

GREAT Women Project



Raising Computer Literacy Among Women Microentrepreneurs in Tanauan, Leyte



Philippine
Commission
on Women



Canadian International Development Agency
Agence canadienne de développement international

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A Women's Economic Empowerment Initiative By The Local Government

Background on Tanauan

Tanauan is an agri-industrial town and eco-tourism destination in Eastern Visayas. It has a land area of 7,877.543 hectares, surrounded by Palo in the north, Tolosa in the south, Dagami and Tabon-Tabon in the west, and San Pedro Bay in the east.

The town is composed of 54 barangays, with a population of 48,674 or 9,244 households. It is classified as a second-class municipality, with income largely based on agriculture, livestock, fishing, forestry & mining, trade and industry, and tourism. Women are mostly involved in agri-based enterprises, producing copra, lechon, fresh catch fish, virgin coconut oil, bamboo craft, pottery, aged tuba, fresh fruits, vegetables, fresh crabs, and metalcrafts.

The GREAT Women Project and the Community eCenter for Women

In 2009, the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW), through the GREAT Women Project, forged partnership with the Municipal Government of Tanauan to enhance its local enabling environment for women's economic empowerment. Capacity development activities were implemented in the municipality, resulting to plans, programs and projects that support its women microentrepreneurs; noteworthy of which is its computer literacy program – Community eCenter - for women.

Based on the GAD Planning and Budgeting Workshop held in December 2010, it was noted that there is a low level of information technology (IT) literacy among Tanauan women. Women cannot afford formal training on computer literacy despite its availability at the town center. With this, women without computer literacy skills are hardly able to compete for technology-based jobs and lack access to information resources and online markets for their enterprise.

With this, the municipality decided to set-up its computer literacy program for women, the Community eCenter of Tanauan. It is a barangay-based computer literacy program expected to raise the low level of computer literacy among Tanauan women including women microentrepreneurs, and create more technology-based economic opportunities for women and other constituents, especially for those involved in agriculture and eco-tourism.

"Rather than having women go out (of the locality) and pay to train on computer literacy, the municipality promises to bring digital literacy training to grassroots women," said Tanauan Mayor Agapito Pagayanan.

"Rather than having women go out (of the locality) and pay to train on computers, the municipality of Tanauan promises to bring digital literacy training to the grassroots women of Tanauan." Tanauan Mayor Agapito Pagayanan said.

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The Community eCenter of Tanauan started with an allocation of PhP 300,000 and 20 laptop computers. It was piloted in Barangay Canramos then followed by barangays San Roque, Malaguicay, Sta. Elena, Baras, Camire, Binongto-an, Salvador, Bangon, Cahumay-humayan, Guingauan, Kiling, Pasil, Binolo, San Isidro, Balod, and Bantagan. Those who completed the training had their first graduation exercise during the 2012 Women's Month Celebration at the Tanauan Gymnasium.

The center sought out barangay officials who are willing to host the computer literacy training. After reaching an agreement, it provided the trainer, equipment and materials while the host barangay provided the venue, electricity, meals of the participants and trainers, and round-the-clock security for the equipment as training counterpart. It is also responsible for enlisting a maximum of 20 women participants for the program.

The computer literacy program used free programs and modules using Intel's Easy Steps, serving as comprehensive tools for conducting Basic ICT Training Course. Participants are oriented on computers and its operating system as well as internet and e-mail, word processing, spreadsheets and multimedia, with hands-on or self-practice activities after every module. Use of the internet, however, is not taught in barangays where internet connection is not available.

Computer literacy classes run from 8am to 5pm for the whole week. Majority of women participants are housewives and operating small businesses such as sari-sari stores, food stands, and vegetable vendors. They are mostly high school graduates, without or little knowledge on computers.

"The step-by-step, guided lectures and hands-on training were really helpful. I was always present during the one-week course because I really want to learn. It was good because it helped women who were just high school graduates and without computer knowledge," said Veronica Bilbao, one of the training participants.

"The computer literacy program helped us even if we are only just housewives. We became knowledgeable in computers and applied what we learned in our homes and small business," said Ermilita Acero, one of the trained women.

The Environment and Social Management Guidelines

Ensuring Environmentally-Sound and Gender-Sensitive Enterprises



“The Tanauan Computer Literacy Program will continue to empower women through technology, because empowered women make an empowered community,” said Tanauan CeC Manager Eugene Ramos.

The program targeted 700 trained women from all barangays by June 2012 and more than 1,000 women by the end of 2012. It contributes to the Philippine Digital Literacy for Women Campaign (PDLWC) which aims to empower 10,000 women from the poor and marginalized communities in the Philippines through digital literacy training.

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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