

**An Evaluative Research in the  
Implementation  
of the Assistance to  
Lolas in Crisis  
Situation (ALCS) Project**



**Department of Social  
Welfare and Development  
(DSWD)**



**Asian Women's Fund  
(AWF)**

## FOREWORD

The Assistance to Lolas in Crisis Situation (ALCS) is a project specifically intended for former comfort women which was implemented from 1997-2002. It aimed to rebuild the Lolas' self esteem and enabled them to cope with the crisis brought about by their traumatic experience. Social welfare services for the Lolas' psychosocial needs were provided through a package of assistance which included medical and food assistance, housing, livelihood assistance, and counseling services among others.

Through this, the Programs and Project Bureau of the Department of Social Welfare and Development conceived the idea to conduct a research study to evaluate the project performance and the impact of services provided to the ALCS project beneficiaries in terms of the level of client's awareness of the program and services, effectiveness and adequacy of the services in uplifting the psycho-social condition of former comfort women and the projects' accomplishments and implementation gaps.

We hope this research output will serve as reference and guide to social welfare and development workers, program developers, and to policy formulators of government and non-government organizations providing services to former comfort women.

Further, it is hoped that the result of this research will enable the general public to have a better understanding on the plight of the former comfort women. Likewise, it will serve as a basis for future development of similar projects as well as the immediate approval of a proposed Senate Resolution on the Filipino Comfort Women which highlights the provision of legal and monetary compensation and advocacy for other legislations that would benefit the former Filipino Comfort Women.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In response to the emerging needs of the former comfort women, the Philippine government through the Inter-agency Task Force on Former Comfort Women was tasked to assist the Filipino former comfort women. The National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women, a member of the Task Force was specifically instructed to formulate package of welfare assistance to address the needs of the comfort women. This proposal was turned into a project proposal by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) in December 1996 and was submitted to the Asian Women's Fund (AWF) for funding. The formal signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the AWF and the Philippine Government was held on January 15, 1997. This project became officially known as the Assistance to Lolas in Crisis Situation (ALCS) Project. The DSWD implemented project. Inherent in the realization of addressing the needs of the Lolas is the assumption that the situation of the Lolas has improved five years after the implementation of the project. This study investigates whether the self-esteem of the Lolas has improved which is measured via the level of satisfaction from the different material/financial and psychosocial components of the ALCS project.

Primary data were taken from the interview of 98 former comfort women, social workers and members of the Inter-agency Task Force on Former Comfort Women.

Majority of the Lolas were in the "old-old" category, have attended four years of formal education, were already widowed, belonged to a family of five on average, and a member of at least one organization. Even if the Lolas were already old, they contributed to the welfare of the household as income-earner as well as caregiver of sick family members. Matters pertaining to their health and finances worry the Lolas most.

The Lolas were taken to garrisons, which were formerly used as municipal building, school, church, hospital and big private houses. Their period of confinement ranged from three days to more than a year. Some Lolas escaped through the help of some family members and influential people in the community while the rest were freed when the Americans came.

After their ordeal, the Lolas felt alone, detached, and ashamed of what happened to them. To deal with this trauma, the Lolas immersed themselves with their work while others migrated to other places, particularly Manila. They could not stand the stare and the mockery of their neighbors.

Overall, there was improvement in the conditions of the Lola which could be attributed to the Project Lola. Many Lolas became owners of decent homes, although some are still unfinished; recreational appliances (e.g., television and radio), and assistive devices (e.g., eyeglasses and walking cane); were more able to visit friends

and relatives; and to pay utility bills on time. Counseling and healing sessions were also seen to have uplifted their emotional well-being. Others wished that there should be more similar sessions in the future. The parties organized by the DSWD during Christmas time was most remembered by the Lolos. Their renewed acquaintance with one another and the Christmas gifts have always been cherished by the Lolos.

Other Lolos found the assistance not enough. This is particularly true for Lolos in constant need of medical attention. Moreover, the perception of inadequacy of the support could be partly attributed to the increasing price of many food items and partly due to the fact that some Lolos were spending their monthly pension on other needs and sharing their food with other members of the family.

As far as the implementation of the project is concerned, the most commonly cited problems were delay in the processing of business papers, different allocations for each Lola, and had to return a number of times to DSWD to get their check/reimbursement.

On the part of the social workers, the problems they have encountered are as follows: administrative problems like scheduled visit to Lolos not being followed, initial lack of trust of Lolos with the assigned social worker and uncooperative family members of the Lola.

When asked on suggestions to improve the implementation of the projects, most Lolos wanted the whole financial assistance be directly given to them. According to them, they know what their priorities are and when money is needed.

Complaints cannot be avoided. By nature, humans have different levels of satisfaction. Furthermore, some complaints of the Lolos were brought about by the changing times (e.g., high inflation rate and changing demographics) and not directly related to what happened in the past. Their perceptions were also colored by other factors such as unemployed family members who are dependent on her and sick family members and others surrounding her. Be as it may, it should not be forgotten that there are also Lolos who are as of today are still being troubled by what they have experienced.

Given the failing health of the Lolos, the first recommendation is that the previous arrangements with the local government health facilities where Lolos could be taken care should be reiterated and strengthened. Or a gerontology center accessible to the Lolos should be established. Most Lolos were already in the "old-old" category, thus the incidence of diseases and complications of their illnesses are also increasing.

The other recommendation pertains to the administration of Lola's fund. It can be patterned similar to a pension scheme. This time, the pension should be higher taking into account the increasing cost of food and other basic necessities. Perhaps, the average cost of utilities should be also factored in. Giving the full amount to Lolos would be unwise. Some Lolos who have acquired refrigerator, television, and other recreational equipment were either pawned or sold to cover the cost of everyday expenses.

Future projects of the same nature should allocate fixed financial support for each beneficiary in the local currency. At the beginning, a mistrust of a Lola with the social worker could be the different allotment for each Lola.

Finally, the counseling component particularly for Lolas who did not belong to groups solely organized for comfort women, is very important for the Lolas to rebuild their self-esteem. These counseling sessions provided the venue to express their feelings, particularly their problems. Important too is the once a year gathering where Lolas could meet and renew their acquaintance with the other Lolas. Perhaps, even if the project has already been completed, an annual gathering and healing/counseling session should be continued.

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## INTRODUCTION

Comfort women, a translation of the Japanese euphemism, *jugun ianfu*, (military comfort women), categorically refers to women of various ethnic and national backgrounds and social circumstances who became sexual laborers for the Japanese troops before and during the Second World War (Chunghee nd). The Japanese government, military officials, and sexual industry agents hoped that this term would obscure the dreadful reality (Kazuko 1994).

Countless women had to labor as comfort women in the military brothels found throughout the vast Asia Pacific region occupied by the Japanese forces. There is no way to determine precisely how many women were forced to serve as comfort women. The estimate ranges between 80,000 and 200,000, about 80 percent of whom, it is believed, were Korean. Japanese women and women of other occupied territories including the Philippines were also used as comfort women. In the Philippines, it was estimated that about 1,000 women were kept as comfort women during the war (Hirt 2000)

The issue of comfort women started to emerge at the international community in December 1991. A number of Koreans, including three former comfort women, filed a class action suit against the Japanese government on behalf of former soldiers, paramilitary, and bereaved families demanding compensation for the violation of human rights of certain categories of Koreans under Japanese colonial rule (Chunghee 1997). Since then, significant political actions and campaigns around military comfort women have been on the increase, and hundreds of comfort women have told similar stories (Kazuko 1994). Other countries followed suit including the Philippines.

In 1992, after a public hearing was held in Tokyo organized by a network of groups working on the issue of comfort women, a number of Filipinas came out and narrated how the Japanese soldiers forced them to provide sex. Initially, a total of 44 women came out and revealed their stories (Panel of Lawyers for the Philippine Comfort Women 1993).

In response, the former President Fidel V. Ramos directed the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Department of Justice and the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women and later the Department of Social Welfare and Development, Department of Health and Presidential Management Staff to study the issue of the comfort women. Organized later as the Inter-agency Task Force on Former Comfort Women, these agencies were ever since tasked to assist the Filipino comfort women (DSWD 2001).

In consultations with government and non-government organizations (NGOs), the NCRFW prepared a concept paper on the proposed welfare assistance package of the Philippine Government for the former comfort women in 1996. Based on this concept paper, the DSWD prepared the Assistance to Lolas in Crisis Situation Project (ALCS) which was approved for funding by the Asian Women's Fund (AWF) (See Annex A for

the Project Activities of the AWF). The AWF entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Government of the Republic of the Philippines last January 15, 1997. This project provides financial assistance for medical and welfare support projects for the former 'comfort women. The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) was tasked to implement the project for a period of five years.

The memorandum of understanding covered only the medical and welfare assistance, thus, the DSWD contributed its own fund for the psycho-social-spiritual activities of the Lolos.

The Assistance to *Lolos* in Crisis Situation Project or ALCS started in 1997. As of December 2001, the project has already served a total of 109 identified comfort women coming from Regions III, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, XI and NCR.

## **OBJECTIVES**

In general, the objective of the study is to determine whether the ALCS Project has contributed in rebuilding the self-esteem of the former comfort women.

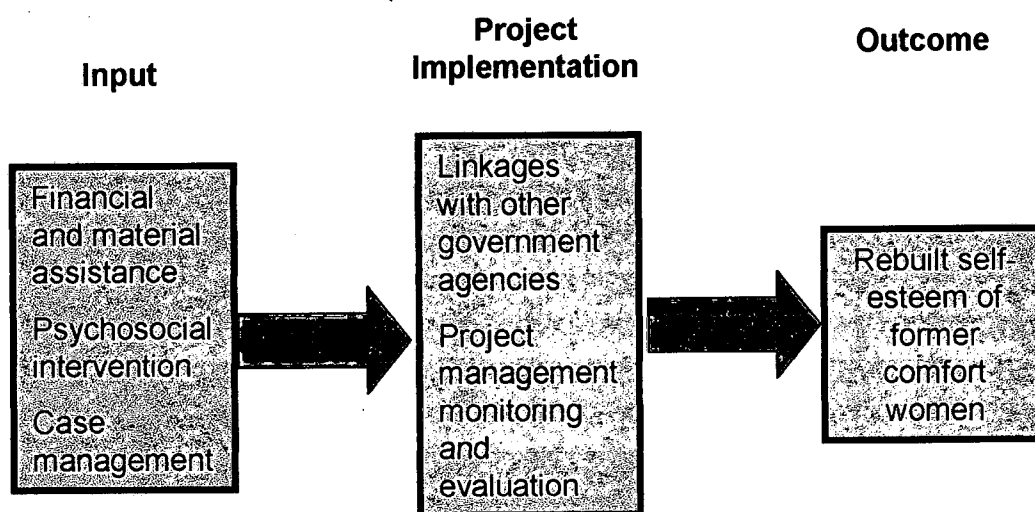
1. evaluate the impact of the project to the Lolos in terms of level of clients' awareness of the program and services;
2. determine the adequacy of the services in uplifting the psycho-social condition of the former comfort women;
3. identify the project's accomplishments and implementation gaps; and
4. recommend measures to improve the implementation of future similar projects.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Conceptual Framework**

This study analyzed the impact of the project by examining the different project components and how these were implemented. The project provided material and financial assistance as well as counseling services to the Lolos. The study looked at manner by which the material and psychosocial services were delivered to the Lolos (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework



### Data and Data Collection

Three sets of questionnaires were used in the data collection. One set was used to collect information from the comfort women. The second set was used to gather data from the members of the Task Force while the third set was used in the interview of the social workers who were in direct contact with Lolos.

The categories of data collected are as follows:

#### *Information collected from comfort women*

- ▶ demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the comfort women
- ▶ level of awareness of the Lolos on the existence of the project
- ▶ nature and extent of services provided
- ▶ satisfaction on the services provided and reasons for such
- ▶ problems encountered; and
- ▶ suggestions for further improvement of future similar projects

#### *Information from the members of the Task Force and Social Workers*

- ▶ effectiveness of the project delivery
- ▶ duration of the project
- ▶ suggestions for further improvement of the project

## Limitations of the Study

The study intended to cover the 98 remaining Lolos (two migrated to other countries while 8 are already dead). However, only 89 or 90 percent were interviewed due to the following reasons: four Lolos could not be located despite the effort to locate them while the other four were very sick, physically and mentally, and could not be interviewed.

## THE PROJECT

Implemented by the DSWD, the project "Assistance to Lolos in Crisis Situation (ALCS) Project" (referred to in this study as Project Lola) focused on the medical and welfare component of the whole AWF Project. Broadly, this project pertained to conduct a study of the conditions and needs of the former 'comfort women,' which formed the basis for the formulation of individual operation plan. This plan consisted of the provision of goods and services, including food, clothing, home improvements, medicine, medical treatment, nursing, wheelchairs and other equipment, as well as counseling. On average, each Lola's allocation amounted PhP 387,288.67 as of December 2001.

### The Project Components

#### *Financial and Material Psycho-social Intervention*

Transportation fare. This assistance enabled Lolos to go to hospital for treatment and counseling centers and visit friends and relatives. It also covered transportation expenses for relocation.

Food, clothing, and shelter improvement, recreational supplies/materials and other accessories when necessary. These were provided to make the every day living of the Lolos as comfortable and as satisfactory to the extent possible. Example of such amenities included television, radio/cassette, and washing machine.

Medicines, medical services and other incidental expenses. These covered hospitalization and fees for the doctor, visiting nurse, care givers and counselors, as needed.

Payment of utility bills. These included water and electricity bills. Later on, phone bills were added to facilitate the communication between the social workers and the Lolos.

Assistive devices. This assistance was provided for the physical restoration of the Lolas. In this category were wheelchairs, crutches, walking canes, eyeglasses and hearing aid.

Livelihood. The Lolas who were capable of venturing into a business were given assistance to engage in entrepreneurial activities.

Incidental expenses were also provided when a Lola dies. In this study, this was not covered because only the living Lolas were interviewed.

### *Psychosocial Intervention and Case Management*

Short-term and long-term counseling was provided by the project. Short-term meant to give the beneficiaries immediate emotional and psychological relief due to tensions as a result of their crisis situation while long-term counseling was a series of counseling sessions facilitated by an expert to help resolve Lolas problem.

Also part of this assistance were the substitute family care and after care and follow-up services.

## **OUTCOME OF THE STUDY**

### **Where the Lolas Are**

The Lolas included in the study were residing in 15 provinces and a city (Figure 2). The City of Metro Manila alone accounted for almost a third of the Lolas, most of who came from Malabon, followed by the province of Rizal with 17 percent, and Bataan with 14 percent (Table 1).

### **The Faces of Lolas**

#### *Socio-economic characteristics*

Age. On average, a Lola was 75.6 years old. Only one Lola can be considered as "young-old" (60-69 years old) while the rest are "old-old" (70 years old and over). Table 1 shows that almost 80 percent of the Lolas are within the 70 to 79 years of age. As of their last birthday, the youngest Lola was 68 years old while the oldest was 91 years of age. In its project declaration, the AWF has acknowledged this and mentioned that "... [the comfort women are now of an advanced age - it is therefore the AWF's aim to act with urgency.]" (AWF 2000). This age pattern highlights the need to pay attention to the increasing health problems of the Lolas. The DSWD terminal report (2001)

reported that the most common illnesses experienced by the Lolas were arthritis, hypertension, heart ailment and eye-related problems. The same diseases were contained in the report of Dr. Josefina Natividad, one of the sub-studies conducted by the Institute of Population Studies, University of the Philippines (1999). Natividad (1999) further noted that old women complained of other health problems not necessarily linked to a specific disease like headaches, joint pains, dizziness and fainting. The increasing incidence and varying prevalence of sickness among old women highlight the health and medical problems being faced by the Lolas.

Figure 2. Place of residence of the Lolas, 2001.

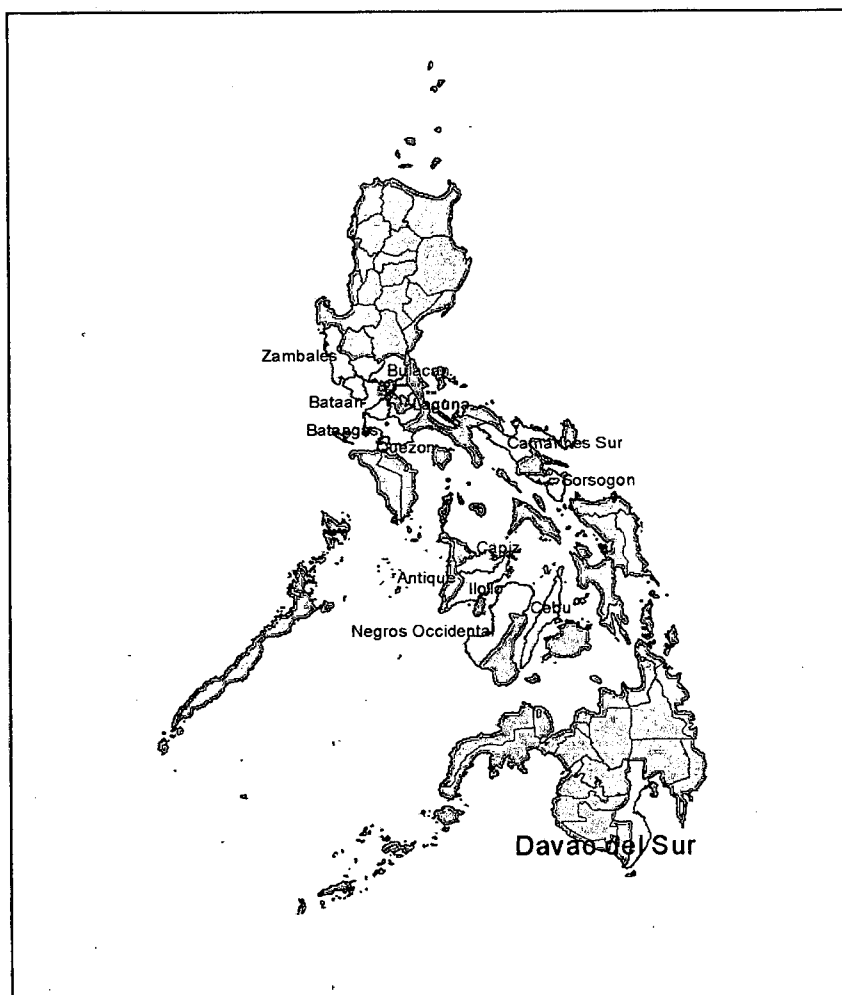


Table 1. Current place of residence, Project Lola, 2001.

Province/City	Number	Percent
Bataan	13	14.61
Batangas	2	2.25
Bulacan	3	3.37
Camarines Sur	3	3.37
Capiz	3	3.37
Cavite	1	1.12
Cebu	5	5.62
Davao del Sur	1	1.12
Iloilo	2	2.25
Laguna	2	2.25
Manila	30	33.71
Negros Occidental	1	1.12
Pampanga	4	4.49
Rizal	16	17.98
Sorsogon	2	2.25
Zambales	1	1.12
<b>Total</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Marital status. A little over 70 percent of the Lolos are widowed. According to Cruz (1999), this pattern is explained by the fact that most women get married at a younger age than men, live longer than men and lastly, tend to stay widowed while the men tend to remarry. The estimated life expectancy in 2000 for females is 71.58 and 66.33 for males (NSCB 2001).

Three of the 89 Lolos have opted to remain single. One Lola did not marry because of poor health. She has never recovered completely from the chest wound inflicted while escaping from the military camp but was nabbed and stabbed by a Japanese soldier. She was on continuous medication since then. Before the war, this Lola was actively engaged in selling tobacco leaves and other self-employment activities but after the war, she only depended on her parents and siblings for a living. The other single Lola did not marry because of fear that her future husband might hurt her the same manner that the Japanese soldiers had hurt her (Panel of Lawyers for the Philippine Comfort Women, 1993).

Educational attainment. More than two-thirds of the women had elementary education. Of these 55 women, about 35 have completed primary education of four years of formal education while the rest had completed elementary education. Fourteen women did not attend formal school.

Five of the 89 Lolos were either able to attend some years or completed college education. A Lola from Luzon was able to finish a degree in Bachelor of Science in Commerce. She was employed at the Philippine Veterans Hospital until her retirement.



**Living arrangement.** Most of the Lolas are living with their family. Sixty-seven percent are living with their husband, married daughter, sister or grandchildren. This proportion of elderly living with their other family members is consistent with the findings of de Guzman's study (1999). His report cited that 70 percent of the Filipino elderly live with their children. He also noted that most old women prefer to live with a married child, especially a daughter. This living arrangement highlights the existence of the strong family bond in the Philippines.

Sadly, there are Lolas who were found living independently. Some opted to live on their own with her children living near them. A few preferred to live singly because their children left due to some personal differences. A Lola from Bicol who has a number of children is living with her two grandchildren who in turn were also partly depending on her for their survival. The money she used to get from the DSWD was used to buy their food, clothing, and other necessities for herself and her grandson and his family of four. Her own daughter left her taking most of her money.

**Economic contributions of Lolas.** The Filipino elderly are often seen as a burden. However, past studies have shown that the common myth of older people being "idle, tired and retired" is not true. Thirty-four of the Lolas were economically active: eight of them were working for wages while the rest were engaged in business such as tending *sari-sari* (variety) store, selling fish in the market, and raising livestock. One Lola sold fish in the Antipolo market, a trade she learned when she was a teenager. In fact, the Japanese took her forcibly while peddling vegetables around the town.

Table 2. Demographic characteristics of Lolas, Project Lola, 2001.

Item	Number	Percent
<b>Age</b>		
69 and below	1	1.10
70-74	38	42.70
75-79	34	38.20
80-84	11	12.36
85+	5	5.62
Total	89	100.00
Mean age	75.9	
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Single	3	3.37
Married	17	19.10
Separated	5	5.62
Widow	64	71.91
Total	89	100.00
<b>Educational attainment</b>		
None	14	15.73
Primary	35	39.33
Intermediate	20	22.47
High School	10	11.24
College	5	5.62
No response	5	5.62
Total	89	100.00
<b>Household size</b>		
0-3	33	37.08
4-6	24	26.97
7-9	21	23.60
10+	6	6.74
No response	5	5.62
Total	89	100.00

Through the Lila Filipina, 46 women, of whom Lola Rosa Henson was one, filed suit against the Japanese government in 1993. Lola Rosa Henson died of heart attack in 1997. Quite recently, another non-government organization for comfort women was organized, the Lola Compañera. A few of the Lila members transferred to and became members of Lola Compañera.

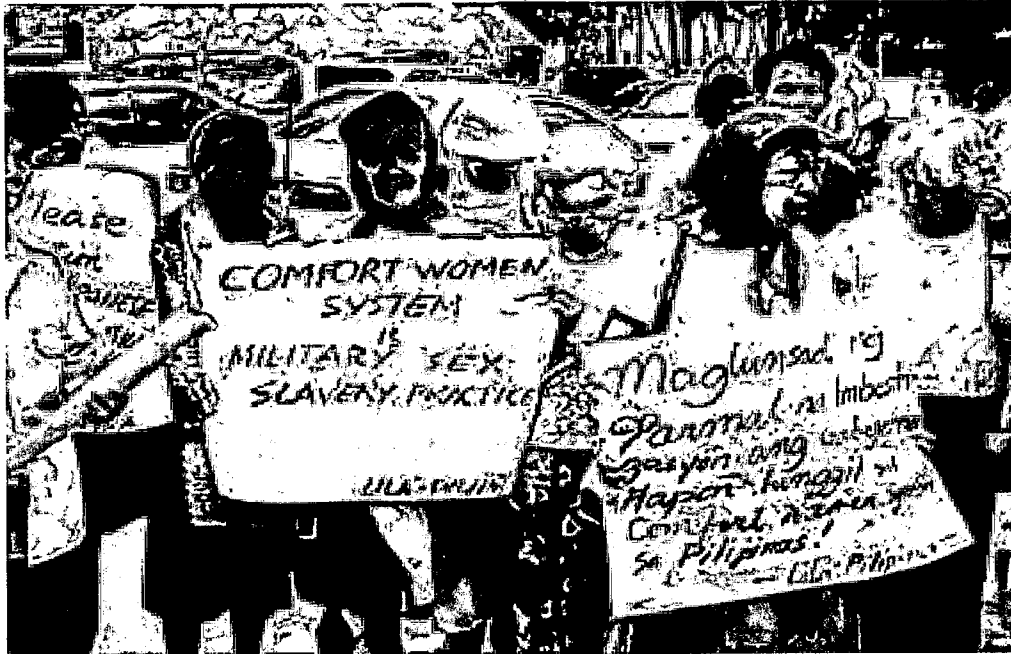
Another popular organization among the Lolas is the Senior Citizens Association where 21 percent of the Lolas were members. Among others, the activities participated in by members are as follows: social and recreational services, health and personal care and dental check-up, spiritual services, and livelihood services (DSWD 2000). These activities could have contributed to the building of self-esteem of the Lolas as these enabled Lolas to be in constant meeting and interacting with other older persons and the community. Furthermore, their meetings also serve as venue where the Lolas can share their time and talent.

About 10 percent of the Lolas interviewed are officers of their organization while the rest are members. These members actively participate in their organizations activities as shown by their attendance to meetings, participation in the discussions, fund raising activities, and social gatherings. Particularly for the Lila Filipina organization members, majority of them join rallies (Figure 4). During the data gathering of this study, a scheduled interview with the Lolas was postponed because the Lolas staged a rally at the United States Embassy. Members of the Lila Filipina meet every third Saturday of the month where members from as far as Bataan and Laguna attend regularly. These meetings also serve as a venue whereby Lolas could share and update each other of developments.

Table 3. Membership in organization and their activities, Project Lola, 2001.

Item	Number	Percentage
<i>Organization</i>		
Lila Filipina	50	56.18
Senior Citizen Organization	19	21.35
Malaya Lola	1	1.12
Mystica	2	2.25
Others	4	4.49
Not applicable	13	14.61
Total	89	100.00
<i>Position</i>		
President	4	4.49
Vice President	1	1.12
Secretary	1	1.12
Treasurer	1	1.12
Others	4	4.49
Member	65	73.03
Not applicable	13	14.61
Total	89	100.00

Figure 4. In front of Japanese Embassy 6/24/97



Source: Palleo (picture courtesy of Lila Filipina)

When asked about the benefits received from being a member, most (71 percent) of the Lolos responded that the organization was fighting for their cause. Even up to now; the Lolos are hoping that through this effort, there will be additional compensation from the Japanese government.

#### *Current problems and constraints*

De Guzman (1999) reported older person's one major worry was the lack or shortage of money (1999). This was true for most of the Lolos included in the study. Seventy percent of the Lolos lamented the fact that there was not enough money for everyday expenses. The "monthly pension" they used to get from the DSWD gets used up in a short time. Even if majority of the Lolos were living with their families, they found it very difficult not to have their own source of income during illness. A Lolos who was suffering from breast cancer lamented not to have money for medicine. When she retired from work, her pension and a portion of her atonement money was used in building two units of apartment for rent. For a while the income from the apartment came regularly, however, her last tenants left without paying the rentals. At the time of the interview, her apartments were still vacant and awaiting for new occupants.

Some Lolas were worried over the finances not only for themselves but for her children and grandchildren. One Lola was worried about her grand children's education. This just shows how Lolas are preoccupied not only with their own problems but also those of their families.

As mentioned earlier, the issue of money came up because of the need to buy medicine. Most Lolas are suffering from sickness and in constant need of money for medicine. Other everyday needs

could be partly satisfied from the assistance give by children and other relatives but the continuous need for medicine was the main problem especially now that the financial assistance from the Project Lola is finished.

Table 4. Most common problems of Lolas, Project Lola, 2001.

Problem	Number	Percent
Looking after sick member of the family	6	6.74
Health related	15	16.85
Financial	62	69.66
Others	6	6.74
<b>Total</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>100.00</b>

## Of Becoming a Comfort Woman

### *Taken by Force*

Many of the Lolas were taken forcibly by Japanese soldiers while in their home. A few were taken while they were at home while a few were either working or running an errand for their parents. Many of the them were still single but there were other married women. A Lola from Bicol was asleep when the Japanese came to their village and rounded up all men and young women and were taken in the elementary school building where they were held until the next morning. Then, they were taken to the municipal hall. Another Lola was told by her mother to buy food from the nearby town while the other one was gathering "sisid" (wet) rice near the pier in Malabon.

More than half (51 percent) of the Lolas were shocked and terrified when they realized that they were being forcibly taken by the Japanese soldiers, (Table 5). They were unable to do anything because of fear. A Lola from Manila who was already married when taken by soldiers. Her initial reaction was to run away and escape but for fear that her husband would be killed, she decided to just keep quiet and went along with the Japanese soldiers. The husband and wife were taken to Fort Santiago in Intramuros and put in a cell. The husband was stripped naked and hung upside-down then beaten with a stick. Other forms of punishment like having his hair shaved along with the scalp, put fingers between steel plates then pressed until the fingers cracked, and his finger nails pulled one-by-one were done to her husband in front of her. Later on, the husband was transferred to another cell, where he died

Another Lola from Manila witnessed the killing of her father, mother and sister who resisted going with the Japanese soldiers. She also believed that her two other sisters were killed when the crying stopped as she was forcibly taken out of the house.

Other Lolos tried to run away when the Japanese soldier were about to take them but were dragged forcibly when captured. While trying to elude the Japanese soldier, this Lola tripped on a tree stump which severely injured her calf and ripped her toenail. Pitiless, the Japanese soldier hit her in the temple with a gun and dragged her by the hair.

### *Inside the Garrison*

Data gathered from military records revealed the existence of comfort stations scattered all over the country (Panel of Lawyers for the Filipino Comfort Women 1993). Seventeen comfort stations for Japanese officers and soldiers were reported in Manila, two in Iloilo, and unconfirmed number in Butuan, Cagayan, Dansalan, Panay Island, Masbate Island, Tacloban, and Laguna.

The above information were confirmed by the Lolos. They were taken to Japanese military camp or garrison which were former wither municipal/provincial building, big private house, elementary/high school building, hospital or church. A Lola narrated that all the corners of a particular church in Manila had a woman being raped by the Japanese every night. There was even a case where the Lola's house itself was converted into a garrison. A tunnel was reported used to house comfort women.

Lola Rosa Henson (Panel of Lawyers for Filipino Comfort Women) was taken into a hospital which was converted into a garrison. Together with other six women, she was forced to provide sex with their Japanese captor. After three months, she was transferred to another comfort station which was a former rice mill. Lola and a group of other young women were washing clothes when a Filipino collaborator of the Japanese suggested that they could earn money from washing clothes for the Japanese soldiers. They went with the collaborator to three Japanese soldiers who were waiting for them. They were taken to a two-storey house and were held there for a year washing clothes during day time and being raped at night.

Their period of confinement ranged from three days to more than a year. About 25 percent of them were confined for four months or longer while 17 percent were kept for three months and 16 percent were there for one month. All the Lolos reported to have been raped throughout their period of confinement. Seven Japanese soldiers first raped this Lola who hails from the Visayas in their house while the other family members were being interrogated. And every night thereafter for seven days, three to five Japanese soldiers raped her. A Lola from Manila was raped a month after her capture. Of her six to seven month confinement in the garrison, three or more soldiers continuously raped months about three times a week.

Table 5. Feelings and reactions of Lolas, Project Lola, 2001

Item	Number	Percent
<i>What was felt</i>		
Shocked	75	84.27
Surprised	1	1.12
Terrified	4	4.49
Others	9	10.11
Total	89	100.00
<i>Reaction</i>		
Cried	43	48.31
Ran/tried to escape	16	17.98
Forgot her reaction	10	11.24
Just accepted it	18	20.22
No response	2	2.25
Total	89	100.00
<i>Confinement period</i>		
One-week or less	12	13.48
Two-weeks	8	8.99
Three weeks	6	6.74
One-month	14	15.73
Two months	6	6.74
Three months	15	16.85
Four months and longer	20	22.47
Don't know	8	8.99
Total	89	100.00

Another Lola's experience became too painful to forget. Her face was singed with a lighted cigarette because of her inability to comprehend what the Japanese soldier was saying. To her, the scar in her face is a constant reminder of her ordeal.

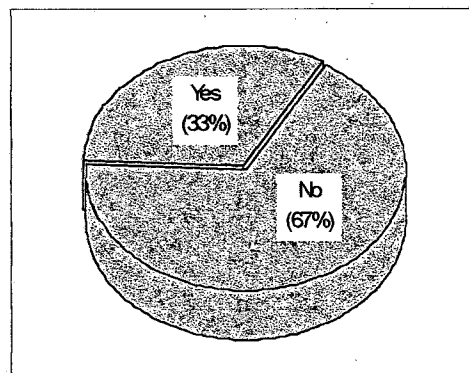
The Lolas feared nighttime because it is when most rapes occurred. However, they also perform work for the Japanese during the day. Some Lolas either helped in the kitchen, washed clothes, or even hauled rocks and sand for the construction of a Japanese landing field.

Their ordeal while in captivity was made worse by the beatings from the Japanese if they resisted to have sex with them. This Lola was kicked in the chest when she resisted to be raped. Another one was stabbed in the shoulder. A Lola from Davao, who was held in a tunnel

for eight months, was kicked every time she protested and was slapped when she screamed. There were times when Lolas had to be hospitalized due to bleeding. They suffered constantly from hunger and thirst. Their meals during confinement consisted mostly of rice, salt and beans in small quantities.

Did they try to escape? Sixty-seven percent of the Lolas said it was futile because they were always guarded and too afraid even to move (Figure 5) (Table 6). The comfort women were heavily guarded during day time. Some

Figure 5. Percentage of Lolas who tried to escape, Project Lola, 2001.



Lolas reported that they were not even allowed to talk to each other. Thus, other Lolos only came to know other comfort women from their town upon learning the testimonies of other comfort women. One Lola who was interviewed stated that she only came to know that her town mate was also a comfort woman when they came out and told their stories.

Other Lolos saw the killing of women who tried to escape. The others were threatened to be beheaded if caught escaping. One Lola was tied in the waist with other four women to prevent escaping. A Lola from Batangas stabbed in the chest while trying to escape. Others were lucky because they were rescued by their relatives and other people. One Lola from Bicol escaped when their Japanese guard was not looking while the guerrillas who attacked the rice mill rescued Lola Rosa. She was very ill and unconscious for two months as a result of torture and maltreatment. Another Lola was also rescued by the guerillas. One night she heard a whistle and when she looked outside, a cousin who was a member of the guerilla movement, managed to give her a rope. Several days later, she used the rope for escaping from the garrison. The rest of the Lolos were liberated from the garrison when the Americans came.

#### *Trauma from Confinement*

Seventy-four per-cent of the women reported becoming introverts because of their experience (Table 7). They have lost their self-confidence. Many Lolos were angry of what happened to them but at the same time were ashamed even if their family members cajoled them. They also felt very filthy. One Lola lost her sanity right after her released from the garrison for sometime. She screamed and cried, did not even recognize her parents and became easily frightened from just hearing thunder and flying airplanes. One Lola even tried to commit suicide. One of the married Lolos did not even talk about her ordeal to her husband who was a soldier. After a while, she and her husband discussed what happened to her; the first and the last time it was brought out in the house. She stared blankly for several days, or speaks/whispers to herself and physical condition worsens whenever this Lola remembers her experience.

Table 6. Reason for not trying to escape, Project Lola, 2001.

Reason	Number	Percent
Being guarded	39	43.82
Do not know who will help	1	1.12
Being tied to the waist	1	1.12
Threatened to be beheaded	3	3.37
Befriended others	6	6.74
Others	9	10.11
No response	1	1.12
Not applicable	29	32.58
Total	89	100.00

In spite of the many years that have passed, the pain of violation and oppression remained. Their past has in sum ways are haunting them. A few years after the war, this Lola from Tacloban met and lived with a man until she told her story. He left her even though she was already pregnant. Other husbands had also similar reactions when they heard the comfort women story after 50 years when the Lolas came out in the open and filed suit against the Japanese government. Upon learning their past two other husbands left their wife. One Lola was forced to tell her husband about her ordeal when she was about to go to Japan with the other Lolas. She had no excuse. Since then, her husband treated her with disdain until his death a year or two ago. Another Lola's family and husband were not happy when she joined the movement and told her story. Her husband refused to talk to her and stopped supporting her. Thus, she left the household and lived with her sister. She is suffering from heart disease, high blood pressure, gastric ulcer and rheumatism. Some Lolas reported that their ailments today could be the effects of their ordeal inside the garrison. A Lola could not work for longer hours because her waist always hurt.

Table 7. The psychological effect of being a comfort woman, Project Lola, 2001

Effect	Number	Percent
Became Introvert	66	74.16
Always nervous	4	4.49
Tried to commit suicide	1	1.12
None	5	5.62
Became afraid of men	5	5.62
Hated the Japanese	2	2.25
Insecure	3	3.37
No response	3	3.37
Total	89	100.00

Sixty-eight of the Lolas reported that members of their family knew of their ordeal (Figure 6). Thirty seven percent said their husbands knew they became comfort women before they were married (Table 8). Some Lolas voluntarily informed their husband before marriage while the Lolas' parents informed others. Only about 9 percent and 11 percent of the husbands learned about the experience of the Lolas after marriage and when the plight of comfort women was featured in the media, respectively.

Figure 6. Husband's knowledge of the Lola's experience, Project Lola, 2001

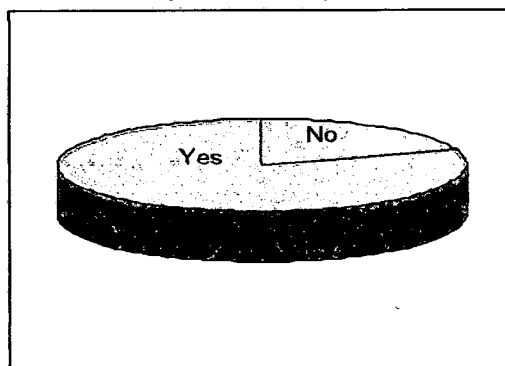




Table 8. When the family was informed, Project Lola, 2001.

Time	Number	Percent
Before marriage	33	37.08
After marriage	8	8.99
After shown on TV	10	11.24
Already knew	10	11.24
Others	7	7.87
Not applicable	21	23.60
Total	89	100.00

Almost 60 years have passed but their pains and sufferings remained. Most of the Lolas shed tears during our interview while others could not control themselves and cried. Albeit, there was a Lola who could not remember what happened to her during war. Perhaps, it was really too painful to remember.

#### *How they Coped With the Trauma*

More than half of the women spent most of their time working, to temporarily forget their ordeal (Table 9). Others coped by moving out of their residence, getting married and simply accepted her fate. Lolas have tried their hands on a number of livelihood activities, one after the other. Through the help of a woman whom she met after the war, this Lola tried to forget her past by selling fish. When she met her husband in 1964, she then worked making paper bags out of cement bags. Others narrated how they devoted most of their time working as helper in restaurants, household help, seamstress, and laundrywoman, and operating their own business like small *sari-sari* (variety) store and beauty parlor. According to the Lolas, preoccupation with their work had therapeutic effect on, forgetting once in a while what happened to them.

There were fortunate Lolas who got married and whose husbands accepted them as they are, in spite their past. A Lola who could not work because her waist always hurt married a good man who supported her throughout their married life. Another Lola's husband and family were thankful that she survived her ordeal. Their children expressed that if not for her they would have not existed.

The Lolas' parents and siblings and later her own family - her husband, children and grandchildren, in a way provided the much needed support for them to go on with their lives. Right after the war, one Lola had to bear the pain while working as household

help in the same house near where she was held as a comfort woman. She became the only breadwinner of the family when her mother got ill, she had to endure it for the sake of her family. As Lola Rosa puts it "If it had not been for her children and grandchildren, she would have been roaming the streets like a crazy person" (Panel of Lawyers for Filipino Comfort Women 1993).

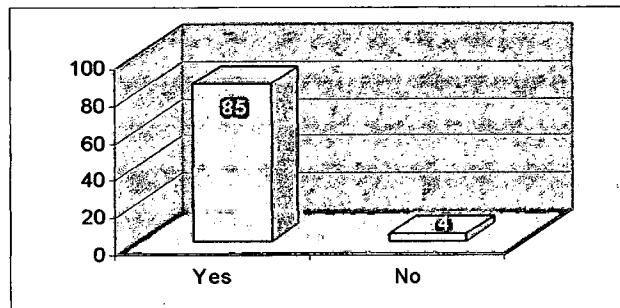
Table 9. How Lolas coped with life after becoming a comfort woman, Project Lola, 2001.

Coping mechanism	Number	Percent
Devoted most of her time to work	49	55.06
Migrated to other places	8	8.99
Accepted her fate as a comfort woman	7	7.87
Got married	6	6.74
With friends	1	1.12
Joined "hukbalahap" (guerilla movement)	1	1.12
Others	13	14.61
No response	4	4.49
Total	89	100.00

### Awareness of the Project Lola

Eighty-four or 96 percent of the Lolas knew the Lola project (Figure 7). The rest of the Lolas who reported not to be aware of the project knew the project by another name. When further probed, the Lolas called the project as the project, which provided "monthly pension".

Figure 7. Awareness of the Lola Project, Project Lola, 2001.



What were the Lola's reactions when they heard of the Lola project? About 44 percent of the Lolas were thankful and happy that there was additional support. On the other hand, 17 percent of the Lolas had no reaction because according to them, this additional support is really intended for them. In fact, the support was not even enough to compensate for their sufferings. The other 21 percent had mixed reactions. Some even questioned why the DSWD was managing it.

Table 10. Response to and source of information about the Project Lola, 2001.

Item	Number	Percent
<i>Felt when heard about the Lola project</i>		
Happy and thankful	44	49.44
None	17	19.10
Others	21	23.60
No response	7	7.87
Total	89	100.00
<i>Source of information</i>		
Lila Filipina	46	51.69
Asian Women Fund	3	3.37
Lola Rosa	6	6.74
When atonement was received	9	10.11
Department of Social Welfare and Development	11	12.36
Other Lolos	14	15.73
Total	89	100.00

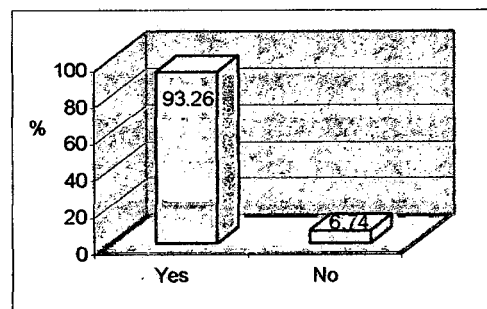
A little over half of the Lolos first heard of the Lola project from Lila Filipina. About 12 percent came to know the project when the social worker visited them for the first time. Other sources of information included Lola Rosa Henson, other Lolos, Asian Women Fund and from the people who were with her when she received the first cash atonement.

## Assessment of the Project Lola

### Overall assessment

Ninety-three percent or 83 of the Lolos felt that the Lola project brought positive changes in their life (Figure 8). A similar self-assessment of the Lola project was undertaken by the DSWD. Each Lola was asked to determine whether they were able to eat three times a day, consult the doctor regularly, visit friends/relatives, buy clothes, recreational appliances, house, and assistive device; pay utility bills on time, able to socialize, attend spiritual activities and others before and after the project. Table 11 shows that the project

Figure 8. Did the project bring any change in their life?, Project Lola, 2001



has been most successful in providing the Lolas with recreational facilities. Ownership of house with durable construction materials was a distant second. There was also an increase in the Lolas who were able to visit the hospital, friends and relatives regularly. On the other hand, the project was least successful in providing at least three meals a day, house ownership, clothing ownership, acquisition of memorial lot and regular medical consultation.

It is not surprising that the project was most successful for Lolas who were able to acquire recreational facilities and renovated their house because these are their priorities. This highlights the importance that people give to material possession – “status” boasting acquisitions. For the least successful items like cash food allowance, this is also not surprising for a number of reasons. One, cash is given to Lolas for them to be able to purchase her food requirements but experience would tell us that most likely, some of the money were spent on paying other necessities. As noted earlier, one Lola used her food money to defray the funeral services of her son; others used it for medicine, transportation expenditure, and others. Second, the food money was not only for the Lolas but also for the other household members as well. If the Lola has food, so are the other members of the family. Third, the increasing cost of food items has partly contributed to the inadequacy of the Lolas' monthly food allowance.

Among the social functioning activities, positive relationship with other household members increased by more than 100 percent after the project. On the contrary, there was a decline in the number of Lolas who were asking for help regarding emotional stress/problems. Perhaps, the Lolas do not want to be an added burden of her family members that she refrained from asking for their help.

It should be pointed out that caution has to be taken in making inferences from foregoing findings. Some of the changes noted above cannot be attributed to the project alone. There are other intervening factors, which could not be specifically accounted for. Examples of these are assistance from other household members including her children and even grandchildren.

Table 11. Outcome of the Project Lola, 2001.

Indicator	Before	After	Percent change
<b>Financial/ material assistance</b>			
Ownership of recreational appliances	14	103	636
Ownership of house made of durable materials	23	97	322
Able to visit hospital and friends/relatives	30	105	250
Ownership of assistive device	18	56	211
Able to pay utility bills on time	43	96	123
Income generating project	31	65	110
Able to purchase prescribed medicine	40	81	103
Able to purchase memorial lot	44	82	86
Regular medical consultation	58	98	69
Ownership of at least five sets of clothing	70	108	54
House ownership	54	79	46
Intake of at least 3 meals a day	91	100	10
<b>Social functioning</b>			
Positive relationship with other family members	46	94	104
Able to socialize	70	96	37
Attends spiritual activities	80	99	24
Able to express/relate with others	97	104	7
Solves her own problems	74	77	4
More open to suggestion/opinion of others	100	100	0
Confide in others	98	93	-5

Source of raw data: DSWD, 2001.

### *Adequacy of the assistance*

To determine whether the project responded adequately to their needs, which in turn could have boost, their self-esteem, each of the Lolas was asked to rate in a scale of 1 (least adequate) to 5 (most adequate) the components of the project.

**Cash food assistance.** Overall, food assistance was perceived by the Lolas as barely meeting the their food requirement. Table 12 shows that about 28 percent of them regarded the food allowance to be just enough while 21 percent and 20 percent considered them as not adequate and least adequate, respectively. Why was this so? Some Lolas mentioned it was not enough because the price of food had gone up and that Lolas were a bit choosy with their food. Further questioning revealed that cash food allowance was also spent on other necessities of not only the Lolas but also other household members. Some amounts are commonly spent for paying transportation

expenses, utilities, and medicine from the food assistance. The other reason given was that the food was not only for the Lolos but also for other members of the family. In our culture, if one eats then the rest also eat even if it means less food for everyone. The eleven Lolos who said that their food allowance was most adequate were probably those whose family had other sources of income. In these cases, the food allowance was truly spent on the Lolos food requirement.

Medical assistance. Table 13 shows that medical assistance is perceived to be inadequate by half of the Lolos while about 34 percent perceived it to be just adequate. This is not surprising because of the high cost of medicine. Given the ages of the Lolos, health problems are becoming an everyday concern. Most old people felt they get sicker as they get on in years (de Guzman 1999). Specifically for older women, the most common ailments include arthritis/rheumatism, hypertension, cataracts, diabetes, and heart problem. Memory loss is also another concern. One Lolos was not interviewed because of memory loss. Old people tend to remember vividly the events in their youth but forget the recent past. Memory loss could also be a symptom of Alzheimer's disease, an aging-related illness.

The other reason for non-adequacy of medical assistance is the fact that this was given on a reimbursement basis. Most Lolos complained that they could not borrow money for doctor and hospital bills when needed. Sometimes, they could borrow money for medicine when they were hospitalized. After a year of implementation, the reimbursement system was changed to because the DSWD has recognized its disadvantages to efficiently address the medical needs of the Lolos.

Clothing assistance. This is one of the most unpopular assistance yet perceived to be adequate. Only 31 of the 89 Lolos interviewed mentioned clothing allowance but for those who availed it, 61 percent considered it to be enough while about 12 percent each considered it to be nearly and most adequate (Table 12). Perhaps, this pattern highlights the less importance given by most Lolos for their own personal needs. Other Lolos commented that they are already contented with their own set of clothes. Instead of spending on clothes, they give priority to things, which will benefit most family members.

Table 12. Level of adequacy of assistance by component, Project Lola, 2001.

Assistance/Level of adequacy			Assistance/Level of adequacy		
	Number	Percent		Number	Percent
<b>Food</b>			<b>Utilities</b>		
1	18	20.45	1	2	6.06
2	19	21.59	2	3	9.09
3	25	28.41	3	18	54.55
4	15	17.05	4	3	9.09
5	11	12.50	5	7	21.21
Total	88	100.00	Total	33	100.00
<b>Medical</b>			<b>Transportation</b>		
1	20	29.85	1	5	19.23
2	14	20.90	2	2	7.69
3	23	34.33	3	12	46.15
4	3	4.48	4	3	11.54
5	7	10.45	5	4	15.38
Total	67	100.00	Total	26	100.00
<b>Clothing</b>			<b>Counseling</b>		
1	3	9.68	1	7	20.59
2	1	3.23	2	3	8.82
3	19	61.29	3	14	41.18
4	4	12.90	4	4	11.76
5	4	12.90	5	6	17.65
Total	31	100.00	Total	34	100.00
<b>Shelter</b>			<b>Caregiver</b>		
1	16	19.75	1	2	16.67
2	22	27.16	2	2	16.67
3	25	30.86	3	5	41.67
4	3	3.70	4	2	16.67
5	15	18.52	5	1	8.33
Total	81	100.00	Total	12	100.00
<b>Livelihood</b>			<b>Healing</b>		
1	7	18.42	1	10	37.04
2	10	26.32	2	2	7.41
3	13	34.21	3	8	29.63
4	4	10.53	4	2	7.41
5	4	10.53	5	5	18.52
Total	38	100.00	Total	27	100.00

Table 12. Level of adequacy of assistance by component, Project Lola, 2001  
(continued).

Assistance/ Level of adequacy	Number	Percent	Assistance/ Level of adequacy	Number	Percent
<b>Recreation</b>			<b>Christmas Party</b>		
1	6	10.53	1	7	11.86
2	14	24.56	2	10	16.95
3	19	33.33	3	23	38.98
4	7	12.28	4	9	15.25
5	11	19.30	5	10	16.95
Total	57	100.00	Total	59	100.00
<b>Assistive Device</b>			5- Most adequate		
1	3	17.65	4- Near adequate		
2	3	17.65	3- Just enough		
3	8	47.06	2- Less adequate		
4	2	11.76	1- Least adequate		
5	1	5.88			
Total	17	100.00			

**Shelter assistance.** People in general consider owning house made of concrete as their most cherished dreams. Thus, it is not surprising that 81 of the 89 Lolos requested for shelter assistance. But looking at the figures in Table 12 indicates that only about 22 percent perceived it to be adequate. Interestingly, the houses, which we visited were half finished, which is also not surprising. Considering that shelter allowance which ranged from Php100, 000 to Php200, 000, it would be impossible to fully finish the design of houses they chose with such amount. Furthermore, knowing the people's general attitude of always wanting to improve something, it would be very difficult to fully satisfy their shelter requirement. An exception is the Lola from Bicol who owns a two-bedroom house and said that it is enough for her grandson and herself. The house still needed floor tiles, ceiling, and other finishing touches but she was very grateful and most satisfied with what she received. According to her, "nakompleto at napaganda ang bahay ko" (the assistance enabled me to complete and beautify my house). Similarly, this Lola from the Visayas was thankful to the project because she now lives in a beautiful house, can eat the food she wants and able to wear nice clothes (Box 1).

**Livelihood assistance.** The 38 Lolos who reported to avail this assistance appear to be not very satisfied with the livelihood assistance (Table 12). The capital requested by Lolos was mostly invested in setting up a *sari-sari* store and acquisition of motor vehicle (tricycle, jeepney and van), and livestock raising. The DSWD terminal report (2001) also noted these type of livelihood activities initiated by the Lolos. About 36 percent of the



livelihood activities no longer existed. This is particularly true for those who invested in sari-sari store-related activities. Most often, everyday necessities were sourced from the store. Even the operating is spent for other purposes are not plowed back to the store eventually used up. Another reason is the increasing number of creditors. In both rural and urban areas, many stores closed down because of unpaid debts. Some motor vehicles were acquired so that other family members be employed as well. However, there were times when rentals for the vehicles were not paid because they were spent for repairs, that the earning for the day was simply not enough to cover the rent.

When asked why the livelihood assistance was inadequate, the most common response was that the capital being given to them was not enough. The goods were expensive while the profit was small.

Utilities. More than half of the Lolos perceived that assistance in the payment of utility bills like telephone and water to be just enough. The only constraint was that utility bills were for reimbursement. Some Lolos complained that sometimes it would take another month or more before these could be processed. The Lolos particularly in the rural areas had to wait longer. However, one Lola was very happy that she had her telephone connection.

The DSWD has also recognized the problems associated with the reimbursement system, however, it cannot be changed. The funds are released based on the receipts submitted by the Lolos.

Transportation assistance. More than a quarter of the 89 Lolos requested for transportation assistance. For those who availed such assistance, 46 percent perceived it to be just enough while 11 percent and 15 considered thought of it as nearly adequate and most adequate, respectively.

Counseling, healing and caregiving. Thirty-four (34) Lolos mentioned counseling. An even smaller number of Lolos mentioned care giving and healing activities that they have participated in. A Lola from the Visayas appreciated the time spent by the social worker talking to her.

Counseling was considered very important by some Lolos because as it served as a venue for relief of the tensions and stresses. These sessions gave the Lolos the opportunity to discuss with the assigned social workers their problems and to explore the possible solutions. But more importantly, through constant communications/discussions with the social worker they were able to tell their stories again and again could have somewhat alleviated their ordeal from their past. This could be among the reasons why the Lolos were interviewed they were able to openly discuss with the study team, even if they met for the first time during the survey. However, as mentioned earlier many of the Lolos were still teary-eyed during the interview.

Box 1

Lola Grateful

*It was in the mountains where the young girls of 15-18 years of age were taken and raped by the Japanese soldiers. Among them was a very frightened girl who got bruised while running away from the soldiers.*

The following day, they were transferred to the Central School of the town. She worked in the kitchen and washed the clothes of the Japanese soldiers. It was during the night when the soldiers used her for comfort. She was in pain and confinement for 15 days. Had she not gotten sick, the soldiers might have not released her.

The experience under the hands of the soldiers gave a lot of pain to her and her family. Some neighbors taunted Lola while others sympathized with what she went through. Her life changed from being a cheerful girl to becoming a loner. It was only through the help of her parents that she has gotten over her crying every night.

She kept herself busy in their family farm to keep her mind away from the ordeal. Moreover, it brought her closer to God for she prayed for physical and emotional healing.

She told her husband about her past when he was still courting her. She decided to tell her story to her children so that they will be careful towards strangers.

For her, the Project Lola provided the chance to buy the food she wanted to eat and wear nice clothes. She was grateful that the project enabled her to have her house renovated. Her beautiful house gives her a sense of pride. She feels that something beautiful has happened to her.

Overall, Lola is very satisfied with the Lola Project.

Recreational assistance. The most commonly requested appliances were television, washing machine, and stereo. Eleven Lolas were most satisfied with their acquisition because "nabili ko ang gusto ko" (I was able to buy what I wanted.). For

some Lolas they had to either sell or mortgage their appliances acquired from the project when they ran out of money for medicine or just for everyday expenses (Box 2). The other Lola had to sell the small house and lot acquired from the project to cover their everyday expenses. She now lives with a married son.

Assistive device. Again, only a few Lolas have requested this assistance. The most commonly requested devices were eyeglasses and walking cane. Forty-seven percent of the Lolas rated it as just enough while other Lolas complained about the reimbursement system. On the other hand, one Lola was very happy that the money she got back from DSWD the money spent on her eyeglasses. In fact, she has changed her eyeglasses more than once.

Box 2

Unhappy Lola

At the beginning of the interview this Lola was very happy relieving the time before the war. She is one of the Lolas who was able to complete a nursing degree via a correspondence school in the United States.

She became very emotional when she started narrating her physical and mental anguish during the war. She was happy of the financial, material, and counseling support being extended to her and the other comfort women. A big share of the atonement money went into the renovation of her big house which was not even completed at the time of the interview. The assistance through the DSWD was spent in buying appliances, payment of electricity, medicine and other everyday necessities. A part of her assistance invested in a sari-sari store. However, after sometime she closed the store as little-by-little the profit including the capital ran out. This was expected as she and her family depended on the store for existence.

However, she was in tears when she informed us that her only daughter left the household with most of her money. After the "monthly pension" from the Lola Project she now depends solely on her monthly veterans pension. However, this is not enough to meet her needs and her grandson's family living with her. She had to sell the refrigerator and mortgaged her television to finance her other needs.

Attendance to Christmas party. A greater number of Lolas perceived their attendance to the party as just enough to most adequate. They were happy and enjoyed the groceries distributed to them during the party. This is one occasion, which most

Lolas remembered and looked forward to. Last December 2001, the Christmas Party organized by the DSWD was well attended. Not only the Lolos came but also some of their immediate family members. They were all happy and pleased as they partake the food and delighted to meet and talk with other Lolos. Mixing and mingling with other Lolos gave them a sense of belongingness.

As far as the social workers are concerned, the provision of the financial/material assistance followed by counseling was most successful in meeting the objectives of the project (Table 13). From their point of view, the material assistance improved the Lolos physical well being while counseling uplifted their psychosocial circumstances.

Table 13. Services/assistance provided to Lolos, Project Lola, 2000.

Assistance/Services	Average rating	Reason
Financial/material	4.57	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ sufficiency of budgetary allotment for each Lola</li> </ul>
Counseling	3.43	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ provided sense of security</li> <li>▶ uplifted self-esteem of the Lolos</li> <li>▶ enable Lolos to cope with the day-to-day family problems</li> </ul>
Workshop/training	2.71	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ helped Lolos to face the problems</li> </ul>
Substitute family care	1.25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ few Lolos availed</li> </ul>

### *Delivery of Services*

All Lolos gave the name of the social worker assigned to them correctly. Surprisingly, the Lolos knew also the social workers who were first assigned to them by their full name. With respect to frequency of visit, 32 percent of the Lolos reported to have been visited once a month. When asked if the frequency of visitation was enough, 69 percent said yes (Table 14). The other 31 percent wanted more visits from the social worker so that the social worker will know more the condition of the Lolos. Others would like to see more of the worker because of the monthly food allowance. The most commonly discussed issues revolved on two things: the health and well being of the Lola and the Lola project. "Kumusta na Lola" (How are you Lola) was echoed by the Lolos as the most common greeting during their visits. Sometimes, they were also informed of incoming meetings or trainings.

Did the Lolos complain about the implementation of the project? Sixty-two percent of the Lolos did not find anything amiss with the implementation of the project. The remaining 38 percent, on the other hand, complained a number of things (Figure 9) like difficulty in getting the reimbursements, delayed release of check, difficulty in going

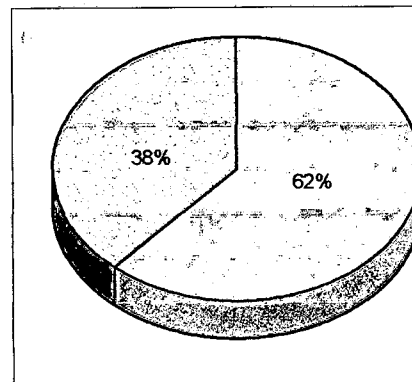
to DSWD and the high cost of transportation, and had to return to DSWD a number of times because check was not yet ready.

Table 14. Frequency of visit by social worker, Project Lola, 2001

Frequency	Number	Percent
1 x month	29	32.58
2 x month	18	20.22
3 x year	8	8.99
4 x a year	8	8.99
5 x a year	13	14.61
Others	12	13.48
No response	1	1.12
<b>Total</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>100.00</b>

According to the social workers, despite their advice not to go to the DSWD, some Lolos went to DSWD in the hope of getting their monthly food allowance and/or reimbursement. Given the government system of accounting, it takes a while before checks could be processed. The long waiting time gave rise to other complaints of the Lolos including: going to DSWD office a number of times making them spent more for transportation. Furthermore, the Lolos mentioned that 10 percent of the amount of the check was deducted when they changed their money at DSWD. This incident occurred when Lolos resorted to changing their money through unauthorized people, when the banks are already closed. It should be noted that these people are not employees of the DSWD. Furthermore, when further probed about the amount deducted, it was found that the rate of deduction was only one percent instead of ten percent as claimed by Lolos. To remedy this problem, Lolos were advised to encash only their check in the bank.

Figure 9. Encountered any problem with the project? Project Lola, 2001.



Other Lolos did not like the idea of the DSWD managing their support. For them, it would be better if the whole financial support would be released to them because they could use the money to finance bigger livelihood projects. Perhaps, this thought emerged because after receiving their atonement money in full.

On the part of the social workers there were other problems encountered during the implementation of the project. One was the lack of trust of trust by the Lolos with the social worker. Some Lolos seemed not to appreciate what the social workers were doing.

Some did not like to sign the certificate of appearance, indicating that the social worker visited and talked to them. This attitude seems to emanate from the earlier complaint that the money intended for them should be wholly and directly given to them. On the contrary, some Lolas like the idea of the social workers visiting and talking to them. They were asking the interviewers as to when the social workers would come back. They knew that there are no longer receive the "monthly pension" but requested that the social worker should visit them once in a while.

There were also uncooperative family members. Their visit and counseling with the Lolas were also constrained by the fact that some members of the Lolas' family were questioning the visits of social workers. Probably, this problem came out of siblings differences in the sharing of the atonement money. A daughter of the Lola from Bicol complained about her other sisters and brothers who thought that she got a bigger share of the atonement money and that she was spending the monthly food allowance of their mother.

The Lolas were also questioning the different amount of financial assistance available for each Lola. These differences came about because the money earmarked for each Lola was already fixed in Japanese currency. The allocation for each Lola was based on the prevailing exchange rate between yen and US dollar and then between US dollar and the peso at the time that the application of the Lola was approved. During the first year of the project, the exchange rate was completely different after the economic and financial crisis in 1997.

The other problem of social worker was that monthly travel plans were not being followed. Due to some administrative constraints or that there were other duties to attend to their planned activities were not pursued as scheduled. Sometimes this upset the Lolas, particularly those who had been waiting for their reimbursements.

With these problems, the Lolas were then asked if they have any suggestion to improve the delivery of services to the beneficiaries of the Lola project. The most common suggestions are as follows:

1. the additional compensation should be given to the Lolas directly. This suggestion came up because of the long wait for the processing of checks as well the need for money as need (e.g., doctor consultation and hospitalization);
2. there should be additional compensation for them and that it should continue for a longer period, the medical assistance in particular; and
3. the burial expenses should be fully shouldered by the project.

## Towards Rebuilding the Lolas' Self-Esteem

Did the Lola's self-esteem improve due the implementation of the project? In our opinion, yes. Of the 13 forms of assistance, seven were rated to be just enough to meet Lolas material and psychosocial needs (Table 15). As noted earlier, 93 percent of the Lolas perceived that the Project has brought positive changes into their lives, financially and emotionally.

Segregating, the level of satisfaction between Lila Filipina and non-Lila Filipina members showed that non-Lila members expressed higher level of satisfaction with an overall average of 4 or near adequate. For the non-Lila members, their higher perception of the project's contribution to their well being highlights. The significant difference between these two groups' perception highlights the important role that the project has contributed to their well being as they had no other sources of support outside of their families. Unfortunately, for other Lolas the financial assistance became the source of irritation among siblings. It is in these cases that the continuous assistance of the DSWD through the social workers would be most appreciated.

Table 15. Summary, level of adequacy/ satisfaction by component and membership in organization, Project Lola, 2001.

Assistance	Overall level of adequacy/ satisfaction	Lila Member	Non-Lila Member
Food	2	3	4
Medical	2	3	3
Clothing	2	3	4
Shelter	2	3	3
Livelihood	3	3	4
Utilities	2	4	4
Transportation	3	3	4
Counseling	3	3	4
Caregiver	3	3	3
Healing	3	3	4
Recreation	3	3	4
Assistive Device	2	4	3
Christmas Party	3	3	4
Overall*		3	4

Legend: 1 - Least adequate 5 - Most adequate

\*Difference between Lila and non-Lila members is significant at  $\alpha = .01$ .

Worth mentioning in Table 15 is the big gap between the level of satisfaction between the Lila and non-Lila member Lolas in the healing component. It seems that the non-Lola members truly appreciated the seminars and workshops they participated.. These gatherings served as a venue for socialization and spiritual activities. One Lola

was disappointed for not attending these activities while another one Lola wanted to have more healing/counseling sessions in the future.

It cannot be avoided that there are Lolas who have complaints. This is understandable because by nature, humans have different perception levels of satisfaction. Furthermore, some complaints of the Lolas were brought about by the changing environment (e.g., high inflation rate and changing demographics) and not directly related to what happened in the past. Their perceptions were also colored by other factors such as unemployed family members as well as sick family members who are dependent on her. But, let us not forget the Lolas who are as of today are still being troubled by what they have experienced.

## **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

Majority of the Lolas were in the "old-old" category, have attended four years of formal education, were already widowed, belonged to a family of five on average and a member of at least one organization. Particularly the members of the Lila Filipina, the Lolas were active participants of meetings, trainings, and even rallies. Astonishingly, even if the Lolas were already old, they contributed to the welfare of the household as income-earner as well as care giver of sick family members. Matters relating to their health and finances were the most common problems of the Lolas.

All Lolas except three, were still single when abducted by the Japanese soldiers. Two of the married Lolas at the time of forced confinement were married to Filipino soldiers. Upon realizing that they were being forced, all Lolas cried and would like to run but because of fear they remained rooted to where they were located. Others also witnessed their family members and some women and men being executed because of resistance, thus further contributing to their horror. Two Lolas managed to run but were forcibly dragged back by the Japanese soldiers.

The Lolas were garrisoned in municipal building, school, church, hospital and big private houses. Their period of confinement ranged from as short as three days to as long as more than a year. As comfort women, nearly all of the Lolas were raped every night during their forced confinement. There were even Lolas raped by an average of 3-5 Japanese soldiers. At daytime, the Lolas did the laundry, cooked meals, washed the dishes, and collected rocks for the airplane landing field. One Lola was unable to move freely throughout her confinement because she was tied in the waist with other four women.

Some Lolas were able to escape through the help of some family members who rescued them and by befriending friends of the Japanese soldiers but many of them were freed when the Americans came. It was reported that the Japanese became more vicious when they heard that the Americans were coming. A Lola has never completely recovered from the stab wound in the chest inflicted by the Japanese. Others have scars



in the face, shoulder, foot and other parts of the body which remind them of their suffering.

After their ordeal, the Lolas felt alone, detached, and ashamed of what happened to them. One Lola attempted to commit suicide while another temporarily lost her sanity. To deal with this trauma, the Lolas immersed themselves with their work while others migrated to other places, particularly to Manila. They could not stand the stare and the mockery of their neighbors. Their children are their strength which prevented them from becoming insane.

There were varying reactions when their family members knew of what happened to her. Majority were very supportive of the Lolas but for a few it became a source of irritation, particularly in the sharing of the atonement money.

In general, there was improvement in the conditions of the Lola after the implementation of the Project Lola. The most noticeable were observed in the acquisition of recreational appliances, house ownership, visiting friends and relatives, ownership of assistive device and ability to pay utility bills on time. Except for livelihood assistance, the Lolas perceived the assistance to be adequate. Counseling and healing sessions were also seen to have uplifted their emotional well being. Others wished that there should be more similar sessions in the future.

For the Lolas, the most commonly cited problem encountered were delays in the processing of business papers, a deduction of five percent when checks were encashed at DSWD, different allocations for each Lola, and had to return a number of times to DSWD to get their check/reimbursement.

On the part of the social workers, the problems they have encountered are as follows: administrative problems like scheduled visit to Lolas not being followed, initial lack of trust of Lolas with the assigned social worker and uncooperative family members of the Lola.

When asked on suggestions to improve the implementation of the projects, most Lolas wanted the whole financial assistance be directly given to them. According to them, they know what their priorities are and when money is needed.

Finally, complaints cannot be avoided. By nature, humans have different levels of satisfaction. Furthermore, some complaints of the Lolas were brought about by the changing times (e.g., high inflation rate and changing demographics) and not directly related to what happened in the past. Their perceptions were also colored by other factors such as unemployed family members who are dependent on her and sick family members and others surrounding her. Be as it may, it should not be forgotten that there are also Lolas who are as of today are still being troubled by what they have experienced.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the failing health of the Lolas, previous arrangements with the local government health facilities where Lolas could be taken cared should be reiterated and strengthened. Or a gerontology center accessible to the Lolas should be established. Most Lolas were already in the "old-old" category, thus the incidence of diseases and complications of their illnesses are also increasing.

The other recommendation pertains to the administration of the Project Lola's fund. It can be patterned similar to a pension scheme. This time, the pension should be higher taking into account the increasing cost of food and other basic necessities. Perhaps, the average cost of utilities should be also factored in. Giving the full amount to Lolas would be unwise. In fact, some Lolas who have acquired refrigerator, television, and other recreational equipment were either pawned or sold to cover the cost of everyday expenses.

Although the final decision lies with the funding agency, perhaps future projects of the same nature should allocate fixed financial support for each Lola in the local currency. In the beginning, one of source of mistrust with the social worker could be the different allotment for each Lola.

Finally, the counseling component particularly for Lolas who did not belong to groups solely organized for comfort women, is very important for the Lolas to rebuild their self-esteem. These counseling sessions provided the venue to express their feelings, particularly their problems. Important too are the once a year gathering where Lolas could meet and renew their acquaintance with the other Lolas. Perhaps, even if the project has already been completed, an annual gathering and healing/counseling sessions should be continued.

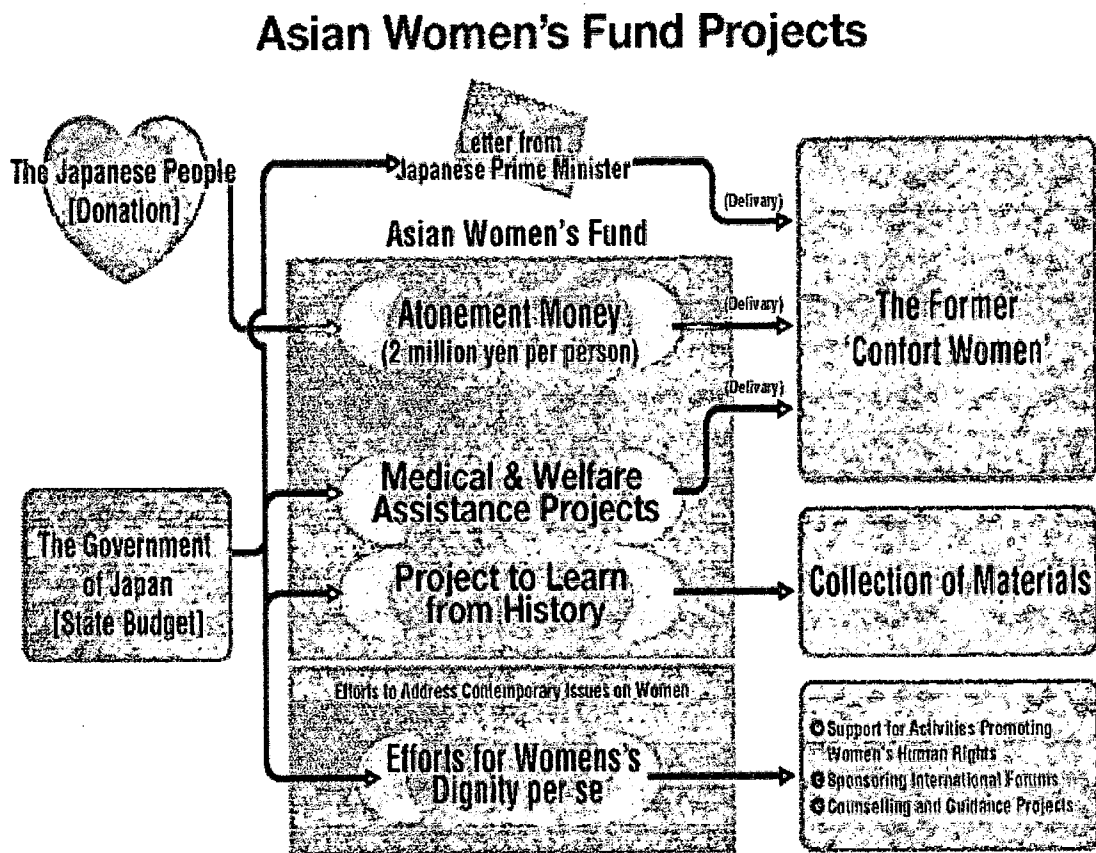
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## Annex I. The Asian Women Fund

The Asian Women's Fund (AWF) was established in July 1995 by the proponents from various sectors in Japan, e.g. the legal, academic and NGO sectors, with the support of the Government of Japan (AWF 2000). The primary aim of the AWF is to extend atonement and support to those who suffered as wartime "comfort women". The victims have long suffered in silence and are now of an advanced age - it is therefore the AWF's aim to act with urgency, in accordance with their needs and wishes, to alleviate their pain in whatever way it is feasible. In brief, the AWF project is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. The Asian Women Funds Projects



Source: AWF, 2000.