

GREAT Women Project



Addressing Gender and Enterprise Challenges of the Bamboo Craft Industry in Leyte

*Utilization of Gender-Responsive
Value Chain Analysis Findings*



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Abstract *The case study discusses the development of bamboo craft enterprises in Tanauan, Leyte. It also highlights the division of labor between women and men as well as challenges faced by microentrepreneurs in bamboo craft making.*

Beginnings of Bamboo Craft Enterprises in Tanauan, Leyte



As early as 1972, the Department of Education provided bamboo furniture-making training in Tanauan, Leyte. Two of its participants, Pedro Arceo and Lorenzo Nogueras, of Brgy. Canramos then started their own bamboo furniture business. A decade later, their success prompted other families to start their own bamboo enterprise. Afterwards, bamboo craft enterprises became the fastest and major source of income for a number of Tanauan households.

In 2004, the Canramos bamboo craft industry ranked among the local economic development (LED) potential sectors and communities in the Province of Leyte. Six (6) bamboo craft entrepreneurs sought to grow their enterprise by forming a cooperative. The cooperative was then able to secure financial assistance of Php 50,000 from the municipal government for tools and equipment such as electric drill, compressor and table grinder. It also obtained a display center at Barangay Buntay however furniture products were seldom bought because of other business competitors. The center now caters to other products and, eventually, the cooperative did not continue its operations as sales were more brisk for individual entrepreneurs in the cooperative.

To date, there are more than 50 families in Canramos engaged in bamboo crafts making.

Bamboo enterprise development in Tanauan began to spread in Samar, Naval, Barugo and Dagami, as the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) fielded Nogueras in different parts of Region VIII.

Bamboo craft-making is predominantly a family enterprise, with men and women involved at various stages of production.



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Gender-based Division of Labor in Bamboo Craft-Making

At pre-production, men and women are into sourcing and selection of bamboo, usually from Palo, Dagami and Tanauan in Leyte. Men solely take on the task of air drying or seasoning and treatment with borax or acid for product durability. During production, men and women partake in cutting bamboo into desired length and sizes, shaving, splitting, boring holes, fitting joints of poles, nailing cut bamboos on to assembled poles, sanding and smoothing of surfaces, and applying varnish and lacquer. Decorative torching is both a skill and task for men.

Bamboo craft makers usually work at the porch of their houses, while others have a production area in a wider location or in farm houses. Hired labourers customarily use their own tools in performing their work.

Finished bamboo products consist of lamp shades, baby cribs, folding chairs, rocking chairs, dividers, tables and living room sets; other products are produced on a made-to-order basis. These products are either sold rough- or well-finished: rough-finished prod-

Gender Value Chain of Bamboo Furniture Production in Leyte

PRE-PRODUCTION PHASE	M	F	PRODUCTION PHASE	M	F	MARKETING PHASE	M	F		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sourcing and selection of bamboos (Sources: Palo, Dagami and Tanuan) 	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cutting of the bamboo into desired length and sizes Pagbaras (shaving) Pagsaksak o Pagbukabuka (splitting of the bamboo) Pagtigib (boring holes) 	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Displaying of the finished products Selling of these products to middlemen and other entrepreneurs Displaying some of the products at the Cooperative Display Center 	✓	✓		
	✓	✓		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pag-assemble (fitting the joints of the bamboo poles) 	✓		✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Getting in touch with the buyers from places such as Samar and Tado ban City 	✓	✓
	✓			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pagsalag/Pagbungbang (nailing of cut bamboos to the assembled bamboo poles) 	✓		✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivering the products to the buyers 	✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Air drying/seasoning 	✓		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pagpolish (Sanding and smoothing of the surface; application of varnish and lacquer; decorative torching [done by other entrepreneurs]) 	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employing of word-of-mouth marketing 	✓	✓		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Treatment with borax or acid (if necessary) 										

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Challenges Faced in Bamboo Craft Making

Products are sold at a lower price, ranging from PhP 800 to 1,200 while well-finished and polished (especially, bamboo sala set) usually costs PhP 2,500 to 3,500 depending on style and design. Entrepreneurs and in-between buyers usually buy rough-finished products.

Other producers who hire workers aside from family members produce bamboo products either on a wholesale or on a per-piece basis. A bamboo sala set which can be finished in a day, for example, ranges from PhP 350 to 600.

Prices are affected by the supply of available materials. For instance, prices are low during May during the harvest season. At this time, bamboo entrepreneurs and workers supplement their income from other activities such as pottery and pedicab driving.

Women are usually in-charge of displaying and marketing bamboo products, as well as linking with buyers from Tacloban City and Samar.

In cases where there is an abundance of bamboo supply, microentrepreneurs still cannot afford to buy in bulk due to lack of capital. They also resort to borrowing money from other entrepreneurs or in-between buyers to continue their operations. They are also forced to sell their products at a very low price to secure income.

Bamboo craft microentrepreneurs also lack proper equipment and tools and such are not likewise designed for women.

Cooperatives as well as establishment of a treatment facility, skills on enterprise management and marketing are viewed as needs to strengthen the bamboo crafts making as an industry.

Insofar as these proposed interventions are concerned, the municipality of Tanauan has taken steps in enhancing its local enabling environment for women microentrepreneurs. Tanauan's GAD Budget increased from Php 300,000 in 2010 to Php 4.0 million in 2011, with WEE allocation of up to Php 2 million.

Tanauan now offers various product development/ upgrading and packaging services for women microentrepreneurs. It established and lately renovated the Techno

Enhancing the Local Enabling Environment for WEE

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Gabay Center, a training and display Center, where WME products—including bamboo craft—can be showcased. It is also strengthening WME groups and organizations, through which the bamboo craft cooperatives can ask LGU support. With its pool of Tanauan gender and business advisers and continued partnership with national government agencies for WEE, Tanauan could extend value-adding WEE services for enterprises even after the GREAT Women Project. An example of a WME value-adding services are free IT training short courses provided to women micro-entrepreneurs throughout the municipality.

About The Project

The Gender Responsive Economic Actions for the Transformation of Women (GREAT Women) Project is a governance and capacity development project that aims to promote and support a gender-responsive enabling environment for women's economic empowerment, particularly those in microenterprises.

The Philippine Commission on Women (PCW), the national machinery for the advancement of women in the Philippines, is the lead executing agency for the Project.

The Commission forged partnership with key national government agencies involved in micro-, small- and medium-scale enterprise (MSME) development and select local government units to create a gender-responsive enabling environment for women's economic empowerment. This project receives technical and financial support from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

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