

M. Dale Shields, Research Associate
The ECOGEN Project
Program for International Development
Clark University
950 Main Street
Worcester, MA 01610 USA

March 29, 1992

To Whom It May Concern:

It was my pleasure to work with Ms. Elena M. Israel when she served as a research assistant with the Ecology, Community Organization, and Gender (ECOGEN) Project. This project is a collaborative endeavor undertaken by the Department of Agriculture of the Philippines (DA), Region VII, the Visayas State College of Agriculture (VISCA) on Leyte, Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts, and Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, U.S.A.. The research is funded by the Women in Development Office of the United States Agency for International Development. Its purpose is to develop research methodologies to explore the dynamics of natural resource management in rural livelihood systems with attention to gender, age, and socio-economic status. Work in southern Leyte was undertaken in barangay of Agbanga in the municipality of Matalom.

Ms. Israel was an important asset to the ECOGEN research team. A recent college graduate, Ms. Israel had had some previous survey experience, but was new to the range of methodologies, including wealth ranking, open-ended interviews, and participatory techniques undertaken by the ECOGEN project. The project also demanded a high level of participation of all team members in the evaluation of the research methodologies as well as the results. Ms. Israel proved to be a very diligent worker, was always willing to undertake whatever was asked of her, and often pleasantly surprised us with her initiative and analysis. She exhibited an ability to learn quickly and eventually became adept at leading some of the interviews herself. She was able to work effectively both independently and as a part of the team. She also proved her natural leadership skills which contributed to the effective functioning of the team.

Throughout the period that I was associated with Ms. Israel, she was a cooperative member of the team. She seemed to develop professionally and personally from the experience. I wish her well in the future, and am pleased to recommend her for similar work.

Sincerely yours,

M. Dale Shields
M. Dale Shields