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GENDER BUDGETING: A KEY TO MAKING CITIES MORE ACCOUNTABLE TO WOMEN

The Experiences and Insights of the Grassroots Women's Empowerment Center (GWEC) and the Caloocan City Government¹

This paper focuses on how the grassroots and professional women came together as pioneers in advancing women's rights and well-being in the City of Caloocan and how they challenged the local government to make the gender and development budget work for women. It is divided into main parts: the first part discusses the legal mandates governing gender and development in the Philippines, the second part focuses on GWEC's effort in pushing for GAD mainstreaming at the city level, and the last part presents our initial gains, challenges and recommendations.

1. Carrying Out the Legal Mandates Governing
Gender and Development (GAD)

The International Mandates

- The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (UN-CEDAW) which promotes equality in all fields, affirmative action for women and protection of women from violence;

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- Beijing Platform for Action (PFA) of the Fourth World Conference on Women (FWCW) which calls for actions on 12 areas of concerns affecting women; and
- Commitments made in such global meetings as the UN Conference on Women, International Conference on Population and Development, the World Summit for Social Development and the Habitat Conference.

The National Mandates:

- Section 14, Article II of the 1987 Philippine Constitution which states that “the State recognizes the role of women in nation building and shall ensure the fundamental equality before the law of women and men”;
- A Landmark law for Women -- Republic Act 7192 or the Women in Development and Nation Building Act can be considered as a result of the lobbying done by women’s groups inside and outside government, with the sympathetic support of gender-sensitive legislators.

Passed by Congress on December 11, 1991, and approved by the President of the Philippines on February 12, 1992, the Act “promoting the integration of women as full and equal partners of men in development and nation building and for other purposes” became operational with the issuance of its implementing rules and regulations by the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) on November 18, 1992.

RA 7192 specifies that a substantial portion of funds received through official development assistance packages be set aside by government agencies to support activities for women. The implementing rules and state that in 1993, at least five percent of these funds shall be in “support of programs/projects that mainstream/include gender concerns in development.” The percentage shall increase from five to 10-30 percent in subsequent years.

The Act also enjoins all departments to ensure that Filipino women benefit equally and participate directly in their programs and projects. To ensure the implementation of its provisions, RA 7192 further directs the bureaucracy to “review and revise all their regulations, circulars, issuances and procedures to remove gender bias therein.” All government departments, agencies and instrumentalities are required to submit a compliance report to Congress every six months.

Under RA 7192 and its implementing rules and regulations, NEDA and the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW) are given the main roles and responsibilities in mainstreaming gender concerns in development planning, advocacy, programming, monitoring and evaluation.

- Executive Order 273 directing all government agencies and local levels to extend the scope of the 5% reservation to apply to the full budget of all agencies, as well as to the budgets of local government units to “institutionalize GAD efforts in government by incorporating GAD concerns in their planning, programming, and budgeting processes”.²
- In Congress, the Senate Committee on Women and Family Relations was created to legislate on women’s concerns. In the House of Representatives, the Committee on Women

with subcommittees on Domestic Working Women, Migrant Women Workers, Disadvantaged Women and Marginalized Women, was formed. A seat for a women's representative in the Lower House was especially created to bring gender issues into focus.³

- The Local Government Code of 1991 instructed the local governments the creation of standing committee to address specific concerns, such as those of women and children.

Glimpses of Caloocan City

Basic Facts and Figures

The City of Caloocan is one of the 17 local government units comprising the National Capital Region (NCR) of the Philippines, otherwise known as Metro Manila. It has a land area of 53.3 square kilometers, which makes it the second largest locality in the NCR. It is divided into two separate geographical districts - North Caloocan, which constitutes about two - thirds of the city's land territory, and South Caloocan, which although smaller in area, is a more progressive since most of the city's commercial and industrial establishments are located there. As of February 2004, the population reached approximately 1.3 million, about 51% (or approximately 663,000) of which are females and nearly 45% (or about 585,000) are children who are below 18 years of age. Classified as highly urbanized city, Caloocan has an annual income 2.01 billion Phillipine pesos as of October 2003, or about 35.89 million US dollars (29.56 million Euros).

The name Caloocan was derived from the tagalog word "Look" which means "bay", because the place used to be part of the shoreline of manila Bay until massive reclamation projects in the 1960s and 1970s transformed it into a landlocked area. It was officially organized as an independent municipality in 1815. On August 30, 1896, Caloocan became part of Philippine history when the great Filipino hero Andres Bonifacio and his group of revolutionaries (called the "Katipuneros") declared their resistance to Spanish Colonial rule. In fact the most famous landmark of the city is the Bonifacio monument which commemorates the first encounter between Filipino revolutionaries and Spanish soldiers.

Caloocan was converted into a full-fledged city on February 16, 1962 by virtue of Republic Act No. 3298 enacted by Congress.

Status of GAD in Caloocan

The concept of separation of powers among the three departments of government is also applied at the local level. Hence the executive branch implements programs and projects designed to promote the general welfare of the city's inhabitants, while the legislative council formulates the policies on how the local government can best serve the needs of the community.

Since 1988, women began playing an important role in the public affairs in Caloocan. Several departments and offices in the city government have been headed

by women, and more and more women have been elected to public office. In the present city council consisting of 14 members, 5 are female councilors.

However, for a long time, women-related services have been confined principally to the conduct of livelihood training projects, premised on the belief that the best way to help them was to make them financially independent, or at least, to make them equal economic partners of their spouses. Other programs included day-care centers, reproductive health seminars, and women`s desk established at the village level.

In budgetary terms, it is difficult to state exactly what percentage of Caloocan`s annual budget is allocated for gender or women responsive activities because these are spread out or performed by different offices of the city government. But it is safe to assume that as late as last year, the percentage has not even reached 5% of the city`s total budget, and this is because GAD has not yet been institutionalized in the local budget. In other words, there is no separate, identifiable item in the city budget that is allocated specifically for GAD programs. Neither is there a focal agency or office for women`s concerns.

Thus, the fact that GWEC was able to successfully lobby for the enactment of a GAD ordinance by the city`s legislative council makes it a truly remarkable achievement on the part of NGOs advocating women`s rights. Gender issues are now starting to gain fuller attention from the local government. The fundamental principals of equality, respect for the dignity and rights of every human being regardless of sexual orientation, religion, race, color, ethnicity, age, ideology and socio-economic class have become clearer. And there is increased recognition that disempowerment of women is a manifestation of structural inequities and unequal power relations between men and women.

GAD Ordinance of Caloocan City

On February 12, 2004, the Caloocan city council unanimously approved Ordinance No. 0378 entitled “ Craeting the Caloocan City Inter- agency Committee on Women`s Issues and Appropriating Fund therefore.” It is based on the power of the local governments to enact laws that support and strengthen national laws. It seeks to implement the constitutional and statutory mandates relating to gender and development concerns.

The committee created pursuant to the ordinance shall operate as a special office under the city mayor with the principal function of formulating, implementing and evaluating GAD programs, projects and activities. The mayor is required to appoint an Action Officer, a person noted for strong advocacy of the promotion of women`s rights and welfare to take charge of the committee. Representatives from different or sectors whose agenda should include GAD issues will serve as members, while GWEC will act as head of the Committee`s secretariat.

The committee shall perform the following functions:

1. Formulate, implement and evaluate programs , projects and strategies designed to institutionalize gender and development (GAD) efforts in the government;
2. Ensure organized participation of women, particularly those belonging to the urban poor sector, in the planning, decision making and assessment of city programs and projects pertaining to women's issues and concerns;
3. Implement a comprehensive women`s health program that will take care of females` needs throughout their life cycle;
4. Push for legislative measures addressing incest, spousal abuse and other forms of violence against women;
5. Implement the policy of establishing a women`s crisis center in the city.

The ordinance stipulates that the committee shall meet regularly every month, and submit an annual report to the city council as well as the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW), setting forth therein its projects, activities, needs, problems and progress.

Initially, the sum of 1.5 million Philippine Pesos (27,786 US Dollars or 22,059 Euros) has been appropriated for the operations of the committee. Thereafter, it is authorized to recommend the allocation of additional funds for the committee's projects and activities, which will be incorporated in the city's annual budget.

It is envisioned that in the next three years, which is the cycle of the local officials` terms of office, the percentage allotted for GAD programs will gradually increase as an integral part of Caloocan`s annual budget until the 5% minimum required by law is reached, or hopefully even surpassed.

Caloocan`s GAD ordinance will be the instrument to uphold the rights of women and the belief in their worth and dignity as human beings and full partners in development and nation building. The local government of Caloocan City shall actively contribute to the establishment of a national and international economic order based on sustained, equitable growth and balanced ecology, and that any development effort it undertakes should enhance women's full potentials, uplift their status and lead to the improvement of their lives, their families and of the communities. Towards this end, it shall pursue and implement vigorously gender responsive development policies design and integrate gender and development support systems, taking into consideration women's economic survival which support for their efforts of empowerment and self determination.

4. Initial Gains , Challenges and Recommendations

Initial Gains

GWEC has definitely enhanced awareness of their rights among the women folk of Caloocan. Many have discovered the benefits of organizing themselves, are engaged in gainful livelihood projects are able to protect themselves from domestic violence and sexual exploitation, and have gained the courage to contribute to worthy causes such as resisting unreasonable demolition of urban poor dwellings.

More women are now enlightened on the important roles that they play, particularly in influencing political and development decisions. Although it is a slow and difficult process, the men are being helped to understand and recognize that relationships work better in an atmosphere of partnership and gender equality.

The appointment of a focal person and the identification of the specific agency in the city government to manage women concerns is a big step forward. It can now be expected that improve coordination and integration of GAD related services can be accomplished.

The Challenges

The principle question at present is how to sustain the interest and support for GAD and women's issues that we have generated. More leaders in the City Government must be convinced to serve as champions of our advocacy in work toward the institutionalization of the start-up program on GAD.

We must also address the issue of how the introduction of the gender perspective in our project will result in benefits that the people would find meaningful. This will necessitate support from government and non-government entities.

There is also a need to further strengthen the capacities of the women leaders of Caloocan, especially on leadership advocacy, networking, and negotiation. They still need to upgrade their skills for mobilizing support and assistance. There is also an urgent need to elevate the economic struggle of women to other thematic areas such as political decision-making and reproductive self-determination.

This is our challenge. We at GWEC, commit to be vigilant and responsive.

As our efforts and resources are maximized, we all hope that our women are as empowered, and side by side working in partnership towards realizations of the "promotion of Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women.

And that in the end, GWEC, join all others, in a FIRM stand that women's concern are top agenda of the GWIA/WUF and the global community.

Recommendations

We should still work for the continuous conscientization and organizing of women so that they may be empowered and actively involved in addressing the roots of their plight. They must be organized and trained to lead in advocacies concerning their rights, welfare, and issues.

Women should be provided with skills to participate in political process such as joining alternative and transformative politics and other decision-making. Women in positions of power and decision-making should be constantly influenced to champion the concerns of women.

Our networking competencies must be reinforced. Knowing where and how to get support is crucial to the strengthening of gender programs and projects. We need to build our own data bank about similar or related work of other organizations, agencies and local government units.

GAD does not end with an ordinance. We should not stop and be contented at having a GAD ordinance passed, we have to more vigilant to ensure that the government funds and resources are indeed allocated to implement the goals and objectives of the ordinance.

2. GWEC's EFFORT IN GENDER MAINSTREAMING AT THE CITY LEVEL

Inspired by RA 7192, the Grassroots Women's Empowerment Center (GWEC) was born. It was initiated by a group of concerned women both from the grassroots and professional levels, it seeks to assist women to rise from the limitations imposed upon them by the society, and regain self-worth as women and as persons who have equal rights, as men, in pursuit of their goals and development.

VISION

GWEC envisions the full realization of women as equal partners of men in nation-building.

She believes that the attainment of this vision depends on the effective mobilization of both disadvantaged and professional women towards their full integration and participation for social, economic, political and cultural development at the local, national and international levels.

MISSION

As a women center, GWEC vows to contribute to the empowerment of women by binding the disadvantaged and professional women in the urban poor communities through important support structures for awareness-raising regarding women's role in the society. This bond recognizes the fact that Filipina women, like their sisters all

over the world, share essentially the same burden - the legacy of the structures of inequality when are reinforced by misperceptions that produce a seemingly unending cycle that retards the women's development.

GOALS

To provide opportunities for individual members and partner women's organizations to initiate, plan, manage, and sustain projects that shall respond to their needs and the community as a whole;

To provide partner individuals and women's organizations adequate access to livelihood in order to improve their economic condition and minimize/eliminate the need to borrow money from usurers;

To provide opportunities for women to hone their skills in community leadership, organizational management and capability-building;

To develop strategies and campaign agenda which shall be directed towards gender consciousness-raising among partner

³ A Handbook on GAD for the Sanggunian Committee on Women and Family women's organizations, GO-NGO structures in the communities and the public;

To establish strong coordinative linkages between and among GO-NGO in the communities in identification, implementation and monitoring of development projects specifically with regard to environmental protection.

2.1 What Were The Gender-Based Needs Prevalent in the Areas Organized by GWEC?

In 1990s, GWEC had conducted a baseline survey in three selected barangays in district 2, Caloocan City (see map). The objectives of the study are: to describe the particular situation of women in the City particularly in the 3 selected villages (GWEC believes that the situation of women in these villages is reflective of the overall situation of women in Caloocan City) and to guide GWEC in coming up with meaningful, relevant, and concrete programs for women, both the grassroots and professionals.

GWEC classified the respondents into professionals and disadvantaged - disadvantaged women are women from 18 to 59 years old with limited or no access to opportunities for education, maternal and child care, skills/training/livelihood, self-enhancement and community participation thus preventing them from participation in development.

2.2 How Were These Needs Responded To?

Recognizing the importance of addressing gender issues and concerns, based on the studies made, GWEC came up with the following programs to address the following major issues for women:

- 1) **Marginalization.** Women participation in development activities is limited to those traditionally regarded as women's concerns like maternal and child care, nutrition, homemaking, and earning supplementary income. Hence, women are unable to develop their potential to the full. Development concerns that are primarily associated with women's functions are considered less important and therefore do not receive as much attention and resources as those that pertain to men's functions.
- 2) **Subordination.** Women are assigned secondary status vis-à-vis men whether in the home, at work, or in public life. Again, this has resulted in women having less access to and control over development resources and benefits. Other manifestations of women's subordinate status are: the use of male values and standards as yardstick for what is ideal or preferable or acceptable, deferment to male authority and opinion, automatic designation of the father as family head, and many others.
- 3) **Discrimination.** This is any practice, policy or procedures that denies women equal treatment and status because they are female. Statistics, for example, still show women's labor force participation and wages to be lower than that of men. Legal reform has not completely removed instances in the laws and the justice systems where women are dealt the shorter hand. Cultural biases also continue to hamper the enforcement of laws that uphold women's rights.
- 4) **Multiple Burden.** Many women hold fulltime jobs or do exhausting farm or market work, but still have to be responsible for seeing to it that there's food on the table, the children are looked after, and the household is in order. Often they are also expected to do volunteer work in the community. These multiple responsibilities wear out women and leave them no time or energy for recreation or personal pursuit.
- 5) **Gender Stereotyping.** This is the tendency to hold fixed, unquestioned and unexamined beliefs and perceptions about women and men, and to assign them roles based on these beliefs. Stereotyping extends to perceptions as

to what type of activities, fields of study, occupations, areas of responsibility and activities are appropriate for women and for men.

- 6) Violence whether threatened or actual, perpetrated on women simply because they are women. It includes sexual harassment, sexual assault, rape, incest, pornography, battering, trafficking, and abuse whether psychological, verbal or economic. These acts of violence reinforce male domination of women.
- 7) Obstacles to personal development. The issues and problems discussed above have a direct negative impact on women's sense of self-worth and their ability to make something of their lives. Developing one's talents and pursuing interests is so much more difficult for women than men, and women who try to achieve something at the cost of neglecting their families risk being censured by society.

Gender and Development Advocacy (GAD) Program

The GAD program addresses the need to increase the level of awareness and skills of members of partner organizations, advocates/friends on gender issues and concerns. The program is offering the following training:

- Gender Sensitivity Training and Mainstreaming
- Special Gender-Sensitivity Training for Men
- Voters' Education with gender perspective with the aim of advancing women participation in local governance.

Housing Rights Advocacy (HRA) Program

The program provides information on the right to adequate housing and encourage the active participation of women in the communities in the process of proposing solutions on their housing/humane resettlement and land tenure problem.

Family and Children Program

The program aims to contribute to the promotion of family relationship based on mutual respect, responsibility, caring and equality among all members of the family. The program also taps local, national and international resources to provide schooling needs/materials to poor but deserving children in GWEC service areas.

Health, Nutrition and Environmental Protection Program

The program aims to contribute in the improvement of the overall health status of women and their families in the service areas by increasing their access to quality basic integrated health care services and information on the environmental protection. The program also aims to contribute to the actualization of a home-based waste management that would contribute to the reduction of waste/garbage in the communities.

Economic Empowerment Program

The program aims to provide skills training, administrative assistance and “seed capital” to women’s groups/organizations interested in putting up livelihood projects. The Program also assists women’s organizations identify, develop and evaluate feasibility of livelihood projects, organize and implement training programs to develop skills needed and useful in the operation of their livelihood projects. In addition, the program is now assisting families of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) since many members of partner women organizations are families of OFWs. (2002 Phil. Overseas Employment Administration data showed more women were deployed as OFW (69.0%) compared to men (31.0%).

> forty-four percent (44.6%) of the total deployed female OFW belong to the service sector, while 43.0% were in the professional, technical and related fields. Majority of those in service sector were domestic helpers (71.0%).

For many more than ten years, GWEC has been successfully implementing all its programs with the assistance of Cordaid but has received very little or no assistance at all from the local government.

Hindering Factors in GAD Integration

To quote the study made by the NCRFW, “the absence of any provision in the Local Government Code relating to the allocation of a budget for gender-related programs has helped maintain the marginalization of gender issues. There are no clear legal bases or requirements obliging local governments to give more attention to gender concerns in the communities, so that little or no action is taken unless civil society groups advocate for it.”

INTEGRATING GAD PRACTICES IN LOCAL GOVERNANCE

Women’s Agenda

Thus, a series of meetings/consultations with women members and leaders were held in 2000 - 2003. The aim was to come up with a proposed women’s agenda to address

the plight of women, through the active participation, and integrate these strategies in the programs and policies of the local government.

Proposed Women’s Agenda to the City Council

Women’s Issues and Concerns	Appropriate City Program for Women	Preferred District Program for Women
<p>Ensure that Republic Act 7192 or Women in Development Act is implemented</p> <p>RA 7192, known as the women in Development and Nation Building Act, can be considered as a result of the lobbying done by women’s groups inside and outside the government with the sympathetic support of gender-sensitive legislators. Passed by Congress on December 11, 1991, and approved by the President. On February 12, 1992, the Act “promoting the integration of women as full and equal partners of men in development and nation building and for other purposes: became operational with the issuance by its implementing rules and regulations by the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) on Nov. 18, 1992.</p> <p>RA 7192 specifies that a substantial portion of funds received through official development assistance packages be set aside by government agencies to support activities for women. The implementing rules state that in 1993, at least five percent of these funds shall be in “support of programs/projects that mainstream/include gender</p>	<p>Come out with a parallel City ordinances matching the RA 7192 modeling the city as the champion of women-cause among the cities of Metro Manila.</p> <p>Ensure a systematized participation of urban poor women in the planning process, decision-making phase and terminal evaluation stage of City programs and projects especially pertaining to women’s issues and concerns.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • at the city level, participation of organized women in the local government bodies, like the city council, executive committee under the city mayor, city offices of the department of social welfare and development, city board of secondary level education, police and community relations that cater to the issues and concerns of children/youth and women. • Strict implementation of local government provision that all local government 	<p>Assure a district-based congressional initiative resources to match the fund of the City in this concern.</p> <p>Ensure and strengthen the process of urban poor women’s representation in the district level as to the congressional-initiated ground-level programs and projects.</p>

<p>concerns in development.” The percentage shall increase from five to 10-30 percent in subsequent years.</p> <p>The Act also enjoins all departments to ensure that Filipino women benefit equally and participate directly in their programs and projects. To ensure the implementation of RA 7192 further directs the bureaucracy to “review and revise all their regulations, circulars, issuances and procedures to remove gender bias therein.” All government departments, agencies and instrumentalities are required to submit a compliance report to Congress every six months.</p>	<p>councils (LDCs) or Sanggunian have to have a women sector representative. This gives women a say in the formulation of policies, projects and ordinances that affect them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a city and district level comprehensive women’s health program that will take care of women’s needs throughout their life cycle. Thus, services must not be limited to family planning and safe motherhood. • Implement the policy of establishing women’s crisis center in the city by assigning the mandatory budgetary allocation. • Work-out city ordinance imposing penalties on incest and other forms of VAW 	
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Partnership Towards the Enactment of the GAD Ordinance

GWEC’s advocacy then entered the legislative arena. Invoking RA 7192, the government’s commitment to the Beijing Platform for Action and other national policies and measures that mandated the automatic appropriations for GAD programs and projects in government agencies, including the local government, GWEC lobbied for the passing of a city ordinance that would enshrine the GAD budget and the creation of a GAD committee under the city mayor.

Sponsored by Councilor Benedicto M. Gonzales, Jr., majority block leader, the city ordinance entitled “creating an inter-agency committee on women and appropriating funds therefore” was passed in February 2004 after many years of advocacy/lobby

work from women's groups. The GAD ordinance was based on the right of the local governments to enact laws that support and strengthen national laws. It sought to implement the joint memorandum from the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW) and the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) that local governments should use a minimum of 5% of their internal revenue allotment (IRA) for gender-related projects.

The GAD ordinance of 2004, was overwhelmingly passed by the city council shortly after the elections.

Our Challenge

GAD does not end with an ordinance. We will not stop at having a GAD ordinance passed. We have to be vigilant to ensure that resources are allocated to implement the ordinance.

GAD Ordinance of Caloocan City

Legal Basis

Implementing Mechanism

Powers and Duties of the GAD Committee

Features of the GAD budget

