

# Documentation Report

The Focus Group Discussion was attended by Mayor Joel M. Ventura, Municipal Mayor of Sibuco, an ABC officer, Ms. Fatima Ayesha Yahiya and Ms. Layda A. Amilasan from MSWDO and two members of the Local Council of Women. The FGD was facilitated by Mr. Daniel S. Paculanang and Mr. Ron Ventus, from CHR 9. Although the PNP failed to attend said FGD as they are still handling a case during such time, after the FGD the CHR 9 conducted a KII to the PNP-WCPD instead including the GAD Focal/Executive Secretary of the Mayor who was also not in attendance during such time. Hon. Mayor Ventura expressed his gratitude to CHR 9 for extending their services to them. He ensures that VAW-C desk are open and functional even during this time of Pandemic but expressed his concerns as to the knowledge of his constituents on their rights and laws especially on GBV, considering that they lack program in the information and dissemination on GBV. Their programs as of the moment are geared towards prevention of the spread of COVID 19 and the infrastructure development of their road networks. In fact, the recorded cases of COVID 19 mostly are Locally Stranded Individuals.

Mr. Ron Ventus explained the rationale and objectives of the activity. The FGD on Legal Referral mechanism on GBV is a program conducted by CHR every year and that they would identify one LGU per year to conduct said activity. The activity aims to assess the GBV referral mechanism in place by a certain LGU and the findings of the CHR would not prejudice the LGU itself but rather the CHR 9 will work with the LGU to improve its referral mechanism on GBV towards a victim-survivor centered services. Mr. Daniel Paculanang expressed gratitude for welcoming the CHR 9 and supporting its program. He further added that All LGU faced problems on GBV and each LGU has different issues and challenges faced in dealing with GBV. CHR 9 identified the Municipality of Sibuco as it is known that most of the population or if not, all are members to an IP community. As such, CHR 9 would like to look into GBV in the IP community.

## **Gender Equality Situationer in the Municipality of Sibuco**

All respondents signify that their records are disaggregated with basic demographics such as sex, age, address, and religion. As of the moment the Municipality of Sibuco has no ordinances in relation to GBV or GAD but Mayor Ventura expressed that he will try to work on it with the Local Council. Again, all respondents state that they were able to utilize their GAD Budget. The Mayor even stated that his office was able to attribute 20% of their budget to GAD as one of his main program in this trying times is livelihood program to women, where his office grants financial support/assistance to Women Organization for their livelihood program. Even with the realignment of their budget to address the COVID 19 Pandemic and cater the LSI and ROF the Municipality, he was still able to continue its program on its barangay health services and other social services including the livelihood program as it is identified as a Sustainable program where the beneficiaries are empowered to support themselves in the long term.

## **Gender-based violence (GBV) in the Municipality of Sibuco (in re to GBV)**

The common forms of GBV in Municipality of Sibuco are the following: economic abuse, “pagbubugbog” and rape. As they have observed, there is an increase of rape cases prior to the pandemic and most of the GBV cases victims are women farmers and are members of an IP tribe. According to MSWDO, almost all of the cases pass through the IP settlement system of their respective tribe. This was corroborated by the ABC President. Accordingly, if ever the case reached the Barangay or the PNP there is already an IP Settlement, and it is endorsed to the respective Office where it is filed. The ABC President explained further that IP settlement can be availed of depending on the gravity of the case. It is noteworthy, that according to MSWDO they have a problem also on teenage pregnancy but most of which leads to Marriage as it is allowed in their culture.

The challenges faced by Sibuco in addressing GBV did not change even with the pandemic. Their main area of concern as of the moment is the victim’s access to justice as most of their road are still under developed, although the Mayor reiterated that they are already working on it. As of the moment, in some areas construction is ongoing but he also identified that given the fact Sibuco has vast geographical area with untouched natural resources there will be Barangays that will have to wait before their road network will be developed. Given such circumstances it is a big challenge to the victim-survivor to access to justice, as reporting such cases would take a great deal of effort and time on their end. If and when they were able to report the case in to PNP, inquest proceedings are held in MCTC Sindangan, Zamboanga del Norte which is about 6-8 hours of travel via Zamboanga City. Although there is an alternate route which would take them half of the travel time such road network is not yet accessible as of the moment as it is thick with mud or rock and/or land/rock slide is prevalent in the area. MSWDO also encountered an instance where victim-survivor lacks legal documents such as valid ID’s and birth certificate, considering most of the victims are farmers they are not aware of the importance such documents or how to secure one. MSWDO further emphasized that they do not have shelter for victim-survivor, they have to send the victim to DSWD Rehabilitation Center in Polanco, Zamboanga del Norte which will entail again about 8-10 hours of travel. Given also that the victims are indigents who have no legal documents such as ID and Birth Certificate which are necessary for their referral in the shelter, their remedy as of the moment is to apply for a baptismal certificate. Financial constraints also play a big factor for the victim-survivor to report the case or not. Given the time, effort and cost they need in reporting the case they would rather choose to earn a living. The average fare for the “habal-habal” is around P100.00 as it is the only means of transportation in the area.

According to the PNP-WCPD Sibuco and as observed also by MSWDO there are no increase of GBV case during the pandemic but is alarmed over the increase of rape cases, even during the ECQ they were able to record a case of rape. Lintangan and Malayal are the identified Barangay in Sibuco were most of the rape cases were reported, as per PNP records for 2020 they were able to record and file 6 cases of rape. The sad reality is as per PNP most of the mothers or partners of the perpetrators side with the suspect rather their child (victim). As such it creates, a fear that “balikan sila ng suspect.” On that account the Local PNP-WCPD and even the

GAD Focal Person shared that there may be cases that are unreported and victims that are yet to be heard.

As of the moment the LGU intervention on the matter is to provide free transportation services for the victim-survivor, they even donated police vehicles to the PNP, Social worker and Brgy. Staff assist in the filing of cases, and if necessary medical certificate are free. The Local PNP also shared that they will conduct a house-to-house campaign to disseminate information on GBV and encourage to report such case.

### **Flow of case management**

The most accessible or preferred point of entry for GBV cases is through their tribal leaders under their IP settlement system. In fact, as per MSWDO it is estimated that 90% of the case are settled under their respective IP settlement system. If and when the case is not settled or is settled and the aggrieved party is not satisfied with the settlement, the case will be forwarded to the Barangay or the PNP. The high prevalence of settlement would directly be linked considering that almost all are Indigenous People who adhere to their culture and tradition of first trying to reach a settlement through their tribal leaders or Panglima according to their IP settlement system and if aggrieved that is the only time, they would report the case in their Barangay or the Police.

According to MSWDO services were still available even during the pandemic and most often victim-survivor would avail the free transportation services given by the LGU.

### **Documentation**

They have available data on GBV and submit regular report on VAW cases to the DILG. The MSWDO will consolidate the report from all the Barangay and the submit said report to the DILG.

### **Recommendations**

All of them recommended for an extensive promotion and advocacy program on Gender Based Violence in their Municipality, considering that majority of the population have no idea on what their rights are and legal remedies available to them. They emphasized that although VAW-C Desk officers are capacitated on GBV but as of the moment they do not have programs directly for their constituents to inform them about Gender Based Violence. The respondents also ask for the support from the CHR 9 to provide them with IEC Materials related to GBV so that they may distribute it to their constituents. Further, they would like also to seek technical support from CHR 9 and other agencies to aid them in drafting GBV related policies to include GAD Code, Anti-Discrimination Ordinance and other policy to better their GBV referral mechanism.

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Documenter

**Pictures during the FGD:**



*CHR 9 Promotion Officers with Mayor Ventura and an ABC Officer*



*CHR 9 Promotion Officers presented Certificate of Appreciation and tokens including IEC Materials to all respondents.*

