

PART I:
Lived Experiences in
Gender Budget Initiative in
the Philippines



The Hilongos Experience



Introduction

Hilongos is an agricultural and coastal municipality in Leyte province in Central Philippines with a population of over 53,500, most of whom live on or below the poverty level. Eleven thousand households constituting the majority, earn incomes of less than P11, 000.00 monthly. More than half of its land area is planted to crops; thus, agriculture is a major source of income for 34% of its households. Hilongos is central to a cluster of five rice-producing municipalities. One-fifth of its 51 barangays is coastal.¹

The opportunity to make an impact on Millennium Development Goal No. 1 in reducing extreme poverty and hunger (by increasing harvests and staple food) is one reason for the choice of Hilongos as one of two project sites. The other was the perceived strong presence of civil society organizations,² foremost of which is the non-government organization known as WELFARE or the Western Leyte Foundation for Agro-Rural Entitles.

WELFARE was founded in the late 1980s for social development work in the rural areas of Leyte Island in central Philippines. Its target groups include landless farmers and agricultural workers, fisherfolk, rural women, children and youth who are victims of gender violence. WELFARE provides assistance and support services to people's organizations through capability building and leadership training, credit and livelihood, organizing, and advocacy on gender and environmental issues, structural reforms and genuine agrarian reform.

WELFARE's thrusts in gender and development include women's livelihood support, awareness raising and skills training, women's centers, gender and governance, and combating violence against women and children.

As with Sorsogon City, a female official at the top has championed the GBI project from the very start: Vice Mayor Altagracia Villaflor who started public service fifty years ago as a Municipal Health Officer fresh from medical school.³

Orientation: Sorsogon City and Hilongos teams are introduced to GRRB at the National Inception Workshop in late 2004⁴

Gender responsive and results based budgeting was first introduced to Sorsogon City and Hilongos stakeholders at a National Inception Workshop in November 2004 which discussed the issues, challenges and imperatives of GAD budgeting in the country, as well as strategies, tools and constraints in implementation. The workshop also sought to promote a sense of ownership and commitment among project stakeholders.

UNIFEM Program Director for Asia and the Pacific, Lucita Lazo noted that the Philippines has a tradition of mandating and law-making that leads to unfunded mandates, unlike

other countries with high implementation rates and corollary budgets, but without too many laws. She said that the UNIFEM Gender Budget Initiative (GBI) program covers projects in 21 countries, most of them at the national level. She added that GRRB is a tool for gender mainstreaming and accountability, a vehicle for women's participation; and it provides and asserts space for recognizing women's unpaid work and the care economy.⁵

Lazo said the essential logic of GRRB is framed in the following: *What is woman's share in public expenditures? What benefits does she claim?* She also introduced the results-oriented budget framework and the four requisites of gender-responsive budgeting: research (gender analysis), capacity building, policy advocacy and knowledge management (See Part II, input A.1.5).

Finally, she noted the continuing challenges to GRRB: demonstration of impact on women, engagement of local people–government and civil society, developing technical skills for gender analysis of budgets, gendering of budgeting processes, and upscaling and institutionalizing the gender budget as a tool for accountability and enhancing local governance.

NCRFW Deputy Director Lorenza Umali traced the evolution of the GAD budget policy from the 1987 constitutional provision ensuring legal equality between men and women and a 1991 law that allocated 30% of overseas development aid (ODA) to women's programs; to a 1995 executive order mandating the inclusion of GAD in annual budget proposals of national government agencies (NGAs); and finally, to the setting of a minimum 5% of NGA budgets for GAD, echoed later in a local budget memorandum for LGUs. Umali also discussed the strengths and weaknesses of the GAD budget policy, ending with the challenge to move gender budgets from 5% to 95%.

Umali noted that NGOs, especially at the LGU level, have clamored for retention of the 5% GAD budget because it has become an enforcing mechanism and tool for negotiation. However, she added, the move from 5% to 95% requires a framework that transforms the whole plan into a gender sensitive plan. She highlighted three features of gender analysis of budgets: the move from quota system to performance-based planning and budgeting; the conduct of a gender assessment of the whole agency's budget; and the "engendered" agency plans and budgets.

Later, it was observed that LGU bias for infrastructure projects seems difficult to reconcile with GAD projects; hardly any thought is given to their impact on women. Another observation was that an existing ODA-GAD network has developed guidelines on the gender-responsiveness of project proposals. Technical support, particularly from the NCRFW, is needed to help organizations access ODA funds with gender-sensitive project proposals (see Part II, input A.1.8).

Two case studies: Capoocan, Leyte and Cebu City

Mayor Marietta Porciuncula of Capoocan, Leyte presented the first case study based on GO-NGO partnership and financed by municipal and barangay GAD funds. The program was strengthened by an executive order mandating the GAD program and thus localizing national GAD policy mandates. It enhanced women's participation in reactivated barangay development councils (causing a shift from infrastructure to social service programs), formulation of a five-year municipal GAD strategic plan, and installation of GAD mechanisms such as GAD focal teams and persons, *Bantay Panimalay* (family watch) and GAD resource center.

Genevieve Makinano of Cebu-based *Lihok Pilipina* Foundation focused on its *Bantay Banay* program which is a community-based initiative to combat domestic violence including cases of rape, incest and gender abuse. *Bantay Banay* now covers eight regions; and with continued advocacy by *Lihok Pilipina* and other women's NGOs, has dramatically raised the GAD budget allocation of Cebu City and its barangays. *Bantay Banays* interventions have made a difference not only in the budgeting process but also in policy making with the enactment of several gender-related city ordinances in the past few years (see Part II, inputs D.1 and D.2).

Project rationale and GRRB framework

Project manager Florencia Casanova Dorotan explained that a UNIFEM/NCRFW project reviewed the six-year implementation of the GAD budget policy and the role of the 5% GAD budget resulting in: a policy appraisal report; a project proposal to improve formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the GAD budget policy; and a conceptual framework for a parallel project at the local level.

The policy appraisal report findings were: agency budget and gender budget dichotomy; non-harmonization of GAD budget with performance-based budgeting; unfunded mandates of government; and inadequate participation of civil society organizations in gender and mainstream budgeting. Dorotan stressed that the need for more and better use of resources for human development and to meet the country's commitment to the MDGs would strengthen the GAD budget and ensure that gender is mainstreamed in the entire project cycle.

Dorotan summarized the project's three-point strategy as follows:

- Assessment of the gender impacts of local government policies, budgets and expenditures; of the DOH programs on maternal and women's health; and of the DA programs on agriculture;
- Identification of entry points to strengthen GRRB; and
- Proposing LGU-specific indicators to measure gender performance of health and agriculture budgets

Project consultant, Rosario Manasan said budgeting starts with the formulation of an executive agenda or a local development plan, which is then subjected to gender analysis. A results-oriented plan, policy and budget are performance-based and must focus on outputs and outcomes rather than on inputs. Gender concerns should be integrated in the definition of program outputs and performance indicators.

Manasan presented a table outlining the three categories of government expenditures and how they can be viewed from a gender perspective. These categories are: gender-specific or targeted expenditures; non-targeted or general expenditures; and equal employment opportunities for women in the public sector. She also illustrated how the tools could be employed to create sectoral outputs in health and agriculture (see Part II, input C.1).

Project technical officer Evangeline Lopez briefed the three groups (Hilongos, Sorsogon City and NGOs-POs) on workshop guidelines and a project logical framework or log frame (see Part II, input A.1.9).

In a critique of the workshop plans, the need for a gender analysis was underscored: to determine who should be trained in what; to help identify priority issues; and the bases for lobbying for gender budget allocations. Lucy Lazo pinpointed female productivity as a strategic issue to meet the MDG goals of raising incomes and reducing hunger and poverty. She raised the following questions to guide the analysis:

- Disaggregate data on level of income (differentiate between incomes of men and women).
- Is women's low productivity due to their differential access to and differential control over production resources (i.e. land, capital, information technology, markets)?
- What should be the strategy to address these productivity issues, e.g. mobilization of idle land?
- Do you have the political will and practical material resources to correct social (gender and ethnic) inequality?
- How will the gender budget be used as a tool to correct social injustice and discrimination?

A signing of the Pledge of Commitment among various stakeholders capped the workshop conference to attain the goal of developing and implementing GRRB in local gender budgeting.

Introducing GRRB to the LGU and barangays in late 2004

In September and November 2004, three project orientation sessions were conducted among municipal officials, barangay representatives and civil society organization (CSO) stakeholders, with officials of the six pilot barangays expressing their commitment to and support for the project. This process was likewise aided by the focus group

discussions (FGDs) and individual interviews undertaken in a number of barangays that, altogether, covered over 200 persons. One highlight was a rousing municipal-wide meeting of women on Dec. 10, 2004 to mark International Human Rights Day drawing 245 pilot barangay representatives, local legislators and WELFARE staff.

Phase 1: Assessment and planning in November 2004 with the MTWG drawing up initial plans

The LGU-CSO municipal technical working group (MTWG members appear in Annex 4) met to prepare for various activities to take place until mid-2005 that included a training needs assessment, barangay project orientation, FGDs in six pilot areas, gender analysis and gender sensitivity training, data gathering and presentation of research findings.

A third MTWG meeting in January 2005 prepared for various project activities in the first half of 2005, including the gender appraisal forum, gender and budget training for CSOs, joint LGU-CSO workshops, an LGU counterpart information drive on GAD budgeting in the six pilot areas, and the national evaluation conference in August 2005.

The meeting noted the following points: delay in data gathering and document review; shortcomings in agricultural services delivery which surfaced in the FGDs and dialogues with farmers; only two out of six pilot barangays had active CSOs in their areas; and how the municipal-wide meeting with women drawing some 245 participants strongly motivated the LGU and participants to push for women's empowerment in the municipality.

Data gathering in late 2004: Counting women and making women count

Data gathering for the gender analysis of agriculture in Hilongos programs, projects and activities (PPAs) was undertaken through secondary research and primary data-gathering.⁶

Data revealed three categories of agricultural work: male-specific, female-specific and that undertaken in common. In the aggregate, women's labor was as critical to rice and coconut farming and fishing, as men's labor. And though men took part in domestic work, women bore the brunt of domestic labor. As for community work, wives usually attend barangay meetings as husbands' proxies while men go to out-of-town training activities. Men are mostly leaders in barangays, farmers groups and mixed groups. Barangay health workers (BHWs) and barangay nutrition scholars (BNSs) charged with local level health care are overwhelmingly female.⁷

Phase 2: Capability building through training workshops and other activities

Training workshop on Gender Sensitivity and Gender Responsive Planning in December 2004

The Hilongos team is introduced to basic gender concepts and gender mainstreaming and learns to measure agricultural PPAs against the yardstick of gender responsiveness.

The foregoing activity sought to enhance the LGU's capability for gender analysis of agricultural programs and projects; to identify and assess gender issues in local government policies, budgets and social service delivery; and to provide skills in gender analysis and budgeting.

The first part of the training workshop dealt with basic gender concepts, gender mainstreaming, international mandates for gender as a global agenda, and GAD planning, budgeting and monitoring, including indicators. The second part presented partial research outputs on agricultural development interventions in Hilongos, the rice farming calendar in Hilongos, agricultural programs and projects in six pilot barangays, and a more detailed gender activity profile for rice farming.

Participants assessed the agricultural programs in terms of agriculture-related problems, gender problems, and plans and budgets. Gender issues related to lack of family planning among some couples, sex trafficking, early marriages and teen-age pregnancies. Problems under the third category pertained to unclear plans and budgets and their processes, and the lack of budget allocation for GAD programs.

In a plenary workshop, one participant said that the 2005 plan merely repeated the previous years' plans but a truly gender sensitive component would be rehabilitation of the Tagbaoto irrigation facility which, for many in the LGU, was the crux of the matter (see vignette following this chapter). Moreover, some municipal offices do not base budgets and sectoral plans on baseline data within their reach, and there is a lack of sectoral plans as bases for the annual investment and annual development plan.

Another issue is the lack of continuity in vision, mission and goals (VMG) and priorities with a change of political leadership, hence the need to review and institutionalize the VMG. Neither has the 1999-2001 strategic plan been assessed, nor has an updated strategic plan been formulated. Municipal plans and budgets are largely not gender sensitive and funds are inadequate to make them so. Plans and budgets are prepared without the benefit of barangay consultations.

In early 2005, four general priority issues had been identified: a non-functioning irrigation system (damaged from years of quarrying), low *palay* (rice grain) buying price by traders, loose organization of women's groups in the six pilot areas, and lack of alternative livelihoods.

Gender appraisal forum in February 2005

The forum drew nearly a hundred participants, the greater majority of whom were municipal and barangay officials (30% were chief executives), indicating a high level of local interest and commitment.



Oyen Dorotan speaking at Gender Appraisal Forum in Hilongos, Leyte, February 15-16, 2005

The forum sought to: share project overview and status report, gender analysis of agricultural PPAs, and agriculture budget and expenditure analysis (2001-04); review the LGU's planning and budgeting process for a shift to gender responsive and results based (GRRB) budgeting; and promote a sense of commitment among LGU and CSO participants towards project objectives. The gender analysis of Hilongos' agricultural PPAs (2001-03) included activity profiles for rice and coconut farming and fishing, and two access and control profiles for agricultural and fisheries programs.⁸

“Women are farmers and fishers, too”

The foregoing inescapable conclusion emerged from the activity profiles, a seeming revelation to most. It very quickly led to corollary observations: that agricultural programs, by and large, ignored women's needs on the flawed premise of female passivity; that women, not men, experienced multiple burdens; that women benefit from government only because they take pains to visit LGU offices; and there was a singular lack of sex-disaggregated data on program beneficiaries.

Thus, the gender study made four recommendations: undertaking a forum with women farmers to surface their issues and aspirations, and drafting a comprehensive plan addressing their needs; involving the community, particularly women, in planning and monitoring; formulating gender-sensitive tools for project monitoring and evaluation; and reactivating the GAD council.

A caveat on statistical correlation based on sparse data

The 2001-04 budget analysis noted the seeming correlation between LGU priority spending on agriculture and reduction of malnutrition in the municipality: from 23.1% in 2002 to 19.2% in 2003 and 14.8% in 2004. However, the report cautioned that improved nutrition rates could **not** be attributed to agriculture budgets due to the lack of data on intermediate output indicators such as food consumption, food production and spending on nutrition programs. Neither do the sparse data contain information on target clientele, improvement in productivity and increase in income.

As in Sorsogon City, the report noted two categories of PPAs: gender-specific or targeted expenditures for women's training or agricultural inputs for activities that engage women in a major way; and general or non-targeted expenditures.

The report said that some PPAs of the municipal agricultural office "appear to be related to the needs of women farmers", such as livestock dispersal, vegetable gardening and livelihood training. But inasmuch as service delivery is "gender blind", not differentiating between women and men and their varying needs, the aforementioned programs cannot be classified as gender specific. One final observation was that partial sex-disaggregated data on program beneficiaries indicate a large proportion of women but "the numbers are not always consistent with differing roles of men and women in agriculture".

Critical issues and recommendations: Moving from non-GRRB to GRRB, the primacy of local constituencies, and "unbundling" the budget

Among the consultant's recommendations to the LGU were: link results with budgets, establish baseline data and install a monitoring system for intermediate outputs and final outcomes, make more transparent budget and expenditure reporting formats, assess programs' cost effectiveness, and collect sex-disaggregated data.

The project manager stressed that this project starts and ends with local participants unlike other researches that end at the data-gathering stage, leaving local respondents to wonder "What has happened to that study?" The second point was the need to "unbundle" the budget vis a vis the LGU's contention that it had good nutrition programs in 2004 to merit the award on "best nutrition implementer in the region". The municipal agriculturist said he had brought along data on rice production and animal disease prevention for use in the study. One final comment concerned the priorities of the mayor which should reflect the needs of his or her constituencies, not just his or her own.

Reactivation of the Hilongos GAD Council in early 2005

Reactivation of the GAD Council formed in 1992 was essential to the GRRB project. Twenty-seven participants, mostly from the LGU,⁹ came to a planning workshop which tackled a host of gender-related issues including maternal malnutrition, the 5% GAD budget and funding difficulties, unreported rape cases, and a new law that broadened women's rights. Following this, they drew up a GAD plan which addressed the following issues: trafficking of persons, rape, child labor, risks faced by women (high risk pregnancy), and battered wives. Among the proposed actions and activities were enforcement of anti-trafficking and anti-domestic violence laws, information, education and communication campaigns, data gathering, counseling, and enhanced maternal care (see Annex 6 for the initial GAD plan).

Trainers' Training on Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights in March 2005

Although the Hilongos team had undergone several gender-related training sessions, a

further deepening workshop was deemed necessary to better equip team members for the tasks of advocacy, planning and budgeting from a gender perspective. The workshop drew nearly 30 participants, largely from CSO groups.¹⁰

That the sessions had in fact deepened participants' understanding of gender was evident in their comments including a recognition of the value of domestic work *vis a vis* paid "productive" labor ("a housewife must value herself and what she does from day to day"); a consensus on the responsibility of barangay officials to intervene in cases of domestic violence (mandated by newly-passed landmark gender legislation); and an affirmation of equality between spouses that precludes acts of violence committed by one against the other.

Participants begin to prepare a two-year municipal plan and budget in April 2005

Given the paramount significance of this municipal-wide activity, the vice mayor took pains to motivate participants, resulting in an LGU contingent of 36 traveling to Bohol island, the workshop venue, with another four participants following. The activity included inputs on local governance, CSOs as partners in local governance and development; VMG review and critical assessment; and workshops on CSO mapping, vision-mission-goals reformulation, environmental critical assessment and participatory planning.¹¹

Preceding the review of Hilongos' VMG was a socio-economic profile of the municipality (Annex 3). The penultimate activity was a critical assessment of both the internal and external environments of the LGU and municipality based on five key result areas (KRAs): governance, administration, social services, economic development and environment management.

Needs were prioritized according to the criteria of relevance, magnitude, importance and urgency. These priorities pertain to administration, governance, environment, social services, and economic development.

Reformulated Hilongos VMG Statement

Vision

We envision a healthy, peaceful, God-loving and empowered citizenry living in a progressive and ecologically-balanced community under a self-sufficient and gender-responsive governance.

Mission

To improve the quality of life of every Hilongosnon, the municipal government shall ensure the delivery of equitable and basic support services through shared, integrated and active people's participation.

Goal

To enhance the well-being of the community through the provision of an effective and efficient range of works, services and facilities that fulfills the needs and expectations of the community.

Participatory planning constituted the final activity addressing the questions of what, who and how shall we do it? The foregoing priority needs would be the basis for planning within a May 2005 to June 2007 timetable. The planning framework included KRAs, objective(s), activities, target outputs, responsible persons, resource requirements, sources (LGU, PO, others) and time frame.

Partial presentation of Hilongos agricultural plan and budget

Goal: To improve the delivery of agricultural programs and services to the people of Hilongos				
Focus	PPA	Gender Issue	GAD objectives	GAD activities
Organization – focused	Establishment of a gender responsive management information system (MIS)	Lack of sex-disaggregated data; reporting forms do not show disaggregation	To establish sex – disaggregated data To develop forms that are gender responsive	Organization and orientation of enumerators Conduct gender analysis and data gathering Review and revise existing forms
	Capacity building of all LGU officials and staff	Not all LGU officials are gender responsive	To raise the gender awareness of LGU officials and personnel	Conduct GSTs for all officials and personnel
Goal: To restore agricultural productivity of 742 hectares of rice lands in seven barangays				
Client – focused	Rehabilitation of Tagbaoto irrigation system	Non-productive 742 hectares of rice lands due to non-availability of irrigated water	To raise funds for rehabilitation of the irrigation system	Prepare project proposal for presentation to donors
Goal: To increase household income from P4,000 to 5,000 per month				
Client – focused	Lowland hybrid rice commercialization	Women are not considered farmers Women farmers are multiple-burdened	To include women as direct program beneficiaries To raise the level of gender consciousness of farmers	Conduct orientation seminar on hybrid rice commercialization Conduct gender orientation for farmers

In the open forum, concern was expressed over the need to rehabilitate an irrigation system serving 742 hectares of farms in the lowlands. A total budget of P50 million is required due to rising costs of labor and materials. The foregoing box is a partial presentation of the plan including goals and PPAs which are categorized into those that are organization/client-focused. Some parts of the plan were later critiqued as lacking a gender dimension.¹²

Training Workshop on Gender Responsive and Results Based Budgeting in mid-2005¹³

Hilongos participants rate their GAD structures and focus on irrigation rehabilitation in their annual plan and budget

In one workshop, Hilongos participants assessed their LGU according to a GAD mainstreaming evaluation framework. Over-all, the Hilongos LGU is ranked between stage 2 (installation of strategic mechanisms) and stage 3 (GAD application).¹⁴ The exercise is valuable because it holds a mirror to what the LGU already has as it seeks to make its agricultural PPAs gender responsive; and what it lacks.

The resource person remarked that implementation, not just creation and formulation, matters most in policy. By the same token, naming of a focal point carries no significance without action. Top management (mayor, vice mayor, local legislators and department heads) must be engaged because they have the power of decision-making. After the training sessions, a mechanism is necessary to check whether these have had real impact in terms, for example, of improved service delivery and gender responsive plans. Finally, indicators and results (in enabling mechanisms) should be both quantitative and qualitative.

Irrigation and gender

In another workshop, the Hilongos team chose as its PPA rehabilitation of the Tagbaoto irrigation system for the exercise on annual gender and development plan and budget (Annex 8). Gender concerns identified included economic deprivation, physical, sexual, mental, emotional and psychological problems, child labor, prostitution and increased school drop-out rate. Stated GAD objectives were to promote women's participation in economic development and to reduce discrimination against women.

The resource person noted that the gender concerns are too broadly stated and hardly express the gender issue. The problem statement lacks sharpness and the plan needs to be more specific, e.g., how many women are adversely affected by the damaged irrigation system? Target groups should be more specific so that activities and budgeting can be more precise. The plan needs reworking and must follow a logical frame. It also lacks coherence since it mixes up administrative with project-specific concerns (see foregoing box). Another resource person echoed the earlier comments, noting that the connection between the gender issue and objectives, targets and performance indicators was unclear. Likewise, the differentiation between the irrigation project as infrastructure and as a gender-related issue is not made.

Training Workshop on Gender Responsive and Results Based Planning, Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation (PIME) and Resource Mobilization in mid-2005¹⁵

The Hilongos team runs the gamut of the development cycle

The activity reviewed the LGU plans undertaken earlier, with the following pointers recommended to evaluate plans: linkage between plan, local and international mandates, baseline data as basis of plan; realizable targets and clear benchmarks; integration of gender responsive and results based concepts in planning (realistic and doable plans, simple indicators); and identification of core problem.

The Gantt chart, introduced as a monitoring tool to track whether targets are accomplished on time, was also recognized as a planning tool. As well, two categories of PPAs were underscored: organizational and client-focused. The former includes PPAs necessary for service delivery: people, systems and structures, facilities, equipments, technology and resources both human and material. The latter are services delivered to clients.¹⁶

The project manager stressed that the LGU's strategic goals should be anchored in the MDGs.¹⁷ One comment on the Hilongos plan was that the PPA should not only provide for orientation on the use of gender responsive forms but should also constitute a team responsible for designing, testing and perfecting the tool. Forms should be made more gender responsive. The municipal agriculturist said they were more interested in production, not in the forms, and would continue using forms without sex-disaggregated data, indicating deep-seated resistance.

Sharpening the gender dimension, surfacing the social dimension

Another comment was that the number of GSTs conducted, rather than a generic "skills training", was the proper indicator of an organization-focused plan. Bulk of the discussion, however, was on the related issues of quarrying and irrigation rehabilitation with the recommendation that client-focused programs should be divided into two: an advocacy program targeting quarrying and rehabilitation of irrigation systems.¹⁸ It was further recommended that instead of citing the number of hectares deprived of irrigation by heavy quarrying, data should be presented on the number of households displaced as a consequence of quarrying, thus sharpening the social and gender dimensions.

The PIME cycle: details are everything

Inputs followed including an overview of PIME and current LGU PIME practices, and generating interventions for improvement (focusing on data and information systems, organizations and structures, resources, policy, administration, coordination, financial management and gender responsiveness). Monitoring is a routine collection and analysis of information, planned and done periodically, while evaluation involves analysis of information collected through monitoring and makes judgments and decisions based on analysis.

In the open forum, the Hilongos municipal agriculturist asked why sex-disaggregated data were necessary, why the need for women empowerment and advocacy, when women and men were treated equally. More women than men are enrolled in agricultural schools, yet this is not raised as an issue.

One social worker replied that sex disaggregation of data is important in service delivery for information on how women have participated in government programs and how many have access to government services. Another participant said sex disaggregation enables her to pinpoint women's contribution to a given task or activity, including their specific skills and abilities. Yet a third response was that sex disaggregation is a basis for developing programs and projects and making plans to improve the welfare of women and men.

Among the points stressed during the synthesis period were: the need to install gender-sensitive health and agriculture management information systems (MIS); the need for each project site to develop its own gender-sensitive PIME framework and tools based on their respective contexts; the need to strengthen existing bodies, rather than create new ones (for Hilongos, the Municipal Fisheries and Agriculture Resource Management Council or MFARMC); the need for GAD focal points under the mayor's office, the need for capability building of LGU staff and legislative council members on gender-sensitive PIME; and the need for more aggressive resource mobilization.

Seminar Workshop on People's Participation in Local Governance (PPLG) in mid-2005¹⁹

People are at the center of governance

The fourth and final joint training activity sought to equip CSO stakeholders with competencies for meaningful participation and effective involvement in local governance, particularly in regard to health and agriculture planning and budgeting. Among the more specific objectives were learning the basic principles and concepts of local governance; knowing LGU dynamics, powers and attitudes; preparing a re-entry plan with clear tasks and commitments for each participant; preparing an advocacy plan to ensure implementation of LGU development plans; and effective resource mobilization to ensure meaningful CSO participation.

It was later revealed that Hilongos barangays do prepare their own plans but these are largely sidelined in the planning process undertaken by the Municipal Planning and Development Council (MDC). The Municipal Planning and Development Officer and the Municipal Budget Officer formulate the final plan and budget, respectively. As well, the process marginalizes individual plans prepared by municipal departments and committees. Department heads do not sit in the MDC.

The resource person noted that in a functional MDC, barangay captains could have made themselves heard and their concerns mainstreamed. Stakeholders could have also checked whether their plans were, indeed, integrated into the municipal plan. The

resource person further remarked that MDC members should be prepared to take on the tasks expected of them and work with the mayor, as MDC leader. The mayor's paradigm may take a while to change but the MDC should not give up.

Effective people's participation: The need for local counterpart among CSOs and the strength of numbers

One participant spoke on how his NGO's health project was covered by a MOA with the LGU, funds, and local resolutions. A project advisory committee was eventually formed which was instrumental to securing project funds. The resource person cited this example of effective NGO participation in local governance.

Speaking on the critical path of participatory governance, the resource person said this was all about democratization: why do we need to participate? Who will get involved? What agenda do we bring into the partnerships? He discussed the motives for participatory governance: sustainable development and to facilitate people's access to resources. He noted that the past three decades of NGO organizing have only reached 20% of the people, leaving the vast majority unorganized: yet, this 20% is a critical mass. He further stressed that strong networks have the numbers that command the respect of politicians.

The resource person's final point concerned the 'when', 'where' and 'how' of participation. What are the rules of the game, when will development planning start, when does the finance committee conduct bidding, when is the deadline for budget preparations, who are the players at each of these stages, what is the time frame? These are among the pertinent questions NGOs must be knowledgeable about.²⁰

Phase 3: Action planning and piloting; and re-entry plans of Hilongos CSOs

Action planning had, in fact, already started in past workshop exercises, which produced: the comprehensive gender responsive and results oriented agricultural plan for Hilongos (July 2005 to January 2007); an advocacy plan; a monitoring and evaluation plan; and a resource mobilization plan.

However, this PPLG workshop seminar much more directly addressed the mobilization of CSOs for local governance. Thus, the following summarizes "re-entry" plans of Hilongos CSOs after the GRRB project comes to a close.²¹ They cover six key result areas with corresponding activities, outputs, time frame and responsible persons.

Defining our clear agenda by popularizing the annual gender responsive results oriented agricultural plan and budget and presenting the same to the *Sangguniang Bayan* (SB) by June 2005. The SB committee on agriculture and MTWG are in charge.

Recruiting players in people's participation in local governance (PPLG) through approval of the SB; meetings with NGOs and POs; presenting the plan to NGOs and POs; and convincing the vice mayor to be the champion.

Making space to participate by convening the local special bodies (LSBs) and organizing a women's desk in every barangay. Outputs include regular meetings of LSBs such as the local development council and FARMC, women's desks established in 51 barangays, and documentation of VAWC cases.

Sharpening tools and skills through CSO strategic planning workshop, training in lobbying, advocacy skills and negotiation. Outputs include an advocacy agenda, increased advocacy skills, and an organized pool of speakers.

Targeting the end through passage of an ordinance to stop quarrying, full implementation of plan, securing funds for a gender responsive and results based agricultural plan and budget, and organization of a multi-sectoral coalition against quarrying. Outputs include rehabilitated and protected Salog river corridors, increased household income, and rehabilitation of 742 hectares of agricultural land and of the irrigation system, increasing numbers of women involved in development activities, and declining incidence of gender-related problems (VAWC).

The seminar workshop ended with high hopes that both Hilongos and Sorsogon teams were sufficiently oriented, motivated and equipped to make gender responsive results based planning and budgeting a reality in their respective areas.

Project outputs in Hilongos

The project resulted in a number of critical outputs for Hilongos ranging from data gathering to awareness building and training, and to document review and plan formulation.

The very first output was the preparation of **a local situationer-cum-socio-economic profile of Hilongos**. This document constituted a basis for the assessment, planning and various other steps that followed.

A second output was the **deepening gender awareness** not only on the part of LGU and CSO leaders but also among village folk, for instance FGD participants, the women particularly, for whom the realization that they were farmers and fishers too, proved empowering.

A third output was the **municipal VMG statement** that was reviewed, validated, reaffirmed and finally, revised to better reflect gender and environmental concerns and people's participation in governance.

A fourth output was the local council's approval of a **supplemental GAD budget** without which a number of crucial training and planning meetings would not have pulled through.

A fifth output was the **capability building** among municipal and barangay officers and CSO personnel, primarily through training workshops and seminars, and also through such activities as study-exposure trips.

A sixth achievement was the clear improvement in planning approaches, shifting from the old practice of starting with figures and finally working out the rationales and/or automatically repeating the past year's budget, to that of starting with issues and concerns, and painstakingly translating these into objectives, activities and indicators. Thus, budgets did not remain ends-in-themselves but became the means to an end.

Penultimately, the project was instrumental in reactivating the Hilongos Municipal GAD Council which formulated a GAD Strategic Plan that focuses on key gender issues in the municipality, traces their roots, proposes programmatic solutions and mobilizes LGU and CSO for joint action.

Finally, the project's undeniable gain is the approval and adoption of an Executive-Legislative Agenda (see Annex 10) and a gender responsive and results based municipal agricultural plan, the former being supportive of the latter.