

— Building a cadre of trainers and advisers for women —

Supporting the development of women's entrepreneurship and teaching women how to manage micro and small enterprises is an effective strategy for enhancing the productivity and dignity of women in rural areas. In many developing countries in Asia, however, institutional programs to support women in developing entrepreneurship and managerial skills are lacking. Many women engaged in agrofood processing businesses do not have any formal training in it or in business management. Thus, few micro and small business enterprises, especially in rural areas, survive over the long term. Due to the important role of women in the rural economies of many member countries, efforts should be made to enhance their technical knowledge in starting and managing small, home-based microenterprises as evidence shows that support through microfinance and entrepreneurship programs have large multiplier effects.

The APO held a training course on Providing Advisory and Training Services to Women on the Management of Micro- and Small-scale Agrofood-processing Enterprises in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 26–31 July 2010. A total of 21 women from 11 member countries successfully completed the course. The course covered selected productivity management tools and techniques in seven modules covering: Concepts and principles of entrepreneurship and agribusiness management; Basic planning tools for starting a small agrofood-processing business; Production planning and operations management; Product quality and food safety management; New product development and productivity improvement; Marketing and logistics management; and Financial planning and budgeting. Participants visited two small companies, My Haiz Sdn. Bhd. and Hajjah Aminah Food Ind. Sdn. Bhd., both started by women as food-processing micro enterprises. Both compa-

nies have prospered, and one now exports its products.

Participant Dr. Kan-
chan Sandhu, a train-
er of women from
India, commented,
“As I am involved in
training women in
various fields, I feel
I will now be able to
guide trainees with
more clarity about

the application of energy for initiating and building an enterprise in terms of equity, time, and commitment to adding value to products. This training will also help me to empower rural women trainees in terms of acquisition of processing, packaging, and marketing techniques to start microenterprises to generate employment, develop economic independence, and increase national productivity.”

Resource Person Reuel Virtucio pointed out that low educational level; lack of training opportunities; legal, cultural, and religious restrictions; and heavy demands of household chores were among the factors contributing to the scarcity of women entrepreneurs in many countries. However, those barriers could be broken down if more trainers and consultants for women were available in member countries. 🌀



Fauziah Binti Mohamed Yah (R), Managing Director of My Haiz Sdn. Bhd., gives pointers to participants on packaging and labeling food products in Shah Alam, Malaysia 29 July 2010. APO/Joselito Bernardo