



COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES

**FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION:
REGIONAL MAPPING OF LEGAL REFERRAL
MECHANISMS ON GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE
CASES**

POST ACTIVITY REPORT

19 and 23 AUGUST 2019

I. Introduction:

The Commission on Human Rights as the Gender Ombud of the country launched its Gender-Based Observatory Project sometime in 2018. "It is envisioned as a resource hub for Gender-Based Violence (GBV), a repository of GBV data including normative standards on GBV from the international to domestic levels, as well as GBV researches particularly looking at how laws on GBV are implemented, and how GBV manifests in the lived experiences of women". "It aims for a deeper and wider understanding of GBV, enhancing women's access to justice, and in general, in making data work for women". In view thereof, in June 2018, through the CHR-GEWHRC, "the CHR undertook a mapping project of the current GBV referral and documentation systems "as a step toward developing a framework for a GBV Observatory".

The said mapping project included the conduct of focus group discussions (FGDs) with different sectors that include, inter alia, government agencies and civil society organizations (CSOs). The main objectives of the project are : 1) to 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. 2) It also aims to strengthen Commission's mandate as Gender Ombud, and to gather regional data on GBV, particularly highlighting, issues faced by the most marginalized and excluded, a focus on intersectionality, and an analysis that look into women's lived experience of GBV.

As its major specific objectives, the activity endeavors to: a) map GBV referral mechanisms in two cities/municipalities in the Region's areas of responsibilities, b) look into the effectiveness of these mechanisms in terms of availability of facilities, kinds of services, and advocacy and partnership with women's organization, c) identify the challenges and barriers as well as document the good practices in reporting and investigation, prosecution and legal assistance, and providing support services, d) derive recommendations and proposals to improve the services and facilities offered by mechanism on the ground, e) focus on the responses to and experiences of the most vulnerable and excluded.

In compliance with the foregoing, this Office conducted two (2) FGDs in two (2) different cities. On 19 August 2019, an FGD involving CSOs at Casa San Pablo, San Pablo City, Laguna was held. Participants¹ include members of the academe, particularly faculty members from Laguna State Polytechnic University (LSPU), Dalubhasaan ng Lungsod ng San Pablo (DLSP), from the Red Cross - San Pablo Unit, the San Pablo Cathedral. Whereas, the FGD involving different government agencies was conducted at Queen Margarett Hotel Downtown,

¹ Attached is the Attendance Sheet for the 19 August activity.

Lucena City, Quezon on 23 August 2019. The activity was attended by twenty-four (24) participants² from government agencies such as: a) Regional Trial Court - Family Court, Lucena City, b) Provincial Department of Health Office, c) Department of Education, Lucena City d) City Social Welfare and Development Office, e) Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP), f) Lucena City Police Station, g) City Legal Office, h) Metropolitan Trial Court in Cities, i) Barangay 4, j) Quezon Provincial Police Office, k) Department of Interior and Local Government, and l) Public Attorney's Office.

II. Preliminaries

The Dialogue was called to order at 8:30 in the morning with Ms. Lea E. Liabres, Information Officer I, CHR IV-A, as the program facilitator. This was followed by the Prayer and singing of the National Anthem.

A. Welcome Message and Discussion of the Background of the Activity



To commence the activity, Atty. Mila J. Punzalan, Attorney IV, CHR IV-A delivered the welcome message. She started her message by thanking the participants for attending the said activity and introduced the delegates from the CHR IV-A Regional Office. Thereafter, she explained the background of the study. She averred that the FGDs are part of a bigger project, known as the GBV observatory project which aimed to view the human rights situation here in the country. Likewise, the project seeks to review the role of stakeholders and different agencies of the government to address GBV. More specifically, its main objective is to map GBV referral mechanisms being practiced and to look into the effectiveness of these in terms of availability of facilities. As well as to identify challenges and barriers in handling GVB cases. We should not look on what is wrong but

² Attached is the Attendance Sheet for the 23 August activity.

we have to look for how it can be improved. Hence the importance of the inputs that may be contributed of each participant.

B. Role of the CHR as Gender Ombud by Ms. Aileen



Consequently, Ms. Aileen C. Edades, OIC-Promotion Division, CHR IV-A, discussed the role of this Office as Gender Ombud in the country. Last August 14 was the 10th anniversary of the enactment of RA 9710 or Magna Carta for Women. What is now the effect of the law in terms of women discrimination? Why is it that there are still news about women abuse and cases filed in our office on women and children abuse? Under RA 9710, CHR was mandated to be the Gender Ombud of the Philippines. Under the Philippine Constitution, the Philippines must comply with the International Committee on Human Rights as signatory on the Convention of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. So, the Philippines passed RA 9710 or Magna Carta of Women in 2009. It said that the government has an obligation to monitor the international obligation on human rights, and CHR as the national human rights institution. The Commission is committed to ensure the privacy of all human rights and fulfillment of equality. The law aimed to eliminate discrimination against women and other gender identity. Under the Magna Carta of Women, CHR is mandated to ensure that no one should suffer on the basis of ethnicity. One of the characteristics of CHR is to ensure non-discrimination on all forms.

She explained that based on 1987 Philippine Constitution the Philippine Government is mandated to comply with international treaty obligation of human rights. As an NHRI, the CHR is committed to ensure the primacy of all human rights and to their protection, promotion and fulfillment on the basis of equality and non-discrimination. Under gender equality, it is their mandate to promote full employment of human rights

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to all human beings of all sexual orientations and gender identities. Under MCW, their mandate is that no one should suffer discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, gender, age, language, sexual orientation, race, color, religion, political and other opinion, national, social or geographical origin, disability, property, birth, or other status as established by human rights standards.

This was followed by the discussion of the mandates and tasks of this Office as Gender Ombud, i.e. investigated cases involving violation of women's rights, conduct promotional activities and policy advisories involving the rights of women, among others.

C. Women's Rights Situationer Report

Subsequently, Atty. Punzalan gave a glimpse of the human rights situation of women in CALABARZON through the discussion of the Women's Rights Situationer Report. The report included data for the first semester of the month vis-à-vis the report for 2018 and the data from the previous years.

III. Focus Group Discussion Proper

A. Lucena City (23 August 2019) – Queen Margarett Hotel Downtown



1. *Gender equality situationer in the city / municipality*

- a. *Basic demographics: for instance gender disaggregated data on per capita income, life expectancy, labor force participation, literacy available?*
- Collection of data on the said topics is on going and available.
 - Big and detailed report.
- b. *Apart from national laws and international human rights instruments (e.g. CRC and CEDAW), what important gender equality policies in place at the local level? How are these policies operationalized by local agencies?*
- GAD code
 - Children code for updating
 - Implementation of GAD, Magna Carta and VAWC from national to barangay.
- c. *Experience with GAD mainstreaming and GAD budgeting (in general and specific to the agency)*
- All information are segregated when it comes to GAD trainings.
 - DepEd GAD plan reviewed and monitored with Regional Office when it comes with GAD.
 - Other barangay didn't know how to utilize the budget and other agencies know how to implement.



2. *Gender-based violence (GBV) in the city/ municipality (in relation to gender-based violence)*

- a. *What are the common forms of GBV received by the service provider?*
- Commonly rape has the highest number of filed case
 - VAWC and rape
 - Lack of financial support
 - Barangay - domestic violence like battered wife
 - Sexual abuse of youth
 - Psychological, physical and verbal abuse
 - Physical abuse
 - Economic abuse common to family

- Depression
- b. Which groups of women are most affected by the GBV forms identified (e.g. urban poor women, women farmers, women with disabilities, on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity)?
- Anybody could experience GBV.
 - Data are disaggregated and not classified
 - Urban poor women
 - Women farmers
- c. 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?
- Privacy and confidentiality are compromised.
 - Due to the strong influence of social media, GBV cases are being sensationalized, privacy is lost and identity of victim is known. This resulted to psychological effect on the victim.
 - Cases between spouses/VAWC cases.
 - Root cause of violence is poverty, broken family and drug addiction.
 - Barangay - drug related problem
 - Taken everything on line like cyber bullying, cyber harassment.
- d. What does the service provider consider as difficult case/s? Why is this?
- Rape cases where minors are common victims.
 - Human trafficking
 - Sexual abuse because it is very sensitive to protect parties involved.
 - Discrimination
 - Drug related problems
 - Domestic violence
 - More on evidence in general when it comes to GBV.
- e. What are the challenges/barriers experienced in:
- i. Reporting and investigation (PNP/VAW Desk) Prosecution and legal assistance (Prosecutor's Office, PAO, VAW Desk)
- Barangay have limited function.
 - Victims just want barangay to mediate rather than file a case.
 - Child friendly barangay but do not have friendly person/s on the VAW desk.
 - Not everyone well oriented regarding the procedure.
 - Some victims not able to get justice because they do not know what to do.
 - Victims do not pursue the case and do not want to cooperate with the police.

- Inconsistencies of the victim/complainant, victims are hesitant in filing case because they are financially dependent to the suspect or respondent.
 - Lack of interest of the victims due to financial matters, limited knowledge of lack awareness of the community on anti-VAWC law.
 - Lack of witness - family members are commonly involved.
 - VAWC separate process.
 - Recidivist, home and shelter and barangay protection level.
 - Some of the barangays have limited information for VAWC and they can't easily specify the problem of VAWC. They don't file a case and they want to talk with barangay captain. It must be documented for the discussion of problem.
 - Child friendly but some of them are not having a friendly approach. They are not oriented of the process.
 - The family are not cooperative in giving information for the problem or case with the government. In the school, the teachers give intervention for the students.
- ii. *Prosecution and legal assistance*
- VAW desk limited only in filing cases, but sometimes filing of case is late due to lack of manpower.
 - Victims withdraw the case because the perpetrator happened to be the husband or breadwinner.
 - Some victims are uncooperative attending hearing just once.
 - Delayed release of financial assistance resulting to withdrawing of case because the victim lacks financial resources.
 - Centralized release of financial assistance resulting to delays in the release.
 - Stigma to victim.
- iii. *Providing support services (MSWDO, CSWDO, WCPUs)*
- Lack of manpower in the barangay level.
 - Lack of communication from different government agencies. Sometimes case is passed on from on agency to another.
 - Lack of awareness on referral system on how to file a case. Do not know where to file the case or their point of entry.
 - Lack of awareness of victims on the point of entry.

- Lack information and education campaign because some women are uncooperative in the activities of the barangay.
- Lack of proper documentation. There are some forms used by one government agency but different in another agency. It is better if we have one forms used in filing GVB case.
- Lack of cooperation from the victim. Some victims do not want to cooperate with PNP and later on only PNP files the case.

f. *What are the best practices?*

- Having a support group.
- Synchronized system for the victim so that she will not undergo the same process repeatedly.
- Intake sheet - information dissemination, referral system to respective office like CSWDO, legal office.
- Having support group.
- Having a multidisciplinary team
- It must be synchronized.



3. *Flow of case management (specific to the service provider)*

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

- Legal support/assistance in filing a case.
- Barangay - PAO, police
- Filing of child abuse cases.
- Filing of complaint then forwarded to proper authority.
- From a referral to help desk.
- From PNP to VAWC desk.
- School - filing of complaint, conduct investigation, then it will have a report, disciplining authority and formal charge.
- Look for immediate need/s of the person then referral.
- Talk to front desk officer then referral.

- b. *What are the available services for GBV survivors provided by the service provider?*
- Filing of case
 - Legal support
 - Advise
 - Documentation
 - Counseling and referral to different agencies
 - Livelihood program, legal support and counseling from CSWD.
 - Financial assistance from LGU.
 - Alternative learning from DepEd.
- c. *Which among the available services offered by the service provider are most often accessed by women?*
- Legal support
 - Advise
 - Documentation
 - Referral to different agencies seeking for assistance.
 - Livelihood
 - Alternative learning system
- d. *What are the possible factors affecting their choice of what to access?*
- Economic factors – financially deficit
- e. *At which point in the process of GBV intervention do women often exit the formal helping system of the service provider?*
- Lack of witness
 - Lack of cooperation
 - After being referred to proper authority.
 - Recovered upon assessment.



4. Documentation

- a. *When does documentation of GBV complaints start (e.g. upon contact with the agency, when the woman agrees to file a case; even "informal" consultations included)?*

- Rape cases
 - Complaint
 - Medico legal
 - "Salaysay"
 - Temporary restraining order
 - Upon referral and filing of complaint, we have forms that victims accomplished.
 - The BJMP help desk has a form.
 - Referral
 - Filing of complaint
- b. *Related to above, could we ask for a copy of forms used for this, if any? Or what are the standard information asked of the woman who access the service being provided by the agency? (are current forms ethnicity and disability segregated?)*
- Client information (including income)
 - "Salaysay"
 - Transfer to in-charge attorney
 - Help desk form
 - Intake sheet within 48 hours it must be forwarded.
- c. *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?*
- Electronic database or system provided
 - MIS
 - It depends at CSWD.
 - Five years in the barangay
 - Others 10-20 years
 - It must be secured unless the authorized person will allow information to be filed and stored because it is very confidential. Some were stored for 5 years while others are kept for 10 years.
 - Have manual for easy access of cases.
- d. *How are these information used? Does the agency publish summaries or reports of cases received?*
- Furnishing monthly reports to PAO.
 - We furnish copy upon request.
 - Not published in the website.
 - Upon request of LGU for case hearing.
 - They publish the summaries and report of cases in the court or in the local government.
- e. *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?*
- Limited, persons can only access come some information especially for those persons involved.
 - Attorney to client confidentiality.

- Intake sheet - referral system
 - Barangay reporting on VAWC cases
 - Person/s involved in the case.
 - Only authorized person to maintain confidentiality.
 - Persons involved in the case and authorized person. The number of cases are allowed to have an access.
- f. *Which information are made public and how at the local level, if at all (e.g. website, publications, statistics are used in community education)*
- Basic personal information
 - Client information
 - Report and statistics



5. Recommendations

- a. *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?*
- Citizen's charter
 - Information dissemination at the barangay level
 - Awareness campaign on VAWC
 - Clients are well oriented or properly informed
 - Seminars/talks/lectures
 - Counseling
 - Awareness campaign for all.
 - To have multi-disciplinary team
 - Awareness campaign
- b. *Are there information on gender-based violence and women's human rights which you feel women vulnerable to GBV need to have more access to?*
- Information dissemination at the barangay level.
 - Awareness campaign on VAWC
 - Awareness for their rights
 - Advocacy and campaign
 - Conduct seminar

c. *Other recommendations for the CHR as the gender ombud as mandated by the Magna Carta of Women.*

- We are not aware of CHR financial assistance, therefore it should be made known to others.

6. *Additional Comments of Other Participants*

- a. We (CSWD) have self education sessions for families of GBV survivors. We believe that preventive is better than cure.
- b. Partnership with DepEd regarding advocacy for awareness.
- c. CSWD coordinates with enforcer, NBI or Crime before talking with the family. Then we forward documents to PNP.
- d. Conduct of consultation dialogues.

7. *Comments from CHR*

- a. Quezon province has the highest number of referrals and we appreciate assistance from any government agency.
- b. You can report to CHR any form of abuse and CHR will coordinate with the victim for financial assistance.
- c. With regard to awareness, CHR can be invited for a seminar or training on human rights. The Commission is strengthening its information dissemination on human rights.

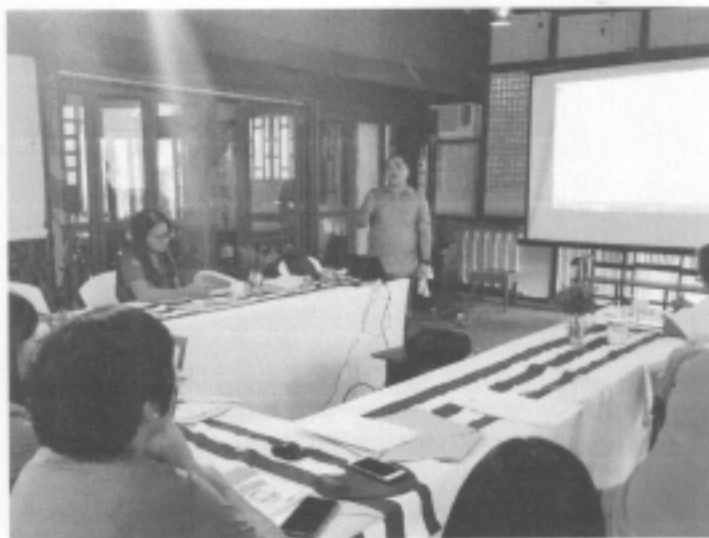
B. **CSOs: San Pablo City (19 August 2019) - Casa San Pablo**



1. *Gender equality situationer in the city / municipality*

- a. *Basic demographics: for instance gender disaggregated data on per capita income, life expectancy, labor force participation, literacy available?*
 - LSPU disseminates gender-related information.
- b. *Apart from national laws and international human rights instruments (e.g. CRC and CEDAW), what important gender equality policies in place at the local level? How are these policies operationalized by local agencies?*
 - There are policies mandated in all government agencies in the city and NGOs.

- They participate in GAD programs, institutional and government initiatives in the implementation of policies.
 - Actions done are based on GAD policies.
 - Barangay participates through the VAWC.
 - There is VAWC in the barangay who handles grievances where both parties discuss the issues for three hearings. If both parties did not agree within the three hearings, it will be endorsed to the court. However, there is a need to conduct information dissemination so that all barangay constituents will understand the law and their rights.
- c. *Experience with GAD mainstreaming and GAD budgeting (in general and specific to the agency)*
- People handling GAD programs extended in offices including schools under city government.
 - NGOs such as church, Red Cross
 - There is an available funds for GAD. There are person-in charge of GAD in all government offices in the city including schools and NGOs.
 - In the barangay, three hearings are held if there are case filed then it will be forwarded to the court. Sometimes, there are cases being settled in the barangay.
 - Barangays have GAD funds
 - We do have access to GAD funds.
 - Not just a requirement of DILG and LGU but they are established in all barangays.



2. *Gender-based violence (GBV) in the city/ municipality (in relation to gender-based violence)*
- a. *What are the common forms of GBV received by the service provider?*
- Sexual harassment
 - Child abuse

- Cyber bullying – due to social media
 - Domestic violence
 - Physical abuse of mother
 - Children are forced to work by parents to sustain their drinking spree and gambling.
 - Feud between husband and wife
 - Attempted rape
 - Peeping tom
 - Attempted rape of a child by a mentally challenged and now he is in jail. The case was forwarded to the CSWD.
- b. *Which groups of women are most affected by the GBV forms identified (e.g. urban poor women, women farmers, women with disabilities, on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity)?*
- Women with disability – they are sometimes misunderstood. Deaf and mute cannot express themselves.
 - Urban poor because they lack knowledge about GBV and how to file a case or complaint. Therefore, there is a need to enhance information dissemination.
 - Rural women – they are not interested, thus they lack knowledge on how to file complaint and don't even know their rights
 - Indigent people are discriminated.
 - Marginalized group – fear of peer humiliation and lack financial access.
 - Sometimes, we forget about men. They also experienced discrimination and LGBTQ as well.
- c. *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?*
- Economic – financial constraint or no money to file a case.
 - Socio-political – because complainant have no connections in government, they believe that nothing will happen with their complaint.
 - Cultural – fear of acceptance to society which they belong, thus they do not complain or if they are able to file their complaint, they become uncooperative and later on withdraw the case filed.
 - Discrimination, sexual harassment, cyber bullying, domestic violence.
 - Use of social media and media – some are fake news while the media exaggerate the news. They only want to report news that are popular.
 - Trends – complaints are exaggerated or fake news spread in the barangay. Therefore, there is a need to assess information.

- But in general, there is improvement in the level of awareness regarding women's rights.
 - There are few cases filed therefore, there is a need to know why there are few cases filed.
- d. *What does the service provider consider as difficult case/s? Why is this?*
- Person with disability - due to language barriers they can't express themselves while person in authority do not understand sign language.
 - Domestic violence victims do not trust anybody anymore.
 - Rural women - lack of knowledge and weakness about their rights. They do not find time to understand their rights.
 - Indigenous people - there is discrimination and language barrier because there are persons in authority who do not understand them due to difference in dialect. Sometimes, they are excluded and considered outsiders.
 - Lack of financial resources - fear that they don't have enough money to pursue the case.
 - Afraid to file complaint
 - Lack of knowledge on the process of filing complaint.
 - No proper communication - some cannot speak English well, therefore, there is a gap in reporting cases.
 - Women are not aware of the process and they don't know where to file complaints.
- e. *What are the challenges/ barriers experienced in:*
- i. Reporting and investigation (PNP/VAW Desk) Prosecution and legal assistance (Prosecutor's Office, PAO, VAW Desk)
 - Victims have fear of rejection, discrimination and humiliation - they feel that they are simple people, therefore no one will pay attention to them.
 - Victim afraid to report complaint due to victim blaming.
 - Due to fear of rejection, complaints are seldom filed. They are afraid that nothing will happen with their case filed.
 - Victim believes that there is discrimination if victim has no connections.
 - Victim faces humiliation because she is accused of having fault.
 - Government is not persistent in information dissemination.
 - Victims do not know what to do and where to file their complaints.
 - Fear especially if you belong to marginalized group because of humiliation from peers or neighbors.

- Fear due to financial constraint because financial resources not enough to pursue the case.
- ii. *Prosecution and legal assistance*
 - Difficulty in handling complaint due to lack of personnel.
 - Financial constraints - although victims are being assisted by CHR/PAO they still need funds to pursue the case. They do not believe that CHR or PAO will help them.
 - Emotional and psychological effect on the victim - not easy to file complaint because attention of barangay constituents will be focused on them. Victims are not prepared emotionally and psychologically. They also feel that the whole barangay will talk about them.
 - Not aware of the process and to where to file a case.
 - Since CWSD is not operating 24 hours and with the 24 hour protocol, there is a gap before a case reaches them and the deadline is not met. Therefore, there is a need for CWSD to operate 24 hours.
- iii. *Providing support services (MSWDO, CSWDO, WCPUs)*
 - Lack of assistance in preparing so many documents, thus complainant become less interested in filing a case.
 - Victim has no capability to file complaint or they lack knowledge on the process on how to file a case or complaint.
 - Some barangays not knowledgeable handling this kind of case.
 - Lack of knowledge on how to file the case. Due to so many documents to prepare, they failed to submit some documents. We recommend that online filing should be done in the future.
 - Financial assistance - slow to submit required documents due to financial constraint.
 - Continuing financial assistance - legal process runs a long time that victims especially the marginalized group are drained of financial resources.
 - Not everybody is aware that there is CHR in the city that could help them. They do not know where to go and how to file a case. Therefore, CHR should conduct massive information campaign to disseminate human rights especially for women and children.
- f. *What are the best practices?*
 - There is VAW Desk and it is functional, however there are confusions as to who are trained officials in the barangay.

- Barangay officials handle cases such domestic violence, drug related and sexual harassment.
- VAWS officials practice proper procedures and keep records. However, some barangays that are not active because they don't have key person charge. In addition, there are confusion in terms of trained officials. They should not just attend seminars but they should be able to handle GBV cases especially in the barangay level. In the barangay, they do not handle cases regarding family matters like husband and wife fight, astray child, neighbors' fight and drug related cases. Sexual harassment issues mostly happened inside the family and VAWC handles such cases.
- In terms of reporting, due process is being followed in handling cases with respect to GBV.
- Legal assistance
- Sustained legal assistance and VAWC in every barangay, GAD office in every government agency.
- Established barangay VAWC and LGU VAWC.



3. *Flow of case management (specific to the service provider)*
 - a. *What are the entry points for GBV cases to come formally into contact with the government services?*
 - When filing complaint from barangay (VAW) to CSWDO to PNP.
 - b. *What are the available services for GBV survivors provided by the service provider?*
 - Livelihood program but not all survivors are aware of such program.
 - Counselling
 - Free legal assistance
 - Women protection program
 - Not everybody are of services provided by CHR.
 - Some survivors are not aware of the abovementioned services.

- c. *Which among the available services offered by the service provider are most oftenly accessed by women?*
- Free legal assistance – provision of lawyer
 - WPP of CHR
 - Counselling program for trauma cases.
 - Financial assistance especially for victims or those who files complaints.
- d. *What are the possible factors affecting their choice of what to access?*
- Long process, thus victim withdraws the case.
 - Lack of information how to access support and who can help them.
- e. *At which point in the process of GBV intervention do women often exit the formal helping system of the service provider?*
- Settlement of cases filed or “allegro,” but no closure of case filed.
 - Legal process takes a long time that some victims would preferred settlement of case filed.
 - When victims learned that they are many document requirements.
 - Some cases filed resulted to settlement because of the long process and too many document requirements. Because of this, there is no closure of the case to the victim.
 - Because of long process, victim give up, got tired of attending the hearing and no more money to spend, thus they withdraw the case filed.
 - Complainants withdraw their complaints. However, the case can still prosper under RA 11313,
 - Complainant afraid to submit proof and evidences due to fear that others not involved may have access to the information.
 - Sustain legal assistance and VAWC, LGU because laws are good but not strictly implemented, therefore not sustainable.
 - Hindrance in assessing justice or legal remedies.
 - After filing a case, complainant failed to attend the hearings.
 - Some are not aware that there is CHR in the city, thus they could not access justice.

4. Documentation

- a. *When does documentation of GBV complaints start (e.g. upon contact with the agency, when the woman agrees to file a case; even "informal" consultations included)?*
 - When a victim files a complaint.
- b. *Related to above, could we ask for a copy of forms used for this, if any? Or what are the standard information asked of the woman who access the service being provided by the agency? (are current forms ethnicity and disability segregated?)*
 - Barangay has a logbook for their documentation.
 - Barangay should first forward the case to CWSD.
- c. *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?*
 - VAWS officials practice proper procedures and keep records. However, some barangays that are not active because they don't have key person charge.
- d. *How are these information used? Does the agency publish summaries or reports of cases received?*
 - Court hearings
- e. *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?*
 - PNP and the Court
- f. *Which information are made public and how at the local level, if at all (e.g. website, publications, statistics are used in community education)*
 - For court hearings.

5. Recommendations

- a. *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?*
- Strict implementation of GBV and women human rights be accessible to students and school employees, barangay and LGU constituents.
 - Clear process on how to report and decide on the case.
- b. *Are there information on gender-based violence and women's human rights which you feel women vulnerable to GBV need to have more access to?*
- Massive information on GAD.
 - Different rights that you are privilege of as human being.
 - Confidentiality should be sustained regarding submitted complaints and evidences because some victims are afraid that their complaints and evidences will be known by others not connected in the case.
 - Confidentiality of submitted complaints and evidences.
 - Massive information on GAD to all gender. Some are not knowledgeable of their rights or become abusive of their rights.
- c. *Other recommendations for the CHR as the gender ombud as mandated by the Magna Carta of Women.*
- Massive information for all men that women have their rights.
 - Equality of rights for men and women, persons with disability, senior citizens and LGBTQI++.
 - Sustain legal, VAWC and LGU assistance.
 - Laws are good but not strictly implemented. When implemented, it is not sustainable.
 - There is a need for information dissemination.
 - Invite key persons and disseminate information to the barangays.
 - Many constituents are not aware of the existence of CHR in the city.


- There is a need for information dissemination and reporting in helping victims.
- All of us should be concerned in protecting human rights of each other.
- More access to financial assistance.
- The need for confidentiality and trusted person once evidences were submitted to CHR. How sure once evidences were submitted it will remain confidential and will not be known to others that are not involved in the case.
- General public need to have more access to massive information campaign on GBV. Other are not aware of economic violence.
- Assistance to rape victims because they are traumatized when they are asked to tell their stories repeatedly.
- CHR should reach out to the 80 barangays in the city.
- Each barangay should have a key person who will discuss women's rights.

6. *Comments from CHR:*

- a. CHR agreed that victims are afraid of filing GBV case because is victim blaming.
- b. Rape victims that are deaf and mute were having difficulty to express themselves while investigator do not know sign language. In court, there is also no interpreter.
- c. Rural women are not aware of their rights, thus CHR will ensure information dissemination.
- d. We agree on re-filing of case of de-enfranchising.
- e. We released last year a policy on victim blaming because we should not blame the victim because what was committed on them is a crime and therefore we should not blame the victim.
- f. It is true that deaf and mute victims has a problem of expressing themselves especially if they were asked to give a narrative of what happened. It is hard to understand them if there is no interpreter.
- g. One the Commission's advocacy is to educate all women on their rights because rural women are not aware of their rights. We believed that if everyone is aware of their rights, no one will be abused.
- h. It is sad to note that many residents of San Pablo City are not aware of the existence of CHR in the city. Therefore, it is a challenge to the Commission how to reach all residents of the city.
- i. The real issue is information dissemination and reporting cases and how to help the victims.

- j. If CSWD is closed, you can file the case to the police station in the women and children desk catering to cases involving women and children. However, the problem is not everybody knows the process.
- k. We are happy to hear that there is barangay here without report of GBV but we have to look into the possibility that they are not simply filing a case.

Submitted on this 21st day of October 2019 at San Pablo City, Laguna.



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