



# NDCP POLICY BRIEF

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## Gender and Development in NDCP : Internalizing the Meaning of Mainstreaming \*

### Introduction

The Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China in September 1995 was a landmark event that set the pace of women's empowerment. Built on the pillars of peace and equitable development, the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) was adopted unanimously by over 180-member states of the United Nations (UN), including the Philippines. Significantly, the concept of bringing gender issues into the mainstream of society was clearly established as a global strategy for promoting gender equality. The Conference on Women highlighted the necessity to ensure that gender equality is a primary goal in all areas of social and economic development.

In July 1997, the UN Economic and Social Council defined the concept of gender mainstreaming as:

*"... the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making the concerns and experiences of women as well as of men an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres, so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal of mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality."*

Aside from BPfA, other major international instruments that were crafted to address gender equality include the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination on Women (CEDAW)<sup>1</sup> and the Millennium Development Goals.<sup>2</sup> These paved the way to mainstream gender equality and address the plight of women in different parts of the world.

Over the years, it has been theorized and established that gender equality is a prerequisite for, rather than a result of, sustainable human development.<sup>3</sup> Hence, gender mainstreaming has become an essential strategy for attaining not only gender equality, but also sustainable human development as a whole.

Gender mainstreaming incorporates Gender and Development (GAD) perspective as a new development paradigm. GAD is focused on the social, economic, political, and cultural forces that determine gender roles. Among others, GAD is concerned on how differently women and men participate in decision-making, benefit from development programs, and control resources. It shifts the focus from exclusive concerns on women, to inclusive growth for women and men, as well as to their socially determined relations. Considered as an important aspect of good governance,<sup>4</sup> gender mainstreaming is a comprehensive development approach that ensures greater equity and justice for all.

The National Defense College of the Philippines (NDCP), as a government bureau with an academic façade, has undertaken promotional activities on mainstreaming gender and development in the College, the armed forces, and the defense department as a whole. For the last seven years, the NDCP has organized various GAD-related activities and programs, such as conducting symposia on women and formulating research studies on gender equality.

However, there has been a growing concern in NDCP whether gender and development has actually made an impact on the morale and welfare of concerned women employees in NDCP. Hence, did the past GAD-related programs, activities, and projects contribute effectively in addressing gender concerns equitably and consistently in NDCP? It is in this light that this policy brief aims to look into the progress and status of gender mainstreaming in NDCP, with the end view of unraveling the enduring issue of internalizing the true meaning of 'mainstreaming' in GAD.

### National Policies on GAD

In the Philippines, various policies on gender mainstreaming were enacted in accord with the ethos of human development. Primarily, these include the principle in the 1987 Philippine Constitution, which enshrines that: "the state recognizes the role of women in nation-building

\* This policy brief was prepared by Patricia Ann Ingeniero, with Ananda Devi Domingo-Almase, DPA as Editor.

and shall ensure the fundamental equality before the law of women and men.” Based on this policy principle, Republic Act (RA) 7192 or the Women in Development and Nation Building Act was promulgated in 1992 to promote the integration of women as full and equal partners of men in development and nation-building.

In 1995, President Fidel V. Ramos signed Executive Order (EO) No. 273,<sup>5</sup> which approved and adopted the “Philippine Plan for Gender-Responsive Development 1995-2025.”<sup>6</sup> The said E.O. envisioned a just and humane society that promotes gender equality and women’s empowerment, among other human rights.<sup>7</sup> Pursuant to EO 273, the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW) issued Memo Circular No. 97-01 that provided guidelines for all government agencies on the assessment and enhancement of their respective GAD Implementation Plans.<sup>8</sup> Focused on the advancement of women as a principal concern of development, the Memo aimed to fast track the institutionalization of GAD in all government agencies. This was proposed through the integration of gender-sensitized<sup>9</sup> measures in organizational planning, programming, budgeting, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation systems.

In 2009, RA 9710 or the Magna Carta of Women (MCW) was enacted as a “landmark legislation on women.”<sup>10</sup> The MCW seeks to eliminate gender discrimination through the recognition, protection, fulfillment, and promotion of the rights of Filipino women, especially those belonging to marginalized sectors of society. In view of RA 9710 and also of RA 7192, government agencies are directed to formulate their annual GAD plans and budgets, and allocate at least 5% of their respective budgets to mainstream GAD in organizational policies, programs, and projects.

Since 1994, the Philippine government has initiated gender mainstreaming strategies to implement gender policy through the NCRFW, now called Philippine Commission on Women.<sup>11</sup> In support of the country’s gender policy, various mainstreaming efforts of different government agencies have been undertaken towards a more gender-sensitive environment not only in the workplace but also in Philippine society. Progress towards gender equality and women’s empowerment in the country has sustained feminist engagement in and outside of government bureaucracies.

## **Policies, Programs, and Activities on GAD in NDCP**

In compliance to national policies on women empowerment and gender development, the NDCP issued Memorandum on the Creation of Focal Points for GAD on 6

June 1999. The Focal Point System (FPS) directed various divisions and staff of NDCP to be responsible for the creation and implementation of its GAD program, thereby institutionalizing the commitment of the College to gender and development. In 2000, the NDCP started organizing its annual GAD Plan and Budget to systematize the management of programs, activities, and projects for gender mainstreaming.

Several years after the issuance of the NDCP Memorandum on GAD in 1999, the College started conducting gender-related research and symposia only in 2006. However, the NDCP personnel had been attending various gender-related training programs, seminar-workshops, and fora in other agencies to develop the GAD focal point system in the College. Despite its slow progress, the NDCP became an institutional venue for various gender-related activities of DND and its bureaus, as well as of other government agencies. For instance, NDCP conducted the Human Resource Information and Education Seminar at the College, and the Human Resource Outreach Program outside NDCP.

In celebration of Women in the month of March, several big-event symposia were held by NDCP at its auditorium. Notably, the adopted symposia themes on women were as follows: “Magna Carta of Women, Philippine CEDAW: In support of the Millennium Development Goals” in 2011; “Women Weathering Climate Change: Governance and Accountability, Everyone’s Responsibility” in 2012; and, “Kababaihan: Gabay sa Pagtahak sa Tuwid na Daan” in 2013.

The GAD activities of the College were either *client-focused* or *organization-focused*. The *client-focused* GAD activities cater to the needs and benefits of NDCP’s clients. The students in the Master in National Security Administration (MNSA) course are part of the primary clients of NDCP as an educational institution. In the conduct of the MNSA program, GAD concepts were consciously integrated in the course modules and lecture discussions to raise awareness among students on gender issues, such as the role of women in governance and security.

Likewise, various gender-related research initiatives were administered by NDCP. In 2010, it carried out a pilot study about women entitled, “Integrating Women in the Military: An Exploratory Assessment in the Philippine Military Academy 2009-2010.” In 2012, the College also conducted another study entitled, “Gender Equality A Pursuit of Good Governance: Study on Gender Equality Issue in the Security Sector Workplace.”

The *organization-focused* programs, activities, and projects (PAPs), on the other hand, pertain to capacity-building, particularly to integrating the gender dimension in the functions of the institution. The organization-focused PAPs include the administration of GAD training programs and orientations, such as on gender sensitivity, use of non-sexist language, lawful privileges for women, gender planning and budgeting, management of GAD database, and other GAD policies and activities.

In 2008, the NDCP conducted a review and revision of its Standing Operating Procedures (SOPs) on personnel matters. The SOPs<sup>12</sup> include the following: Policy on Flexible Working Hours in the Government Service in SOP No. 1-2008; Policy to Work beyond Office Hours in SOP No. 2-2003; Policy to Render Overtime Services in SOP No. 3-2003; and, Policy to Leave Office for Official Business, on Official Time, or Emergency Cases in SOP No. 4-2003. The modifications in the said policies were made in recognition of the special needs of female employees who experience problematic monthly periods, and who are pregnant and breastfeeding. Male employees who assist their wives after giving birth are also given the privilege of leave. Both female and male personnel are also allowed reasonable flexible time, exemption from overtime work, and emergency pass.

In 2011, the DND issued Department Circular encouraging all officials and employees of the Department and its bureaus to use non-sexist language in official documents, issuances, and communications. This policy aims to promote gender-sensitivity in the bureaucracy by making conscious efforts to avoid implicit and explicit discriminatory language that is offensive to women.

## **Issues and Challenges on GAD in NDCP**

At face value, the NDCP may be considered as a serious advocate in mainstreaming gender and development not only in the College, but also in the DND, the armed forces, and other government bureaus. This can be seen from the conduct of various GAD-related symposia, seminars, and research by the College. However, it appears that the administration of the GAD-related policies have not been fully internalized in the planning system of NDCP.

### *On identifying GAD concerns*

In accomplishing the Annual Plan and Budget, for instance, the previous GAD Focal Point Committee (FPC) and Technical Working Group (TWG) found it difficult to comply with the technical requirements in documentary forms. One major problem faced by the GAD FPC and TWG was the identification of particular gender issues or

concerns as bases for the formulation of the PAPs in the Annual GAD Plan and Budget of NDCP. With this, it can be noticed that the past and current GAD plans were identical, as these were only “copied and pasted” for the lack of a more responsive program on GAD. Given this predicament, there is a need for strategic planning among the GAD FPC and TWG members who are involved in identifying the gender related goals and objectives in NDCP.

The agenda setting for GAD in NDCP must not just be handed down from the top, but also gathered and evaluated from actual experiences on the ground. This way, real and prevailing issues of discrimination against vulnerable women at the workplace will be documented and acted upon by the administration. This is essential not only in determining the focal and priority gender concerns in NDCP; but also in selecting appropriate courses of action to address the perceived problems, and implementing these consistently and judiciously.

Differing interpretations of “gender mainstreaming” and “gender issues” may create confusion in the planning process. Hence, NDCP must define how it understands concepts and concerns in gender mainstreaming in order for these to be translated into programs and development outcomes which are beneficial to women and men. Moreover, there must be a thorough understanding of the implementing guidelines on GAD Annual Plan and Budget in accord with national and international laws. The principles that the GAD policies profess must be internalized not only by the GAD FPC and TWG but also by all personnel in the College.

### *On the conduct of GAD Audit*

Since the promulgation of the NDCP’s commitment to GAD-related policies and programs in 1999, a gender audit has not yet been realized and conducted. For one, the absence in NDCP of a gender audit could perhaps be attributed to the status of its GAD FPC. The NDCP institutionalized the GAD FPS in 1999, but the DND issued a new circular in 2011,<sup>13</sup> providing for a different set of guidelines on the composition and functions of the GAD FPC. The Circular directed the second highest official in the bureau to be the GAD Chairperson, with the division chiefs as members of the GAD FPC. However, there has been no formal recognition of the new GAD Chairperson and other members of the Committee by the NDCP administration to this date. Thus, it is not clear whether a GAD FPC officially exists in the College, ergo, the ambiguous state of the NDCP GAD Program as a whole.

It must be noted that a gender audit is crucial in assessing the level of effectiveness of gender mainstreaming in the institution. Specifically, the audit aims to evaluate the extent of gender responsiveness of the

policies, programs, and projects of the agency; the level of gender awareness and competence of personnel; and the presence or absence of enabling mechanisms that support gender mainstreaming. It helps in determining policy gaps and enduring gender issues faced by personnel and clients of concerned agency. Hence, gender audit could have been the basis for the formulation of programs that have direct impact on gender responsiveness and development in NDCP.

## Conclusion

Mainstreaming gender policy in the public bureaucracy means developing a culture of respect for women, and the sensibility to their special conditions. It means creating a conducive environment where women have voice in the organization, and right to practice their profession without unreasonable censure and reprisal from male superiors.

In order to be a champion of gender and development in the defense department and the public sector, the NDCP must, first and foremost, be an exemplar of the values and principles of women's rights in its own institution. With this, the administrative leadership must be at the forefront of promoting a gender-sensitive workplace that will guard against abuse and discrimination of vulnerable women in the line of their duty and profession inside the academe. In the future, the College must have zero case of abuse and discrimination against women, especially of a female professor.

The credibility of any institution, more so of that with an academic character, lies in its sincerity to practice what it professes, beginning from the administration of its own employees. The propaganda for gender and development would only be a lip service if a reported case of violation of its very provisions and principles were compromised and undermined for the sake of institutional reputation.

Behind the public promotions, the success and progress of mainstreaming gender and development, especially in a male-led bureaucracy, is a long term process that entails serious introspection, implementation, as well as prosecution of reported violation.

On the whole, the evaluation of the effectiveness of government-funded programs and projects on GAD must go beyond sheer counting of gender-related events and activities that were conducted by concerned agencies. The evaluation must probe deeper on how traditional treatment and attitude on women by men has changed in the workplace; and on how well the morale and welfare of

female personnel have been uplifted by GAD related policies. Aside from the promotional symposia on GAD and the special privileges accorded to both genders, the real meaning of GAD must be internalized in the mainstream consciousness especially by men in power who interpret and execute the policies.

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*The views expressed in the policy brief do not necessarily reflect the views of the administrative leadership of the National Defense College of the Philippines. The readers are free to reproduce copies or quote any part provided proper citations are made. For comments and suggestions, please email [ananda.almase@ndcp.edu.ph](mailto:ananda.almase@ndcp.edu.ph) and [ingeniero.patricia@gmail.com](mailto:ingeniero.patricia@gmail.com).*

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## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly, is often described as an international bill of rights for women. Consisting of a preamble and 30 articles, it defines what constitutes discrimination against women and sets up an agenda for national action to end such discrimination.

<sup>2</sup> The third MDG focuses on promoting gender equality and women empowerment which include (1) ratios of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education, (2) share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector, and (3) proportion of seats held by women in national parliament. While having a goal focused for women, it is also evident that gender issues are present in all the other goals. Thus, addressing gender issues, which cut across all the goals, will effectively contribute to the attainment of the MDGs.

<sup>3</sup> Innes, Melissa, ed.. *Accelerating Change: Resources for Gender Mainstreaming*. Canada: Canadian International Development Agency, 2000.

<sup>4</sup> Innes, ed., *Accelerating Change: Resources for Gender Mainstreaming*, 26.

<sup>5</sup> E.O. No. 273 mandates agencies to incorporate and reflect GAD concerns in their agency performance commitment contracts, annual budget proposals, and work and financial plans. (See PCW-NEDA-DBM Joint Circular No. 2012-01.)

<sup>6</sup> The PPGD lays out development goals and strategies that will make gender equity innate in public programs and policies. It is a 30-year perspective plan that ensures women-friendly policies can take root and flourish despite the barriers posed by traditional attitudes and stereotyping. (Retrieved from <http://www.pcw.gov.ph/publication/philippine-plan-gender-responsive-development-1995-2025>)

<sup>7</sup> NEDA, PCW, and ODA. *Harmonized Gender and Development Guidelines for Project Development, Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.

<sup>8</sup> EO 273 also authorized the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW) to issue memorandum circulars in consultation with concerned agencies to facilitate the implementation and monitoring of the PPGD.

<sup>9</sup> Gender sensitization is the process of changing the stereotype mindset of men and women — a mindset that strongly believes that men and women are 'unequal entities,' and hence, have to function in a different socio-economic space. (Retrieved from

<http://www.drwa.org.in/vpage/PDF/Gender%20note-1.pdf>)

<sup>10</sup> Burgonio, TJ. "Magna Carta of Women finally a Law." *Philippine Daily Inquirer*. August 15, 2009. Accessed

<http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/inquireheadlines/nation/view/20090815-220369/Magna-Carta-of-Women-finally-a-law>

<sup>11</sup> Masilungan, Elena, ed.. *The Rationale Behind Gender Mainstreaming*. Manila: National Commission on the Role of Women, 2001.

<sup>12</sup> National Defense College of the Philippines' Disposition Form File No. 45-09 with Subject: Review and Revision of SOPs on personnel matters dated 19 February 2009

<sup>13</sup> DND Department Circular No. 03 dated 22 February 2011 with a subject "Guidelines on the Composition, Designation, Roles, and Functions of GAD Focal Point Committee at the DND Proper and its Bureaus."