

GREAT Women Project

In 2006, Philippine Commission on Women (PCW) outlined several reasons why government support to women's economic empowerment (WEE) was important and timely. The reasons were:

- Global and national indices on women reveal areas to improvement in economic opportunities for Filipino women
- Supporting women entrepreneurs makes good economic sense, with more Filipino women more active than men in starting a business.
- Supporting women's economic empowerment will introduce sustainable measures to address gender and development issues in enterprise laws and programs, business registration, local economic development, social protection and environment.

PCW is the lead implementing agency of the **Gender Responsive Economic Actions for the Transformation of Women (GREAT Women) Project**. The 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. PCW facilitates a convergence of partners, consisting of national government agencies, 6 selected provincial local government units, 2 partner alliances and 47 municipalities from partner provinces to create a gender-responsive enabling environment for women's economic empowerment.

The GREAT Women Project is provided with technical and financial support from the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD) Canada, formerly the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

National Government Agency partners:

Department of Trade and Industry-Office of Special Concerns (DTI-OSC), Philippine Trade Training Center (PTTC), Cottage Industry Technology Center (CITC), and Bureau of Small and Medium Enterprise Development (BSMED)
Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR and attached agencies/bureaus)
Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG)
National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA)
National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC)
Occupational Safety and Health Center (OSHC)
Department of Science and Technology (DOST)
Technical Education and Skills Development Authority-Women's Center (TESDA-WC)
Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth)
People's Credit and Finance Corporation (PCFC)
Department of Tourism (DOT)
Department of Agriculture (DA)

Local Government Unit partners:

Ifugao, Quezon, Metro Naga Development Council in Camarines Sur, Bohol, Iloilo, Leyte, Davao del Sur and PALMA Alliance in North Cotabato

Overview of Results

Women's economic empowerment is defined as women having access to and control on high-value productive resources, such as information, credit, loans or financial assistance, services training, markets and technology. With WEE, women can have decent jobs and humane working conditions, while enjoying benefits from wealth-creating opportunities equal with men.

With most Filipino women opting to engage in microenterprises, the way to economic empowerment is to create or strengthen a gender-responsive enabling environment to sustain and grow these microenterprises. This means identifying and addressing gender issues that put barriers to women in accessing assistance for her business.

GWP enabled a core group of officers to implement the project and engage agencies (national and local levels) in discussions to review policy/ program/ project and services to

benefit women and workers in micro enterprises. PCW influenced these government agencies to include gender and WEE perspectives in their operations.

Through capacity development and technical assistance, these agencies built their knowledge, skills and expertise in Gender Analysis, GAD Planning and Budgeting, Policy Formulation for WEE, Entrepreneurship and Women's Concerns in Micro Enterprise Development, Sustainable Local Economic Development, Results-based Management, and M&E for results. Key officers started to regularly apply gender analysis and WEE tools.

These partners became increasingly competent in integrating women's concerns in their functions, eventually demonstrating strengthened gender-responsive governance resulting in improved services for women's microenterprises.

GREAT Women Project

Impact on Women Microentrepreneurs

GREAT Women Project saw that a gender-responsive enabling environment contributed to better productivity of women's enterprises and improved women's products which generated wider market acceptance. Women microentrepreneurs (WMEs) displayed more confidence in dealing with service providers. A number expressed enhanced relationships with spouses who acquired better appreciation of the role women play in running a business. Several WMEs also began emerging as enterprise leaders, and were later trained to be trainers on gender and entrepreneurship.

Women microentrepreneurs and women workers would articulate satisfaction of the assistance they accessed from LGUs and NGAs, citing they:

- gained knowledge and improved entrepreneurial skills
- accessed various business services ranging from business registration/licensing, enterprise development, technology and social protection
- acquired training and technical assistance on occupational safety and environment
- received assistance in acquiring equipment and accessed common service facilities that helped them boost production and increase product sales
- expanded markets for their products through trade fairs and product promotions
- gained access to credit and were able to gradually pay loans
- felt improvements in standard of living and gender roles

Moreover, the GREAT Women partnership with the private sector (ECHOSI Foundation) conducted a Design Clinic Series for women's products. Through these series, women microentrepreneurs received technical advice and mentoring on value-adding for products, developing new product variants, costing products, improving production capacities, proper packaging and labeling, and assistance with food and nutrition labelling requirements.

Together with PCW, product experts and leading entrepreneurs cliniqued over 1,000 women's products in project sites. Many women's products are now reaping better sales through exposure to urban markets and institutional buyers.

More importantly, the partnership yielded the GREAT Women Brand, a concept brand that taps local designers and leading women entrepreneurs to gather community products by women, upscale and link these quality products with local and exports markets through social entrepreneurship channels. GREAT Women brand products are now initially exclusive to all ECHOStore retail stores and Tesoro's outlets.

Impact on Gender-Responsive Governance At The Local Level

Capacity building by PCW trained and skilled about 4,800 LGU officials and staff trained to implement initiatives on WEE. These included chief executives, local legislators, career officers belonging to departments such as planning and development, budget and finance, social welfare, health, economic development or livelihood offices. Capacity development on WEE spawned major initiatives at the local level are as follows:

Local Policymaking and Programming for WEE. Some 98 local policies were adopted with WEE focus. These include GAD Codes, Revenue/Incentives Codes, local plans, ordinances, and executive orders that contextualize women empowerment and provide for projects and resources for operationalization.

Strengthened gender governance resulted in positive improvements for the enterprise, household and individuals, reaching more than 8,000 women entrepreneurs and women workers in 180 women's groups in 8 provinces.

LGUs also fostered numerous partnerships and joint ventures on WEE, by establishing links and generating resources with NGAs, private sector, MFIs and people's organizations.

Increased GAD Budget for WEE. Some 23 LGUs reported a combined GAD Budget of Php 351.23 million for 2012, of which Php 83.39 million was earmarked for Gender and WEE programs. Overall, LGUs are allocating some 14% to 96% of total GAD budgets to WEE initiatives and programs for women.

Establishment of CSFs and Enterprise Desks. Nearly 20 common service facilities (CSFs) combined with assistance packages for different WME groups were established with the convergence of NGAs and LGUs. More than 10 Enterprise desks were made functional to directly coordinate with entrepreneurs on services.

Functional Interdisciplinary Teams at Provincial and Municipal Levels. Partner LGUs formalized the creation of 47 technical working groups that are poised to sustain WEE after the Project.

GREAT Women Project

Impact on Gender-Responsive Governance At National Level

Capacity development provided to national government agency partners generated several results. These included enhanced policies to mainstream gender, while economic/enterprise projects were developed to improve livelihoods and sustain enterprises of women. The GAD Budgets from government agencies are now better planned and reported to include WEE initiatives. NGAs collaborated with the agencies to assist WMEs at the local level. Agencies honed trainers to roll-out gender analysis, and developed their own WEE tools. Their databases also began including more data on women.

The National Enabling Environment for WEE was strengthened with the crafting of 13 national policies and introduction of new programs and tools with WEE focus. Among these were:

DTI Gender-Responsive Value Chain Analysis. DTI specifically focused on engendering the value chain analysis framework. Integrating gender in the value chain resulted in interventions and strategies to make women-led enterprises in food and marine sectors more competitive.

DTI-CITC's Hardin ng Kalikasan Subproject. This women's cooperative in Real, Quezon diversified its product line after acquiring new production technologies, improving its business operations and developing a raw materials farm for handmade paper.

DTI-PTTC Integration of WEE. DTI-PTTC integrated GAD-WEE in their training modules offered to entrepreneurial clients.

DOLE-OSHC Services to WMEs and the Informal Sector. OSHC created regular OSH programs for MSMEs and LGUs and for workers in the informal economy. These programs include training, modules and tools for microenterprises on OSH Appreciation and Safety & Health Audit on women workers.

PhilHealth's Partial Subsidy Scheme. With the Scheme, women microentrepreneurs can access social protection at a lower cost. Local governments or premium donors, more importantly, can assist low-income women microentrepreneurs by shouldering part of annual contributions. With the Partial Subsidy Scheme, marginalized women such as unmarried mothers, pregnant women and women in households and microenterprises, now serve as primary PhilHealth member in the issuance of social health insurance cards.

DOST Gender-Responsive Technologies and Technology Transfer Services. After Agency-wide gender mainstreaming, DOST geared its Small Enterprise Technology Upgrading Program (SETUP) to provide technology and support requirements of common service facilities and various WME groups. DOST also developed its toolkit for assessing the gender-responsiveness of DOLE technologies.

TESDA-WC TVET Program. TESDA-WC integrated entrepreneurship values and gender sensitivity training in the basic technical-vocational curriculum programs.

DENR-EMB Capacity Building on Environmental Management System and Pollution Prevention. DENR-EMB conducted Gender Analysis of Philippine Environmental Laws, and implemented seminars on environment for local micro- and small entrepreneurs in project sites.

DENR-FMB Assistance to Women Microentrepreneurs and the Promotion of the GREEN Kit. DENR-FMB issued an administrative order requiring all its GAD Focal Points across all regions to provide technical assistance to women microentrepreneurs on environment management, using its GREEN Kit. The GREEN [Gender-Responsive Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) Enterprises] Kit provides environment and natural resources-based livelihood options for men and women.

DILG's Initial Efforts to Localize MCW. DILG capacitated their GAD Focal Point System on specific roles in implementing the Magna Carta of Women and the GREAT Women Project.

DENR-PAWB's Gender-responsive Ecotourism Management Plan. The Gender Responsive Ecotourism Development and Management Guidelines is a toolkit by PAWB that applies GAD concepts and women's participation to assist LGUs craft gender responsive ecotourism plans. The toolkit was modeled after the development of a strategic ecotourism plan for Pamilacan Island (in Baclayon, Bohol).

NAPC Training of Trainers on Financial Literacy. The gender-responsive financial literacy training focused on increasing the women knowledge on basic microfinancial services and asset-building programs. NAPC Trainers aim to cascade this training to MFIs, LGUs, WMEs and people's organizations nationwide.

PCFC Implementation of the Credit Rating System. The credit rating system with emphasis on Facility Risk Factor (FRF) was enhanced and integrated with social performance and GAD indicators to ensure PCFC's credit risk management processes are sound, effective and responsive.