

# **Making the GAD Budget Gender-Responsive at the Local Government Level**

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*This study reviews the executive and legislative policies for the GAD budget in the Philippines and examines issues that preclude the full enforcement of the GAD budget law at the LGU level. It explores how the practical and strategic gender needs of low-income Filipino women can be better addressed by the effective and effectual implementation of the GAD budget policy.*

## **Introduction**

Because of systemic gender asymmetries – in wealth, income, power, decision-making, access to and control over economic and social resources, in the division of labor, in roles, opportunities and constraints – women's needs and interests differ markedly from those of men's. The discrimination, exploitation, marginalization, oppression, and subordination that ensue from these gender asymmetries make deliberate action to change women's condition and position imperative. How can both the practical and strategic gender needs of low-income Filipino women be met by the effective and effectual implementation of the Gender and Development (GAD) budget policy at the local government level?

The GAD budget policy, which mandates all departments, bureaus, offices and agencies to set aside 5% of their total budget for gender and development concerns, was institutionalized in 1995 under the General Appropriations Act. E.O. 273 (1995) mandates agencies, including local

government units (LGUs), to allocate funds for the implementation of a GAD plan. The Quezon City (QC) GAD Code (2004) requires the appropriation of 5% of the Annual Development Fund for the city's various departments.

At present, women's and other social movements must still actively negotiate and make claims for the rightful and equitable use, and for the release of the 5% GAD budget of LGUs. The experiences of women's organizations in their attempts to access the GAD budget have revealed the weaknesses of the GAD budget policy and its implementation. This study reviews the executive and legislative policies for the GAD budget and examines issues that preclude its full enforcement at the city and barangay levels in Quezon City, Philippines. The purpose of this research is to determine how the utilization of the current 5% mandated GAD budget at the local government level can be maximized.

## **Methodology**

Key informant interviews were conducted with officers of the Quezon City Gender and Development Resource and Coordinating Office (GADRCO); a budget officer of the Quezon City government and the GAD Focal Person of one barangay<sup>1</sup> in Quezon City. A focus group discussion was conducted with a participant from the GADRCO and representatives from various non-government organizations including the Institute of Politics and Governance, Alliance of Progressive Labor, Tala Estates Settlers Foundation, the Center for Popular Empowerment, Welga ng Kababaihan, and Womanhealth.

## **Key Concepts**

### **The Gender and Development (GAD) Approach to Women's Development**

The Gender and Development(GAD) approach, which is also known as the 'empowerment approach' or 'gender-aware planning', is concerned with both 'women's material conditions and class position, as well as the patriarchal structures and ideas that define and maintain women's subordination' (Connelly,

Li, MacDonald, & Parpart, 2000: 62). Its focus is not on women alone, but on the relationships between women and men, and 'on the interconnection of gender, class, race, and the social construction of their defining characteristics' with the view of meeting short-term practical needs and changing structures of subordination (Connelly et al., 2000: 62-3).

In the 'Guidelines for the Formulation, Implementation, and Monitoring and Evaluation of Gender and Development Codes' (2008) issued by the NCRFW and the DILG (2008), GAD is defined as:

a development perspective that recognizes the unequal status and situation of women and men in society. Women and men have different development needs and interests as a result of said inequality, which is institutionalized and perpetuated by cultural, social, economic, and political norms, systems, and structures.

### Gender Issues and Concerns

Based on the same guidelines, gender issues and concerns are said to... 'arise from the unequal status of women and men...societal expectations and perceptions, which are reflected in and perpetuated by laws, policies, procedures, systems, programs, projects and activities of government, (and) could impede women's full development and their participation in and equal enjoyment of the fruits of development.' (NCRFW-DILG, 2008: 56)

### Gender Mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming is the Philippine government's strategy for making government agencies and local government units work for women's empowerment and gender equality. It refers to 'the process of analyzing existing development paradigms, practices and goals; assessing the implications on women and men of existing and planned actions in legislation, policies, programs, projects and institutional mechanisms; and transforming

existing social and gender relations by consciously integrating gender concerns in development goals, structures, systems, processes, policies, programs and project' (NCRFW-DILG, 2008: 56).

#### Practical Gender Needs (PGN)

Practical gender needs are identified by women given their socially accepted roles in society. They do not challenge the gender division of labor and women's subordinate position, though arising from them. They are responses to immediate perceived necessities within a specific context and are concerned with living conditions such as water provision, health care, employment - basic needs required by the entire family but identified as the 'practical gender needs' of women (Moser, 1993: 40). Practical gender needs relate to women's 'condition' or their material state or 'immediate sphere of experience' (Connelly et al., 2000: 143). Policies to meet practical gender needs focus on the domestic arena such as income generating projects, housing, and basic services (Moser, 1993).

#### Strategic Gender Needs (SGN)

Strategic gender needs are needs women identify as a result of their subordinate position to men in society. They vary according to context and relate to the gender division of labor, power, and control, for example legal rights, equal wages, women's control over their bodies (Moser, 1993). Strategic gender needs relate to women's 'position' or social and economic standing relative to men (Connelly et al., 2000: 143). Meeting strategic gender needs help women achieve greater equality as they challenge existing roles and women's subordinate position. This is a feminist, bottom-up struggle that promotes women's 'real' interests (Moser, 1993: 39).

The distinction between practical and strategic gender needs is crucial. While we recognize that it is important that women's practical gender needs be met, it is in addressing their strategic gender needs that the strategic gender interests of women's empowerment and gender equality can be achieved. Under

Moser's (1993) empowerment approach, these strategic gender interests can be met via bottom-up mobilization around practical gender needs. As such, programs, projects, and activities (PPAs) that address women's practical gender needs can serve as entry points for conscientization on their strategic gender interests, and for mobilization and organized action to achieve these.

### **Gender and Development (GAD) Budget**

The GAD Budget is the total amount provided in the General Fund Budget of the LGU to finance PPAs under the GAD Plan. At least 5% of the LGU's total annual appropriation is earmarked for GAD-related activities and attributed to the existing PPAs of the LGU budget. As such, the GAD budget is not an additional and separate fund to be provided by the national or local government.

### **GAD Plan**

According to the DBM guidelines, a GAD Plan is a gender mainstreaming tool that consists of PPAs of agencies for a specific time period that address gender issues and concerns of their respective sectors and constituents. It specifies the targets to be achieved and performance indicators.

### **GAD Focal Point**

A GAD Focal Point is a mechanism created in all government agencies and LGUs to ensure the preparation, implementation, and monitoring of GAD Plans. It is composed of a Chairperson and members from key offices and gender-aware groups (NCRFW-DILG, 2008).

### **Policies Related to GAD Planning and Budgeting**

The Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of R.A. 7192 (1992) or the Women in Development and Nation Building Act requires that 'external

and domestic resources be increasingly mobilized for utilization by national and local government agencies to support programs and projects for women'. At least 5% of overseas development assistance (ODA) funds, to be subsequently increased to 10-30%, is to be allocated for programs/projects that mainstream/include gender concerns in development. (Sec. 6 (a) (b) (2), IRR RA 7192; de Dios, 2008: 2)

R.A. No. 7192 and Executive Order (E.O.) No. 273 (1995), which approved and adopted the Philippine Plan for Gender-Responsive Development (PPGD) 1995-2025, mandate government agencies and LGUs to institutionalize GAD in government by incorporating GAD concerns in their planning, programming, and budgeting processes. The allocation of funds for the implementation of a GAD Plan is a statutory requirement that must be complied with by provinces, cities, municipalities and barangays.

The 1995 General Appropriations Act (GAA) was passed into law with a general provision in the GAD Budget Policy (Section 27) mandating all departments, bureaus, offices, and agencies to set aside at least 5% of their total budget appropriations for projects designed to address gender issues. This GAD budget provision has since been retained in subsequent General Appropriations Acts.

Joint Memorandum Circular 2001-1 issued by the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), Department of Budget and Management (DBM), and the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW) provides the 'Guidelines for Integrating Gender and Development (GAD) in the local planning and budgeting system through the formulation of GAD plans.' With the aim of assisting LGUs in responding to gender issues in their locality, the guidelines require LGUs to formulate GAD Plans and to integrate these in their Local Development Plans. The guidelines were formulated to ensure that appropriate funds from internal/local sources, foreign donors, and other external funding agencies are allocated for the implementation of GAD PPAs and include a mechanism for monitoring and implementation by the DILG and the NCRFW.

To provide clearer and more operational concepts on mainstreaming GAD in planning and budgeting, Joint Memorandum Circular 2004-1 was issued by the NCRFW, DBM, NEDA. This superseded JMC 2001-1 and provides the Guidelines for the Preparation of GAD Plan and Budget and Accomplishment Report to Implement the Section on Programs/Projects Related to GAD of the General Appropriations Act (GAA). Two salient features in the guidelines are: the responsibility of oversight agencies in preparing GAD plans and budgets which exacts greater accountability in ensuring that agencies adequately address GAD concerns, and the mainstreaming of GAD activities into the existing monitoring and evaluation system of agencies (Second Philippine Progress Report on the MDGs).

Joint Memorandum Circular 2007-1, issued by the DILG, DBM, NEDA, and NCRFW, and which supersedes JMC 2004-1, provides the Guidelines for Gender and Development (GAD) Planning, Programming and Budgeting, Implementation and Monitoring. It aims 'to assist LGUs in addressing gender and development issues and concerns' and 'to provide guidelines and procedures for identifying, implementing, and monitoring GAD programs, projects, and activities.' It also specifies that funds must be ensured for the implementation of LGU GAD PPAs, and identifies minimum strategies for the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of GAD PPAs and gender mainstreaming, as well as who is responsible for these in the LGUs. There is also a section on the roles of oversight agencies.

JMC 2007-1 clarifies the ambiguities in JMC 2001-1, specifying a focus on 'women-specific and gender-related issues and concerns in the locality' and stating that PPAs must address 'women's empowerment, gender equality, women's human rights needs, issues, and concerns.' JMC 2007-1 requires that the identification of GAD PPAs must follow the synchronized local planning and budgeting calendar. Quezon City is the pilot city for the Rationalized Local Planning System (RLPS) which synchronizes GAD budgeting with the rest of the budget process.

In 2004, the QC government enacted SP-1401, S-2004, 'an ordinance providing for a city gender and development code and for other purposes.' The QC GAD code specifies the appropriation of 5% of the City's Annual Development Fund for the effective implementation of the ordinance. A 2005 memorandum from the City Director to all the barangay captains in QC requires the implementation of gender and development projects and activities to be funded by 5% of the Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE) allocation.

### Policy Critiques

While the GAD budget policy - in providing that at least 5% of the total budget of all government instrumentalities be earmarked for GAD plans designed to address gender issues - appears beneficial to women, it runs the risk of projecting women's issues as marginal, if we consider that percentages allocated to certain purposes can signify its relative value and importance. This might also seem to obviate the need to allocate larger amounts to PPAs that are needed by women, because of apparent compliance with the mandated 5%. The 5% guaranteed GAD budget can also give the appearance of mere tokenism.

Even the mandated 5% of the total budget has not been followed in QC policies. The section on Appropriation in the QC GAD Code states an appropriation of 5% of the City's Annual Development Fund for the implementation of the ordinance. The memorandum to all the barangay captains from the City Local government Operations Office specifies funding of 5% of the MOOE allocation for GAD projects and activities.

There is a fear that with the GAD plan subsumed under the RLPS for LGUs, gender and development issues would again be marginalized. Questions have been raised as to whether the LGU implementors have been adequately capacitated on the integration of GAD in LGU management and on the anchoring of GAD-related efforts on international commitments such as the CEDAW. It is felt that even the formulation of the GAD plan is still not fully understood by the LGUs.

## **Implementation of the GAD Budget Policy in Quezon City**

### **At the City Level**

The city budget is distributed among the various departments and offices in the city government. The items that enter the GAD budget emanate from them and the clients served by these departments. Amounts not utilized by a department/office can be shared with another.

All GAD program proposals from constituents must be submitted to the Mayor and copies furnished to the Gender and Development Resource and Coordinating Office (GADRCO) so they can be followed up and pushed for by this office. The Mayor endorses proposals to the GADRCO – it is the GADRCO that directs these proposals for partnership with the health or social services departments, or for appropriation from the Mayor's fund, for example.

There are budget guidelines developed by the City Administrator and the City Budget Office. Budget calls are done in the third quarter.

The Mayor does not automatically allocate 5% of local government budget to GAD PPAs; allocations are based on submitted program and project proposals. As such, the amount attributed to GAD PPAs can exceed 5%. In the last utilization reckoning, P 549.94 million, or 37% of the total budget (program-based), based on the post-analysis of budget, was said to be allocated to GAD concerns.

The key players involved in the GAD planning and budgeting process are the heads of budget and planning, the City Administrator, heads of departments/offices, and the GAD Council (the City government's GAD Focal Point). The heads of departments/offices are the approving authority of the departments' plans/programs. The department/office heads submit PPAs to the City Budget Office and the Finance Committee (a technical working group composed of the heads of planning, finance, and budget). The PPAs also go through the City Planning Office, the Office of the City Administrator, and lastly to the Mayor and the City Council for approval. When

the budget reaches the City Council, it is said that the Council is more concerned about figures, not specific programs. After the general budget is approved, the GADRCO identifies the GAD PPAs and consolidates these into a GAD plan.

The GAD Council is in charge of oversight in terms of the GAD budget enforcement. The GADRCO, which is responsible for providing technical and administrative support to the GAD Council, also monitors the implementation of the GAD budget policy.

In terms of the GAD budget policy advocacy and implementation, the GADRCO is a technical working group that primarily assists departments, agencies, offices, and the GAD Council in the City government and secondarily, the barangays. It capacitates and mentors key people in how to access, advocate, implement, plan, and endorse GAD planning and budgeting.

#### At the Barangay Level

Barangay Bagbag garnered the barangay recognition award for Best Gender and Development Practice for 2008 in Quezon City for its gender sensitivity training project and community-based monitoring system (CBMS). Its GAD office was started in 2005. The barangay has a GAD ordinance.

In the GAD budget breakdown for the years 2006-2008 (P782,000, P2.74 Million, and P6.97M, respectively), the largest expenses of Barangay Bagbag went to the purchase of a motor vehicle in 2006 (43.5% of the total), a fire truck, motor vehicle, and sound system in 2007 (76.6% of the total) and a dump truck in 2008 (93.2% of the total). In their annual gender and development accomplishment report, PPAs include Barangay Day and an effective traffic and security scheme during All Souls' Day.

The 5% GAD budget is not allocated outright because GAD concerns are said to be also addressed by other projects. If these other projects are included in the total, expenditures exceed 5%.

Barangay gender-disaggregated statistics revealed the need for economic empowerment of community women and the barangay zeroes in on basic needs, livelihood and skills training. Training sessions on gender sensitivity, anti-VAWC awareness campaigns are also conducted. The barangay has an office that addresses VAW cases. Health check-ups such as breast examinations and pap smears are provided.

The GAD focal person crafts the GAD plan and budget, and the deliberation and decision-making is done by the barangay captain and the barangay council. There have been no accessibility problems because the GAD focal person is the wife of the barangay captain.

There are no solid women's organizations in the barangay so there is no participation by women's groups in the GAD planning and budgeting process. In workshops conducted during gender summits participated in by barangay leaders, top priority needs are surfaced. Data are also gathered from the ground and needs ascertained based on these data. The key players of the planning and budgeting process are the barangay captain, the GAD focal person, and the GAD office staff.

### **Lessons from Quezon City**

The implementation of the GAD budget policy typifies that of most other policies and/or laws in the country: the creditable intention is not matched by similar actualization. There is a gap between the policy and its effective implementation that must be bridged. The GAD budget policy is meant to be gender-responsive, but this is not always translated into practice. What follows is a summary of the lessons from the research.

### **Pitfalls of the GAD Approach and Gender Mainstreaming**

Because it is women who face additional obstacles brought about by their gender, the focus must be on women when we refer to 'gender issues' and

'gender and development.' Corollary to this, given the small percentage allocated to GAD concerns from the total budget of LGUs, it is imperative for GAD PPAs to directly address the practical and strategic gender needs of only women. There are concerns that the term 'gender' has been co-opted in development practice. Reddock (2000: 38) argues that 'gender' has gained widespread acceptance because it includes men in the analysis and reassures them 'that their interests and concerns are not being overlooked or undermined by an excessive focus on women.' It has also gained political acceptability because of its 'more neutral and objective sound' compared to the term 'women' (Scott 1989, in Reddock 2000: 39).

Critiques of the use of the concept of gender from movement and theoretical perspectives have emerged. Gender relations are characterized by male dominance and female subordination; gender PPAs are supposed to address and redress this. From a movement perspective, there is the fear that the use of gender is rendering women invisible again, with the marginalization of the problems and struggles of women and the feminist movement (Reddock 2000: 13). While using the term 'women' presupposes an awareness of women's oppression and subordination, the term 'gender' is used to refer neutrally to both women and men (Arnfred, 1999). The language of gender has also depoliticized women's issues in development - gender is no longer the subject of struggle but rather a technical problem to be planned and monitored - in the process hiding from view the underlying inequalities in power between women and men (Arnfred, 1999).

Even the practice of gender mainstreaming has been critiqued. It is said that by ignoring an overt analysis of power, it makes invisible the systemic problems and terms of integration of women, and negates the possibility of any 'transformative potential' (Charkiewicz, 2005: 2-3). Its agenda is mere integration into existing economic, political, and social structures, and does not question how these structures reproduce and perpetuate oppression of women. From a more progressive perspective, gender mainstreaming is limiting.

### Difficulty in Accessing the GAD Budget

The GAD budget policy is not automatically followed in practice. Its implementation is, to a large extent, dependent on the local chief executive (city mayor, barangay captain). Access to the GAD budget is easier if the local chief executive is gender-responsive. However, there are still many key officials who need to understand the significance of this policy. The presence of strong women's organizations that are aggressive in making demands on the GAD budget is a facilitating factor, but these actors must still contend with and maneuver around local politics.

### Lack of Interest in Women's Concerns and Resistance to the GAD Approach

There is still a lack of interest on women's issues which are still viewed as insignificant. GAD budgets can be allocated merely in order to appear compliant with the law, and this compliance is not necessarily accompanied by a commitment to the GAD approach to women's development. Some barangay captains and councilors react to the 5% GAD budget negatively, seeing it as an unnecessary claim on already limited resources.

More than a lack of interest on women's issues, there is also resistance to the GAD approach and its advocacy of women's empowerment and gender equality – from both men and women. Many are still of the belief that this is unnecessary, and that meeting the practical gender needs of women must be the only priority.

### Lack of Knowledge About What GAD Is and What GAD PPAs Are

Despite the specific reference to the unequal status between men and women in formal government definitions of concepts in which the term 'gender' is used, there appears to be common confusion and lack of understanding with respect to its development applications with respect to women. In the case of the barangay cited earlier, there are expenditure items that do not appear to specifically

and directly target the practical and strategic gender needs of women arising from their socially- and culturally-ascribed subordinate position in society.

More basic than the lack of adequate understanding about GAD is the lack of consciousness on gender sensitivity, from the barangay to the highest city officials. Local chief executives, who play a critical role in the utilization of the GAD budget, act on the basis of their own appreciation of the GAD approach, which may be erroneous or insufficient. Further, GAD PPAs given priority reflect the leanings and level of progressiveness of key officials. One manifestation of this is the presence or absence of projects that address sexual and reproductive health and rights issues.

The ambiguity attendant to what the GAD approach is and what constitutes a GAD project accounts for actual GAD budget items such as construction expenses unrelated to gender concerns such as streets and overpasses; sports development programs; services for prison inmates; livelihood programs for men; a dump/ fire truck, sound system, and motor vehicles for general use. In the consolidation of the GAD plan, in order to banner GAD achievements, PPAs that were not initially conceptualized as a GAD PPA are reported as such, as long as some connection to women can be conjured. LGUs can and do justify expenses as also serving women's, though not their gender, interests. Inspection of reported expenditures on GAD PPAs of selected LGUs show that they can easily surpass the minimum 5%, including as they do contentious PPAs that do not principally serve women's interests and needs such as those for Barangay Day and effective traffic and security schemes. LGUs can simply look for ways in which they can fit women into these projects and pass them off as GAD beneficiaries.

In planning and designing PPAs for women, the feminist supposition that all issues are women's issues can be carelessly translated into the view that any PPA will ameliorate women's condition and position. While we do not question that women can also potentially benefit from the construction of a multi-purpose hall, for example, we question why the already limited 5% GAD

budget must finance an expenditure that redounds to the benefit of the entire barangay and not exclusively women. Can't expenditures such as these be budgeted from the remaining 95% of the LGU budget? Is it not more equitable to use scarce local government resources and comply with the mandated 5% GAD budget by funding PPAs that are primarily geared towards women, such as the provision and competent staffing of a barangay health center, a day care center (which will alleviate their reproductive burdens), or a VAW (violence against women) facility?

GAD PPAs must address women's lived and daily realities relating to their marginalization and subordination, and the power relations that buttress these. As such, they must adhere to the affirmative action precept. The GAD PPAs must be directed towards meeting not only women's practical gender needs, but also their strategic gender interests of gender equality and women's empowerment. GAD PPAs should never be just an afterthought, identified only in order to be able to report them as such in the GAD Plan.

#### Absence of GAD Focal Points

As a corollary to the lack of interest on women's issues, resistance to the GAD approach, and lack of knowledge and clarity on what GAD is - not all LGUs have GAD focal points. This is reflective of the continuing low priority given to or non-recognition of women's gender-specific needs and concerns. Where there are GAD focal points, there is a wide unevenness in terms of knowledge and capability of the Chairperson and other members.

#### Absence of Continuity

When the leadership of the LGU changes, all gains made on the GAD advocacy can be wiped out if the succeeding leaders do not share the same commitment. Efforts must be made to capacitate key people who can ensure the continuity of the GAD advocacy despite changes in local government leadership and administration.

### Merely Addressing Practical Gender Needs is Insufficient

PPAs that address women's practical gender needs, such as livelihood and skills training, credit provision, maternal health and family planning services, day care centers, are necessary but insufficient in attaining the strategic gender interests of gender equality and women's empowerment. Purposive action is required to attain these; they are not automatically reached by the mere provision of PPAs that meet practical gender needs. These PPAs have to be conceptualized as entry points within the broader context of the GAD approach. Thus, they must be accompanied by training and capability-building on gender sensitivity and the GAD approach, by women's organizing, mobilization, and collective action. Conscientization (Freire, 1970) – learning to perceive economic, political, and social contradictions, developing a critical consciousness, and taking action against the oppressive elements of reality– is essential.

### No Bottom-up Mechanism

In barangays, there may be no women's organizations that can participate in and influence the GAD planning and budgeting process. However, the absence of organized women's groups should not pose a hindrance – even unorganized women should be given a voice, a meeting can be convened and community women enjoined to attend and participate.

The ethic of participatory governance must be embedded in the GAD planning and budgeting process. Community meetings must be facilitated wherein constituents can articulate their needs and interests, and their expectations from local government. Efforts towards grassroots organizing should also be done to increase the visibility and voice of low-income Filipino women, and to capacitate them to bargain effectively and gain access to and control over vital material and non-material resources. The design of PPAs must not only emanate from a participatory process that includes community women, they must also be purposively crafted and directed to meet their identified needs.

### Mechanisms for Monitoring and Evaluation Must be Strengthened

Barangays, city departments, and offices can be remiss in the accomplishment and submission of GAD budget and plans. This is another indicator of either the absence of or low priority given to GAD PPAs. The GAD budget seems to be the least prioritized and its inclusion still needs to be closely watched and monitored.

A tracking mechanism of all the phases of the GAD planning and budgeting process must be set in place: ensure that there is grassroots participation in the preparation of the GAD plan, that there is a budget allocated, that the plan is implemented. Women's organizations and civil society have a crucial role to play in this.

### Capacity-Building and Technical Assistance

Experience tells us that the GAD budget allocation is not automatically implemented, it must be pushed. Advocates of the 5% GAD budget must know and understand local government processes, how GAD planning and budgeting works in the City Budget Office and in the barangays, which offices are involved, in order to effectively advocate and monitor it. They must understand the budget framework and participate in the generation of the GAD plan and budget.

Barangays in Quezon City can link up with the QC GADRCO, the GAD Council, or with NGOs for assistance on what programs can be implemented in line with the GAD advocacy such GST, VAWC training, gendered Minimum Basic Needs programs, etc.

It is not only people from the barangays who should be capacitated with respect to gender sensitivity, the GAD approach and budget, and participatory governance. While the GADRCO has made strides in capacitating and mentoring key people in the city departments, offices, attached agencies and barangays on how to access, advocate, implement, plan, and endorse GAD planning and

budgeting, there are many stakeholders in city government to be reached, and so advocacy must be sustained.

### Spaces for Engagement in the GAD Planning and Budgeting Process

Mechanisms such as the QC City Development Council must be maximized by gender advocates in the GAD budget advocacy. NGOs and POs must look for windows of opportunity such as these to actively lobby and engage the city government.

### Advocacy and Cultivation of Relationships with GAD Champions

There must be sustained advocacy and cultivation of relationships with GAD champions, potential or actual. Improving and enhancing the understanding of GAD and gender-responsive planning and budgeting among key players must be sustained through workshops, training, seminars, etc. Persistent advocacy entails engaging influential people involved in the budgeting and planning process, coordinating and joining forces with them, and winning their endorsement. There must be strong NGO and PO support. These organizations should participate in the crafting of GAD programs and projects. There must be unity and cooperation among all the GAD advocates.

### Research on Women's Situation

Research on women's situation must be undertaken. Local situationers, gender-based indicators, and gender-disaggregated statistics are useful in the identification of gender issues and problems and the ensuing gender needs that must be incorporated into GAD plans and budgets.

### Creativity in the Use of the GAD budget

Efforts must be made to use the GAD budget in unexplored ways. One of such ways that can be explored is the provision of conditional cash transfers to

mothers or subsidies for women's social security contributions. Cash transfers may, for example, be conditional on their bringing their children to health centers for check-ups and immunization.

## **Ways Forward**

There is vast potential for enhancing and redirecting the use of the GAD budget. We identified a number of crucial elements in ensuring that the GAD budget is truly responsive to women's needs, transformational, and contributory to gender equality and justice. These include: the capacity-building of LGUs, women's and concerned organizations in gender planning, programming, and budgeting; the presence of empowered local groups pushing for reforms on a sustained basis; the presence of gender-aware champions from the barangay to the city government levels; the installation of systems, tools, and mechanisms to ensure the enforcement and implementation of the GAD budget; and, the presence of gender-responsive local legislation.

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#### **Endnote**

- <sup>1</sup> A 'barangay' is the smallest unit of government in the Philippines.