

GREAT Women Project



The Provincial GAD Office: Maximizing Opportunities Towards Gender-Responsive Local Governance



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The Provincial GAD Office

Maximizing Opportunities Towards Gender-Responsive Local Governance

Summary *What started out as an ad hoc office of the provincial government became a strong mechanism that binds GAD initiatives in the entire province. In this case, the Provincial Gender and Development Office (PGAD) of Quezon, with its limited capacities but with a fervent will to enrich the province's GAD efforts, maximized the opportunities brought by the GREAT Women Project to learn, engage key players and promote gender-responsive local governance.*

Creating the provincial mechanism for gender and development mainstreaming

In 2000, the Provincial Government of Quezon issued Ordinance No. 4 mandating the formation of the Provincial Gender and Development Council (PGADC). PGADC is composed of the heads of various provincial offices and line agencies. It ushered the creation of the PGAD Office. In mid-2003 until the 1st quarter of 2005, greater attention was given by the province to welfare services for women which ushered to the formation of the Provincial Gender and Development (PGAD) Office. The governor considered women's needs a special agenda of his administration.

The PGAD Office was initially considered as an ad hoc mechanism for special projects. In 2005, however, after two years of continuous service delivery to women and lobbying to the Provincial Government, the Sangguniang Panlalawigan passed Provincial Ordinance 2005-02, institutionalizing the said office as one of the executive departments under the Office of the Governor. PGAD Office assumes coordinative and regulatory, monitoring and service functions. Primarily, it ensures results in the implementation of the Quezon GAD Code. It provides special services for victims of violence on women and children, microenterprise development and cooperation with the GREAT Women Project.

Quezon was selected as one of the partner provinces for the implementation of the GREAT Women Project. One of the aims in selecting Quezon for the province to create models of women's enterprises out of disaster-stricken municipalities of Real, Infanta and Nakar.

Pursuing women's economic empowerment

In February 2008, PCW conducted a field visit cum consultation with the Provincial Government of Quezon, through the PGAD Office, to further explore the areas of partnership under the Project. One of the areas identified by the PGAD Office is supporting the three (3) municipalities severely affected by natural calamities – Real, Infanta and General Nakar (ReINa).

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In 2004, a series of four typhoons hit the RelNa municipalities, resulting to 176 casualties among 12,007 affected families, 4,256 damaged houses, and about PhP 103.3 million worth of damages to agriculture.

Even after several years and assistance from government and non-government entities, these municipalities still struggled from economic and environmental destruction brought about by the typhoon. Recovery and restoration was made possible through the organization of livelihood associations, composed of and actively participated in by women.

With utmost consideration to the resiliency of women in the aftermath of a disaster, the PGAD Office highlighted the opportunity brought forth by the GREAT Women Project to these municipalities and, correspondingly, advocated for the inclusion of these municipalities as target project areas to PCW.

Creating Municipal and Provincial Technical Working Groups. A series of field visits and inception workshops were conducted with the local officials, non-government and people's organizations and women entrepreneurs of RelNa to gather initial baseline information on the level of GAD as well as livelihood and microenterprise initiatives undertaken by the local governments and other players. In the course of these activities, a technical working group was formed in each of the municipalities (MTWGs), representatives of which participated in the Provincial Technical Working Group (PTWG) for the GREAT Women Project. The PTWG, on the other hand, aside from the MTWG representatives, was composed of representatives from the PGADC. The MTWGs and the PTWG served as the focal points of the PGAD Office in coordinating for project implementation.

After the series of discussions with the P/MTWGs, local officials agreed to participate in the project and a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was forged between the PCW, the Provincial Government of Quezon and the Municipalities of Real, Infanta and Nakar on June 30, 2008. PGAD, to raise awareness on the project and ensure the commitment of local officials, set the date of the MOA signing during the celebration of the 100th day of the then-governor's term.

*Charting the path
for women's
economic
empowerment*

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Building baselines of the local enabling environment for women's economic empowerment. While field visits and inception workshops were previously conducted with RelNa, data was necessary to recognize issues of women microentrepreneurs and the local environment within which these microentrepreneurs are operating. Hence, in 2008, a baseline study was conducted by BIDANI of the College of Human Ecology of the University of the Philippines in Los Baños.



Harmonizing efforts on women's economic empowerment. Given that the three municipalities and the province have their respective activities to support women's economic empowerment, harmonization of activities was conducted to enable collaborative, cohesive and cost-efficient interventions for the project. Each partner developed its own "roadmap" towards a common goal for women's economic empowerment, but identified common activities to maximize resources.

The municipalities of Real, Infanta, and Nakar then formed the Quezon Metro RelNa Cooperation How is this mechanism different from the PTWG which served as the mechanism for sharing of issues, concerns, and good practices for replication and for monitoring and evaluating project implementation.

The RelNa cooperation likewise gave birth to the development of Eco-Tourism for the promotion of organic farming in Infanta and Nakar.

PGAD also provided channels such as the WEE Forum, RelNa Cooperation meetings, and harmonized planning sessions among the project partners. It also required the designation of permanent alternate representatives of PTWG members to ensure continuity of their participation and accountability.

PGAD, in its efforts to continuously ensure harmonization of project efforts, devoted 37.4% (83 out of 222 activities) of its time and human resources to the conduct of PTWG meetings and 76.7% for project communications.

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Supporting capacity development for key people towards institutional reforms. Given that the primary need of the target municipalities and the province is on capacity building on GAD to further understand and implement measures to promote women's economic empowerment, the members of PGADC and the PTWG underwent a series of capacity building on gender sensitivity, gender-responsive legislation, GAD planning and budgeting. Such interventions enabled the PGAD to recognize the need to enhance its existing Provincial Gender and Development (GAD) Code as a springboard for the enhancement of other provincial and municipal policies and plans that affect women, especially in the economic sphere. This enhanced legislation also revitalized the Municipal GAD Councils (MGADCs), which were already in place prior to the creation of a PGAD Office. PGAD Office also strengthened the work of the PTWG and MTWGs.

True enough, after the enhancement of the GAD Code, municipal local officials in ReIna started reviewing and issuing ordinances and resolutions related to GAD and women's economic empowerment with reference to the GAD Code and other legal mandates on GAD; other Quezon local governments followed suit.

The capacity building activities likewise heightened consciousness among local government officials to use non-sexist language in their speeches and communications, increased demand for GAD technical assistance beyond the P/MTWGs and eventually, support for GAD programs. PGAD recorded 249 project activities and events requests from various institutions from 2008 to September 2010. PGAD is also developing in technical assistance provision.

Several gender mainstreaming assessment tools such as the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Framework (GEWEF), Gender Mainstreaming Evaluation Framework (GMEF), Harmonized GAD Guidelines for Project Development to Monitoring and Evaluation (HGG), Gender-responsive Local Government (GeRL) Ka Ba?, and Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) Scorecards shared by the project were used to generate data and information on the existing poli-



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Replicating experiences and good practices

cies, programs and systems to create or enhance the local enabling environment for women's economic empowerment. Results of these tools, coupled with the baseline studies, are deemed helpful by PGAD in planning, implementing, monitoring and managing various project and GAD initiatives in the project areas.

The GREAT Women Project interventions – its lessons and good practices - sparked interest among non-project target areas to pursue GAD initiatives. The joint provincial, city and municipal Gender and Development Councils meetings were maximized by the PGAD to share project activities, which eventually engaged local officials and GAD Focal Points to start exploring ways for possible replication.

The eight (8) municipalities of Sariaya, Pagbilao, Mauban, General Luna, Padre Burgos, Macalelon, Lopez, and Calauag, initially posted their interest and eventually were assessed to become the next replication areas for the GREAT Women Project. Similar to the initial activities of the ReINa municipalities and the provincial government, an assessment of the current local enabling environment for women's economic empowerment is the primary agenda prior to actual replication.

Key factors for PGAD's Success

The PGAD Office carried out replication by leading Gender Sensitivity Training and Gender-based Analysis of Policies, Plans, Programs, Activities and Structures for LGU officials and stakeholders. It assisted replication LGUs in crafting their work and financial plans for WEE. Through workplans, replication LGUs have plotted activities to promote WEE such as E-Center and E-Business Partnership Program for LED-WEE, productivity enhancement business center for LED and WEE, increased budget for livelihood program for all sectors/provision for all sectors, strengthening of marketing desk/livelihood skills trainings and GAD legislations with WEE emphasis.

Continuing GAD advocacy. Gender issues, admittedly, are quite difficult to advocate amongst the popular and practical issues of poverty, climate change, peace and security.

PGAD, however, invested on information, education and communication activi-

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ties and materials to raise awareness about gender issues, GAD and the GREAT Women Project activities. It built strong relationship with the Philippine Information Agency (PIA) in the province for information dissemination. It likewise maximized the annual Women's Month celebration to recognize the achievements of women leaders, outstanding MGADCs, and projects, to encourage more officials and other key players to mainstream gender equality and women's empowerment in their programs and activities. More importantly, it utilized regular meetings of local mechanisms to advocate for institutional reforms and resources to support GAD and women's economic empowerment.

Supportive local leadership. Local legislation and policies, resources and mechanisms to support GAD and women's economic empowerment would not have been possible without the support from local officials. PGAD ensured 'buy-in' from the local leaders to ensure that project interventions are programmed, implemented and sustained.

Partnership-building. Aside from the PGADC, P/TWGs, PGAD built linkages with various institutions such as the Luzon Lucian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (QLCCI) for the private/ business sector, the Luzon Federation Union of Cooperatives (QFUC) for people's organizations, and the Yak as Kumara nag Bata, which is affiliated with the Child Fund (formerly Christian Children's Fund) for the NGO sector. It also strengthened existing ties with government agencies at the provincial level such as the DTI, DOLE, DOST, SSS, PhilHealth, and TESDA. These linkages and partnerships are aimed at sustaining project gains and the planned replication in other areas.

