

Unleashing women's entrepreneurial and managerial talents in agribusiness

"More women can move up the agribusiness managerial ladder and be successful as agribusiness entrepreneurs if proper training is given them to cope with the requirements of the emerging opportunities," was the conclusion of the 27 participants from 13 countries who attended the recent workshop on Improving Managerial Skills of Women Entrepreneurs in Agribusiness. It was held in Indonesia, 10–14 June, and organized by the APO in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration of Indonesia.



Mushroom production facility at C.V. Volva

The participants, who were managers of agribusiness enterprises, representatives of academia or training institutions, and consultants, pointed out that there were

implicit policies and cultural norms in many countries in Asia which prevent women from accepting managerial positions, especially in agribusiness. They also pointed out that another factor contributing to the continued dominance of men in managerial positions in agribusiness is that few women are trained to take on such roles.

The workshop suggested that the relevant institutions in member countries should set up human resources development (HRD) programs to address the needs of both women entrepreneurs and women in the agribusiness workforce so that they can assume more responsible positions. The following were among the various topics discussed: management functions in business organizations; opportunities and challenges for women managers in agribusiness enterprises; basic management tools and techniques for agribusiness managers; and designing learning tools for women entrepreneurs and managers in agribusiness.

At the end of workshop, participants produced three templates for use by the APO and member countries in undertaking HRD for women in agribusiness: a model for a trainers' training course on Improving Managerial Skills for Women Entrepreneurs and Managers in Agribusiness; course on Building the Capacity of Women in Value Chain Management in Agribusiness; and Seminar on Strengthening the Participation of Women in Agribusiness Development. Participants were also able to observe onsite the challenges faced by women running their own businesses and received practical advice when visiting two agribusiness enterprises managed by women, C.V. Merapi Farma Herbal and C.V. Volva, involved in the production and processing of herbal products and mushrooms, respectively. 🌱