

## **IX. Philippines - UDF-PHI-07-184-4005 - Promoting Gender Responsive Governance for Rural, Indigenous and Muslim Women in the Philippines**

### **i. INTRODUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT**

#### **a. The project, evaluation objectives, and methodology**

The project *Promoting Gender Responsive Governance for Rural, Indigenous, and Muslim Women in the Philippines* was implemented in the Philippines by the implementing agencies Nisa Ul-Haqq Fi Bangsamoro Inc. and Pambansang Koalisyon ng Kababaihan sa Kanayunan (PKKK) from November 2008 to March 2011, including a 3 month-extension at no additional cost. The project had a total budget of US \$ 290,000 with a remaining balance of US \$5,418.14.

The project's overarching goal is to promote women's rights by addressing the issues of marginalization, gender discrimination and violation of human rights of rural and indigenous women on one hand, and Muslim women in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), on the other. This is to be done through the development of special measures and temporary special measures<sup>1</sup> in compliance with the principles of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The project encompassed interventions in 12 provinces in the Philippines.

This project implementation encompassed two distinct components: advancement of the rights of the rural and indigenous women, and the rights of the Muslim women in ARMM. The component on rural and indigenous women included: a baseline research and benchmarking of CEDAW implementation with respect to the rural and indigenous women in the Philippines with a particular emphasis on women's property rights to land, natural and coastal resources, etc.; advocacy for adoption of gender-responsive policies, programmes, structures and other measures for rural and indigenous women; and capacity-building of rural and indigenous women's groups and other stakeholders. This component was implemented in six provinces in the Philippines and included sites for fishing, farming and indigenous women sectors.

The second component, dedicated to the promotion of the human rights of Muslim women in ARMM, encompassed a baseline research on the priority of women's right issues and state responses to violence against women and girls, reproductive health, political participation, particularly in the local governance, access to services and property rights of the Muslim women in the 6 provinces of the ARMM. This component focused mostly on training and capacity building activities for women NGOs, and mentoring the Muslim women in Mindanao to be able to monitor, document and engage in democratic dialogue with their local governments.

#### **b. Evaluation objectives and methodology**

The evaluation process has been guided by the 2009 Memorandum of Understanding between UNDEF and UNIFEM and is in compliance with the UNDEF evaluation guidelines, as well as UN Women Evaluation Policy and Guidelines, developed for the first round of UNDEF projects, and the UN Evaluation Group Norms (Standards for Evaluation in the UN system). According to the 2009 Memorandum of Understanding, UNIFEM will carry out a coherent thematic gender evaluation of the nine UNIFEM-executed UNDEF Round II Projects. The evaluation has four main objectives:

- to analyze the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming in UNDEF project strategies and approaches and the impact on women's human rights;

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<sup>1</sup> Special measures and temporary special measures are strategies distinguished from each other and are explained in Article 4 of CEDAW and in its General Recommendation No. 25.

- to capture more systematically contributions being made by UNDEF projects on enhancing engendered democratic governance;
- to assess and validate UNIFEM's contribution to UNDEF's primary purpose of supporting democratization around the world;
- to inform, develop and further refine UNDEF and UN Women's strategic and funding priorities regarding gender and governance and thus support efforts to generate and disseminate lessons and results on gender and democratic governance interventions.

The evaluation methodology is set out in the 2009 Memorandum of Understanding between UNDEF and UNIFEM according to which the evaluation was conducted in two stages: a scoping study undertaken by the evaluator to analyze the nine UNIFEM-executed Round II project designs and create tailored guidelines/frameworks to ensure the success of the projects and end-line evaluation undertaken by the evaluator to assess each of the nine UNIFEM-executed projects in the framework of the established evaluation strategy goals.

The nine UNIFEM-executed Round II projects were informed by the Mid-term Assessment Reports, the Final Narrative Reports, and the Final Financial Reports. The evaluation was conducted by an international expert, and UN Women Political Participation Section managed the evaluation process. The evaluation was participatory and involved consultations with UNDEF, UN SRO/CO, UN partners, and other major stakeholders.

### **c. Development context**

The Philippines encompasses more than 7,000 islands and is populated by seven major ethnic groups. The three major and most populated islands are Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. The majority of the country's population is Roman Catholic; the Muslim population constitutes about 5%. The country is administratively divided into 16 regions, within which levels of local government units (LGUs) are categorized into 81 provinces, 155 cities, 1,497 municipalities and 41,994 *barangays* (the smallest political unit).<sup>2</sup> One of the regions is the political-administrative subdivision called the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM).

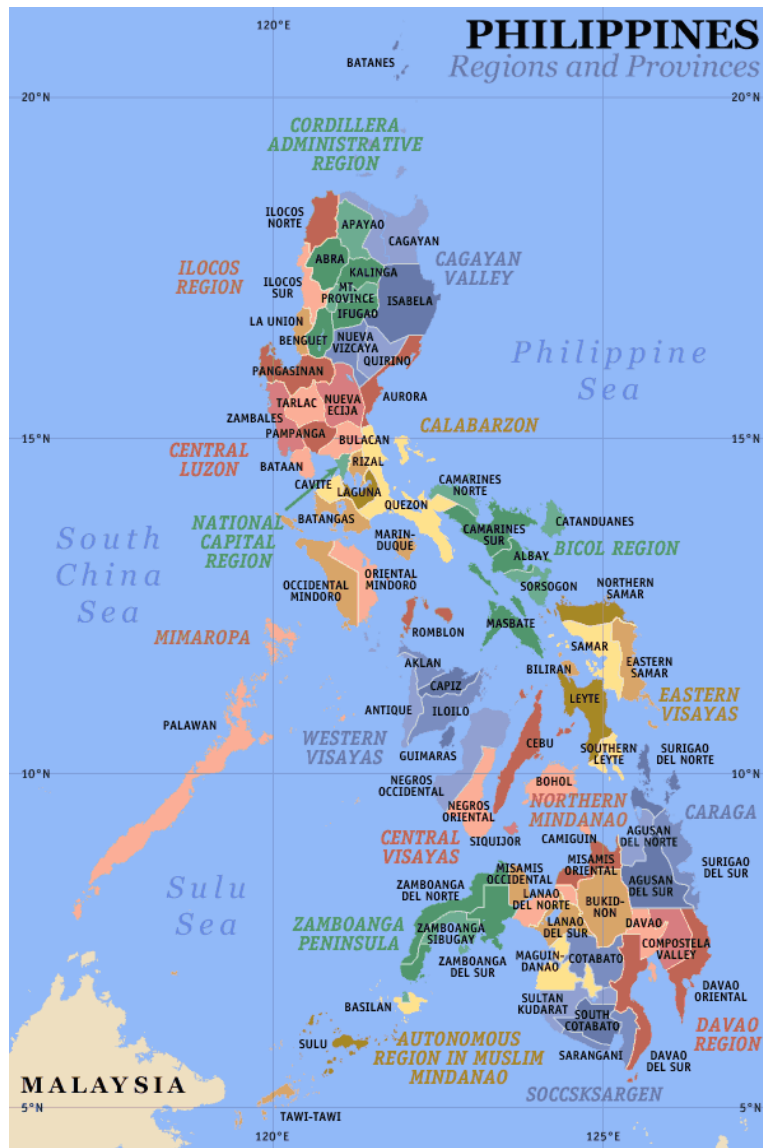
The Philippine economy has been transitioning from one based on agriculture to one based on services and manufacturing. Despite the fact that about 1/3 (32%) of the of the country's labor force of 38.1 million is employed in the agricultural sector, the latter contributes to only about 13.8% of GDP. Against this background, the Philippines' rural population is economically and politically disadvantaged. Rural women, in particular, are among the most marginalized population as they suffer from labor disparity and gender-based discrimination. Thus, rural women earn about 1/3 of the salary of rural men - 0.36 peso for every peso a man earns. Women in the Philippines comprise half of the country's population, nevertheless they make up less than half of the beneficiaries of the government's agriculture programs; they represent less than a quarter of the beneficiaries of fisheries programs; control less than 1/2 of the land and water resources, less than 1/3 of agri-fishery support services, and comprise less than 1/4 of the decision-makers with respect to rural development programs.

In the Philippines rural women may be sub-classified into: women in the farming, fisheries, informal, manufacturing, and other community-based sectors. Each sector consists of further sub-classifications based on the extent and condition of marginalization, i.e. how impoverished they are, how they cope and survive everyday challenges, how they exercise control over productive

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<sup>2</sup> National Statistical Coordination Board, 2007.

resources, and how gender is divided in terms of labor, benefits and decisions.<sup>3</sup> The sub-classifications may be observed among indigenous women, who may belong to farming and fishing communities; yet these should not be treated as absolute conditions since indigenous communities practice their own economic and governance systems.



The Muslim women in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) are another economically and politically marginalized group. Since late 60s, the government of the predominantly Roman Catholic Philippines has faced armed opposition from several Muslim groups, which sought greater autonomy for the island of Mindanao. The conflict has its roots in the systematic marginalization of the Moros (Islamized Native people) of Mindanao by the national government, in favor of the Catholic Filipinos whose families migrated to Mindanao from other

<sup>3</sup> Such classification was identified by the PO-NGO Lobby Group on a Rural Women Magna Carta; the group was formed in 2001 in a series of consultations called by the Philippine Peasant Institute.

parts of the Philippines as part of a deliberate resettlement policy<sup>4</sup>. Decades of armed rebellion and internal conflict led to the internal displacement and emigration of Muslim Mindanaos, alongside an influx of Christian settlers from the neighboring islands of Luzon and Visayas on account of population pressures have led to a transformation in the demographics and Muslims now comprise only 18% of the population as compared to 76% at the turn of the century.<sup>5</sup>

Against this backdrop of armed conflict, displacement, and poverty, Muslim women face various forms of discrimination. As a result of traditional practices and formal regulations, they are susceptible to early and/or forced marriage, polygyny, inequality and gender-based discrimination in the family, inequality with respect to inheritance rights and control over land and other resources. In addition, due to their minority status, Muslim women in the Philippines are very protective of their culture and religion, and reluctant to seek changes or debate about the interpretation of many religious tenets. By virtue of Presidential Decree 1083, the Code of Muslim Personal Law is in the legislation, determining relations within the Muslim community. This law follows provisions of Islamic law, Shari'a, as well as establishing Shari'a courts. The law also follows the traditional norms on early and forced marriages in detriment of internationally established human rights principles, in particular the age of consent for marriage.

## **ii. PROJECT STRATEGY**

### **a. Project approach and strategy**

#### **The Implementing Agencies**

#### **Pambansang Koalisyon ng Kababaihan sa Kanayunan (PKKK)**

PKKK is a coalition of organizations and federations of associations of rural women, farm and fishery workers and indigenous women, including rural women in the informal sector, elderly, young, and women with disabilities as well as NGOs and individuals who work for the interest of the above sectors. The organizational structure of PKKK consists of the General Assembly, Provincial Coalitions, National Council of Leaders, Executive Committee, Line Committees, Issue Clusters, and the Secretariat. In compliance with the 2003 Rural Women Congress Declaration, which outlines the objectives of the Philippine's rural women by 2013, PKKK is committed to working towards:

- Fulfillment of rural women's property rights in agrarian reform, ancestral domains and to coastal resources;
- Access to safe and adequate food, potable water, and basic services;
- Access to sustainable and women-friendly agricultural and fishery support services;
- Representation and Participation in the Implementation of Gender and Development (GAD) Programs and Local Sectoral Representation (LSR);
- Fulfillment of Reproductive Rights and Protection from all forms of violence and other oppressive gender relations;

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<sup>4</sup> Rajendran, S. , Veronesi D., Mohammad, N , Mala A., "The Impact of Armed Conflict on Male Youth in Mindanao, Philippines" Conflict Prevention & Reconstruction Paper No. 35, Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction (CPR) Unit, World Bank

<sup>5</sup>2005 Philippine Human Development Report (HDR).

- Fulfillment of Rural Women's Peace Agenda, especially in Mindanao.



**A PKKK activist demands adequate housing for fishing communities**

**Nisa Ul-Haqq Fi Bangsamoro Inc.** (Nisa) is a group of Muslim women advocating for women's rights in the context of Islam and culture. The *Nisa* members are women from the following non-government organizations: Alternative Legal Assistance Center (SALIGAN), Bangsamoro Lawyers' Network (BLN), Neighbors PopDev, Almujaadilah Development Foundation, Inc. (AMDF), Tarbilang Foundation, Inc., and Basilan Muslim Women's Association. *Nisa* is committed to advancing women's rights in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). It focuses particularly on the following issues:

- Poverty and unemployment among Muslim women;
- The effects of armed conflict and clan wars on Moro women;
- Education and literacy;
- Child labor;
- Child marriage
- Muslim women and public leadership;
- Health and reproductive rights;
- Equality and justice in Muslim families.

## **Strategies**

The project's goal to promote the rights of rural and indigenous women in 12 provinces and Muslim women in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) has been achieved through a comprehensive set of strategies, which include awareness raising, advocacy and lobbying, training, capacity building, and networking.

The project sees the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and its Optional Protocol as a framework, according to which the marginalized women in the Philippines can seek government accountability for protection and promotion of their human rights. The project activities build on the 2006 Concluding Comments of the CEDAW Committee on the Philippines Government Report which call for "special attention to the needs of rural, indigenous and Muslim women to ensure access to basic social services, facilitate their empowerment and participation in decision-making processes". It also recommends that the government "consider and establish temporary special measures to accelerate women's equal participation in political and public bodies and encourages dialogue with Muslim leaders on the removal of discriminatory provisions in the Code of Muslim Personal Laws (CMPL)".

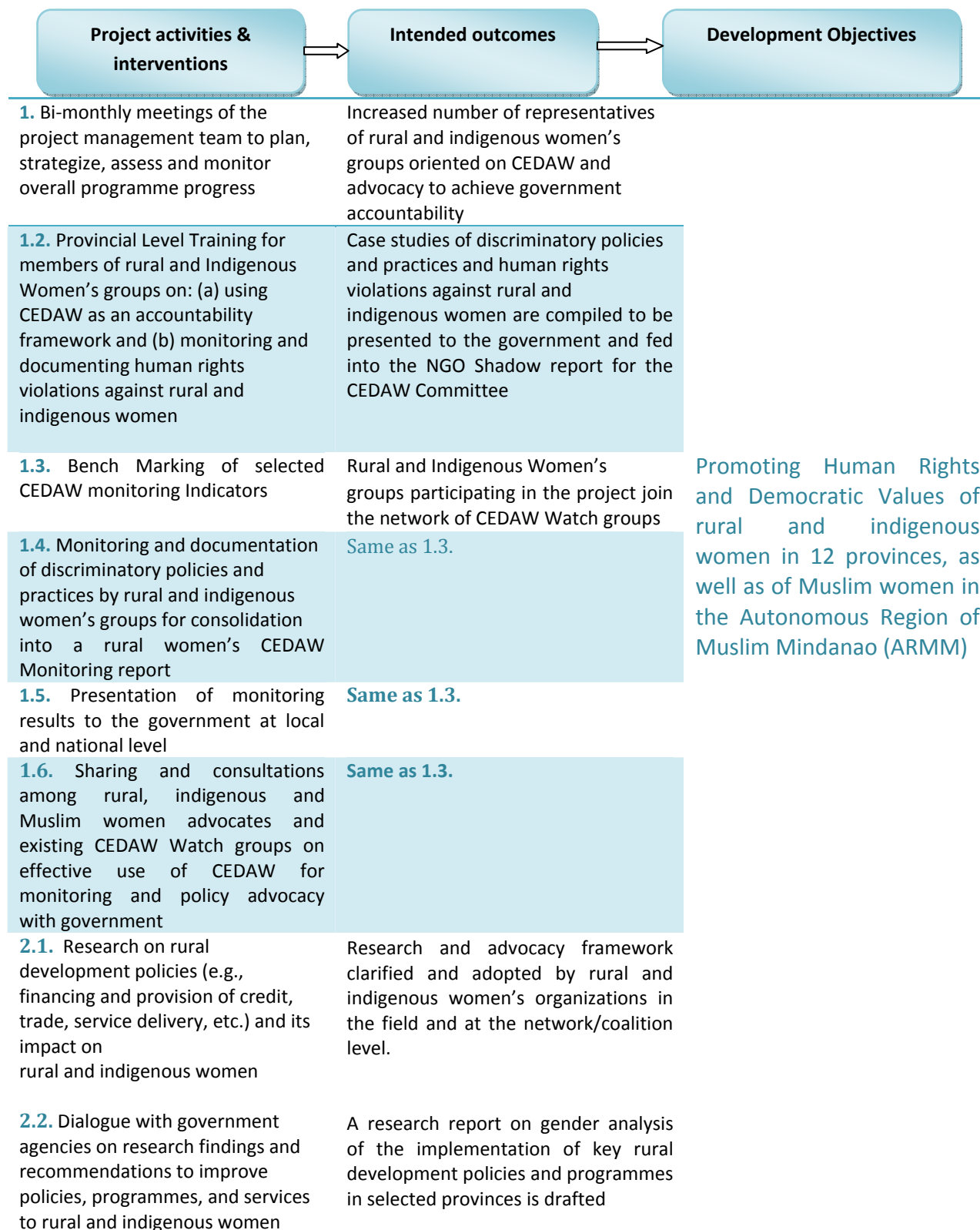
In this respect, the project focuses on the local application of CEDAW prescribed special and temporary measures and as a strategy to achieve democratization, as well as political and economic empowerment of rural, indigenous and Muslim women in 12 provinces in the Philippines – 6 of which have a Muslim majority and 6 of which are non-Muslim but where rural women mostly belong to fishing, farming and indigenous communities. The following project activities were implemented in line with the strategy to pave the way for temporary special measures: baseline research and benchmarking of the human rights of rural and Muslim women; fostering democratic dialogues with local governments for adoption of gender-responsive policies, programs, structures and other measures for rural and Muslim women; and capacity-building of rural and Muslim women's groups and other civil society actors in the fulfillment of women's rights.

Furthermore, the project interventions placed emphasis on mobilizing the efforts of rural, indigenous and Muslim women engaging local governments and national government agencies in policy dialogues and in monitoring CEDAW compliance on the implementation of special and temporary special measures. In addition, rural and Muslim women have influenced the adoption of Local Government Codes on increasing women's political participation in local government bodies and local development councils. The project has contributed to building the skills and capacity of women's groups to monitor the compliance of local and national government with women's rights standards, to document and report cases of gender-based discrimination and gender-responsive practices.

The project implementation also relied on networking and fostering cooperation among indigenous, Muslim and rural women to catalyze the exchange of experiences and resources, build capacity and improve skills related to negotiating proposals for temporary and special measures with the local and national government.

### **b. Logical framework**

The logical impact diagram that follows is based on the project logic as set out in the project document. The framework involves five distinct (immediate) outcomes.



<p><b>2.3.</b> Information dissemination and advocacy events to generate awareness and support among local communities to influence local and national government agencies on affirmative action for IP and rural women's political representation</p>	<p>Temporary Special Measures (TSMs) are proposed in advocacy dialogues with key rural development government agencies</p>
<p><b>2.4.</b> National Validation conference on research results and policy recommendations</p>	<p>Same as 2.3.</p>
<p><b>3.1.</b> Hiring of Volunteer Area Coordinators; Site selection of 6 provinces</p>	<p>Gender Responsive local development plans and budgets are proposed by rural and indigenous women's organizations to LGUs in 6 provinces</p>
<p><b>3.2.</b> Provincial level Training and application of Gender responsive planning, budgeting and monitoring</p>	<p>At least 60 rural and indigenous women leaders and LGU representatives are trained in gender-responsive local development planning, budgeting and monitoring</p>
<p><b>3.3.</b> Networking between women and NGOs and GAD teams of local government to draft and lobby for the approval of gender responsive local development plan, budget and services</p>	<p>Monitoring report on implementation of LGU GAD plans and budgets prepared by women's groups in the 6 pilot areas/ provinces</p>
<p><b>3.4.</b> Monitoring of GAD Plans and Budget by women's group</p>	<p>Same as 3.3.</p>
<p><b>3.5.</b> Generation of database of local gender statistics and case studies to feed into the annual monitoring reports</p>	<p>Same as 3.3.</p>
<p><b>3.6.</b> Advocacy to present gender issues emerging from monitoring data to the local and regional government</p>	<p>Same as 3.3.</p>
<p><b>4.1.</b> Training workshop for the newly mobilized CEDAW Watch Team of Muslim Women NGO leaders on GAD Planning and criticizing, monitoring government accountability using CEDAW as the framework</p>	<p>CEDAW Watch teams of at least ten Muslim NGO leaders in each of the 6 provinces serve as a resource pool in trainers and monitors in organizing women and advocating with their local governments</p>
<p><b>4.2.</b> Participatory action research to compile baseline on the impact of Muslim cultural practices and the Code of Muslim Personal Law on women in order to identify priority women's rights issues.</p>	<p>Baseline study and gender analysis of Muslim cultural practices and the impact of the Code of Muslim Personal Law on women is conducted by the CEDAW Watch Teams</p>
<p><b>4.3.</b> Presentation of research results and recommendations, including on the revision to the Code of Muslim</p>	<p>Provincial-level gender issues collated by CEDAW Watch teams presented and discussed with the provincial Local</p>



Personal Law, to the provincial LGU for inclusion in the GAD plan and budget	Government Units for GAD planning and budgeting
4.4. Lobby the LGU for the proper utilization of the 5% GAD budget according to the priority women's issues identified through the research	Same as 4.3.
4.5. Regular monitoring of LGU performance against CEDAW Commitments	Same as 4.3.
4.6. Sharing experience and consultations with PKKK national and local affiliated groups in ARMM	Same as 4.3.
5.1. Module-making and workshop preparation	Members of the Bangsamoro Women's Commission and LGU GAD Focal Points in ARMM are organized and trained on CEDAW, gender-responsive planning and budgeting
5.2. Provincial trainings on Islam and Gender, CEDAW and CMPL and gender-responsive planning and budgeting for local government leaders and members of the Bangsamoro Women's Commission	GAD Monitoring, evaluation, and reporting system in LGUs and ARMM Regional Government are established and linked with NCRFW and CEDAW Watch NGO network in ARMM

### iii. EVALUATION FINDINGS

#### a. Relevance

The project focuses on the promotion of the human rights and democratic values of rural and indigenous women in 12 provinces in the Philippines, as well as the rights of the Muslim women in Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), which are essential for the mandate of both UN Women and UNDEF. In view of this fact, the project activities encompassed training and capacity building of women-led NGOs from the Muslim (Moro) communities in Mindanao and rural and indigenous women NGO leaders to promote women's human rights and propose anti-discrimination and gender equality measures, as well as to engage with key government leaders and advocates for the development of gender-responsive policies. Most of these activities were implemented as envisaged in the logical framework.

The project succeeded in achieving its main outcomes. With the aim of enhancing the capacity of rural and indigenous women's organizations to monitor gender equality results of local and national policies and programs, the project provided training on gender-responsive governance and temporary special measures to 250 women to facilitate the formulation of their local advocacy and monitoring plans. In addition, 800 rural and indigenous women leaders were also able to gain additional knowledge on CEDAW.

With respect to formulating CEDAW-based proposals incorporating special and temporary special measures for rural and indigenous women, the project has designed 21 gender equality indicators guided by the CEDAW framework, which have been translated into policy proposals, discussed at various fora, including national and local government policy-making bodies in order to accelerate responses.

Furthermore, to encourage government policies, programs and services to become more gender-sensitive to rural and indigenous women's rights, the project has successfully engaged local governments in discussions of the agenda of the rural and indigenous women, in particular the public fora on Magna Carta of Women<sup>6</sup> (MCW) and workshops on Gender-Responsive Governance. During the project lifetime one local government unit has signed a memorandum of understanding with the rural women's groups and another local government has committed to incorporating its Gender and Development Code in relation to the MCW.

The creation of CEDAW Watch Teams, including ten Muslim NGO leaders in 5 provinces, corresponds to the objective of enhancing the capacity of Muslim women NGOs to advocate and monitor government accountability vis a vis women's human rights and propose anti-discrimination and gender equality measures in the Muslim socio-political context. The CEDAW Watch Teams serve as a resource pool of trainers and monitors to help organize women to advocate and engage with their local governments. The CEDAW Watch Teams were essential in lobbying the Regional Legislative Assembly (RLA) of the ARMM and drafting the Gender and Development Codes, which served as a basis for adoption of the Philippine Magna Carta of Women.

Regarding the objective of raising awareness and enhancing capacity of key government leaders in the Autonomous Regional Government of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) the project has succeeded in convincing the ARMM Regional Government to adopt a Regional Gender and Development Code, which allocates 5% GAD Budget to programs, projects and activities to address gender discrimination and marginalization of women in the ARMM.

#### **b. Effectiveness**

The overarching goal of the project is to promote the rights of rural and indigenous women in the Philippines and Muslim women in the ARMM and to enhance women's empowerment at local levels. To this end, the project implementation encompassed activities related to capacity building of community leaders, rural and indigenous women's organizations, as well as interactions with local governments and advocacy and lobbying for the development of gender-responsive policies at national and local level. The project activities were guided by CEDAW as a framework to monitor government accountability vis-à-vis women's rights.

#### **PKKK campaign on rural women's agenda**

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<sup>6</sup> The Magna Carta of Women, Republic Act # 9710 was adopted by the Philippines Parliament on 15 August 2009. The law prohibits discrimination against women and recognizes, promotes and protects their rights. It also guards them against all forms of violence, including those committed by the state.



- 251 rural and indigenous women leaders were familiarized with the provisions of the CEDAW and the principles of gender-responsive governance and temporary special measures. They gained capacity to formulate and implement a CEDAW monitoring plan adapted to their respective community and Local Government Units (LGU).
- 800 rural and indigenous women leaders from 32 provincial LGUs were oriented on the CEDAW application.
- A Gender-Responsive Rural Women Development Plan (GRRWDP) drafted by the rural women leaders was presented to the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture and circulated during the National Agri-Fish 2005 Summit, held in February 2011.

### **Capacity building of rural and indigenous women with respect to CEDAW application**

The project implementation contributed to raising awareness among rural and indigenous women about the application of CEDAW as a framework for monitoring local government programs on agriculture and fisheries, agrarian reform and rural development. During the project lifetime, over 250 rural and indigenous women have been provided with in-depth training on gender-responsive governance and temporary special measures to facilitate the formulation of their local advocacy and monitoring plans. The trainees formed monitoring teams and formulated advocacy plans that targeted six provincial local government units. In addition, 800 rural and indigenous women community leaders from 32 provincial local government units were familiarized with CEDAW application and gained capacity to monitor the CEDAW implementation by the local and national authorities. Furthermore, at national level, the advocacy plans developed by the project trainees on the basis of 21 core indicators, were consolidated into a draft Gender-Responsive Rural Women Development Plan (GRRWDP), which was presented to the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture and circulated during the National Agri-Fish 2005 Summit, held in February 2011.

It is worth noting that during the project lifetime the Philippine government has not submitted any periodic country report to the CEDAW Committee. Therefore, women's CSOs in the Philippines have not drafted a NGO Shadow Report, which usually represents the civil society's perspective on the situation of women's rights at national and local level. Nevertheless, abundant qualitative information was gathered on the issues of property rights of women farmers, fishers, and indigenous women; their access to social protection and support services; their participation in the local governance, throughout the project activities. Likewise, extensive quantitative data on rural women and indigenous women was collected by women's NGOs and members of PKKK, including a national survey on women in agriculture, conducted in 2008, and a local survey of women belonging to the Teduray Lambangian tribe, conducted in 2009. Thus, the project implementation has generated extensive and updated information and an in-depth analysis of the situation of rural, indigenous, and Muslim women in the Philippines, which is available to be integrated in the next NGO Shadow Report to be presented by women's CSOs as an alternative to the national government's submission of its country report, expected by the end of 2011.

### **Special and temporary special measures for rural and indigenous women**

Through a series of workshops on policies, plans, and programs aimed at rural and indigenous women the project beneficiaries have identified and analyzed instances of gender-based discrimination and inequality. Furthermore, the project beneficiaries applied CEDAW as a framework for translating the outcomes of the above mentioned workshops into 21 gender equality indicators, which served as benchmarks for the Rural Women Agenda for policy advocacy and actions. The proposed 21 gender equality indicators have thus become a basis for policy proposals in the form of special and temporary special measures such as:

- representation of rural and indigenous women organizations in the Agrarian Reform Councils, Fisherfolk and Aquatic Resource Management Council and local development councils (LDCs) in the municipalities/provinces;
- women's representation in peace building councils;
- equal treatment of women in property rights policies (processes on land titling, fisherfolk settlements, ancestral domains);
- support services for women's roles in food security such as women-led sustainable agriculture program;
- protection from violence like special VAWC mechanisms for women in remote areas;
- and reproductive health programs for women in remote areas.

In addition, gender equality measures were outlined in the lobbying for the agrarian reform extension (CARP Extension with Reform/RA9700), campaigning for fisherfolk registration, crafting of the Indigenous Peoples Master Plan, National Climate Change Action Plan (NCCAP), lobbying for the Magna Carta of Workers in the Informal Economy (MACWIE) and for the Reproductive Health Bill.

The project implementation faced some challenges with respect to enacting gender-responsive programs and services for rural and indigenous women, particularly in terms of actual funding in the six pilot provinces. The main setbacks were related to patronage politics, politicizing the governance processes, and the rigid technical requirements for accreditation, which blocked the access for the organizations of rural and indigenous women. Nevertheless, there were signs of recognition by the local authorities in some provinces. For instance, in Aurora province, a local Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between the provincial government and the implementing partner, PKKK, promoting the rural women agenda and enabling a cooperation mechanism, although no specific funding is mentioned. The same development was observed in

other participating provinces, like Bukidnon, Sorsogon, Leyte, Bohol, and Agusan Sur, where there was room for cooperation without funding commitments on part of the local authorities.

The project focused on inclusive mechanisms for participation in local policy making of rural and indigenous women, allowing them better access to the democratic and political sphere, while taking into their rights and needs. At national level such mechanism was embodied by the Inter-Agency Committee on Rural Women (IACRW), co-chaired by PKKK. Proposals were also made for rural women's participation in national governance bodies such as Presidential Agrarian Reform Council (PARC), National Agri-Fisheries Council (NAFC), National Fisheries and Aquatic Resource Management Committee (NFARMC), and the National Action Plan on Peace UNSCR 1325. Although some of the proposals have been endorsed by the government agencies, the delays in the approval process demonstrate the need for more active advocacy and lobbying in this respect. At the local level, the project partners targeted the local bodies, such as the barangay/municipal/city development councils and other local economic governance bodies.

### **Enhancing gender responsive local policies, programmes, and services**

Throughout the project few local governments have taken steps to enact gender-responsive plans and programs. They often showed good will and interest in the rural and indigenous women's agenda, e.g. by participating in public fora about the Magna Carta of Women (MCW) and workshops on gender-responsive governance, but yet only one local government has signed a memorandum of understanding with the rural women's groups and another has initiated a review of its Gender and Development Code. Given the timing of the 2010 elections there has been insufficient time to see what the response to the local women's agenda will be.

It is worth noting that the Gender-Responsive Rural Women Development Plan (GRRWDP) represents a significant step and has great future potential in facilitating the monitoring of local government policies and programs. The GRRWDP has already been presented to relevant government bodies such as the Department for Agriculture, the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Food, the Congressional Committee on Agri-Fish Modernization, as well as to the alliance of stakeholders in rural development, Alyansa Agrikultura.

### **CEDAW Watch Teams of Muslim Women NGOs**

The project activities involved training Muslim NGO leaders in the ARMM and forming CEDAW Watch Teams, which serve as a resource pool of trainers who are particularly helpful in mobilizing local women and advocating for women's rights with the governments. Along with local government representatives, the women NGO leaders were trained and their capacities on issues such as CEDAW and other international women's rights instruments, gender equality and Islam, gender-responsive planning and budgeting, agenda-setting, lobbying for policy reform, and policy writing (GAD Code) enhanced. The increased capacity for in-depth gender analysis of issues faced by Muslim women and policy reform has resulted in the adoption of the ARMM Regional GAD Code, Sulu Provincial GAD Code, and the Marawi City GAD Code. Due to the volatile situation following the Maguindanao Massacre<sup>7</sup> the proposed Maguindanao GAD Code has not yet reached first reading;

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<sup>7</sup> **The Maguindanao Massacre** is also known as the Ampatuan massacre after the town where the mass graves were found occurred on the morning of November 23, 2009, in the town of Ampatuan in Maguindao province, on the island of Mindanao in the Philippines. Victims were on their way to file a certificate of candidacy for Esmael Mangudadatu, vice mayor of Buluan town, when they were kidnapped and brutally killed. Mangudadatu was challenging Datu Unsay mayor Andal Ampatuan, Jr., son of the incumbent Maguindanao governor Andal Ampatuan, Sr., in the Maguindanao gubernatorial election, part of the national

however the Governor has committed to pass it. The drafting, consultations and lobbying for the adoption of the GAD Codes represent a major achievement for the advancement of Muslim women's rights given their incorporation of pertinent provisions relating to marriage and family relations. It is worth noting that the GAD Codes in the ARMM also incorporate principles of gender equality, as found in the *Qur'an* and *Sunna*. Another significant outcome of the project is that the principles and provisions, embodied in the newly-adopted in the Philippines Magna Carta of Women, have been disseminated in the ARMM through regional and provincial GAD Codes.



GAD Codes Training for Muslim community leaders in the ARMM, organized by Nisa in collaboration with Oxfam

### **Gender-responsive policies, programs and services for Muslim women**

A significant project achievement is the adoption of the ARMM Regional GAD Code, which provides for allocation of 5% GAD Budget to programs, projects and activities focusing on gender equality and gender justice to address gender discrimination and marginalization of women in the ARMM. Likewise, the project implementation has resulted in the adoption of provincial and city GAD Codes, enacted by the legislative bodies of the provincial and city local governments, such as the Sulu Provincial GAD Code and Marawi City GAD Code. The Tawi-Tawi and Basilan Provincial GAD Codes have reached second reading and are expected to be adopted soon. All of these GAD Codes have

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elections of 2010. The 58 people killed included Mangudadatu's wife, his two sisters, journalists, lawyers, aides, and motorists who were witnesses or were mistakenly identified as part of the convoy.

been drafted, proposed and lobbied by the CEDAW Watch Teams. The adoption of the regional and provincial GAD has proved that training together NGOs and local governments was particularly successful. Thus, during the policy-making consultations, lobbying, and advocacy activities the Muslim women-led NGOs and their government counterparts have shown a significant improvement in their capacities to advocate for women's rights and lobby for gender-responsive policies and programs. Another example of the successful cooperation between the ARMM Regional Government and women's NGOs, including the CEDAW Watch Teams, was the fact that as a result of consultations, trainings, and workshops, the CEDAW Watch Teams succeeded in convincing the ARMM Regional Government not to enact a regional Code of Muslim Personal Laws (CMPL) but rather to incorporate the proposed policy revisions to the CMPL into the ARMM Regional GAD Code.

## **Challenges**

The implementing partners have encountered several clusters of external and internal challenges that have hindered or delayed the project implementation:

- Lack of government commitment to support gender-sensitive policies and programs for rural, indigenous, and Muslim women, and particularly reluctance to translate the commitments into resource allocation. This deprives the newly adopted policies and programs from gender-responsive budgeting, which in the long term threatens the continuation of the project activities beyond project's lifetime, and ultimately represents a risk for the gender equitable development at local level in the Philippines;
- Inflexible local and national electoral politics have excluded the rural and indigenous women's agenda from the electoral platform of the political party candidates;
- the project implementation was delayed by national and local, and special elections on one hand, and the volatile security situation in the project areas, particularly in ARMM after the Maguindanao massacre, followed by election-related violence, on the other hand;
- Internal organizational issues of PKKK Provincial coalition, including the re-orientation of new area coordinators and re-distribution of the tasks among the project management team have hindered some activities, resulting in a delay in the project implementation. In addition, the project would have benefited from more coherent handling of advocacy work and research activities vis-à-vis the over-all project goals. The implementing partners also outline some limitations in the periodic compilation of the area data reports, which could have provided earlier information for the TSMs. As seen from the logical framework, the implementing partners embarked on ambitious, intense and large scale activities, which resulted in delays in the project implementation. Having too many activities would have compromised the project had it been implemented by an organization with more limited capacities.

## **Good practices**

The project implementation has contributed significantly to the advancement of human rights of the rural, indigenous, and Muslim women in the Philippines in the following ways:

- The adoption of Gender-Responsive Rural Women Development Plan (GRRWDP) represents a major achievement as a rights-based advocacy framework and monitoring instrument for the rural women agenda;
- Empowerment of rural, indigenous, and Moro (Muslim) women from grass-root level and community leaders to nation-wide women coalitions through training and capacity building on gender-responsive governance and enhancing skills to monitor policies and formulate inputs for the Shadow Report;

- Reviving of the Inter-agency Committee on Rural Women (IACRW), which serves as a venue for discussion of the rights of rural and indigenous women and their participation in local governments;
- Improved communication and collaboration mechanisms between women organizations and government bodies for the benefit of advocacy and promotion of women's rights.
- The adoption of the ARMM Regional GAD Code, which encompasses the principles of the Magna Carta of Women and the CEDAW, and incorporates gender-responsive CMPL amendments. Likewise, the adoption of the Sulu Provincial GAD Code and Marawi City GAD Code are a major step in this respect. The adopted GAD Codes (ARMM, provinces, city), and those awaiting second reading (Tawi-Tawi Provincial GAD Code, Basilan Provincial GAD Code, and Maguindanao Provincial GAD Code) contain gender-responsive provisions and allocation of GAD budgets.

### **c. Efficiency**

#### **Work Relationship**

The relationship between the implementing partners, PKKK and Nisa Ul-Haqq, was guided by consensus building and a participatory approach in decision-making and plan implementation. The implementing partners conducted a joint inception workshop in January 2009 to discuss joint activities, share experiences on Gender-Responsive Governance strategies, and common advocacy campaigns in ARMM. During the project lifetime, the implementing partners observed the principle of fair workload distribution and financing for their respective project activities.

The implementing partners also conducted combined interventions and sought venues to share experiences. In February of 2009, Nisa Ul-Haqq invited PKKK-ARMM to attend the Forum-Dialogue with members of the ARMM Regional Legislative Assembly, followed by a GAD Code discussion with the Regional Committee on GAD. In December 2010, PKKK invited Nisa Ul-Haqq to the conference on the gender-responsive rural women development plan, attended by government agencies, rural development and gender advocates.

In addition to the project staff, PKKK recruited six area coordinators for the six pilot sites, who were in charge of promotion and implementation of the Rural Women Module on Gender-Responsive Governance; formulation of local plans for advocacy, research, capability-building, and organizational development; conducting workshops on CEDAW monitoring and Temporary Special Measures; engagement with local governance bodies; and submission of financial and activity reports.

#### **Delay**

A no-cost extension until December 31, 2010 was requested by the implementing partners and approved by UNDEF. It was motivated by a delay in the project implementation as a result of a combination of scheduled and unforeseen events: the national and local elections on 10 May 2010; Barangay elections on 25 October 2010 and the special elections in some provinces; Ramadan 11 August – 11 September 2010; the Maguindanao massacre in November 2009, which had an impact on the security situation of the project areas. Furthermore, organizational issues of PKKK, related to replacement of the area coordinators and re-distribution of the tasks among the project management team caused project implementation delays. During the first stage of the project implementation PKKK observed minimal participation of the indigenous women in the pilot areas, which determined a separate process/ group discussion on the situation of the indigenous women, particularly in Mindanao, resulting in a delay in the project activities in ARMM.

Likewise, the discussion of the Gender Responsive Governance Advocacy plans by the rural and indigenous women and the development the temporary special measures (TSMs) as strategic targets for women's rights advocacy took longer than originally envisaged and were finalized only



in November 2009. This activity was further delayed in the period December 2009 - March 2010, as the required data from the local government units – sex disaggregated data and local plans/policies for the farmers, fishers and indigenous peoples – was difficult to access due to the local elections. In this respect, implementing partners encountered unexpected hardship, since many officials were wary of giving information that might compromise political parties and political plans for the elections. The implementing partners found a partial resolution to this issue through focus group discussions (FGDs). Nevertheless, the FGDs departed from the original schedule for data gathering and entailed contracting additional researcher-writers. Yet, the flexibility and the problem-solving attitude of the implementing partners proved beneficial for the rural and indigenous women, since it involved reviewing of CEDAW and TSMs and their application to the rural women's agenda.

#### **d. Impact**

The project has impacted significantly the policy reforms related to gender-responsive governance at the regional, provincial and city levels. The project's added value can be seen in the application of the CEDAW provisions at local level, and particularly in the monitoring of State accountability and engagement with local and provincial governments towards the advancement of women's agenda. The project contributed to enhancing the capacities of rural and indigenous women and community leaders with respect to organizational development, networking, lobbying, communication skills, data gathering/research and analysis. This impact is evidenced by the fact that many rural women leaders were encouraged to participate and run for the Barangay (village) elections and used the rural women's agenda as their platform for governance.

Furthermore, the intense capacity building and participatory policy formulation resulted in a sense of ownership of the implemented activities by the project beneficiaries, assertiveness in their human rights, and ultimately will achieve the empowerment of the trainees. In this respect, the project succeeded in enhancing the capacity of Moro women NGOs to advocate women's human rights and propose gender equality measures, as well as increasing the capacity of government officials in the ARMM to design and formulate gender-responsive policies, such as the enactment of the ARMM Regional GAD Code, Sulu Provincial GAD Code, and Marawi City GAD Code, which incorporate the amendments of Code of Muslim Personal Laws; the application of the Philippine Magna Carta of Women (MCW) through the ARMM regional, provincial and city GAD Codes.

The project has launched a successful example of combined CSO-government capacity-building activities, which results in partnership and collaboration between Moro women NGOs and provincial and local government bodies for the benefit of women's rights and increasing women's participation in decision-making processes. Yet, the positive initiatives, started during the project's lifetime, need to be strengthened and guaranteed by formal mechanisms, which would facilitate access to the local legislative and executive bodies. Likewise, the project activities have substantially contributed to the advancement of women's rights and to making rural, indigenous, and Muslim women more visible in public life. Nevertheless these efforts need to be continued beyond projects' lifetime.



PKKK advocates

#### **e. Sustainability**

The empowerment of rural, indigenous, and Muslim women through training and capacity building is one of the most distinctive contributions of this project. The aspirations of the project trainees to further engage in political decision-making at local and provincial levels has proved the effectiveness of the project's interventions. At institutional level the established partnership and collaboration between women-led CSOs and local governments has paved the way for future achievements related to gender mainstreaming at local level. The enhanced capacity of the rural and Muslim women's NGOs, and the good practices and lessons learned as a consequence of the project implementation will benefit their future work, directed at advancement of women's rights. In addition, the policies and plans, particularly the adoption of local government Gender and Development (GAD) plans with allocated budgets to support the women's agenda represent another project achievement which is to play an important role beyond project's lifetime.

Yet, the project has only scratched the surface of some complex and ongoing processes, such as shifting public attitudes related to gender roles, empowering marginalized rural, indigenous, and Muslim women, coalition-building and mobilizing women's CSOs, and transforming government agencies' inaction into commitment to the women's agenda. A sustainable solution to these issues requires further efforts and resources beyond this project's lifetime. The task of advocating for gender-responsive policies and plans, monitoring gender budgets, and making local governments accountable for their commitments to gender equality is on-going. It is to be expected, though, that

the achievements, examples, and good practices set out by this project will significantly benefit future work.

#### **f. UNDEF and UN Women value-added**

The project focuses on gender-responsive governance as a tool to advancing the rights of rural, indigenous, and Moro women in the Philippines, and as such it clearly fits into both UNDEF's and UN Women's mandates. The project activities encompass empowering women from the most economically and politically marginalized sectors through awareness raising, enhancing their skills, increasing their visibility and strengthening their democratic values. The project trainees have directly and substantially impacted policy making at the local level through lobbying and advocacy for the adoption of Gender and Development Plans and allocation of gender budgets. The comprehensive set of project interventions reflects its commitment to the principles of gender equality and democratic development. The lessons learned and the good practices established by the implementing partners will be applicable to similar programs which will be envisioned in the Philippines and other countries in the region.

#### **iv. CONCLUSIONS**

The project *Promoting Gender Responsive Governance for Rural, Indigenous, and Muslim Women in the Philippines* has contributed to the empowerment of the aforementioned women. Through a comprehensive set of approaches, including training and capacity building, advocacy, lobbying, and engaging local governments in a dialogue, awareness raising, and coalition building and mobilizing women CSOs, the project has created a momentum for the adoption and implementation of gender responsive policies and plans at local level, enhanced the visibility of rural and Muslim women in the process of democratization in the local governments and has raised awareness about the role of women's leadership in the Philippines. The challenges and lessons learned indicate the need to pursue efforts to mainstream gender equality and good governance in policy making in Philippines. The project also represented a platform for exploring special and temporary special mechanisms as strategies to improve democratic governance at local level, integrating CEDAW in the local policies, plans, and programs in the targeted provinces and in the Autonomous Regional Muslim Mindanao.