

DEFENDING THE LAND, DEFENDING THEIR LIVELIHOOD - WOMEN OF KAMMI IN THE PHILIPPINES

A group of peasant women in the Philippines, organized under the Kababaihang Magbubukid ng Mindoro (Peasant Women of Mindoro) carry as one of their major concerns the issue of environment. Their activities include a campaign on sustainable agriculture, reforestation and coming up with an environment-friendly lifestyle.

Founded in 1987, KAMMI aims to enhance the peasant women's role in politics, economy, culture and other aspects of society. At present, it has 17 chapters in 8 municipalities in Occidental Mindoro. It has self-help livelihood projects and seminars and trainings on leadership, organizational management, peasant women's situation, feminism, sexuality and reproductive rights, women and land reform and women and the environment.

In their campaign on sustainable agriculture, the women have successfully asserted that they cut down their use of pesticides and refrain from spraying when transplanting is

about to start. This resulted in a decrease in the number of cases of dizziness and vomiting due to too much exposure to chemicals. Members of KAMMI also successfully lobbied for the passing of a bill that prohibits the burning of hay, leaves and other crop residues that causes the loss of organic fertilizers.

To focus on their environmental campaign, KAMMI amended their constitution to

include a committee for the protection of the environment in each chapter of their organization.

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Photo: Chaneg Vol. III No.1 Jan-April 1993