

# *GREAT Women Project*



## *Envisioning Good Governance in Buenavista*

*Results of Partnership between Philippine Commission  
on Women-GREAT Women Project and Buenavista LGU*



*March 2013*

# Envisioning Good Governance in Buenavista

## Results of Partnership between PCW-GREAT Women Project and Buenavista LGU

**Summary** This case study shares the immediate results of GREAT Women Project interventions in the Municipality of Buenavista in Bohol. Through the project, the LGU improved its governance processes through transparent, participatory and gender-responsive decision-making processes, consequently, resulting to gender-responsive policies, plans and programs.

**Background** Buenavista is a fourth-class municipality located in the northern part of Bohol. It is composed of 35 barangays, with a population of 25,351 or 4,924 households (2009).

The municipality has a mixed economy, deriving income from agricultural and non-agricultural sources. Micro and small enterprises are mostly operated by women, with 300 women compared to the 185 men entrepreneurs in the municipality. Women microentrepreneurs are usually involved in home-based business such as basket making, *amakan* processing<sup>1</sup>, food production and retailing to balance their work and household roles.

### *Developing Local Capacities Towards Responsiveness to Women Microentrepreneurs*

There are also existing women-led enterprise groups in Buenavista, one of which is the Buenavista Federated Women's Multi-Purpose Cooperative (BFWMPC). Women banana growers sell their produce to the cooperative for additional income. The municipal government, in coordination with its Provincial Agriculture Office, then extended trainings on food safety and standardization to the cooperative, giving birth to another enterprise - banana chips processing – in 2009 being the result of GWP interventions. While banana chips production served a limited market within eco-tourism centers, local stores and individual orders, the cooperation between the Municipality of Buenavista and the BFWMPC served as the result of creating a local enabling environment for livelihood development.

Buenavista is one of the municipalities chosen by the Provincial Government of Bohol for the implementation of the GREAT Women Project. Various capacity development interventions were conducted in the municipality to enable them to develop policies, plans and programs responsive to gender and women's economic empowerment concerns in the locality. More importantly, the LGU obtained a better appreciation of its role as the lead enabler for women microentrepreneurs through project interventions.

#### **Footnote:**

<sup>1</sup>Amakan is known to be a drier or a drying process for rice and other agricultural produce among small farmers.

Within the first year of project implementation, the municipality formulated its Executive-Legislative Agenda (ELA) and Annual Investment Plan (AIP), responsive to gender and women's economic empowerment issues. In the second year of project implementation, the municipality enhanced its local Revenue Code and strengthened the implementing

# Envisioning Good Governance in Buenavista

## Results of Partnership between PCW-GREAT Women Project and Buenavista LGU

guidelines of its GAD Code for more clear-cut actions to support women in microenterprises. Below are highlights of project interventions in Buenavista and its results:

***'En-gendering' the Executive-Legislative Agenda.*** The GREAT Women Project, through local gender champions, espoused participatory approaches in the crafting of the municipality's three-year Executive-Legislative Agenda (ELA). *Sangguniang Bayan* Members and other LGU key officials conducted workshops to mainstream gender perspectives in the ELA.

The LGU also realized that the GAD Focal Person should ensure that gender concerns are considered in the formulation and revision of the CDP, ELA and AIP. This is often conducted through civil society consultations to enable a more inclusive and transparent decision-making process on issues and concerns affecting the locality. ELA serves as the basis of the Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP) and the Annual Investment Plan (AIP) of the LGU.

***'En-gendering' the Annual Investment Plan.*** The project supported the crafting of the municipality's 2011 AIP, ensuring the inclusion of gender-responsive programs/ projects/ activities (PPAs) in the said plan. The AIP is the yearly translation of the CDP and a powerful instrument to ensure the implementation of PPAs.

The LGU had more resolve to have every PPA in the 2011 AIP be supported with a detailed implementation plan. Having such plans will ensure that PPA programs are implemented without deficiencies, and are appropriately budgeted. With GREAT Women Project capacitation, LGU members geared PPA towards having the LGU fulfill its enabler role in WEE. Other WEE-responsive programs integrated in AIP were as capacity development for WMEs on product development, market linkaging, promotion of WME products and services (i.e. banana chips and ecotourism-based products and enterprises), among others.

### ***Preparing the Gender and Development Code Implementing Rules and Regulations.***

The Buenavista GAD Code served as the LGU's first legislation that addressed various gender issues. This local policy included advocacy and information and education campaigns on laws and policies for women, support mechanisms to empower women (including the conceptualization of the Buenavista Sustainable Micro Enterprise Development Unit), strengthening of GAD support group, provision of reproductive health services, as well as strengthening of women's participation in governance, local and overseas employment and women-focused microenterprises.



# Envisioning Good Governance in Buenavista

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## Results of Partnership between PCW-GREAT Women Project and Buenavista LGU

Activation of the Municipal GAD Council (MGADC) and the appointment to the MSWDO position served as foundational activities to implement the GAD Code.

Since the issuance of the GAD Code IRR, there were improvements in the hiring and employment practices of the municipal government. Recruitment, selection and appointment to local government positions were based on qualifications, without gender bias. The municipal technical working group (MTWG) conducted orientations on the Magna Carta of Women and other women-related legislation and mandates among women and barangay officials throughout the municipality. Local women realized that they could contribute economically to their household and communities through building their microenterprises, like banana and mango chips processing.

In May 2011, the municipality sought a broader base of participation from the Barangay Women's Association and representatives of the business sector in the preparation of the GAD Code's implementing rules and regulations. Because of this, the GAD Code IRR created the Buenavista Sustainable Micro-enterprise Development (BSMED) Unit in the LGU. This unit is envisioned to develop strategies on entrepreneurship and investment opportunities for women through multi-stakeholder partnerships. It will also operate as a separate unit from the municipal planning and development coordinator (MPDC) office, employing one organic personnel and two technical staff.

**Revisiting the Local Revenue Code.** The project influenced the municipal government to revisit and enhance its Local Revenue Code. The LGU realized that specific provisions could potentially be introduced into the code to address gender concerns such as allowing women-friendly payment options, women microentrepreneur-friendly permits, revenue allotments to support women microentrepreneurs. The draft revisions on the Revenue Code are currently being reviewed by the Sangguniang Bayan since mid-2012.

**Utilization of Gender Tools.** Through the various trainings conducted by the project, the LGU is now able to utilize various gender tools such as the Harmonized GAD Guidelines for Project Development, Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation (HGG), Gender Mainstreaming Evaluation Framework (GMEF) and Gender-Responsive LGU Ka Ba? (GeRLKa Ba) in assessing the gender-responsiveness of local policies,

# Envisioning Good Governance in Buenavista



## Results of Partnership between PCW-GREAT Women Project and Buenavista LGU

plans, programs and activities. The LGU also increased its knowledge on results-based management concepts and its application in making gender-responsive project proposals. It is likewise able to improve its current monitoring practices through the concepts learned from monitoring and evaluation for women's economic empowerment. Buenavista is currently developing a monitoring and evaluation framework on WEE for one of its local programs.

## 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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