

GREAT Women Project



Engendering Local Policies and Plans *Integrating WEE in the Local Policies and Plans of Baybay City*



Canadian International
Development Agency

Agence canadienne de
développement international

August 2011

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The city of Baybay was chosen as one of the pilot areas for the GREAT Women Project (GWP) mainly because of a convergence of partners for enterprise development, and the pressing women's issues in the city. The City of Baybay has already developed plans and programs on gender, with both a GAD Code and a GAD Plan in place, even before GREAT Women Project implementation. In fact, Baybay City already appointed a GAD Focal Person who could start implementation of gender mainstreaming activities, women empowerment and women microentrepreneurs.

Baybay's thrust for its initial year of Project implementation was to review and enhance its Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP). Year 1 activities centered on increasing knowledge and skills of key LGU staff to apply GAD and WEE tools and concepts in enhancing the CDP to make it both GAD and WEE-responsive.

Building Layers for GAD and WEE

Using an existing CDP draft, Baybay LGU reviewed the CDP to assess the extent to which the CDP adhered to GAD and WEE. On May 10, 2009, department heads met and agreed to infuse GAD and WEE concepts in the GDP. A month later, Local Chief Executives (LCEs), Sangguniang Panlalawigan representatives, department heads and the Technical Working Group (TWG) gathered in a workshop to review the CDP draft, held on June 3-5, 2009 in Lahug, Cebu City.¹ Review of the CDP became the first major activity conducted by the LGU relative to the GREAT Women Project. The facilitator, Prof. Ma. Aurora Theresa Tabada of the Visayas State University (VSU), who did most work in infusing gender in their CDP.²

Some participants in the review of CDP were unclear on their roles and the ways to infuse gender and WEE in CDP. They attribute it to having the Gender Sensitivity Training (GST++) conducted after the review. GST++ would have given LGU participants more awareness about WEE. Prior to GWP, the LGU had been immersed in several GST.

But as Ms. Mora Abarquez, Agricultural Technologist and GWP Action Officer and TWG member explained, *"We knew about GST, but at that time we did not know what that was for, where the GST was going, what its intention and direction were."*

When time came for to schedule a pre-GST and GST++ meeting, Prof. Tess Tabada observed that participants had to be more clearly oriented on their roles in implementing the GREAT Women Project, while the Sangguniang Panlalawigan needed to become more aware on their role of integrating women's economic empowerment in their LGU

Footnotes

¹ Interview with Baybay City TWG, July 8, 2010, Baybay City, Leyte Province.

² Ibid.

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plans and policies. Prof. Tabada thought that better awareness in project roles would be required to ensure participant commitment to the GST++. A pre-GST++ meeting was held, where it was surfaced that follow-through was required with the CDP.

During the pre-GST meeting, several recommendations and findings were raised. Among them are the need for GST as the first activity in the LGUs to make them gender/WEE sensitive and become aware of gender issues. Use of disaggregated data is important in every planning activity. LGUs have good appreciation of gender in localities, and the Chairperson of Gender and Women Issues in the Sangguniang Bayan need to be engaged as a champion of gender issues especially to legislators.

CDP will have to be revisited, with provisions to be incorporated in the final/proposed CDP of the LGU raised. Department heads, who were TWG members and were willing to work on the CDP, could be an alternate core group to finalize, review and elevate the CDP to the SB for approval, if local legislators hesitate reviewing the CDP. ³

Baybay City held its GST++ on July 15-17, 2009 in Boracay Island, Aklan, which served to reinforce Baybay City CDP. The Vice-Mayor, Sangguniang Panlalawigan members, the technical working group and department heads participated in the GST++. With the intention and direction of GAD becoming clearer, participants applied this knowledge in crafting their gender and WEE-responsive provisions.

During the Second Review of their CDP in March 2010 at San Remegio, Cebu, the LGU had to look into the drafts prepared by each department or sector, such as health, agriculture, social welfare, engineering, GSO and MPDC to ensure their gender and WEE-responsiveness. Their drafts were reviewed and integrated into a draft Baybay City CDP, which was later scheduled for approval by the Sangguniang Bayan and Sangguniang Lalawigan. ⁴

In January 2010, Baybay City conducted a Year-end Assessment and Planning and a GAD Planning and Activity Workshop. Within these activities, the LGU resolved to include sectors of disaster, children, persons with disability (PWD) and environment in the CDP's sectoral drafts. The GAD Planning and Activity Workshop intended to enhance the LGU's 2010 GAD Plan with the integration of the GWP plan. Crafting the 2010 Baybay City GAD Plan and Budget was a first in Baybay City legislation and implementation.

Partnership in the first year of project implementation concentrated mainly on the City



Footnote

³ Interview with Baybay City TWG, July 8, 2010, Baybay City, Leyte Province.

⁴ Ibid.

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Partnerships for WEE

Gender and Development Council (CGADC). Prior to the GREAT Women Project, there had been initial activities toward promoting stakeholder cooperation in support of gender and development. Among such are partnerships with the Visayas State University, the creation of the Technical Working Group in Baybay, and the creation of the CGADC.

The Visayas State University, a premiere government university specializing in agriculture and the environment, is the preferred institution of the LGU to implement GAD-related trainings in Baybay. VSU has fielded its professors, Tess Tabada and Lucy Paloma, in helping the LGU conduct its GST++ and CDP review.

Creation of the TWG in Baybay City strengthened partnership among LGU departments to promote GAD and WEE. The TWG serves as the core to ensure project implementation in the LGU. The TWG was capacitated through a series of trainings to integrate GAD and WEE in the LGU's plans, policies, budget, programs and services.

Through the passage of Executive Order 06-2009, the City Gender and Development Council was recreated and reorganized to expand the number of institutions/agencies involved in promoting WEE-responsive governance. To organize the Council, a dialogue and reorganization meeting was held to identify the possible CGADC members and focal person, and to preview existing Baybay livelihood/microenterprise support programs. A need arose for the LCE to issue an executive order that will authorize the Chiefs of Offices and the designated alternates to solely attend the CGADC meetings/conferences.⁵

Visible Results in GAD and WEE

Results are emerging from capacity development for gender-responsive programs, projects and services and building support networks for WEE. Baybay City has found out that GREAT Women Project implementation has steered even pre-GWP GAD initiatives on the right direction and proper perspective.

Prior to GWP, government offices such as agriculture, health and social welfare departments, sourced different funds to finance women's programs and activities. The Social Welfare Department appropriated funds for the purpose, while the Agriculture Department requested funding from the Office of the Mayor to finance women's projects. The LGU needed to define its GAD Program needed better definition, while information dissemination on GAD Budget before the Project was lacking. The LGU's program implementers did not have a clear idea on the purpose of the GAD Budget and the kind of activities charged to the fund.

Footnote

⁵ Interview with Baybay City TWG, July 8, 2010, Baybay City, Leyte Province.

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In 2009, government offices, specifically the social welfare department, started availing funds from the 5% GAD Budget, after they were properly informed by the GREAT Women Project on how and where to use its GAD Budget.⁶

Second, with the GREAT Women Project, local government agencies such as the agriculture, health and social welfare departments, started developing more programs for the women sector. In addition, they also have built capacities for monitoring and evaluation. They are now both conscious and skilled on how to properly monitor and evaluate programs and activities, and even came up with appropriate monitoring and evaluation tools for the programs and activities they implemented.⁷

Third, with strong consciousness about gender, key LGU officials, technical personnel and program implementers voluntarily infuse gender in programs and activities. Sangguniang Panlalawigan members who were initially reluctant to join women and GAD-related trainings, now voice that they now understand what GAD is about. LGU has been implementing parallel activities to raise the awareness of both staff and program beneficiaries on GAD and WEE. As an example, the City Social Welfare and Development Officer, spearheaded efforts to roll-out the GST++ among offices and departments and achieve a multiplier effect of GAD and WEE awareness.⁸

Key technical staff in various LGU offices and departments now willingly include GAD and WEE advocacies in meetings and/or seminars. For example, the local division of the Department of Education has tried to tap services of the City Social and Development Officer to conduct GST++ among the teachers.⁹

Not only did the project enable the LGU officials and staff to develop that certain level of gender-responsive attitude, but it also enabled them to strategize or provide substance and direction in the LGU's plans and policies as well in the implementation of programs and projects towards attaining WEE.

High awareness on GAD and WEE, especially among local government officials and key technical staff, are seen to boost and uphold efforts to sustain gender and WEE. During the local planning session, measures were drafted to continually improve the plight of women microentrepreneurs. The LGU has a move to establish an Economic Enterprise Development Office to support WMEs. Organization and registration of unorganized WMEs shall be prioritized. Women microentrepreneurs producing pandan products, cassava products, jackfruit processing and fresh fish vending are target women beneficiaries.



Footnotes

⁶ Interview with Baybay City TWG, July 8, 2010, Baybay City, Leyte Province.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ms. Loreta Malabanan, now the City Social and Development Officer also served as city councilor in the previous terms advocating women protection and empowerment. Province.

⁹ Interview with Baybay City TWG, July 8, 2010, Baybay City, Leyte

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LGU personnel also gained concrete skills in project management. They have acquired skills in preparing plans and reports and are in the habit of constantly consulting and reviewing workplans throughout implementation. Constant review of the workplan has enriched the LGU's capacity to think and strategize how best to implement the project and attain project goals.

LGU personnel also manifested changed mindsets concerning women in domestic situations. Employees in the LGU are more keenly aware of their rights, their capacity and potentials, and changed their outlook in life. Some male employees no longer carry the burden that providing for the family is not the sole responsibility of husbands.

Improving Project Implementation



From the Baybay City perspective, certain requirements are needed for improved implementation of the GREAT Women Project. The LGU needs a wider scope of stakeholders who will pursue project goals of developing the local enabling environment for WEE. The LGU finds capacity building, especially in Project Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation, useful for GAD, WEE and other LGU programs and projects.

Constant communication with the LCE on what was going on with the project undoubtedly elicited the support. Hence, active involvement of LGU officials in the GWP activities could have further strengthened the support of the entire LGU in attaining project targets.¹⁰

Footnote

¹⁰ Feedback Report and Impressions on Baybay City GST++ by GWP Local Area Coordinator Henry Abawag

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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