



*Inauguration of one of Davao City's Child Minding Centers led by the City Mayor*



## Davao City

Local government units (LGUs) doing gender mainstreaming need strong leadership and commitment, organized women's groups, adequate resources — and lots of inspiration — to see things through. In fact, when gender mainstreaming is not explicitly defined in the LGUs' development plans, Gender and Development (GAD) efforts may not be realized at all. As a form of assistance and in keeping up with the unique contexts and specific needs of LGUs, the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW) then “localized” its Technical Assistance Blueprint in accordance

with gender-related mandates and as provided for by the Magna Carta of Women (MCW) (RA 9710).

In 2014, PCW added the **GAD Local Learning Hubs (GAD LLHs)** to its LGU-centered technical assistance portfolio, the aim of which is to showcase innovative GAD structures, processes, and programs that have been sustained, if not improved by LGUs through the years. GAD LLHs are meant for sharing and replicating good practices, ultimately giving other LGUs the opportunity to think



outside the box when implementing GAD initiatives. LGUs seeking to imbibe GAD innovations can learn from the GAD LLHs and get inspiration on how to infuse GAD in local governance and public service.

**One of the five PCW-certified GAD LLHs is Davao City.** The City Government of Davao has continuously fulfilled its GAD mandate by establishing an LGU Division in charge of gender mainstreaming and by strengthening its Special Counsel on VAWC [violence against women and children]. At the same time, the City Government enhanced its programs for women and children by expanding the coverage of its facilities, such as the Community-based Child Minding Centers and the Female City Jail.

## From GAD Office to a GAD Division

Integration connotes cohesion and complementation, a typical challenge for provincial, city, municipal, and barangay LGUs.

The **Integrated Gender and Development Division (IGDD)** of Davao City started out as an interim office for GAD in 1999 until September 2003 under the supervision of the Chairperson on the Committee on Women, Children and Family Relations. In October 28, 2003, the Women Development Code was amended, thereby creating the said Division under the direction and supervision of the City Mayor's Office.

Cohesion and complementation are reflective of IGDD's functions, as it serves as the coordinative, regulatory, and monitoring body for all the GAD efforts of the city. The IGDD even transcends these three main functions by influencing Davao City's budgeting process resulting to the institutionalization of GAD planning and budgeting at the different LGU levels.

To reinforce IGDD's functions, the City Accounting and Planning Development Offices require all city departments and barangays to submit their annual plans reflecting their proposed GAD-related activities and programs, which in turn are approved by the IGDD. The LGUs are able to comply because of the GAD-related technical assistance and capacity building programs that the IGDD provides regularly.

What is notable with the IGDD is that it serves as the prime mover of gender mainstreaming even if it did not adopt the recommended LGU structure for the GAD Focal Point System. The IGDD's structure is also unique because of its attached multisectoral consultative body, the Davao City Council for Women (DCCW), comprising the women councils from all 182 barangays. From its end, the DCCW consciously complements IGDD's coordinating function, thus resulting to barangay- and city-led GAD programs that are more cohesive. To further reinforce its coordinative function, the IGDD also works



**Women lead the establishment of the Integrated Gender and Development Division**

with GAD Focal Persons assigned in the different offices/departments of the City Government.

The IGDD also acts as a monitoring and regulatory body, and it can directly influence women-related programs and activities of both public and private organizations. The IGDD works closely with the Local Monitoring Board [1] tasked to monitor media outlets (including publishers of local dailies) and other organizations that release publicity materials that are “gender blind.” With permission from the City's Business Bureau, the IGDD serves as one of the signatories to special permits, allowing it to monitor and regulate beauty contests and other fund raising initiatives that portray women as commodities. In addition, the IGDD acts as Secretariat to the Coordinating Council on Gender-Based Violence (CGBV) and the Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking (IACAT).

The IGDD strengthens its GAD advocacy by building strong partnerships with women's groups, local governments, media, academe, private institutions, and local communities. It also recognizes the outstanding GAD achievements of individuals and organizations in behalf of Davao City.

## “Pro Bono Publico”

In common terms, “For the Public Good”, referring to the event of the 2004 Davao Women Summit where survivors and advocates from the women's movement sought direct intervention from the City Government to act on the

[1] The Local Monitoring board is Davao City's counterpart for the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board.

continuous rising of violence against women and children (VAWC).

The City Government responded by creating the Office of the Special Counsel (OSC) on VAWC through Executive Order No. 49. The OSC on VAWC composed of City-paid lawyers has the primary objective to address violence committed against women and children by way of providing support services specifically on legal matters for the protection of their rights. Through the OSC on VAWC, survivors seeking free legal service can work with the five OSC lawyers, who then initiate complaints and represent them before judicial, quasi-judicial, and administrative courts. In fulfilling its duties, the OSC coordinates with other government bodies and NGOs with mandates and expertise on VAWC.

According to one of the OSC lawyers, some VAWC cases do not move forward because of limited personal finances (e.g., transportation and food of VAWC survivors during hearings). There are also instances wherein survivors are found to be unprepared emotionally and psychologically. Thus, VAWC cases do not prosper even if free legal services are provided or the lawyers believe the cases could have been won.

While faced by these challenges, the creation of the OSC is still considered a trailblazing initiative by the City Government because it has responded to the needs of women and children in addressing all forms of gender-based violence through free legal assistance. The OSC also gets the continued support of the City Mayor, and it has contributed to the deeper appreciation of the local judiciary on GAD.

Every week, a minimum of five clients, many of whom encounter economic and psychological abuse, approach the OSC for legal assistance. As of November 2014, more than 5,524 cases have been filed and assisted by the OSC.

## Support for Working Parents

Being a parent or a child caretaker should not hinder one from pursuing productive activities. Three milestone years mark the creation and operations of the **Child Minding Centers in Davao City**. The first was in 1998 when the City Government established the Davao Child Minding Center for its working mother employees. More than a decade later, in 2009, the Davao Child Minding Center expanded its target clientele by catering to male parents—employees of the City Government. Lastly, in 2012, the Child Minding Centers were expanded to the barangays, hence called Community-based Child Minding Centers; the clientele further expanded to include constituents even if they are not employed by the City Government.

Both the Davao and Community-based Child Minding Centers are managed by the Benefits and Welfare Division of the

Human Resource Management Office. It is also supported by the City Legal, Social Services and Development, and Health Offices. Together, they set the selection and application criteria for child enrollees, as well as craft guidelines and agreements with participating parent/s. About 25–35 children aged four years old and younger enroll regularly. The facilities are open from 8 AM to 5 PM to keep up with the schedule of working parents/guardians.

The Child Minding Centers promote the MCW's provision for right to decent work, as it enables women to balance family responsibilities and work obligations. The Centers also respond to Sec. 17 of the Local Government Code, which promotes basic services and facilities for family, community, and women's welfare.

## An Enabling Environment for Women Detainees

It's not about providing “punitive program”; instead, the focus is on reformation and rehabilitation of Women in Especially Difficult Circumstances (WEDC), specifically women in detention, to prepare them for reintegration in the society.

The Davao City Female Jail, more popularly known as the **Ray of Hope Village**, is recognized as the first detention facility of Philippine Penology Management catering exclusively to the well-being of female inmates. It was set up by the City Government in 2008 to provide a separate detention for female inmates. Gawad Kalinga (an NGO), the New City Commercial Corporation (a private corporation), and the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology helped establish this “home-type jail” inside the City Jail Compound.



*Facilities at the Ray of Hope Village offer a sense of community for women detainees*

Beyond physical infrastructures, the City Government and its institutional partners also provide skills training and livelihood activities at the Village. Livelihood products of female inmates are sold to visiting individuals and organizations, as well as in trade fairs with support from the City Government.

According to the women inmates, allowing them to form their own cooperative helped sustain their livelihoods' operations. Earnings from small sari-sari stores, laundry services, and the bakery are used to buy personal items like toiletries, which are not typically provided by jail facilities.

Some members also consciously plan for their future outside the jail. About 80 women inmates have become voluntary members of the Social Security System (SSS) and pay Php 330 monthly through the "AlkanSSSYA project."

Female inmates also participate in education programs through the Alternative Learning System. At the Village, everyone is encouraged to finish high school at the least. Some of the 30 inmates who finished schooling in 2014 were offered teaching tasks to provide extra help to regular teachers.

Ray of Hope's programs and activities have resulted to a change in mindset for both the female inmates and their families. Visits from family members have become more frequent compared to the previous years. At the same time, women inmates have also started contributing to the fares, food, and allowance of their visiting families.

The Ray of Hope Village, although established before the passage of the MCW, responds to its provision for women in detention by providing services and interventions like segregated facilities, health and sanitation, skills and livelihood training, and financial assistance.

At present, the Ray of Hope Village has 12 cottages housing 282 women inmates.



## GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT LOCAL LEARNING HUBS

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Text supplied by the PCW-Technical Services Division  
(e-mail: [tsd@pcw.gov.ph](mailto:tsd@pcw.gov.ph))

Photos from the City Government of Davao

# GAD

Local Learning Hubs are about sharing and replicating good practices, ultimately giving LGUs the opportunity to think outside the box when implementing GAD.

When an LGU examines its legal mandate with gender lens, when it unleashes gender equality as part of its development goals, when it unites women and men constituents to work toward GAD — that is gender mainstreaming.

Davao City offers four GAD innovations that may be replicated by other LGUs when incorporating GAD in local governance and public service. These are the Integrated Gender and Development Division, the Special Counsel on VAW, the Davao and Community-based Child Minding Centers, and the Ray of Hope Village for female inmates.

The City Government of Davao has shown that local policies that correspond to gender-responsive programming and budgeting — coupled with the support of Local Chief Executives, LGU partners, and a strong women's movement — can lead to successfully established GAD facilities and well-implemented GAD programs.



The five PCW-certified GAD Local Learning Hubs are located in the Provinces of AKLAN, ILOILO, and QUEZON, and the Cities of DAVAO and NAGA

For more information on Davao City's Certified GAD Local Learning Hubs, contact:

## INTEGRATED GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

ADDRESS: Room 9, 2/F Mezzanine, City Hall Building,  
City Hall Drive, San Pedro St., Davao City, Philippines  
TELEPHONE: (+63 82) 226-8011  
EMAIL: [igdd@davaocity.gov.ph](mailto:igdd@davaocity.gov.ph)