

MAKING DATA WORK FOR WOMEN: MAPPING OF LEGAL REFERRAL MECHANISM ON GENDER - BASED VIOLENCE

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Pangasinan State University
Gender and Development Resource Center
Lingayen, Pangasinan

RLA PARTICIPANTS

1. Pamela May Santos	MSWDO Lingayen
2. Atty. Raymund V. Tugade	PAO Lingayen
2. Atty. Dominique C. Evangelista	LGU Lingayen, Office of the Mayor
3. Bayani R. Paragas	Provincial Legal Office, Pangasinan
4. Dr. Merlita Q. Santos	Pangasinan State University

PRELIMINARIES

The Focus Group Discussion (FGD) spearheaded by the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) started at 9:30 in the morning with an Invocation and the singing of the National Anthem through an audio visual presentation.

Mr. Danilo Balino called Ms. Celia Quedado, the Information Officer II of the CHR Regional Office I, who also served as the emcee of the activity, to acknowledge the participants, this was followed by the welcome message of Dr. Manolito C. Manuel, the Vice President for Academic Affairs of Pangasinan State University who represented Dr. Dexter R. Buted, the President of Pangasinan State University.

Dr. Manolito C. Manuel started his message by sharing lines he has read in the Facebook about thinking of oneself as a blessing so that one will not be stressed. He also said that the university is very supportive of GAD and all the activities related to GAD and the President of Pangasinan State University hopes for the continuous relationship to all the agencies who are also GAD advocates.

After Dr. Manuel's speech, a video presentation on the background of the activity was shown. It emphasized on the different issues on human rights and on gender-based violence cases. Soon after the video, Ms. Quedado called on Mr. Danilo Balino, Information Officer III of the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) Region 1 to discuss the objectives of the activity and provided an overview of the Focus Group Discussion (FGD). He thanked Dr. Manuel for his presence and hoped that the objectives of the FGD should be met.

Mr. Balino also explained to the participant the objectives for the conduct of the FGD, which are the following:

- a. Harness the capacities of the Commission's 16 Regional Offices in monitoring functionality of referral mechanisms, providing recommendations, and influencing enhanced functionality and responsiveness of local inter-

agency mechanisms to respond to VAW; it aims to strengthen Commission's mandate as Gender Ombud;

b. Gather regional data on GBV, particularly highlighting issues faced by the most marginalized and "excluded," a focus on intersectionality and an analysis that looks into women's lived experience of GBV.

He then proceeded to present the more specific objectives which are as follows;

1. Map GBV referral mechanisms in two cities/ municipalities in the Region's areas of responsibilities;

2. Look into the effectiveness of these mechanisms in terms of availability of facilities, kinds of services, and advocacy and partnership with women's organization;

3. Identify the challenges and barriers as well as document the good practices in reporting and investigation, prosecution and legal assistance, and providing support services;

4. Derive recommendations and proposals to improve the services and facilities offered by mechanisms on the ground; and,

5. Focus on the responses to and experiences of the most vulnerable and excluded.

After enumerating the objectives, he told the participant that the results of the mapping will form part of the Commission's Gender Based Violence Observatory and will be presented during the Regional GBV Mapping.

Next to Mr. Balino's talk was Atty. Anna Leah Romero, Atty. V of the Commission on Human Rights, Region I who was introduced by the emcee, Ms. Quedado, to discuss on the background of the work of CHR as Gender Ombud.

Before her talk, Atty. Romero expressed her gratefulness to the participants who came even with some equally important appointments. She explained further why Lingayen was chosen for the FGD. This was because in the Region, Pangasinan is the number 1 with the most number of reported GBV. In the province of Pangasinan, Dagupan City is the first while the Municipality of Lingayen is number 2. However, the CHR had already conducted GBV Mapping in one city (San Fernando City, La Union last September 6, 2019) so this time, the CHR also opted to conduct the FGD in one municipality-and this time the Municipality of Lingayen.

Atty. Anna Leah Romero first asked the participants why CHR is the Gender Ombud and nobody answered. She then continued her discussion on the role of CHR as Gender Ombud, its activities and programs, and provided an overview of the Gender Ombud Guidelines, she started it by giving the objectives of her talk. She also presented the situation of women and the LGBTQ persons in terms of human rights violence. She presented her talk through an audio visual presentation and started by enumerating the following legal basis:

1. Universal declaration of Human Rights which states that “all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights

2. Article II, of the 1987 Philippine Constitution states that, “the State values the dignity of every human person and guarantees full respect for human rights”

3. The Yogyakarta Principle also states that, “human beings of all sexual orientations and gender identities are entitled to the full enjoyment of all human rights”

She then continues on the role of CHR as Gender Ombud primarily on the advocacy for the promotion and protection of women’s human rights and strengthen human rights education. They also conduct investigations on violations including those committed by private institutions with the provisions of the Magna Carta of Women and recommend appropriate measures for its effective implementation.

The CHR Gender Ombud Guidelines was adopted on April 21, 2015 which operationalized the role of CHR as Gender Ombud as follows:

1. Conduct investigation of individual complaints and institutional violations of the provisions of MCW
2. Provide legal and other support services
3. Monitor the implementation of Magna Carta of Women
4. Issue Gender Ombud advisories and others
5. Promote human rights and advocacy

The said guidelines includes the following protocols:

Protocol 1 – Handling of women’s cases

Protocol 2 – Handling cases of girl children

Protocol 3 – Handling cases involving persons with diverse Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity and Expression (SOGIE)

Atty. Romero emphasized on SOGIE. She said that Pangasinan is active on SOGIE, however there is no SOGIE bill yet but there are Local Ordinances. She mentioned an athlete as an example of an intersex; on Gender Identity, she differentiated transgender, transwoman and transman. She then further discussed the idea behind SOGIE thru the Genderbread person as shown from the power point presentation which is illustrated as follows:

Sex – one can be male, female, or intersex or based on the biological attributes at birth

Gender identity – pointed in the head where one person identifies oneself as male, female or transgender which does not necessarily correspond to one’s sex at birth

Gender expression – pointed in the hand which shows how one person expresses oneself as feminine or masculine

Sexual orientation – pointed in the heart which shows to whom one person is romantically, physically, and sexually attracted with and that one may be heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual or asexual.

She added that everyone has a SOGIE, it just differ from one another.

She also informed the participants that any person who has been a victim of violence and discrimination may seek the assistance of the commission. They could report their

complaint to the Regional Office. Cases which includes violations of the MCW, human rights any discrimination acts.

When filing complaints, the following details should be included:

1. Name and address of the complainant
2. Name and the address of the perpetrator
3. Type of violation committed
4. Actions undertaken by the complainant thru different government agencies or organizations prior to seeking assistance from CHR.

The CHR Regional offices submit annual reports on the monitoring the compliance to MCW on the Regional Women's Human Rights and LBTQI Profile. The CHR also reports on special issues like the Reproductive Health Law. In addition, the commission also issue advisories on certain event such as that of President Duterte's rape joke.

There are sample cases which were filed and investigated by the Regional offices like;

1. Misuse of GAD fund
2. Violation of women's right to reproductive health
3. Discrimination perpetuated by a family court judge
4. Discrimination against women such as dismissal due to pregnancy and sexual harassment
5. Violence against women and assistance to request for support

Sample cases for people with diverse SOGIE

1. Workplace discrimination
2. Discrimination in educational setting
3. Investigation of hate crimes against LGBTQI persons
4. Psychological abuse or bullying on the basis of SOGIE

Atty. Romero also highlighted the accomplishments of CHR Regional Office I from January to June 2019 in the provinces of Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, La Union and Pangasinan. According to the report, there is a total of 294 assisted clients where 56% are females and 46% males. Thirty cases were also resolved and given financial assistance which involved rape cases of minors. The commission gives not only financial aids but also provides women legal counseling who are victims of RA 9262 or the Violation Against Women and Children (VAWC).

However, some cases on RA 9262 are not being pursued because of financial issues. This is the reason why the commission is reaching out to barangay officials on the provision of the Livelihood programs and opportunities which will empower women. Atty. Romero also noted that there is no reported cases in Region 1 and this may mean positive or negative because it may mean there is really no case or the other way around.

On the monthly submission of reported cases by the PNP reveals that the Top three GBV are:

1. RA 9262 (VAWC)
2. Acts of lasciviousness
3. Rape

Based on CHR monitoring, there are Women's Desk in all the municipalities but they are not functional. However, Atty. Romero commended Alaminos City's VAW office.

Atty. Anna Leah ended her talk with a quote by Einstein which says: “The world will not be destroyed by those who do evil but by those who watch them without doing anything.”

The activity proceeded immediately with the FGD with Mr. Danilo Balino as the moderator. He first explained the procedure and informed the participants that the proceedings is recorded and documented.

Results of the FGD among the Regional Line Agencies (RLA) representatives

The FGD is participated by representatives from the different government service providers from the municipality of Lingayen to the Provincial office of Pangasinan and each shared first hand experiences.

On question # 1 Gender equality Situationer in the city/municipality

Basic demographics: for instance gender disaggregated data on per capita income, life expectancy, labor force participation, literacy available?

Ms. Santos of MSWDO- Lingayen: There is data however, not sure if there is available data in all basic demographic because such is being handled by the head of the office.

Atty. Tugade of PAO: There is no data available in their office as well as such record but they gather personal data on economic situation, sex is also recorded for gender based violence but only on reported cases. They only rely on the Certificate of Indigency.

Atty. Evangelista of the Office of the Mayor: Data depends on the record of the DSWD of the municipality of Lingayen.

Mr. Paragas of the Provincial Legal Office: Data depends on the record of the DSWD office

Dr. Santos of Pangasinan State University: Records are available from the Human Resource office however, there is no data on Life expectancy. Records on literacy is from the office of the Vice President of Academic Affairs while some are data are taken from records on the Seminars conducted.

Apart from national laws and international human rights instruments, what important gender equality policies in place at the local level? How are these policies operationalized by local agencies?

Ms. Santos of MSWDO-Lingayen: There is a policy but not sure. They participate in the celebration of Women's Month and Children's Month however, they are not sure if such were translated into policies.

Atty. Evangelista of the Office of the Mayor: Not also sure if there is a policy however, in practice, it is evident that there is no discrimination; in fact, it is seen that there are more women than men working in the municipal office.

Mr. Paragas of the Provincial Legal Office: There is the GAD Code and all municipalities have GAD Code, actually 80% of the municipalities have GAD Code and Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of GAD is also implemented in the Province.

Moderator: What does the province do?

Mr. Paragas of the Provincial Legal Office: The legislative body is responsible and the legal office reviews the ordinances.

Dr. Santos of Pangasinan State University: There are several GAD policies and all are approved by the Board of Regents (BOR) of the university, including Committee on Decorum and Investigation (CODI) however, there are no case reported. In addition there are still plans of the GAD office like "Gatas ng Ina".

Atty. Tugade of PAO: There is no specific policy in there office since everything is centralized but they are aware of the GAD policies.

Ms. Santos of LGU-Lingayen: Their office also conducts GAD training.

Experience with GAD mainstreaming and GAD budgeting

Ms. Santos of MSWDO-Lingayen: They are aware of the 5% GAD Budget

Atty. Evangelista of Office of the Mayor: Not aware of the mainstreaming however, the 5% GAD budget is strictly followed.

Mr. Paragas of the Provincial Legal Office: GAD Mainstreaming is implemented but GAD budgeting in the municipalities is not specified although they are aware of the 5% GAD budget.

Dr. Santos of Pangasinan State University: There is mainstreaming in the university, in fact the 5% GAD Budget is used in Research, Extension and Instruction of the university.

Atty. Tugade of PAO: No idea of the 5% GAD Budget since it is centralized and there is no specific activities on GAD related only on legal matters.

On Question # 2 Gender-Based violence in the municipality

What are the common forms of GBV received by the service provider?

Ms. Santos of MSWDO-Lingayen: Mostly physical, Economic and Verbal

Atty. Evangelista of the Office of the Mayor: Mostly Economic

Mr. Paragas of Provincial Legal Office: Mostly Economic like the wife asking for financial support to husband

Dr. Santos of Pangasinan State University: Mostly Economic

Atty. Tugade of PAO: Mostly Economic, some are Physical abuse and most of the handled cases are rape, child abuse and RA 9262 cases

Which group of women are most affected by the GBV forms identified?

Ms. Santos of MSWDO-Lingayen: Those poor children who are victims of pregnancy and no support from the husband.

Atty. Evangelista of the Office of the Mayor: Those poor and all types of women like working mothers. There is no case of gender identity and disability

Mr. Paragas of Provincial Legal Office: Those who are Unemployed

Dr. Santos of Pangasinan State University: Those poor women

Atty. Tugade of PAO: Those that are totally dependent on their husband

What have been the observed trends in gender-based violence cases received in the past five years? What are possible economic, socio-political, cultural and other factors affecting this?

Atty. Tugade of PAO: Mostly on RA 9262 with 2-3 cases, these cases are more on economic abuse. One of the factors affecting this is because women are now aware of their rights.

Dr. Santos of Pangasinan State University: It is on economic abuse, there is no reported cases also because of awareness and suggested that CHR would also have seminars regarding solo parents

Atty. Tugade of PAO: The office also conducts awareness in different barangays.

Mr. Paragas of Provincial Legal Office: There are no reported cases on GBV.

Atty. Evangelista of the Office of the Mayor: Cases are on economic abuse. Women became more assertive because of their awareness of the law.

Ms. Santos of MSWDO-Lingayen: But because of the values that Filipino has, people get to more career oriented and doesn't mind their family.

Dr. Santos of Pangasinan State University: Through observation, nowadays students do not usually tell problems to teachers.

What does the service provider consider as difficult case/s? Why is this?

Ms. Santos of MSWDO-Lingayen: It is when people file complaints and later do not pursue which is repeatedly done

Atty. Evangelista of the Office of the Mayor: With cases where the husband is out of the country

Mr. Paragas of the Provincial Legal Office: When the husband does not follow the agreement on the support to the legal wife. The office becomes the collecting agency

Atty. Tugade of PAO: With the same cases where there is emotional involvement

Dr. Santos of Pangasinan State University: Inform the office of the case but does not formalize their Complaint or sometimes they proceed directly to PNP and file the case.

What are the challenges/barriers experienced?

Atty. Tugade of PAO: There is no problem met in reporting and investigation and in providing legal assistance and support services.

Atty. Evangelista of the Office of the Mayor: There is no problem except with the lack of follow through

Mr. Paragas of the Provincial Legal Office: The cases are being referred to the PAO or the Legal Officer.

Dr. Santos of Pangasinan State University: There are no reported cases on GBV in the university, such cases are brought to the court

What are the best practices?

Atty. Tugade of PAO: The parties involved are made to reconcile or make an agreement

Dr. Santos of Pangasinan State University: Conduct seminars and trainings

Mr. Paragas of the Provincial Legal Office: The same with PAO where parties are made to reconcile.

Atty. Evangelista of the Office of the Mayor: The same also with PAO

Ms. Santos of MSWDO-Lingayen: Conduct seminars and trainings to barangay officials on how to handle VAW cases

On Question # 3 Flow of case Management

What are the entry points for GBV cases to come formally into contact with the government services?

Ms. Santos of MSWDO-Lingayen: First, the client goes to the barangay and then goes to the office to file the case and to validate with the PNP.

Atty. Evangelista of the Office of the Mayor: When the clients go to the office usually they ask for assistance but they should show interest

Mr. Paragas of the Provincial Legal Office: The office is only concern with administrative cases when client file a complaint against a government employee.

Dr. Santos of Pangasinan State University: Cases are client base. They go to the guidance office to report the case but others are reluctant to file a case.

Atty. Tugade of PAO: Cases are client base

What are the available services for GBV survivors provided by the service provider?

Ms. Santos of MSWDO -Lingayen: Counseling, financial support but everything is documented and sometimes, the office refer them to other agencies.

Atty. Evangelista of the Office of the Mayor: Services provided are through the office of the DSWD

Atty. Tugade of PAO: Legal assistance, however there is no witness protection provided by the agency

Dr. Santos of Pangasinan State University: Counseling and financial assistance

(Atty. Anna Leah of CHR asked questions on different fees and the actual fee on protection order, and is mediation fee really cost five hundred pesos and Atty. Tugade said that for PAO client, all fees are free and 500 pesos for protection order the standard fee. In addition, Atty. Anna Leah Commended the Province of Pangasinan because of their best practice-the Pangasinan Crisis Intervention Center (PCIC) which was certified by the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW) as a Local Learning Hub, the first in the Region)

At which point in the process of GBV intervention do women often exit the formal helping system of the service provider?

All of the agencies invited for the FGD answered that when the client exits....

On Question # 4 Documentation

When does documentation of GBV complaints start?

Atty. Tugade of PAO: The complaint starts upon contact with the agency

Mr. Paragas of the Provincial Legal Office: The complaint starts with the routing slip issued by the administration office

Atty. Evangelista of the Office of the Mayor: It starts upon filing of case to the PNP

Ms. Santos of MSWDO-Lingayen: When the complainant goes to the agency and recording and signing take place.

(CHR asks the sample form which were used for documentation. Agencies may send the said copy both soft and hard to the CHR e-mail address.)

How are these information filed and stored? How long will they be kept on the average? Does the agency have an electronic database for the cases?

Mr. Paragas of the Provincial Legal Office: The office follows a process when a certain file is requested.

Atty. Evangelista of the Office of the Mayor: Only person concern are authorized because of confidentiality

Atty. Tugade and MS. Santos: Only person concern are also authorized

Dr. Santos of Pangasinan State University: Only person concern but if it is really needed for a certain purpose, letter of request should be provided for record purposes

Who can access these files? Are other offices/ helping agencies allowed direct or full access to them? Researchers? What is the protocol for this if any?

All agencies said that files are not published and that only concerned or authorized person could have an access to the file.

On Question # 5 Recommendations

Are there information on gender-based violence and women's human rights which could be of use to, and you would like to be available to your agency?

Dr. Santos of Pangasinan State University: IEC materials, books and brochures which are for CHR for the awareness of the students, teaching and non-teaching staff.

Mr. Paragas of Provincial Legal Office: The province of Pangasinan observes and implements the GAD Code.

CHR offers assistance in the dissemination of the GAD Code.

Are there information on gender –based violence and women's rights which you feel women vulnerable to GBV need to have more access to?

Dr. Santos of Pangasinan State University: There is a conduct of massive information dissemination and the creation of women's desk however, it is not functional

Dr. Tugade of PAO: There is no particular designation to handle cases of GBV, usually the one who is assign in the family court will be the one responsible

Mr. Paragas of Provincial Legal Office: There is the GFPS in the Provincial Office

Atty. Evangelista of the Office of the Mayor: It is the DSWD who becomes the focal person

Are there information on gender-based violence and women's human rights which you feel the local population in general need to have more access to?

All agencies requested the CHR if they could have a satellite office in Pangasinan, since clients cannot afford to go to the CHR office in La Union

Atty. Anna Leah of the CHR asked if what the recommendations will be for the CHR to improve their services

Dr. Santos of Pangasinan State University: The CHR should provide legal services and also continue to conduct seminars and trainings regularly.

Atty. Tugade of PAO: There should be a regionalized forensic practice.

Atty. Anna Leah Romero made the closing message and the awarding of the certificates of appreciation to the participants.

Results of the FGD among CSO Representatives

PRELIMINARIES

The afternoon session started with the Zumba which was participated by the CSO representatives and the officials from the CHR with some other guests from Pangasinan State University and PSU GAD Staff and at exactly 1:30 the program was opened with an invocation through an Audio Visual Presentation.

Dr. Merlita Santos, the Pangasinan State University GAD Director made the welcome remarks on behalf of Dr. Dexter R. Buted, the University President. She commends the CHR for coming up with the activity and was happy that PSU was the venue for the event. She also welcomed the participants for the FGD and hopes that the learnings from the forum will help enhance the performance of the duties and responsibilities of everyone.

Shortly after the welcome remarks, a video presentation was shown to the afternoon session's participants (the same video that was shown in the morning session). After which, Mr. Danilo Balino discussed the objectives of the Focus Group Discussion. He emphasized that the dialogue will focus on the gender-based violence particularly on RA 9262 and RA 7610, he also informed the participants that the discussion will be recoded and documented.

Atty. Anna Leah Romero of the CHR, shortly discussed on the work of the commission as Gender Ombud, she then emphasized that CHR's mandate to monitor the compliance on the provisions on the Magna Carta of Women. She added that the Central office makes the advisory on National issues concerning women specifically the Violence against them. In addition to this, the commission also provides legal and financial assistance and encourages the barangay council to provide livelihood programs to women.

She also have discussed further about SOGIE and the advocacy of the CHR in providing support to Gender-based violence. Some points of her discussion was also discussed in the

morning session. She ended her talk by encouraging everyone to help one another amidst the challenges that would be encountered.

Mr. Danilo Balino then further emphasize on the role of the CSOs in the advocacy of the CHR and the cooperation and support of the other agencies and Colleges and Universities both public and private.

Next he started with the FGD with the CSOs....

On Question # 1 Gender equality Situationer in the city/ municipality

Are you aware of any local gender equality or GBV policies in your city/municipality? Do you know if you have a GAD Code or an Anti-Discrimination, Anti-Cat-calling ordinances or of their barangay counterpart?

Representatives from Pangasinan State University, Metro-Dagupan Colleges, NLMCCI, LEAF and Center for Christ agreed that there are policies but people are not aware. They say that because of politics, people are afraid to refer the case to authorities because they seem not to be concern.

NLMCCI: There is a national GAD code but there is no localized GAD code and they lack awareness

MDC: They just hear anti-discrimination on television and the government does not invite

CFCC: If there is, it is not implemented. The government has their own CSOs so other CSOs are not being involved and aware. There are certain things that are happening in the grass roots.

Have you or your organization participated in the development/passage of these policies? Have you ever accessed GAD funds of the barangay/LGU?

Everybody is aware of the 5% GAD Fund.

NLMCCI: There is 5% GAD but barangays are not fully aware of its implementation

Are the VAW Desks in your barangay functional?

NLMCCI: The social worker is the one responsible in giving assistance to the victims in Region 1

CFCC: Cases are not brought to the barangays, it is directed at once to higher authority (PNP)

According to Atty. Anna Leah Romero, there is a guideline for the VAWC Desk. There should be a person usually women who will responsible to handle cases of the VAWC, unfortunately the barangays are not aware that they should be the first responder.

CFCC: It is a case to case basis. Complainants are asked to fixed the conflict, thus case be closed.
(Told the story on a certain process of implementing the VAWC Desk)

Atty. Anna Leah said that the PNP should entertain the case since it was brought to their office.

MDC: Tell a story of a VAWC, where the case was just settled. Can the CHR intervene in resolving the case?

Mr. Balino of the CHR: The commission can come in anytime and can work independently.

MDC: The problem is, the office of the CHR is too far.

LEAF: What action have they done?

Mr. Balino of the CHR: Promote the advocacy

Atty. Anna Leah Romero: The commission is partnering to different agencies, and recently is their partnership with the DILG

On Question # 2 Gender-based violence (GBV) in the city/municipality (in relation to gender-based violence)

What are the challenges/barriers women experienced in: a) reporting and investigation of cases of GBV, b) Prosecution and legal assistance, and; c) Providing support services?

Participants open a situation about prostitution among millennials and other cases of sexual abuse/child abuse done on a certain place in Dagupan among some groups of young street children.

LEAF: Lack of support from others

Everybody said that, not all service providers are supportive.

CFCC: There is no problem with the PNP, VAWC is functional. With prosecution, there is also no problem. She shared about experience in family courts.

From your experience, which group of women are most affected by the GBV forms identified?

LEAF: The urban poor are mostly affected

CFCC: On the basis of Sexual Orientation

What are specific challenges/barriers experienced by women in seeking legal remedies in cases of GBV? What are the challenges specific for women in the marginalized sector?

LEAF: They are afraid to pursue the case.

MDC: Because of humiliation.

CFCC: It is also because of financial, sometimes because of the religion.

What have been the observed trends in gender-based violence cases received in the past five years? What are possible economic, socio-political, cultural and other factors affecting this/ these trends?

CFCC: Lack of awareness

MDC: Because of Poverty

CHR: Are there documents on GBV Cases?

CFCC: There are no reports. It is not documented

On Question #3 Flow of case management

From your experience, what is often the entry point for women who seek to report cases of GBV with the government services?

Everyone says that they go to the police and not in the barangay

CFCC: Should foster the presence of the CHR

NLMCCI: also foster the presence of the LGU

CFCC: Suggested that there should change the image of CHR

MDC: Emphasize on what really is the role of the CHR. Media have given a negative image to the CHR

CFCC: Ask how effective self-defense is. Sometimes, in reality it is difficult to go out of the situation

What are the available services for GBV survivors are women often aware of?

MDC: Guidance and Counseling

CFCC: The BHW of the government and preventive action

LEAF: Give example of the assistance they do in their organization

MDC: Monitoring, follow-ups and house visit

Which among the available services offered by the service provider are most often accessed by women? What are the possible factors affecting their choice of what to access?

MDC: The school and give guidance and counseling

NLMCCI: people are now aware of the services offered by the government

Are there services that women victim survivors of GBV seek are often unable to access from government offices? What service are they most frustrated/ disappointed?

NLMCCI: Agencies are ready to give assistance but sometimes there is no continuity in pursuing the case

CFCC: Sometimes there is discrimination so there should be somebody to accompany them

At which point in the process of GBV intervention do women often exit the formal helping system of the service provider? What do you think are the underlying reasons for these?

CFCC: Often the case have not started, agencies would tell to settle the case because of family

PSU: There is a very slow implementation of the case. There is always mediation after arraignment

On Question # 4 Documentation

Does your organization conduct documentation/ research on GBV in your area? Can you provide a brief description of the documentation/research?

Do you document cases of GBV that your organization or you assist or respond to? How is the system of documentation?

CFCC: There are reports and give description of the document

MDC: They make reports and they are kept in the office

LEAF: There are filed reports

From experience, is there a government good practice in responding to GBV? Is there also a case that showcases difficulty in accessing justice/legal remedies in cases of GBV in your area?

CFCC: There are flow chart and signage posted

On Question # 5 Recommendations

ALL: Manpower, more budget and partnering with champions.

CFCC: Should localized the term Gender Ombud

LEAF: Give assistance and trainings for free

NLMCCI: Rights based should be delivered to the people

The CHR offered their assistance in giving resources like IEC materials and they could also be tapped as resource speakers.

After the discussion, certificates of participation were awarded and photo opportunity was done before the meeting was adjourned at 4:30 pm.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

The following are some of the Key Takeaways.

1. Based on the FGD attended by some government agencies' representatives of the municipality of Lingayen and the Province of Pangasinan, there is no complete gender database. Most of the data used are taken from the office of the DSWD which is mostly from the certificate of Indigency.
2. In the province of Pangasinan, the GAD Code and its Implementing Rules and Regulation is already established also with the 80% of its municipality while review of the ordinances is taken care of the Legislative body and reviewed by the Legal office.

3. At Pangasinan State University, policies on Gender and Development which includes gender equality policies are being approved by the Board of Regents (BOR) as well as the GAD Code. Projects and activities are continuously implemented as stated in the GAD Plan and Budget of the university which is consistently endorsed by the CHED and the PCW.

4. Most cases being handled are those that involved violence against women and children. However, most of the VAWC desk established were not functional.

5. Women Organizations in Pangasinan often encounter cases which involved women and children who are abused by their own relatives but because of humiliation of their own family, cases are not being pursued. While with some gender – based violence cases are not pursued but rather are being resolved because of financial responsibilities when filing a case.

6. Political influence is also one of the reasons why some community people do not refer cases to authorities because they thought these government service providers do not seem to be concerned.

7. Since lack of awareness is one of the reasons why some people do not know their rights and the agency where they could refer to in case of problems, the participants both from the government agencies and women organization and even Higher Education Institution suggested that the Commission(CHR) should have a satellite office here in Pangasinan.

Based on the observations, it can be concluded that, authorities should strengthen their capacity to implement their mandate and to inform the people especially those who are less fortunate that they are ready to extend their assistance. The government should also look into the function of the barangay VAWC desk so that GBV cases should be first resolved in the barangay.