinent to TIP is mainly responsible for the misunderstanding, confusion and neglect of duty-bearers in curbing other forms of violations resembling TIP.

## **The Commonalities and Peculiarities**

### **I. Male and Female TIP Victims Profile and Experiences**

According to the UNODC 2012 Global Report on TIP, majority of Filipino victims of TIP are under debt bondage, and most of them are trafficked for sexual exploitation, prostitution and pornography. Other victims were trafficked for purposes of forced labor, slavery, and child labor (*Ibid*). Interestingly, the Philippines is among the only three countries with reports of recorded cases of male TIP. The same report shows that the Philippines have established domestic and international routes of TIP.

Domestically, victims from provinces are trafficked to key cities for cheap labor as construction workers, household help or prostitutes. Internationally, Filipino TIP victims are trafficked and were detected largely in the Asia-Pacific, South Asian and East Asian Regions, mostly for the same purposes.

The Coalition Against Trafficking of Women in the Asia-Pacific (CATW-AP) claims there is a significant variation in terms of the range of ages of female victims depending upon whose data it is being used. Blas Ople Policy Center and Training Institute (BOPCTI) claim that ages ranges from 15-40 years old while the Visayan Forum Foundation, through an interview conducted by Newsbreak magazine, place the age range at 12-22 years. Majority of them come from rural areas and recruited to work as domestic helpers, sales ladies or nannies. They had limited education and belonged to families with 6-11 members (Enriquez: <http://catwap.wordpress.com/>). In

sum, the common notions of the female victims' gender roles in both their communities of origin and destination exacerbate their susceptibility to dangers of TIP.

In an interview with the BOPCTI key informant, majority of the female victims that they rescue and rehabilitate are subjected to multiple forms of VAWs. In the cases handled by BOPCTI, female victims trafficked to Malaysia are predominantly victims of sexual exploitation and slavery while those in the Middle East are victims of physical and sexual violence and labor related abuses. Sordid stories of women being found dead after they were locked in drums in a cargo vessel were shared according to the Center for Women's Resources to the Philippine Center on Transnational Crime (PCTC). Another case involved Filipinas found frozen dead in a van while being transported across borders in Europe (<http://www.pctc.gov.ph/>).

Majority of the recorded male victims are adults, married and had families who depended on them (Verite). They comprise 15% of the total number of trafficking victims all over the world (UNODC, 2012), most of whom are skilled and experienced blue collar workers; many are degree holders and licensed professionals. Most are passport holders and legally documented. They are trafficked to work as fishermen and construction workers in (Sabah) Malaysia, ship crew of illegal vessels in Taiwan, forced laborers in the Middle East. Their ages range 21-50 years old (Verite). Most of these victims have experienced forced labor conditions, physical and verbal abuse, other forms of labor malpractices and even sexual abuse according to the key informant.

### **The other side of gender-sensitivity**

In most cases, NGOs and government agencies' proclivity to interpret gender sensitivity as a one dimensional focus on women's special needs results in the neglect of specific needs of male victims of TIP. This is reflected by the assumption that women and children are the referent objects of existing international and national laws. While it is a fact that women are victimized by TIP, men are equally victimized and have gender-specific needs. This gender bias is manifested by the fact that all over Philippines, there are very few shelters provided for male TIP victims. Majority of government and NGO-run shelters are designed for female victims. The lack of data documenting male TIP victims is interpreted as the latter's non-existence.

## **II. Modus Operandi and Profile of Traffickers**

TIP victims are promised high-paying jobs in their destination areas by traffickers. Victims are made to believe that their traffickers will shoulder their exorbitant placement fees and other expenses so that when the victim arrives in the place of destination, she is already heavily indebted. Beholden to this debt, the victim is then forced to perform slave-like or sexual services in order to pay for these debts.

Of convicted traffickers in the Philippines, 77% are men and the rest are women. In the case of male victims, majority were deceived by male recruiters. Verite reported that majority of the victims have voluntarily entered the destination country where the exploitation took place. For higher salaries and higher hazard pay, many Filipino men are willingly trafficked into hazardous zones in the Middle East despite government bans. On the other hand, majority of recruiters of female victims are also women they

are familiar with e.g. relatives ( CATW-AP). Victims are recruited by both local and foreign recruiters.

### **Modus Operandi**

The BOPCTI key informant described the Modus Operandi of TIP syndicates as being network-like and complex to be fully addressed by one-dimensional approaches. Traffickers are mere facilitators of demands coming from recruitment agencies and direct employers. He pointed out that individuals and organizations with high demand for sex workers and cheap labor “outsource” to ground-level recruiters who merely perform segmentalized portions of the trafficking process. They are in concert with established networks of local drivers, port inspectors, and victims’ travel escorts who are unknown to each other. This enables risk-free TIP operations that are hard to detect, trace and prosecute. In case of arrest, detained trafficker cannot pinpoint or identify other actors. Demand is then outsourced to another supplier. Compounding the issue are the law enforcers complicit in these trafficking schemes.

Common among male and female victims is the use of deception and force of recruiters. Majority of male victims voluntarily apply for work abroad although some are also subjected to similar patterns of trafficking experienced by most of female victims. The key informant discussed that victims are made to sign contracts with promising salaries and excellent working conditions. Only upon arrival in their destination country that they find out that those contracts are replaced with terms that are below what was agreed upon. Other victims deceived that their agencies have paid for their expensive placement fee or transport fee and thus direct deductions were made from their salaries. Deep in debt, male victims, like female victims, are forced to serve beyond maximum terms of their contracts, made to work in inhumane conditions, or sold-off to slavery or sexual labor.

### **Responses to TIP in the Philippines**

#### **B. Governmental and Non-Governmental responses**

Discussion and analysis of this section focus on the different governmental policies and actions undertaken by governmental agencies with particular attention to Gender Perspective or lack thereof. In the same manner, NGO interventions tackling TIP shall also be discussed.

#### **I. Governmental Responses**

The Philippines ratified R.A.9208 or the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003 which formalizes and structures governmental efforts systematically addressing TIP. Section 3(a) of this law provides a clear and concise definition by which acts constitutive of TIP are classified and could be meted corresponding penalties. Section 20 of RA9208 mandates the establishment of the Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking (IACAT), which follows a multi-stakeholder approach to combat human trafficking. It undertakes measures to prevent and suppress TIP and ensures the victims’ recovery, rehabilitation and reintegration into mainstream society (Gutierrez, 2013).

RA10362 was ratified by congress in order to expand and cover aspects of TIP previously unaddressed by RA9208. The pertinent provisions contained by this amendatory law are: 1.) removal of the confidentiality clause on the identity and modus operandi of the accused in trafficking cases, 2.) the definition and provisions concerning “attempted,” and the “act,” of TIP for involuntary servitude and forced labor, 3.) amendments to the definition of child-trafficking to include barter, sale and trade of children.

In spite of their merits, these laws fail to incorporate thoroughly the gender perspective despite the gender mainstreaming campaigns of the government.

The Philippine government through the IACAT has recently prioritized the institutionalization of the gender perspective in its policy mechanisms and organizational undertakings. It is only recently that IACAT recognized the importance of: (a) collating gender disaggregated data that are useful in understanding and responding to TIP and (b) a gender-sensitive procedures of handling TIP cases. IACAT and its member agencies have been active in seeking international networks’ inputs and resources in its campaign against TIP.

The key respondent from the TIP division of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), a member agency of IACAT, claimed that IACAT is finalizing its “Protocol on Handling Victims of Trafficking” which is currently in the hands of the Department of Justice for review. This protocol which explicitly incorporates the gender perspective is aimed at providing capacities to agencies, institutions and ground-level personnel to standardize and formalize operational procedures.

Currently, IACAT is using the “Performance Standards and Assessment Tools for Psychosocial Counseling Services for Women-Victims of Violence and Their Children” manual, according to the key respondent. While generally aiming to provide professional and accessible gender-sensitive psychosocial intervention for victims of VAWC, the guideline is the closest standardized institutional material available in addressing gender-specific rehabilitative and reintegration concerns of female TIP victims.

The Philippine National Police crafted the “Standard Operating Procedures for Trafficking in Person Investigations” ([trafficking.org.ph](http://trafficking.org.ph), 2013). It is a step-by-step guide for front-line investigators and supervisors. It teaches risk assessment, management of victims, and the use of special tools and techniques to pursue and investigate TIP (Ibid). The manual emphasizes the importance of strategic planning, and outlines the roles played by case managers, investigators and investigation unit chiefs. A key objective is to enable the preparation of air-tight cases that lead to the successful prosecution of offenders (ibid). However, the effect of this welcome development is yet to be seen as it was only rolled-out this year.

### **Hierarchy of Lenses**

Before law enforcement agencies are able to effectively evaluate a victim’s situation and apply appropriate gender-specific responses, generic TIP lens must be used. This means that ground-level law enforcement agents should be familiar with the basic

rubric in identifying cases that are categorizable as TIP. In the absence of this preliminary lens, the fullest extent by which the gender perspective may become an efficient tool of response may never be realized. It goes without saying that the same personnel must also be equipped with gender sensitivity skills in order to fully take into account the situation of the victims and recommend appropriate gender-sensitive interventions.

The BOPCTI key informant cited that governmental interventions continue to overlook the importance of gender perspective in addressing TIP. For example, the respondent has seldom observed that at least a woman interviewer is appointed to interview a female trafficking victim who has experienced sexual abuse. Initially recorded as ordinary cases of sexual harassment or labor malpractice, certain cases referred to BOPCTI are assessed as TIP only upon meticulous interview and debriefing. In the experiences of TIP victims coming from Sabah Malaysia, port authorities and law enforcement agencies are more inclined to view and treat the former as refugees and not as TIP victims. These incidences are thus officially recorded and data-banked as cases of displacement and not trafficking. Reintegration programs are conducted but are oftentimes inattentive to gender needs especially for those who experienced VAW and other forms of abuse. At times, psychosocial interventions may be given but are likewise gender-blind. This is due to the absence of an accurate data that is gender disaggregated. It follows that if concerned governmental agencies are unable to detect the victims' situation as falling in the mold of TIP, appropriate interventions will not be applied.

The tendency for government agencies is to respond with temporary and band-aid solutions.

## **II. Non-Governmental Organizations' Responses**

Anti-TIP NGOs are acknowledged for different interventions that have positively impacted victims, and their families. Their incessant lobbying, tireless networking activities, continued rescue operations and many more unsung efforts have contributed to the ongoing campaign against trafficking. Aside from their respective interventions, anti-trafficking NGOs are also effective interlocutors of victims' needs and interventions available in different formal venues. In the absence of needed programs or interventions, NGOs have been there to supply it.

Despite these, not all NGOs employ gender-aware measures in their campaign against TIP. If the gender perspective is to be used in evaluating measures initiated by these NGOs, the Philippine anti-trafficking movement is still far from achieving a generally gender-aware approach to TIP. This is perfectly understandable given the natural diversity of anti-TIP NGOs which belong to various backgrounds (e.g. religious NGOs, feminist NGOs, etc.).

Among the most gender-sensitive NGO response against TIP is that of the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women Asia Pacific (CATW-AP). CATW-AP's programs address the demand side of TIP. The CATW believes that demand for sexual services is among the determinants of the existence of TIP. CATW is currently lobbying for the legislation of an anti-prostitution law that will increase penalties for buyers in the sex industry (Enriquez: <http://catwap.wordpress.com/>). CATW-AP spearheaded a program

correcting the sexual socialization process and perceptions of young men aged 17-21, educating them about sexuality, attitudes and behavior towards women, and the issue of prostitution (Ibid). CATW-AP has already conducted eight (8) camps in the three (3) major islands of the country since 2004, imparting knowledge to 304 young men from schools and communities (Ibid). The initiatives undertaken by CATW-AP open spaces for replication by other NGOs and evidences the doability of creating, on both normative and institutional level, campaign activities and even policy mechanisms hinged on the gender perspective.

The International Justice Mission (IJM), another anti-TIP NGO runs “Project Lantern.” This initiative is composed of (1) law enforcement, (2) prosecution and the court system, (3) victim aftercare, (4) labor regulation, (5) local government unit oversight, and (6) civil society engagement ([www.ijm.org](http://www.ijm.org)). IJM has been responsible for the institutionalization of gender-sensitive innovations in court proceedings for TIP victims. One such innovation is the creation of a separate waiting area for women/children victims of TIP in the Cebu city/province courthouse preventing victims from being harassed by the trafficker and allowing the prosecution of the case to pursue.

IJM employs gender-sensitive aftercare of female TIP victims. It also assisted DSWD region 7 in establishing “HerSpace” Processing Centers inside DSWD’s Crisis Intervention Unit. Immediately after TIP victims are rescued from brothels, victims are interviewed and processed by trained DSWD personnel and member of the IJM inside the “HerSpace,” separate from the holding cell or processing area of the trafficker. This innovation allows the victim to feel that she is not at fault or that she is not being detained, lessening trauma. It also frees the victim from the intimidating police station environment. It also physically distances her from her tormentor, preventing her from threats and harassment. Finally, it allows the victim to gradually adjust before she is further subjected to aftercare interventions which IJM also provides in partnership with DSWD. IJM is also in partnership with several NGOs in improving the physical layout of shelters, improving security and spaces for interaction of victims.

Most important though is the campaign of IJM to develop economic self-determination of victims. IJM’s ESSR or Economic Self-Sufficiency and Re-integration Project, is a program that aims to increase “realistic and sustainable opportunities for economic self-sufficiency for trafficking victims.” IJM recommends their trained beneficiaries to local employers and have been successful in giving employment opportunities to former TIP victims. This is important as economic self-sufficiency allows former victims to extricate themselves from cyclical abuse that is a product of economic deprivation and dependency.

NGOs have been among the most innovative and creative forces in addressing TIP and this sector have been successful in filling-in gaps that are left unaddressed by the government. However, in the context of gender mainstreaming or in making approaches and interventions more gender sensitive, much coordinative work and sharing of expertise has yet to be done.

## **Conclusion**

In this study, the use of the gender analytical framework has been vital in exposing factors, details and conditions which are often concealed from conventional worldview. Gender analysis applied in the context of TIP in the Philippines was able to surface normally overlooked gender roles and perspectives that have been persistent in the Philippine society. This is important since most literature available regarding TIP are either products of efforts of government institutions and agencies (and are therefore more policy-oriented) or informal actors such as CSOs and NGOs (thus, more action-oriented and are created for lobbying purposes). It is very clear that the precursors of TIP are conditions produced by gender inequalities. Gender Analysis explains the different social factors responsible for the predominant victimization of women to TIP and exposed existing concepts of manhood/maleness as the main factors concealing actual cases of male TIP. Analysis of the different reproductive, productive, community management and political roles of women from men allowed the researcher to nuance and trace the availability of gender responsive policies and interventions, even the lack thereof. Understanding the TIP situation in this country gives policy-makers and other concerned organizations a leg-up in creating victim-centered and gender sensitive policies.

It is assumed that gender-specific responses should be available to cater to the specific needs of the victims according to their gender. As this study has yielded, this is not always the case. Sustained efforts or the exploration of other efficient methods of dealing with TIP should be hinged on the gender perspective. Even if much attention has been given to cases of TIP in the Philippines and its female dimension, it appears that concerned governmental agencies have been inattentive to the special needs of women victims and the rarely acknowledged cases of male TIP. On different levels of policy-making and implementation, starting from the collation of gender disaggregated data, usage of such data in the development of corresponding policy mechanisms that address gender-specific issues pertaining TIP, creation of gender-sensitive measures that are victim-centric, to careful and meticulous implementation of such provisions that is constantly improved by a regular evaluation process, gender perspective must be injected.

IACAT have been sluggish in mainstreaming the gender perspective in its undertakings and policies, although it is making significant strides in terms of policy legislations. There is still a need for sustained and heightened gender-mainstreamed policy interventions and collation of gender disaggregated data pertaining TIP. Gender-sensitivity trainings and programs are most welcome especially for field operatives and law enforcement agents. Further, Gender analysis is an effective diagnostic tool in determining factors behind gender-blind policies in urgent need of amendments. It is most important to note that the gender perspective will never be realized nor properly incorporated in policies and programs if it is not anchored on the universal human rights.

NGOs also have a fair share of gender blindness. Although impressive reform undertakings and interventions were made possible by these organizations, not all are able to mainstream the gender perspective in their interventions. There is still room for improvement to an already impressive array of interventions made available by NGOs such as BOPCTI, IJM and CATW-AP. The laurels garnered from small yet

significant victories must not be limited within their organizational auspices; such expertise must be shared to other NGOs engaged in the fight against TIP. These replicable practices are supposed to be disseminated and supported by governmental and funding agencies.