

Philippines

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE
POLICY AND INSTITUTIONAL
MAPPING REPORT

The World Bank

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1818 H Street NW
Washington DC 20433
Telephone: 202-473-1000
Internet: www.worldbank.org

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Marivi Amor J. Ladia, Social Development Specialist, World Bank, led this work as the focal point for sexual exploitation and abuse/sexual harassment (SEA/SH) in the Philippines. This report was prepared by Nancy E. Parreño, gender-based violence consultant, and benefited from the reviews of Vincent Abrigo, Regional Gender Tag Assessor, and Alkadevi Patel, Senior Social Development Specialist and SEA/SH coordinator for East Asia and the Pacific. The team wishes to thank the government institutions and development partners who shared their time and insights allowing the completion of this report amid the pandemic.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Philippines has a good array of national policies on gender mainstreaming, including laws addressing gender-based violence (GBV) and discrimination. In 2009, it enacted the Magna Carta of Women, a comprehensive legislation that supports and strengthens women's human rights, especially of those in the marginalized sectors, as well as lays down the institutional structure for ensuring these rights. There are also established mechanisms such as women and children protection desks in barangays, police stations, hospitals, and institutionalized programs in national and local government agencies which operationalize the State's commitment to provide redress in cases of GBV. Moreover, a strong civil society base—the women's movement, in particular—contributes to increasing awareness of women's human rights and gender equality. Civil society organizations also play a major role in providing direct and support services on GBV, especially in areas and sectors where institutional mechanisms are problematic.

However, challenges remain: (1) issues regarding *availability* (for example, in times of disasters or displacement, or in some cases, when the mechanism is missing in their community), *accessibility* (physical distance, direct and indirect financial cost of using the service, among others), *acceptability* (such as sociocultural appropriateness and responsiveness) and *quality* (gender-sensitivity and responsiveness) of direct services for GBV survivors; (2) limited documentation and data harmonization among agencies, which contribute to the invisibility of women and the issue of GBV in development programming; (3) uneven implementation of the laws and standards compliance; (4) low number of gender equality champions represented in the decision-making bodies, especially in the government; and (5) shrinking spaces for women's human rights advocacy. The COVID-19 pandemic and corresponding government response are also presented as an emerging issue that needs finer scrutiny to identify and address their negative impact on GBV.

Following this, two general tracks of action are recommended. The first track is building women's capabilities to engage economic, social, and political institutions in an empowering and transformative way. This relates to increasing women's economic empowerment and organizing (or strengthening, as the case may be) women's collectives especially at the community level. The second track is strengthening institutions to fulfil their mandates under GBV policies and promote women's human rights. Addressing GBV during the COVID-19 pandemic also necessitates looking into responses that (1) secure women's access to mobile and digital technologies, (2) build institutional capacities of agencies providing direct services to GBV survivors to integrate and maximize these technologies in their work systems, and (3) incorporate gender and cultural diversity and sensitivity in designing and implementing national public health guidelines and localized responses to the pandemic.

In addition to these, recommendations specific to the World Bank projects include (1) working within its scope of influence to strengthen institutions, standards, and policy implementation to prevent and mitigate GBV; (2) engaging community stakeholders in identifying risks and responses to GBV; (3) supporting documentation and research; (4) and engaging third-party contractors to work with project partners to ensure compliance with national policies and standards. Further study of gender issues in areas covered by the Pasig-Marikina River Basin Project, Metro Manila Flood Management Project, and the Agus-Pulangi Hydropower Complex Rehabilitation Project is also recommended given the lack of information on these in project documents.

ABBREVIATIONS

ACWC	ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AICS	Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situation
ALG	Alternative Law Groups
ARMM	Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao
BARMM	Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (formerly ARMM)
BPfA	Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action
BPO	barangay protection order
CAR	Cordillera Administrative Region
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CHR	Commission on Human Rights
CICL	children in conflict with the law
CIRAS	Crime Information Reporting and Analysis System
COA	Commission on Audit
CODI	Committee on Decorum and Investigation
COSE	Coalition of Services of the Elderly
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
CRC	Convention on the Rights of Children
CSC	Civil Service Commission
CSO	civil society organization
DBM	Department of Budget and Management
DILG	Department of Interior and Local Government
DOH	Department of Health
DOJ	Department of Justice
DSWD	Department of Social Welfare and Development
DSWP	Democratic Socialist Women's Party
EO	executive order
ESF	Environmental and Social Framework
GAD	gender and development
GBV	gender-based violence
GDI	Gender and Development Index
GGI	Gender Gap Index
HGDG	Harmonized Gender and Development Guidelines
IACAT	Inter-Agency Council on Trafficking
IAC-VAWC	Inter-agency Council on Violence Against Women and their Children
IBP	Integrated Bar of the Philippines
ICT	information and communication technology
IDMC	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
IPV	intimate partner violence
LCAT-VAWC	Local Council Against Trafficking and Violence Against Women and Children
LEA	law enforcement agency
LGBTIQ+	lesbian, gays, bisexuals, trans, intersex, queers, etc.
LGU	local government units
LSWDO	local government social welfare and development offices
MCW	Magna Carta of Women
MSSD	Ministry of Social Services and Development
NAP-WPS	National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security
NASWEI	National Association of Social Work Educators
NBI	National Bureau of Investigation
NCR	National Capital Region

NDHS	National Demographic and Health Survey
NEDA	National Economic and Development Authority
NFWCP	National Federation of Women’s Clubs of the Philippines
NGO	nongovernmental organization
NLRC	National Labor Relations Commission
ODA	official development assistance
OSCY	out-of-school children and youth
P/C/MHO	Provincial/City/Municipal Health Office
PAO	Public Attorney’s Office
PAWID	Philippine Alliance of Women with Disabilities
PCW	Philippine Commission on Women
PKKK	Pambansang Koalisyon ng mga Kababaihan sa Kanayunan (National Rural Women’s Coalition)
PNP	Philippine National Police
POPCOM	Commission on Population and Development
PPGD	Philippine Plan for Gender-Responsive Development
PSA	Philippine Statistics Authority
RA	Republic Act
RHU	rural health unit
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SEA	sexual exploitation and abuse
SH	sexual harassment
SOGIE	sexual orientation and gender identity and expression
SWS	Social Weather Stations
T/PPO	temporary/permanent protection order
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UPCWGS	University of the Philippines–Center for Women and Gender Studies
VAW	violence against women
VAWC	violence against women and their children
WAGI	Women and Gender Institute, Miriam College
WB	World Bank
WBG	World Bank Group
WCCD	Women and Children’s Concerns Desk
WCPD	Women and Children’s Protection Desk
WCPU	Women and Children’s Protection Unit

KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS¹

Children	Persons below 18 years old or those over but whose physical and mental condition makes them not fully capable of protecting or taking care of themselves (Republic Act 7610).
Child marriage	Any formal marriage or informal union between a person under the age of 18 and an adult or another child (UNICEF).
Forced marriage	A marriage of an individual against her or his will.
Human trafficking	Also called trafficking in persons, the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring, or receipt of persons by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability, or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purposes of exploitation. Women and children are particularly vulnerable to trafficking practices (Environmental and Social Standard [ESS] 2, footnote 15).
Gender-based violence (GBV)	An umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will and that is based on socially ascribed (gender in this case) differences between males and females. It includes acts that inflict physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion, and other deprivations of liberty. These acts can occur in public or in private (Inter-Agency Standing Committee 2015, 5).
Gender-based discrimination against women	Any distinction, exclusion, or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment, or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil, or any other field (CEDAW, Article 1).
Gender mainstreaming	The process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies, or programs, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic, and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetrated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality (UN ECOSOC 1997).
Sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA)	<p>Sexual exploitation: any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially, or politically from the sexual exploitation of another (UN Glossary on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse 2017, 6).</p> <p>Sexual abuse: actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions (UN Glossary on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse 2017, 5).</p>

¹ The main reference for the definitions is World Bank's *Good Practice Note: Addressing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment (SEA/SH) in Investment Project Financing involving Major Civil Works* (2020).

Sexual harassment (SH)	Any unwelcome sexual advances, request for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.
Violence against women (VAW)	Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life. Violence against women shall also be understood to encompass, but not be limited to (a) physical, sexual, and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation, and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence, and violence related to exploitation; (b) physical, sexual, and psychological violence occurring within the general community, including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment, and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere, trafficking in women, and forced sex work; (c) physical, sexual, and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the State, wherever it occurs. The term violence against women and girls is also used (UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women 1993, Articles 1 and 2).
Violence against women and their children (VAWC)	The more common term used to refer to intimate partner violence (IPV) in the Philippines. It covers physical, sexual, psychological, and economic violence against a woman by her current or former spouse, partner, or person with whom she has or had an intimate relationship, regardless of the gender of the perpetrator.

INTRODUCTION

The World Bank considers that no country, community, or economy can achieve its potential or meet the challenges of the twenty-first century without the full and equal participation of women and men, girls and boys. It is committed to closing gaps between males and females globally for lasting impact in tackling poverty and driving sustainable economic growth that benefits all. In view of this, the World Bank consciously integrates measures against gender-based violence (GBV) in its financed projects, whether this violence happens in private or public spaces. In October 2018, the World Bank Group (WBG) adopted the Environmental and Social Framework (ESF) to ensure that environmental and social risks of the projects it finances are identified, minimized, and mitigated (World Bank 2018).² It has revised the Guidance Note and identified the need to focus on the sexual exploitation and abuse/sexual harassment (SEA/SH) aspect of the GBV spectrum for project impact assessment and implementing mitigation measures (World Bank 2020). This report uses this broader perspective when reporting on GBV, which is inclusive of SEA/SH.

This report aims to map out the policy and institutional mechanisms addressing GBV in the Philippines. It is hoped that this document will enable WB teams to draw upon national laws, policies, experience, institutions, and available resources to prevent and respond to GBV within or associated with WB-supported activities in the country. The report has six parts:

1. Situational analysis of gender-based violence in the Philippines
2. Legal and policy framework on GBV
3. Institutional mechanisms against GBV
4. Nongovernment responses to GBV
5. Gaps and challenges in addressing GBV in the Philippines
6. Recommendations

The last section also contains recommendations specific to the World Bank in relation to the Pasig-Marikina River Basin Project, Metro Manila Flood Management Project, and the Agus-Pulangi Hydropower Complex Rehabilitation Project that it finances.

Framework

The selection of policies and institutional mechanisms presented in the report is guided by the World Bank's definition of gender-based violence: "any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will and that is based on socially ascribed (i.e., gender) differences between males and females. It includes acts that inflict physical, mental, or sexual harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion, and other deprivations of liberty" whether this occurs in private or public life. This definition echoes the standards set by the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), to which the Philippines is a State party and has adopted as part of its national laws.

² See also other World Bank publications: *Environmental and Social Framework* (2017), *World Bank Group Gender Strategy (FY16–23): Gender Equality, Poverty Reduction and Inclusive Growth* (2015), *Global Gender-based Violence Task Force: Action Plan for Implementation* (2017), and *Working Together to Prevent Sexual Exploitation and Abuse: Recommendations for World Bank Investment Projects* (2017).

As regards institutional mechanisms, the report focuses on four aspects: (1) direct service provision to survivors of GBV, (2) access to legal redress of violations, (3) gender mainstreaming (which includes standards setting, technical assistance, social awareness raising), and (4) monitoring mechanisms.

The report also recognizes that women, children, and members of the LGBTIQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer, etc.) community as the most vulnerable groups to GBV.

Methodology and Limitations

The report is drawn from the results of a desk review of documents pertinent to GBV policy and response in the Philippines, as well as interviews with key stakeholders in the issue. The latter included representatives from government agencies comprising the Inter-agency Council on Violence Against Women and their Children (IAC-VAWC), international organizations, civil society groups, and WB staff.

In all, 14 agencies and individuals participated in the interviews (See Annex 1 for the participating agencies). The COVID-19 emergency and the imposition of a community quarantine starting March 16, 2020 affected the reach of the interviews. Several members of the IAC-VAWC are frontline government agencies against the pandemic. Many civil society groups, especially women's human rights organizations, were also engaged in welfare and protective actions against GBV during the period. The interviews were conducted through online platforms such as Webex, Skype, and Facebook Messenger or through phone. Poor or intermittent internet connection affected the quality, including the recording, of the interviews. Three agencies, the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW), Department of Health (DOH), and PLAN International, opted to email their responses, although PCW and PLAN International were also interviewed at a later date.

Although GBV encompasses a wide range of acts, the report draws mainly from the experience in addressing intimate partner violence (IPV) and sexual exploitation and abuse in the Philippines. This is partly because of limitations of document reviews. As well, IPV and sexual violence and exploitation are the most documented forms of GBV in the country. The limited availability of reports also hindered contextualization of these two issues in Moro or indigenous cultural communities, LGBTIQ+ communities, and among women with disabilities, among others.

1. SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS OF GBV IN THE PHILIPPINES

The Philippines is one of the Asian countries where women are seen to enjoy a wide latitude of freedom to exercise their rights. The country ranks high in international gender indices such as the Gender Development Index and Gender Inequality Index of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Gender Gap Index (GGI) of the World Economic Forum, indicating relatively minimal differences between the status of women and men in the country. In cases of significant discrepancy in gendered statistics, these refer to specific areas of concern rather than widespread inequality.³ The indices are

³ The drop in the Philippines' ranking in the Gender Gap Index (GGI) from eighth place in 2018 to 16th in 2019 was mainly due to the low political participation of women, as evidenced in the number of female Cabinet secretaries, legislators, and local chief executives. Apart from this, the country showed improvement in the other dimensions measured by the GGI, namely, economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, and health and survival.

based on measures on income, health, education and literacy, economic and labor participation, and political participation.

A caveat to this claim, however, is its reliance on national statistics which tend to blur women's different experiences of discrimination. The national picture is that development outcomes are equally benefitting all women. In reality, groups of women such as rural women, Moro women, indigenous women, internally displaced women (by natural hazards, militarization, or armed conflicts), and the LGBTIQ+ community are left behind. It is also relevant to include the experiences of girl children as gender-based discrimination and violence can have serious and long-term effects on their self-esteem, capabilities, and opportunities well into adult life.

The Philippines is known to have a good array of national laws on gender equality, yet the persistence and prevalence of GBV in the country undermine policy responses to protect women and children against abuse and exploitation. For instance, the 2017 National Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) published the following statistics on violence against women:

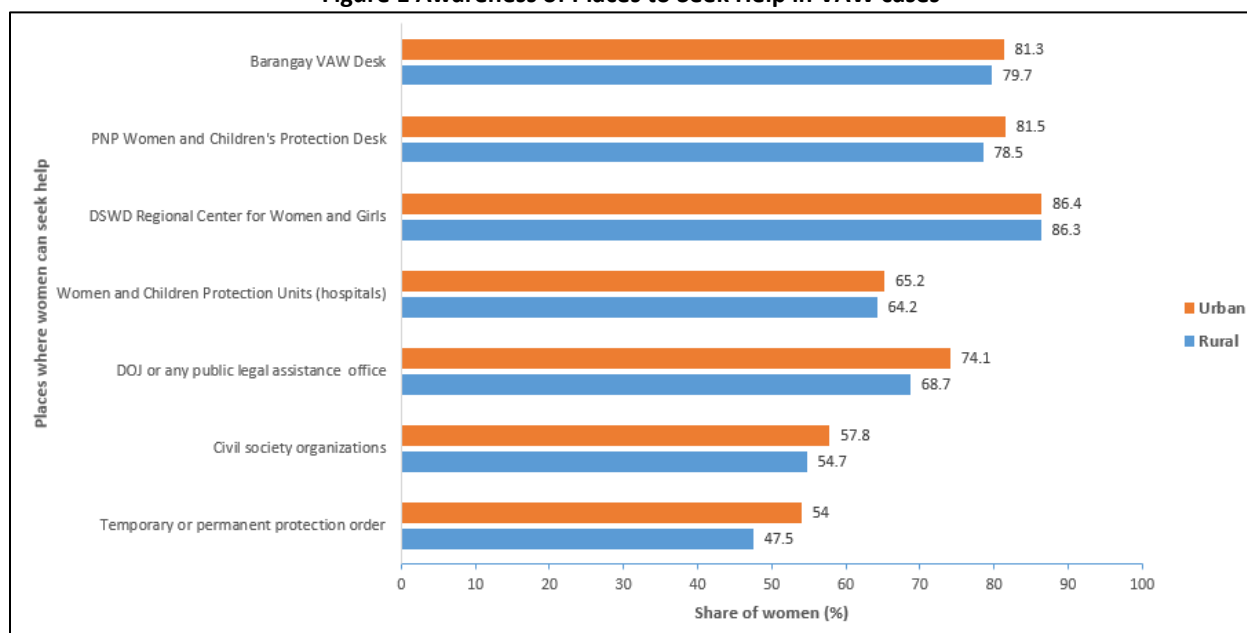
- Seventeen percent of women ages 15 to 49 have experienced some form of physical violence since the age of 15. The Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) posted the lowest percentage (5 percent), while Eastern Visayas (25 percent), Caraga (28 percent), and Bicol (29 percent) reported the highest.
- In the same age group, 5 percent have experienced sexual violence. The proportion was lowest in the National Capital Region or NCR (2 percent), Cordillera Administrative Region or CAR (2 percent), and ARMM (1 percent), and the highest in Bicol (11 percent) and Caraga (14 percent).
- More women with children and from the lowest income quintile reported experiencing both physical and sexual violence compared with child-free women and those from the highest income bracket.
- For ever-married respondents, the most common perpetrators of physical and sexual violence are their current or former husbands or partners. Those who have never been married reported experiencing physical violence from their parents and teachers, and sexual violence from friends or acquaintances, relatives, current or former boyfriends, and strangers.

The presence of GBV is a clear indicator of discrimination against women as it subscribes to women's subordinate role in their families and communities, and the undervaluation of their contribution to societal development. This mindset is perpetuated in and by sociocultural and political institutions, including the family where one's gendered socialization begins: While males are raised to be leaders, providers, and decision-makers, females are brought up thinking their role is to support men and to be nurturers who put the welfare of their families and others before their own. Particularly in cases of IPV, the violence is often linked to the supposed failure of the woman to live up to her role as an all-caring, all-sacrificing, and understanding mother or partner. Thus, it is not surprising that women may not see their experience as a violation of their human rights.

The results of the 2017 NDHS showed that only 34 percent of women ages 15 to 49 who have experienced physical or sexual violence sought help, while another 25 percent told someone about the abuse but did not seek assistance from authorities. The remaining 41 percent had never sought help or told anyone of the violence. Women are more likely to seek help when they have experienced both physical and sexual abuse (50 percent) compared with those who experienced only physical abuse (30 percent) or sexual abuse (38 percent).

This puts into perspective the number of GBV cases reported in the country: They represent only a fraction of GBV experienced by women and children. Despite the high awareness of the services and reliefs open to them, women and children may not be reporting GBV to authorities because they did not see it as a violation of their rights or felt that the violation was not serious enough to warrant outsider intervention (Figure 1).

Figure 1 Awareness of Places to Seek Help in VAW cases



Source: National Demographic and Health Survey (PSA and ICF 2018)

Accessibility and responsiveness of reporting mechanisms and services are another factor. The frontline agencies in addressing GBV cases are the barangay (village-level government unit), Philippine National Police (PNP), local government social welfare and development offices (LSWDO), and hospitals. However, less than 10 percent of the women who sought help on GBV turned to each of these institutions. The Philippine Commission on Women (n.d.) also noted the “culture of silence” surrounding GBV. Many survivors are reluctant to come forward because of experiences (her own or other women’s) of being humiliated and blamed for the violence or of the complaint being trivialized or dismissed. A lack of trust in the country’s legal and justice system—that it can truly help them—is another reason women do not report GBV (Table 1).

Table 1 Sources of Help in VAW Cases

Source	Form of violence			
	Physical violence only	Sexual violence only	Physical and sexual violence	Physical or sexual violence
Own family	69.1	60.9	55.9	64.7
Husband/partner's family	7.3	2.4	7.0	6.7
Boyfriend	0.1	0.9	0.1	0.2
Friend	19.2	23.4	14.0	18.2
Neighbor	7.7	5.1	16.3	9.8
Social work organization	2.2	11.9	1.4	3.2
Doctor/medical personnel	1.1	—	1.5	1.1
Police	5.2	2.3	9.1	6.0

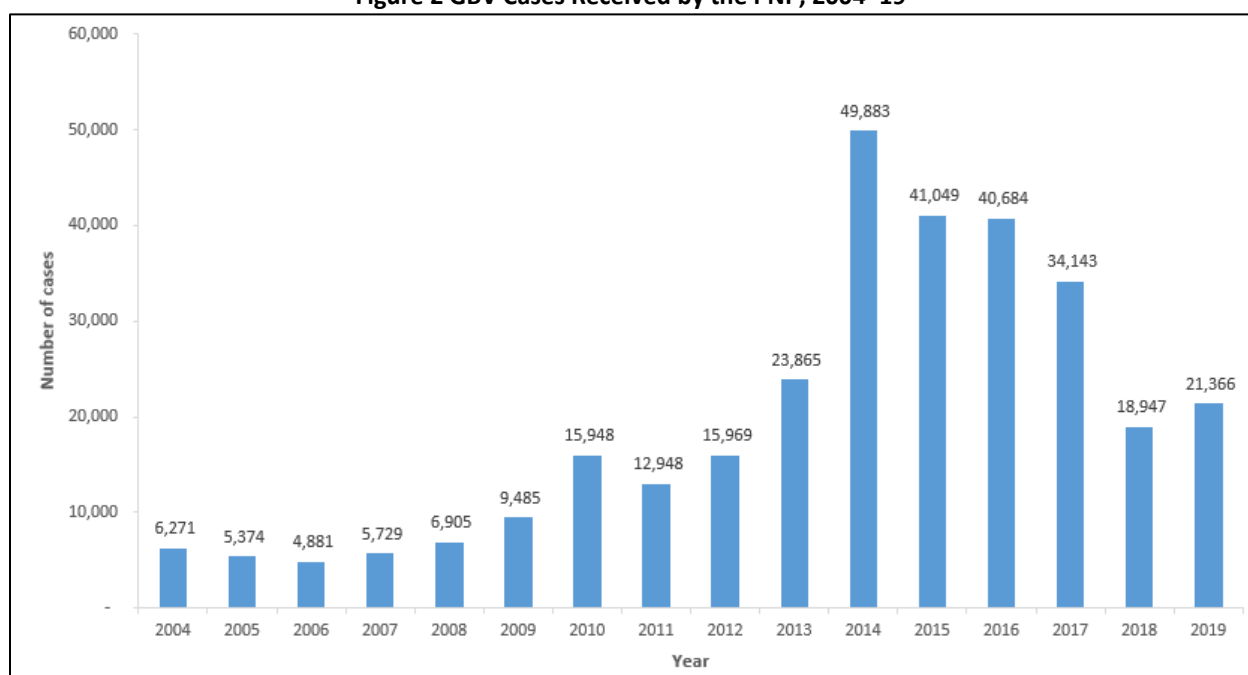
Source	Form of violence			
	Physical violence only	Sexual violence only	Physical and sexual violence	Physical or sexual violence
Lawyer	—	0.5	0.6	0.2
Religious leader	0.5	—	1.7	0.7
Other	2.5	11.9	1.4	3.2

Source: National Demographic and Health Survey (PSA and ICF 2018)

Note: Percentages do not add up to 100 percent because of multiple responses

Nevertheless, there has generally been an increase in the number of cases reported to the police due to such factors as heightened community awareness of GBV, increased establishment and functionality of institutional redress mechanisms, and improved GBV documentation. In terms of prevalence, the PNP recorded 21,366 GBV cases in 2019, a 12.77 percent increase from the previous year. From 2004, when the Anti-VAWC law was enacted, to 2019, the highest number of GBV cases recorded by the PNP was 49,883 in 2014 (Figure 2).

Figure 2 GBV Cases Received by the PNP, 2004–19



Sources: Fact Sheet on Women and Men in the Philippines (PSA 2019b); data from PNP Crime Information Reporting and Analysis System (CIRAS), 2019

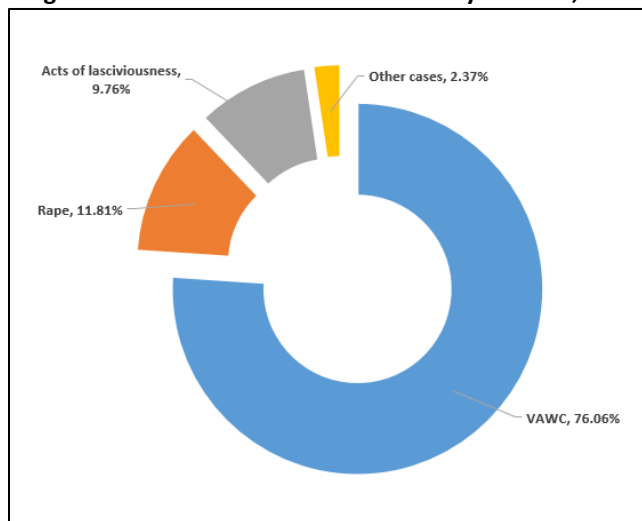
The figures exclude cases of GBV against children, which are documented separately.

1.1. Intimate partner violence

Intimate partner violence (IPV), or “violence against women and their children” (VAWC) as it is known in the Philippines, is the most prevalent and documented form of GBV in the country (Figure 3). As defined by Republic Act (RA) 9262, VAWC is any threat, attempt, or actual act of physical, psychological, sexual, and economic violence against a woman by her current or former spouse or common-law partner, sexual partner, or a person with whom she has or had a dating relationship, regardless of the gender of the perpetrator. The inclusion of “children” in the title of the law emphasizes that children under the care of

the woman are often used by the perpetrator to inflict psychological violence on her, whether or not the children were directly or indirectly harmed by the perpetrator.

Figure 3 Forms of GBV Cases Received by the PNP, 2019



Source: Data from PNP CIRAS, 2019

Disaggregated by region, the highest percentage of cases was recorded in Region VII (20.66 percent), NCR (9.51 percent), and Region IV-A (7.46 percent). The lowest, on the other hand, was in ARRM (0.6 percent), Region IV-B (1.89 percent), and CAR (2.07 percent).

Current or former spouses or common-law partners are the most common perpetrators of VAWC, based on the 2017 NDHS data. Among the ever-married women, 24 percent said they experienced physical, emotional, or sexual violence from their spouses or partners, and 15 percent said they experienced this within the last 12 months preceding the survey. About 40 percent of the women said they sustained a physical injury from the violence.

The NDHS noted that violence is more frequently reported among women who are younger, have children, and are from lower income quintiles. Women whose spouse or partner often gets drunk are also more likely to have experienced VAWC. Marital control in the form of getting jealous or angry when the woman talks to another man, accusations of infidelity, limiting her visits to family and friends, and insistence on knowing where she is at all times was experienced by 9 percent of the respondents. Marital control was highly correlated with women’s fear of their husband or partner.

The PNP recorded 428 cases of violence against children in relation to VAWC in 2019.

1.2. Sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment

Sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) covers a wide range of acts. This section, however, focuses mainly on rape and acts of lasciviousness, as defined in Philippine laws; other forms such as sex trafficking and prostitution, and online sexual exploitation are discussed separately.

SEA cases comprise 22.53 percent of the GBV cases filed with the PNP in 2019. This figure excludes the cases that may be but are not solely sexual abuse in nature. Examples of these are human trafficking and cybercrimes. Also, because VAWC, which includes sexual violence by an intimate partner, is recorded

separately, the number covers only those committed by strangers, relatives or household members, workmates, friends, or acquaintances.

Rape is the most reported form of SEA against women committed by a nonintimate partner (52.43 percent), followed by acts of lasciviousness (43.31 percent).

Cases of sexual harassment (SH) in the workplace, school, and public spaces such as streets make up only 2.37 percent (114 cases) of the total GBV complaints women brought to the police. The low rate of reporting may be due to the perception that SH is not a serious offense, even when a significant number of women are experiencing this. RA 77877 mandates schools and workplaces to establish a grievance committee (called Committee on Decorum and Investigation or CODI) and procedures to specifically deal with SH cases. Employment- or labor-related SH cases can also be brought to the National Labor Relations Commission (NLRC). It is possible that women and children were availing themselves of these mechanisms and filing administrative cases against perpetrators instead of criminal cases with the police.⁴

A 2016 survey commissioned by the United Nations Women Safe Cities Program found that three out of five women in Metro Manila experienced SH at least once in their lifetime in a public space and 88 percent of them were in the 18 to 24 age brackets. Half of the respondents did not report the incident, with 20 percent of them saying they were overcome with fear. In 70 percent of the cases, the perpetrator was a stranger (Bartolome 2016). This reality is the subject of RA 11313, or the Safe Spaces Act, which was enacted in 2019. The new legislation addressed the gaps of the earlier anti-SH law (RA 7877) and sought to create a more enabling environment to report and address sexual harassment. For instance, the definition of SH was broadened to cover acts occurring not only in workplaces and educational settings, but also in public spaces such as streets, malls, evacuation centers, inside public utility vehicles, as well in cyberspace. Whereas only people of higher rank or with moral ascendancy over the complainant could be charged with SH under the previous law, RA 11313 penalizes horizontal (peer-to-peer) harassment. Apart from CODIs, reporting and redress mechanisms were expanded to include barangay women's desks, the police, and designated traffic enforcers.

In 2019, there were 8,301 cases of SEA against children, accounting for 39.14 percent of the total cases of violence against children. This is almost double those against adult women in the same year, even when cases that may be but are not solely SEA in nature such as trafficking and cybercrimes are excluded. A great majority of these cases were rape (79.3 percent), followed by acts of lasciviousness (18.06 percent). Less than 1 percent of recorded cases (23 cases or 0.28 percent) involves sexual harassment. These figures include cases involving both female and male child survivors.⁵

⁴ No information on the number of sexual harassment cases in the country was available as of this writing, apart from those from the PNP and the Civil Service Commission (CSC). From 2015 to 2019, the CSC (2019), which has oversight function on government offices, received only 26 cases of sexual harassment, 13 of which had been resolved in favor of the complainant.

⁵ The extent of GBV against males, particularly boys, is underresearched in the Philippines. In a systematic review of literature on violence against children in the Philippines (University of the Philippines Manila and others 2016), 62 studies found that children engaged in hazardous labor and living and working on the street, majority of whom are boys, have increased risks to sexual exploitation and trafficking. Children in conflict with the law (CICL) are vulnerable to physical, emotional, and sexual violence. In 2018, 86.32 percent of CICL served by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) were male (Philippine Statistics Authority 2019b).

1.3. Human trafficking and prostitution

Human trafficking is one of the major GBV issues in the Philippines, affecting more females than males globally; within Southeast Asia, sex trafficking accounts for 60 percent of the detected cases (UN Office on Drugs and Crime 2018). The prevalence of trafficking in the country is difficult to determine given the challenges in documentation. In a 2019 global study, cases of “modern-day slavery” (which covers trafficking, forced marriage, sale of children, and debt bondage) in the Philippines were estimated to be as high as 780,000 (Walk Free Foundation 2019). Specific to children, the International Labor Organization-Manila estimated that 60,000 to 100,000 children were in prostitution dens in the country in 2010 (Challenger 2010).

Poverty is one of the main drivers of trafficking, specifically sex trafficking. The vulnerable situation of women and children is aggravated by gender-based discrimination, which objectifies and regards them as commodities. Communities where people are most at risk to trafficking are also characterized by limited opportunities for income generation, presence of a red-light district or sex tourism, and low awareness of trafficking (UNICEF, n.d.). It is also sustained by weak implementation of antitrafficking laws, corruption of officials, harmful traditional and cultural practices, civil unrest, natural disasters, and lack of political will to end it (ECPAT, n.d.).

In the case of international labor trafficking, a general profile of the victims shows that they are young (ages 18 to 27) and mostly adult women, with underage females a close second. Many of them come from urban centers such as NCR, although a significant number are from outlying provinces easily connecting to cities or major entry and exit points (sea and airports) (UN Global Programme against Trafficking in Human Beings, n.d.). Zamboanga City and Tawi-Tawi, for instance, often serve as jump-off points to backdoor entry channels of Malaysia and Indonesia (Lagsa 2015).

Domestically, recruitment and transport for trafficking are largely from rural areas to the urban centers and tourist spots where demand for solicited sex is high. Sex trafficking of LGBTIQ+ youths is prevalent in Cebu, a major commercial hub as well as a transit point to other areas in the Visayas and Mindanao (International Organization for Migration 2015). Organized crime groups are very often behind trafficking of persons. Traffickers may be foreigners or Filipinos.

Cases of prostitution that do not fall within the ambit of trafficking are handled differently, depending on whether children or adult women are involved. Child victims of prostitution have greater protection under national laws. Women in prostitution, however, are penalized for breaking the law.⁶ They also face compounded discrimination and violence in their communities, as well as stigmatization as immoral and promiscuous women, which deters them from reporting GBV and accessing redress. Prostitution is strongly linked with issues of feminization of poverty, reproductive health and sexual rights, and VAW and sexual exploitation. Many of the women in prostitution are also survivors of physical, psychological, or sexual abuse by their families or other people, or have been trafficked for sexual exploitation when they were children.

⁶ The law on prostitution (RA 10158) is criticized for being clearly anti-women when it defines “prostitutes” as “*women who, for money or profit, habitually indulge in sexual intercourse or lascivious conduct*” [italics supplied]. Furthermore, the law only penalizes the “prostitutes” and does not mention the criminal liability of pimps, establishment owners, patrons, and other persons enabling prostitution.

1.4. Child marriages and child pregnancies

Child marriage as GBV is a sensitive issue because it is regarded as an established cultural practice among certain Muslim populations⁷ and indigenous cultural communities. However, it is not limited to these groups if “marriage” is defined to include common-law partnership or other informal unions between children and an adult or another child (UNFPA APRO and UNICEF EAPRO 2018). Child marriage is largely undocumented; the civil registry recognizes only marriages between persons ages 18 and above as legal.⁸ One source of data, however, is the 2017 NDHS: 16.5 percent of women ages 20 to 24 surveyed said they were married before they were 18.⁹

In addition to societal acceptance of the practice, poverty is a major driver of child marriages. Increased economic insecurity in times of disasters, for instance, is also a pressure to consider marrying off children. Unplanned pregnancy among teenagers is another reason for child marriage. While in some cases, this is consensual decision between partners, adolescent girls may also be forced into the union to “save face” against the stigma of having a child out of wedlock or being raped (UNICEF 2018).

Cases of pregnancy among girls below 18 years old are not always regarded as child abuse or indicative of GBV. Rather, the discourse on the issue accommodates the idea of consensual sexual relations between girl children and their partners, regardless of whether their partner is a peer or an adult.¹⁰ In 2018, there were 183,967 births from teenage mothers (19 years old and below), making up 11.03 percent of total live births recorded that year. Of these, 2,250 births were from mothers ages 10 to 14, or 1.22 percent of teen pregnancies (Philippine Statistics Authority 2019).¹¹ A little more than 70 percent of babies born from teenage mothers were fathered by men ages 20 and above (Commission on Population and Development, n.d.). While many factors contribute to teen pregnancy, taking advantage and abuse of children may also be a reason (Commission on Population and Development, n.d.).

Marriage and teen pregnancy are seen as one of the major reasons girls drop out of school. The proportion of out-of-school children and youth (OSCY) was higher among females (63.3 percent) than males (36.7

⁷The Code of Muslim of Personal Laws (Article 16) allows for the marriage of a Muslim male at least 15 years old and a Muslim female once she reaches puberty, which may be as early as 12 years old.

⁸ The legal age for contracting marriage is 18 for both females and males. Under the Family Code (Articles 14 and 15), if marriage is sought by someone between 18 and 21 years old, parental consent is required and should be manifested in writing; if between 21 and 25 years old, parental advice is required and should also be in writing.

⁹ A 2005 UNICEF global statistical study on early marriage also noted that child marriage in the Philippines is more common with women from lower income brackets (22 percent) than those in the highest income quintile (2 percent), and with those living in rural (62.4 percent) than urban areas (37.6 percent).

¹⁰ One factor is the contradictory position of the law as regards children and sexual violence. While the law defines “child” as someone who is below 18 years old or older but incapable of protecting himself or herself because of mental disability or condition, statutory rape is defined as sexual relations with a person under 12 years old or is demented. Thus, the element of “consent” becomes relevant in prosecution with regard to sexual relations with children from 12 to below 18 years old, unless within the context of prostitution, trafficking, and other acts specified as criminal acts against children.

¹¹ As regards teen fathers (ages 19 and below), there were 50,194 in 2018 (Philippine Statistics Authority 2019a).

percent) in 2017. Asked why they dropped out, almost 60 percent of the girl children cited “marriage and family matters” (Philippine Statistics Authority 2018).¹²

1.5. Technology-mediated violence against women and children

Accompanying the increase of digital technology access and social media use are cases of cyberviolence against women and children in the country. These include cyberbullying, harassment, threats, and unjust vexation. Blackmailing women with their private photos or videos, whether taken with or without their consent, to further abuse them is also a form of cyber-VAW.

The more well-known cases of cyber-VAW involve sexual exploitation and abuse of children for online voyeurism, prostitution, and pornography. In one UNICEF article, the Philippines was tagged as the “global epicenter of the livestream sexual abuse trade,” with girl children as the most vulnerable victims (Brown 2016). The “operators” (people who facilitate the streaming) can be the children’s own parents or guardians, relatives, neighbors, or traffickers who had lured children away from their hometowns. Most children were convinced that their “performances” were harmless because there was no physical contact between them and the predator on the other side of the screen (for example, “the child was only posing naked”). However, this can eventually escalate to being coerced to do sexual acts with another child or adult. In some cases, the online predator arranges to meet the child personally to sexually abuse her or him.¹³ Apart from poverty, online sexual exploitation of children in the country has been linked to broken homes, poor parenting, consumerism, peer influence, family values, and sociocultural beliefs and norms (UNICEF 2016).

Online sexual violence and exploitation of women and children are facilitated by the relatively cheap and easy access to the internet, availability of various online platforms through which “shows” can be streamed, operators’ fluency in English to communicate with predators (largely foreign nationals), and the presence of remittance centers even in small communities. Online GBV presents more difficult challenges for detection, documentation, and prosecution because it occurs in cyberspace where anonymity of the location of abuse and online predators is easier to achieve. Specialized skills on information and communication technology (ICT), as well as modern ICT infrastructure and equipment, are necessary to address this—something which may not yet be fully in place in law enforcement agencies across the country.

1.6. Violence against the LGBTIQ+ community

The Philippines is regarded as one of the most gay-friendly countries in Asia, based on a 2013 global survey by the Pew Research Center. However, gender advocates qualified this result by saying that Filipinos are generally accepting of LGBTIQ+ only if they stay within the restricted confines of social stereotypes, for example, the gay entertainer or the butch lesbian security guard (UNDP and USAID 2014). To date, there is no national law against discrimination and violence on the basis of sexual orientation and gender

¹² There is an active lobby by CSOs and Muslim groups for a law against child marriages in the country (Philippine Legislators’ Committee on Population and Development 2019). Likewise, the Philippine Commission on Women (2019) included banning child marriages in its 10-point Women’s Priority Legislative Agenda after a nationwide consultation in 2019.

¹³ There are also cases where older children (and youth) initiate contact with potential “clients” for online sex in exchange for money. See, for instance, UNICEF’s *State of the World’s Children: Children in a Digital World* (2017) and “Rappler Talk: Sex Trafficking in the Digital Age” (Rappler 2017).

expression and identity (SOGIE). The LGBTIQ+ community continues to be vulnerable to physical, psychological, and economic abuse from various institutions of society, including their own families, schools, workplaces, health and welfare service agencies, and the government. Conservative religious groups have also been antagonistic toward members of the LGBTIQ+ community and fuel the discriminatory sentiments and actions against them. In a Social Weather Stations (SWS) survey in 2013, 45 percent of the respondents said they believe that HIV/AIDS is a gay and lesbian sickness. Discrimination and violence on the basis of SOGIE remain largely undocumented because existing reporting mechanisms, even those addressing GBV, are not sensitive to capture this information. The social stigma attached to being LGBTIQ+ also deters them from reporting abuse when they know they have to “out” themselves in the process (Commission on Human Rights 2017).

1.7. GBV in the context of disasters, conflict, and militarization

The Philippines is ranked third among all countries with regard to disaster risk, specifically those induced by natural hazards (UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction and Asian Disaster Preparedness Center 2019). Emergency situations brought about by such disasters heighten women’s vulnerability to GBV, which may be already present in her household or community before the event. This is especially true for poor women. They are more likely to become dependent on relief goods and other forms assistance for their basic needs during the phase of acute crisis and thus vulnerable to possible abuse from humanitarian workers. Displacement from their homes and sources of livelihood compounds their poverty, which may drive them to consider options such as early marriage and engagement in prostitution and transactional sex.

Illegal recruitment¹⁴ and trafficking are also rife in post-disaster situations. Traffickers may pose as humanitarian workers offering scholarships for children or employment to women to entice them to move to cities where they will be forced to work in slave-like conditions or be sexually exploited. Domestic violence cases are also observed to increase as family tensions build up alongside financial insecurity and psychological distress.

Similarly, armed conflict situations put women and children at serious risk of GBV, particularly rape and sexual exploitation. In the context of violent extremism, GBV can take the form of sexual enslavement, forced marriage, and encroachment on women and girls’ right to education and participation in public life. The UN Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism also noted that women and members of the LGBTIQ+ community are “systematically targeted, abducted displaced, and murdered” (UN Women 2019). Armed conflict can also put more pressure on women as they take on multiple roles of caring, providing for, and protecting their families. In areas like Maguindanao and Cotabato, men are generally absent in the communities because they have been recruited into armed groups or leave their communities because they are suspected of being combatants or fear being conscripted into armed groups (Margallo 2005).

¹⁴ Under RA 10022, which amended the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995, illegal recruitment refers to “any act of canvassing, enlisting, contracting, transporting, utilizing, hiring, or procuring workers and includes referring, contract services, promising, or advertising for employment abroad, whether for profit or not, when undertaken by nonlicensee or nonholder of authority.” In this definition, the act of recruiting for profit itself is a crime, whether or not the persons recruited were moved from one place to another.

As families are displaced by the conflict,¹⁵ women and girls living in evacuation camps are also vulnerable to physical violence, SH, solicitation of sexual favors, and trafficking (Veneracion-Rallonza 2015). A number of Muslim families in evacuation centers following the Marawi siege resorted to child marriages as a way to cope with their economic instability. Child marriages were also seen as necessary to maintain “family honor” because the strict segregation of unmarried females and males could not be observed in the centers. Forced marriages were also a response to settle cases of gender-based violence (marrying the girl to the perpetrator) in some instances (Joint Regional Child Protection and Gender-Based Violence Working Group 2017; Oxfam in the Philippines 2018).

Militarization, in general, was also identified as a significant risk factor in commercial sexual exploitation of children as it leads to community displacement which in turn increases the risk of children being trafficked (UNICEF 2016). Apart from armed conflict situations, deployment of the military and paramilitary groups in communities increases rural and indigenous women’s fears of GBV.

In the case of mining, violence, SH, and threats of rape are known to be used by these forces to establish power over the community and dissuade protest, but they also affect women’s sense of security when they go to work on their fields, fetch water and firewood, or bathe their children (Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development 2009). Domestic violence also increases as women become more financially dependent on their spouse or partner. While men can be hired to work in the mines, rural and indigenous women are displaced from productive labor when their agricultural lands are claimed for mining or converted into roads. Women’s economic insecurity and diminished control over household finances can increase their vulnerability to abuse. Prostitution was also observed to sprout or increase in communities surrounding mining sites (Pasimio 2013).

2. LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK ON GBV

2.1. International laws and standards

The Philippines has been a State party to the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) since 1981 and the UN Convention on the Rights of Children (CRC) since 1990. In effect, the Philippines adopts the standards of these two international human rights instruments as part of its national laws. These treaties are also used to interpret GBV issues involving women and children survivors brought to court.

Complementing the international treaties are consensus documents and declarations that also interpret and deepen understanding of treaty provisions. The Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action¹⁶ (1995)

¹⁵ The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre or IDMC (2020) reported 182,000 individuals displaced in 2019 due to conflict and violence, mainly in Mindanao. The center, which is connected to the Norwegian Refugee Council, relied on data available from the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in the Philippines and the Disaster Response Operations and Information Center of DSWD.

¹⁶ The Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action (BPfA) is an output from the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995. It identified 12 critical areas of concern in relation to women’s empowerment, as well as recommendations to governments, international development organizations, and civil society organizations on how to overcome barriers. VAW was identified as one of the serious issues affecting women globally; however, discussion on various forms of GBV and its aggravating factors can also be found in the other 11 critical areas of concern.

and the Sustainable Development Goals¹⁷ (2016) are two notable consensus documents and declarations relevant to GBV, and to which the Philippines has committed. Although not legally binding as UN conventions, the BPfA and SDG provide internationally agreed upon standards (definitions and indicators, for example), blueprints for action, and monitoring of progress in addressing the most urgent and strategic social development issues, including GBV.

The Philippines is also an active member of the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC) established in 2010. The ACWC functions mostly in an advisory capacity to the ASEAN on matters relating to women and children's human rights.

2.2. National laws and standards

The 1987 Philippine Constitution recognizes women's role in nation-building and their fundamental equality with men under the law (Section 14, Article II). The Constitution also has specific provisions promoting women's rights to representation in Congress, as well as protection of their health (Section 11, Article XIII) and labor rights (Section 14, Article XIII).

The Magna Carta of Women (RA 9710) is the domestic application of CEDAW in the Philippines. It frames the State's directions toward realizing gender equality and affirms the importance of a gendered perspective in looking into broad social issues such as poverty, access to education, livelihood and employment. The law emphasizes differential context of women and men, which disadvantages women in the economic, social, cultural, and political spheres. Thus, it advocates for substantive equality, which goes beyond providing same opportunities for women and men but also considering if the action will lead to *de facto* gender equality and outcomes.¹⁸ The law gives special attention to women who live in poverty and have very little to no access to land and other resources, basic goods and services, and the legal and justice system. These include women in the following sectors: farming, fishing, urban poor, women workers in both formal and informal economies, migrant workers, indigenous peoples, senior citizens, solo parents, and the Moro women.

Protection from violence figures prominently in the Magna Carta of Women. The law stipulates that priority be given to assist women against gender-based crimes and help them attain justice and healing (Section 9, Chapter IV). It also recognizes that GBV can occur in various contexts such as in times of disasters, involuntary displacement, armed conflict, and militarization, and can be committed by State or non-State agents.

¹⁷ The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) is a blueprint for action toward ending global poverty, protecting the planet, and ensuring that people live in prosperity and peace. All UN member states committed to the 17 global goals in 2015, which includes gender equality (SDG 5).

¹⁸ To quote from General Recommendation No. 25, CEDAW: "...a purely formal legal or programmatic approach is not sufficient to achieve women's *de facto* equality with men, which the Committee interprets as substantive equality. In addition, the Convention requires that women be given an equal start and that they be empowered by an enabling environment to achieve equality of results. It is not enough to guarantee women treatment that is identical to that of men. Rather, biological as well as socially and culturally constructed differences between women and men must be taken into account. Under certain circumstances, non-identical treatment of women and men will be required in order to address such differences. Pursuit of the goal of substantive equality also calls for an effective strategy aimed at overcoming underrepresentation of women and a redistribution of resources and power between men and women."

RA 11054, or the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) Organic Law, is also explicit on the protection of women against discrimination, exploitation, and violence within its jurisdiction in accordance with CEDAW (Article IX, Section 12).

Many forms of GBV are considered crimes in the Philippines and are punishable by imprisonment, imposition of fines, or both, depending on the gravity of the offense. The major laws on GBV were briefly described in the previous section of this report (See Annex 2 for a listing of GBV-related laws). These laws are also appreciated alongside national policies with provisions addressing gender-based discrimination, or laws on issues disproportionately affecting women, to surface the multidimensionality of GBV. These include those on indigenous peoples' rights, solo parenting, people with disabilities, domestic workers' rights, reproductive health and responsible parenthood, and international migrant workers' rights.

There is still no specific legislation addressing child marriages as GBV and a violation of children's human rights. Related to this, there is movement to amend existing laws that are inconsistent with human rights standards set by the Magna Carta of Women and CEDAW, such as the law on statutory rape and prostitution. The Family Code contains discriminatory provisions against women; it states that when disagreement arises on matters of conjugal property and on children's welfare, it is the husband's decision that will prevail (Articles 96 and 211). LGBTIQ+ advocates also criticize the Family Code for putting homosexuality and lesbianism parallel to alcoholism and drug addiction as grounds for nullifying marriage (Articles 46 and 55).

2.3. Other policies facilitating gender equality

Prior to the Magna Carta of Women, early policy support for integrating a gendered analysis and programming in national and local development initiatives of the government is found in the Women in Nation Building Act of 1992 (RA 7192) and the General Appropriations Act beginning 1995.

Under the Women in Nation Building Act, government agencies are required to review their regulations, circulars, issuances, and procedures and remove gender-biased provisions against women within their agency and in the planning and implementation of their projects. Likewise, a percentage of overseas development assistance (ODA) funds received shall be allocated for GAD-related activities and ensure women's full participation in the development process.

The Gender and Development (GAD) budget, or the allocation of at least 5 percent of a government agency's budget for GAD activities, has also been integrated in the national budget through the General Appropriations Act since 1995. Supporting these policies are joint memorandum circulars to provide guidance on how to implement gender mainstreaming and the GAD budget (for example, NEDA-DBM and PCW Joint Memorandum Circular 1994-01 and 2012-01). Addressing GBV, whether directly through provision of services and intervention support or indirectly through building the capacities of the agencies to be more gender sensitive and responsive to cases of GBV where it occurs in their operations, is one of the more common use of the GAD budget in government agencies (Illo 2010).

2.4. Local ordinances against GBV

Local government units (LGUs) have the power to legislate ordinances translating national laws into their particular context; they can also be proactive and enact gender equality ordinances applicable only to their locality as long as these are not contradictory to State policies. An example of the latter is the Gender and Development (GAD) Codes of several cities, provinces, and municipalities addressing various gender

equality issues, especially GBV, even before the Magna Carta of Women was passed in 2009. Sexual harassment in public spaces and discrimination on the basis of SOGIE were also subjects of local ordinances ahead of national legislation on the same (Parreño 2020). To date, the Anti-Sexual Harassment law of 1995, which responds only to acts committed within education and workplace settings, has been expanded to include street and online sexual harassment, while the bill against discrimination and violence against members of the LGBTIQ+ community is still pending in Congress.

2.5. National action plans on GBV

The *Philippine Plan for Gender-Responsive Development (PPGD) 1995–2025* is the national blueprint for realizing gender equality in the country. It presents an analysis of the macro to micro context of discrimination against women and outlines strategic actions to address issues. Chapter 19 on violence against women discusses domestic violence, rape, sexual harassment, pornography and violence in media, trafficking and prostitution, military rape and sexual abuse, religious and ritual abuse, and violation of reproductive rights as major VAW issues.

Since 2010, the country has periodically developed and adopted a *National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (NAP-WPS)* in line with its commitments under UN Security Council Resolution 1325. The latest plan covers the years 2017 to 2022.

Several gender issues are also mentioned in the *Philippine Development Plan (2017–2022)*, including addressing women’s vulnerabilities in relation to poverty, disasters and conflict, as well as increasing women’s access to the labor market, economic opportunities, infrastructure, and reproductive health services (Emdnoza 2017). In particular, strengthening the protection of the rights of women to access cultural resources and live a life free from discrimination and fear is found in Chapter 7 (“Promoting Philippine Culture and Values”).

3. INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS AGAINST GBV

3.1. Direct service provision to survivors of GBV¹⁹

In accordance with the Local Government Code (RA 7160), which provided for local autonomy and decentralization, the delivery of basic services and facilities was devolved from the national government to provinces, cities, municipalities, and barangays so that each LGU shall be responsible for a minimum set of services and facilities in keeping with established national policies, guidelines, and standards. This also applies to the delivery of assistance and services to GBV survivors.

Barangay-level interventions

The barangay, the smallest political unit in the country, is the most accessible to women. By law, each barangay should establish a women’s desk that takes the lead in addressing cases of gender-based discrimination and violence in the community. Its functions include facilitating access of GBV survivors to

¹⁹ See also Annexes 3 to 7 for the case referral flowchart, starting at various starting points of GBV reporting (barangay, police, LSWDO, hospitals, and prosecutors).

needed interventions such as a barangay protection order (BPO) against the perpetrator, medical treatment, temporary shelter, and police assistance. The Anti-VAWC Law gives barangays the authority to issue a protection order to ensure that the woman is not further harmed by her abuser while longer-term interventions are being arranged for her. The BPO is issued without court decision and without awaiting the results of investigation of the case. It is effective for 15 days and can be renewed multiple times without prejudice to the woman. The Anti-VAWC Law also prohibits the barangay from mediating in cases of intimate partner abuse and influencing the woman to reconcile with her abuser, although in many communities this is still being done by barangay officers as an intervention.

Law enforcement

All police stations in the country have a Women and Children Protection Desk (WCPD), which is mandated by law (RA 8551). The WCPD personnel are, by default, female police officers. However, in instances when this is not always possible in all work shifts, male officers can be assigned as long as they have completed the basic training on women's human rights and gender-responsive case management.

Local social welfare and development offices and the DSWD

The Local Government Code requires city, municipality, and provincial governments to establish a local social welfare and development office (LSWDO), which employs social workers and related professionals to manage welfare cases brought to their attention. The issues the LSWDO deals with are broad in scope, ranging from poverty alleviation to providing burial assistance to indigents. In larger and well-resourced LGUs, there is usually a social worker designated for women and children's concerns, including GBV.

The LSWDOs operate independently from the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) which is a national agency with no LGU oversight functions. The DSWD,²⁰ however, has the Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situation (AICS), which can provide support to GBV survivors for expenses such as transportation and medical bills. GBV survivors can access the AICS in DSWD regional offices as walk-in clients or through LSWDO referral. The DSWD also runs temporary residential care facilities for women and children GBV survivors, although these have a limited capacity, considering their services cater to an entire region. National community-based programs directly managed by the DSWD, such as the Kapit-Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan-Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services (Kalahi-CIDSS) and the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps), have grievance mechanisms through which service users report GBV. However, in terms of direct assistance to GBV survivors, DSWD workers will also tap into LGU-based mechanisms.

Medical and health facilities

The women and children protection units (WCPU) in hospitals provide multidisciplinary and comprehensive medical and health services for women and child survivors of physical, sexual, and

²⁰ The Ministry of Social Services and Development (MSSD) of BARMM may have a set of interventions or mechanisms on GBV different from the national DSWD owing to the region's autonomous status. Based on its website, the MSSD's organizational structure and programs were patterned after those of the DSWD Central Office before the latter's reorganization. The Women's Welfare Program of the MSSD "aims to promote the welfare of disadvantaged women giving special attention to the prevention, eradication of exploitation of women in any forms as well as promotion of skills for employment and self-actualization." At the time of writing, this report came across no other information related to GBV interventions in BARMM.

psychological violence. A Level 3 WCPU, for instance, would have at least two designated physicians, at least two social workers, a registered nurse, a police officer, and a mental health professional—all trained to handle cases of women and child survivors in a gender- and child-sensitive manner. The lowest WCPU level, Level 1, will have a trained physician and a social worker. The establishment of WCPUs in hospitals is mandated by the Department of Health (DOH) Administrative Order 1-B in 1997, although this applies only to hospitals directly managed and supervised by the national government (also called Department of Health hospitals). Many LGU hospitals (as well as private hospitals) have yet to adopt this standard. As of December 2019, a total of 113 WCPUs have been established across the country (Maria Arlene Rivera, Department of Health, email message, April 23 and 28, 2020).

The barangay, police, LSWDO, and hospitals also undertake activities to promote among women and children awareness of their rights and GBV services available to them such as community information drives, orientations, and seminars.

3.2. Access to legal justice

The Public Attorney's Office (PAO) under the Department of Justice (DOJ) provides free legal representation, assistance, and counseling to indigent people, regardless if the respondent to the case is a State or non-State actor (for example, a private citizen).²¹ There are no data found on the number of women who filed VAWC and sexual violence cases in courts. However, most literature and the interviews conducted for this report point to the difficulty of accessing legal justice for GBV; some women might not even regard legal justice as an option. Economic and sociocultural factors present a formidable barrier to bringing GBV cases to courts, much more staying on course with the legal action. Economic issues include lack of material support for the woman and her children, especially if she is financially dependent on her spouse or partner, and the high cumulative cost of going back and forth different agencies to get the required documents or evidence. Following up her case is also costly because it can take months to years before a decision is handed down.

Social and cultural norms around keeping family and community harmony, and the woman's role in society also make it possible for mediation to thrive as a VAWC intervention even when the law explicitly prohibits this. Apart from the barangay, many local cultural practices on seeking justice for violations are built on mediation and reconciliation of parties, for instance among indigenous peoples and Islamic communities. These processes are applied in cases of GBV involving members of their community.²²

Cases involving sexual harassment can be filed as a criminal case with the police or as an administrative case with the school or workplace grievance committee specific to sexual harassment cases (also called Committee on Decorum and Investigation or CODI).²³ As an employment and labor issue, SH complaints

²¹ The PAO can represent either the GBV survivor or the perpetrator as long as they meet the published criteria on who are eligible for its services. However, it can only represent one of them (sometimes, whoever accesses the PAO first) as the PAO lawyers will not handle cases that put them in conflict with each other (<http://www.pao.gov.ph/page.php?id=28>).

²² Mediation in IPV cases is not always regarded by the women themselves as disempowering, in the same way that many women do not find accessing legal justice (or justice through courts) as empowering. There are instances when indigenous women opt for mediation facilitated in their tribes where they are given more voice in the proceedings. See, for instance, the CHR report, *Making Data Work for Women's Human Rights: A Proposed Framework for the CHR Observatory on Gender-Based Violence* (2019).

²³ See also CSC Resolution No. 01-0940 on the Administrative Disciplinary Rules on Sexual Harassment Cases. An appeal on the final decision at the agency level can be filed with the CSC if the agency is a government office.

may also be filed with the NLRC for alternative dispute resolution (for example, arbitration). In an administrative case, sanctions on a defendant who is found guilty can range from a reprimand to suspension or termination from work. It is generally believed that reporting on SH is very low, particularly if the form of harassment experienced was not physical or overt.

The Commission on Human Rights (CHR) can provide legal assistance to GBV survivors through its regional offices. As the Gender Ombud, it can assist in filing cases against individuals, agencies, institutions, or establishments that violate provisions of the Magna Carta of Women against gender-based discrimination and violence. All regional CHR offices have a GAD focal person, who also leads in handling cases involving gender equality issues, including GBV.

3.3. Gender mainstreaming

National agencies play a key role in gender mainstreaming, particularly in standards setting and monitoring of compliance to policies. Specific to GBV, the government established the Inter-Agency Council on Violence Against Women and their Children (IAC-VAWC) and the Inter-Agency Council on Trafficking (IACAT) (See Tables 2 and 3 for their member agencies). The two councils are responsible for promoting the laws on VAWC and trafficking, respectively, and monitoring their implementation; building the capacity of issue stakeholders; developing comprehensive programs for survivors; and networking.

Table 2 IAC-VAWC Members	
1.	Department of Social Welfare and Development (Chair)
2.	Department of Interior and Local Government (Co-chair)
3.	Department of Justice
4.	Department of Health
5.	Philippine National Police
6.	National Bureau of Investigation
7.	Department of Labor and Employment
8.	Civil Service Commission
9.	Philippine Commission on Women (Secretariat)
10.	Department of Education
11.	Council for the Welfare of Children
12.	Commission on Human Rights
13.	NGO representatives (three)

Table 3 IACAT Members	
1.	Department of Justice
2.	Department of Foreign Affairs
3.	Department of Labor and Employment
4.	Department of Interior and Local Government
5.	Philippine Overseas Employment Administration
6.	Bureau of Immigration
7.	Philippine National Police
8.	Philippine Commission on Women
9.	Commission on Filipinos Overseas
10.	Philippine Center for Transnational Crimes
11.	Coalition Against Trafficking in Women–Asia Pacific (NGO representing the women sector)
12.	Blas F. Ople Policy Center and Training Institute (NGO representing the overseas Filipino workers sector)
13.	International Justice Mission (NGO representing the children sector)

The Philippine Commission on Women (PCW) acts as the secretariat of IAC-VAWC. Because the agencies under the IAC-VAWC are the same agencies involved in addressing other forms of GBV, this council has also become a venue to discuss collaborative actions and review standards and policy implementation as regards other forms of GBV (Rhodora Bucoy, PCW, interview, April 21, 2020). The Department of Justice is the lead agency of the IACAT which is composed mainly of government agencies addressing international migration concerns, in addition to the DILG which is a key agency in addressing trafficking cases within the country. In 2010, the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) And DSWD issued a joint memorandum circular creating regional and LGU-level IAC-VAWCs to improve coordination

of actions on gender equality, including responses to GBV. The regional and LGU-level IACAT and IAC-VAWC (called Local Council for Trafficking and VAWC or LCAT-VAWC) is composed of counterpart offices of national agencies at these levels, as well as local NGOs working on women and children's concerns.

The GAD budget is an instrument used to monitor the extent of gender mainstreaming in government agencies by measuring the investment on actions to eliminate gender-based discrimination and violence, both within the agency and in its service delivery, and the quality of these actions through the types of activities conducted. The PCW reviews GAD plans of agencies, while the Commission on Audit (COA) audits GAD budget expenses of all government agencies and LGUs. The annual audit determines the judicious use of the GAD budget to address gender issues and meet the objectives of the country's commitments, plans, and policies on women's empowerment and gender equality.

In accordance with the Women in Nation Building Act, ODA projects are also reviewed for their compliance with GAD mainstreaming standards, one of which is the allocation of at least 5 percent of its funds to promote gender equality in its operations and outcomes. The Harmonized Gender and Development Guidelines (HGDG) was developed by the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), the PCW, and the ODA GAD Network to be a common instrument in mainstreaming gender perspectives in development programs and projects among government agencies, donor organizations, and other stakeholders.

3.4. Monitoring mechanisms

The Magna Carta of Women identifies three government offices to monitor the implementation of its provisions: the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW), Commission on Human Rights (CHR), and Commission on Audit (COA).

The PCW is the overall monitoring and oversight body on the implementation of the Magna Carta of Women. As such, it has the authority to direct any government agency to report its progress in implementing the law and respond to issues brought to the commission's attention. The PCW also takes the lead in ensuring that government agencies are capacitated to effectively undertake its duties under the law.

Designated as the Gender Ombud, the CHR, together with the PCW, monitors the compliance of government agencies with the Magna Carta of Women and ensures that standards are in accordance with the principles of women's human rights and nondiscrimination. It can recommend to the President of the Philippines or the CSC possible administrative actions against violations or failure to implement provisions of the Magna Carta of Women.

The Magna Carta emphasizes the role of the COA to audit the use of the GAD budget in accordance with the set standards and guidelines.

4. NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS AND GBV

4.1. Civil society organizations

Promoting social justice and gender equality is ingrained in many nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in the Philippines, regardless of their sectoral or thematic focus, albeit in varying degrees. This can be

attributed to the visibility of women’s human rights organizations, starting in the martial law period in the 1970s which pushed for stronger State accountability for gender-based discrimination and violence. Although the number of organizations providing specialized direct assistance to GBV survivors (such as professional counseling and psychosocial support, legal representation, medical assistance, temporary shelters) has waned over the years, their advocacy and lobbying work has resulted in a more gender-sensitive environment than before: There are now established community-level mechanisms to address GBV and a wider social awareness of women’s human rights and laws. Thus, many NGOs would be aware of women’s desks in the barangays and police stations, if not have general knowledge on how to navigate GBV referral pathways.²⁴

Community organizing, networking, and coalition building are ways through which women’s human rights organizations extend their reach to communities located far from cities and town centers. Examples of multisectoral and mass-based women’s organizations that are based in NCR but have members in communities across the country are the Democratic Socialist Women’s Party (DSWP) and GABRIELA. Sectoral coalitions and collectives include the Pambansang Koalisyon ng mga Kababaihan sa Kanayunan (PKKK or the National Rural Women’s Coalition), Coalition of Services of the Elderly (COSE), LILAK (Purple Action for Indigenous Women’s Rights), and Philippine Alliance of Women with Disabilities (PAWID). The national network Lagablab actively partners with organizations working on SOGIE issues in the regions. Capacity-building sessions with members, whether individuals or local people’s organizations, generally include gender-sensitivity training, women’s human rights education, and providing information on how to assist GBV survivors. Developing community leaders to take the lead in promoting gender equality, including responding to GBV, is also a major focus of these organizations.

The Alternative Law Groups (ALG) is a coalition of 20 legal resource NGOs in the country. Gender equality and protection of women’s human rights are crosscutting themes for members, regardless of the sectoral issues they specialize in. Two of its members, the Women’s Human Rights and Legal Bureau and WomenLEAD, are legal resource NGOs for women.

The Likhaan Center for Women’s Health and the Family Planning Organization of the Philippines are NGOs that provide sexual and reproductive health services to women and adolescents. Part of their work is on preventing GBV (for example, intimate partner abuse and sexual violence) through information and education, and managing the consequences of sexual violence. They also provide primary health care services, including postabortion care, and counseling on VAW.

Women’s sociocivic clubs, some with chapters nationwide, also undertake education and training activities related to GBV. Although they do not provide direct assistance to GBV survivors, these clubs have been known to support local initiatives for such, as well as other forms of welfare assistance to grassroots women. The National Federation of Women’s Clubs of the Philippines (NFWCP) is the largest federation of women’s clubs in the country.

GAD resource centers, which are usually based in tertiary-level academic institutions, are also part of the GBV response at the local level. Their mandate is focused on research and capacity building on gender equality issues. However, many of them also function as GBV responders and provide services such as giving information, initial counseling, and referral to students, faculty, and employees who seek their help. The University of the Philippines–Center for Women and Gender Studies (UPCWGS) and the Women and

²⁴ One of the initiatives of IAC-VAWC is a directory of GBV service providers, which will be made publicly available (Bianca Aljibe, IAC-VAWC secretariat, email message, April 20, 2020). This is yet to be completed as of this writing.

Gender Institute (WAGI) of Miriam College are engaged in international- and national-level advocacies for gender equality.

The Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP), the official organization of all Filipino lawyers whose names are in the Roll of Attorneys of the Supreme Court, can provide legal services *pro bono* to indigent persons. The IBP has chapters across the country. Legal aid programs of law schools can also be tapped for legal advice or representation in GBV cases.

Children’s human rights organizations complement GBV responses of women’s NGOs, particularly because they also reach out to mothers and other adult women providing care for children. Moreover, there is a large interface with mechanisms addressing violence against children and against women at the community level.

4.2. International NGOs

A number of international NGOs support initiatives against GBV in the Philippines, either as a program focus or mainstreamed in their operations. They work with civil society organizations, government agencies, other international organizations, and the private sector to empower communities and decrease conditions that make people vulnerable to discrimination and violence. Often, interventions on GBV are complemented with, or embedded in, programs and projects addressing poverty, disaster risk reduction and management, strengthening livelihoods, and child sponsorship. International agencies also play a key role in convening multisectoral groups and government agencies to work on issues like emergency response. Some notable activities in this regard are organizing women’s community watch groups against GBV, establishing guidelines on gender-responsive emergency response, and strengthening institutional mechanisms for reporting and referral of GBV cases.

Apart from emergency settings, international organizations are active in addressing poverty and other factors that increase vulnerability to GBV at the local level. Oxfam-Philippines, for instance, works with grassroots women to improve their livelihood and increase their economic empowerment. Oxfam-Philippines has projects aimed at strengthening women’s negotiating power within their households and in markets where they procure materials and sell their products. Plan International, while a child-focused agency, has consciously applied gender perspectives in designing and implementing its programs. Its Global Strategy (2017–21) aims to reach more girl children to “learn, lead, decide, and thrive in development and humanitarian settings,” which necessarily includes addressing GBV in all its forms, as well as socioeconomic and cultural barriers to realizing their rights. The Philippine office of OutRight! Action International coordinates with different organizations working on SOGIE issues to improve LGBTIQ+ access to GBV services, document rights violations, and advocate for a specific national law addressing discrimination and violence on the basis of SOGIE. These three organizations operate or have partners in different parts of the country; Oxfam-Philippines and Plan International have several projects in Mindanao related to emergency response and rehabilitation, and poverty alleviation.

4.3. United Nations agencies

There are 18 UN agencies, funds, programs, and projects in the Philippines, all of which integrate the protection and promotion of women’s human rights in their operations. As with other international agencies, UN offices are not directly engaged in service provision for GBV survivors. Their major contributions to addressing GBV are in providing technical assistance and facilitation in standards setting,

mobilizing resource support for national to local initiatives, and creating spaces for collaboration and coordination of stakeholders on issues (such as emergency response and advocacy campaigns).

The UN Women Philippine Project Office is focused on women migrants' rights and the Safe Cities Program. It was a key stakeholder in the enactment of RA 11313 or the Safe Streets and Public Spaces Act of 2019. This law expands the coverage of the law against sexual harassment to penalize such acts committed in public spaces like streets, alleys, inside public utility vehicles, and cyberspace. The UN Women's work on women migrants' rights involves working with various stakeholders reviewing existing policies on national migration and trafficking, and developing strategies and legislative responses to strengthen its compliance with CEDAW. The UN Women's office in the Philippines also implements WeEmpower Asia-Pacific, the UN Women's joint program with the European Union focused on increasing the number of women who lead and participate in private-sector businesses.

The work of the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) is on sexual and reproductive health. Its mission is "to deliver a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe, and every young person's potential is fulfilled." It has three transformational goals along this line, one of which is "ending gender-based violence and other harmful practices against women and girls, including child marriage."²⁵ In the Philippines, the UNFPA supports the full implementation of the Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Act (RA 10354) and the Magna Carta of Women. It works with government agencies such as the DOH and POPCOM to reduce maternal mortality and fill the unmet need for family planning, as well as the Department of Education to operationalize a comprehensive and gender-sensitive sexuality education curriculum aligned with international human rights standards. The UNFPA also supports actions addressing GBV in emergency settings and strengthening women's reproductive and sexual health and rights, especially of women in disabilities. In 2014, the UNFPA partnered with the DSWD and the National Association of Social Work Educators Inc. (NASWEI) to integrate gender perspectives in the social work curricula. It also funded a series of training on gender-responsive case management for social workers.

The UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) is another agency active in protecting children from violence, including GBV. It works to strengthen government policies, programs, and services so children can fully realize their rights in the country. Its thematic areas of work in the Philippines are child survival, education, child protection, and social policy governance.

5. GAPS AND CHALLENGES

It is a common observation across sectors and groups working on GBV in the Philippines that the country does not suffer from a lack of good policies to promote gender equality. Where it falls short is in implementing these laws and ensuring that development programs, projects, and activities lead to outcomes that empower women as whole and not just a few groups. The latter, in particular, is a critique of the common practice of looking at the number of women and men in programs and thinking that a 50-50 gender representation is enough to result in women's empowerment in the long run. However, this is not the case. The UN CEDAW and Magna Carta of Women both advocate measures that promote *substantive equality* and holistically evaluate how the very development processes—from designing to implementing programs, for instance—can discriminate against women or may result in such, however unintended this may be. Contextualizing actions in women's realities is critical, and with this, the recognition that the starting point is women's marginalization in society. An intersectional perspective

²⁵ See the website of UNFPA Philippines at <https://philippines.unfpa.org/en/about-unfpa-philippines>.

also sharpens the analysis by surfacing the differences among women; that is, some women are more disadvantaged than others in certain situations. An empowering approach, one that pushes toward the realization women’s human rights, is necessarily an inclusive one; it does not leave behind the most marginalized and vulnerable groups of women.

Several challenges were raised in the literature reviewed and in the interviews in this regard:

- Barriers to seeking help. At the community level, women are constrained from seeking assistance due to issues of availability (for example, in times of disasters or displacement, or in some cases, the mechanism is missing in their community), accessibility (such as physical distance, direct and indirect financial cost of using the service), acceptability (such as sociocultural appropriateness and responsiveness) and quality (gender-sensitivity and responsiveness, for instance) of direct services for GBV survivors.
- Documentation and public data. Limited documentation and data harmonization among agencies contribute to the invisibility of women and the issue of GBV in development programming, and in the public sphere in general. There are 49 VAW-related forms and reports being used by 14 government agencies. The IAC-VAWC is working to come up with a harmonized VAW documentation system, particularly as regards VAW case intake, service referral form and consent form (PWC, email response to interview guide). Disaggregation of data by sex is yet to be strictly observed among agencies in general; in the case of GBV documentation, it is also a challenge when data are not nuanced to surface the intersecting identities of people affected (for example, ethnicity, disability, SOGIE in addition to the usual data on age, socioeconomic status, education), and context (such as location, situation or setting, perpetrator profile). Related to the documentation are generation of statistics and utilization of the information to guide planning and decision-making on GBV.²⁶
- Uneven implementation of laws and standards compliance. While good laws are already in place, implementation is still weak in many areas in the country. A case in point are the institutional mechanisms established to address GBV: As of 2018, the DILG assessed that less than 20 percent of barangay women’s desk are “ideal,” meaning they are almost or fully compliant with the standards set for this mechanism, while 4.78. percent are still “basic.”²⁷ While resource constraints are a factor in this situation, there should be a progressive movement to address the gaps in the delivery and quality of services for GBV survivors. Beyond the provision of material assistance and services, appreciation for the importance gender equality and women’s human rights in development is problematic. There is a large leeway in the interpretation of the law at the community level, which opens the otherwise empowering processes to patriarchal norms and attitudes—for instance, the persistence of mediation in VAWC cases in many communities and child and forced marriages as a resolution to sexual violence. Another manifestation is the lack of integration of GBV and its related issues in development planning at the local or national level.

²⁶ See also CHR’s *Making Data Work for Women: A Proposed Framework for the CHR Observatory on Gender-Based Violence* (2019).

²⁷ The DILG annually assesses the status of barangay women’s desk on the basis of its establishment (for example, if it has a supporting local ordinance or staffed by trained personnel), resources, plans and budget, and accomplishments. A barangay women’s desk is said to be “ideal” if it is scored 81–100 points, “mature” if 51–100, “progressive” if 21–50, and “basic” if 20 or less.

- Low representation of gender equality champions in decision-making bodies, especially in the government. Beyond a body count according to whether one is female or male, it is more crucial to push for gender-responsive actions in the public sphere that integrate a gendered perspective in analyzing social issues and responses—and this can be done by both women and men. However, an argument must also be made for an inclusive space of diverse voices if gender equality and the elimination of GBV are to be realized. Thus, it is equally crucial that women from various sectors and contexts are represented in decision-making. A consequence of this lack of gendered perspective and diverse voices is the dearth of support for gender equality bills in Congress and gender analysis of proposed laws or programs of the government. Historically, laws on GBV and gender equality took years to gather the required votes in Congress to be enacted, and not without the strong lobby of women’s human rights organizations. The lack of women leaders or heads of offices has also been observed in the executive and judicial branches. Under the law, there should be an incremental increase toward a 50-50 gender balance in top positions in the civil service within five years after the enactment of the Magna Carta of Women. This has not been realized, much less having a diverse representation of women in public decision-making.
- Shrinking spaces for women’s human rights advocacy. The challenge to addressing GBV has several dimensions. First, the dire economic conditions of certain groups of women, such as rural and urban poor women, indigenous women, and women with disabilities, limit their community participation as they prioritize basic survival needs. Second is the resurgence of misogyny in the public sphere and cyberspace fueled by statements even from high-ranking people on women’s bodies (rape “jokes” are an example) and capabilities (for example, those directed at women oppositionists). Third, there is the lack of representation in decision-making bodies as discussed previously. Fourth, the general culture of impunity in the face of human rights violations, along with suppression of dissent against the government, impacts women’s human rights organizations and advocates as they work with marginalized sectors. Addressing GBV, if it is to lead to realizing women’s human rights, should not be reduced to simply addressing cases of overt interpersonal violence, but also looking into and challenging the systems that produce the inequality of economic, social, and political power among different sectors and make violence an option to resolve—or quell—differences and dissent.

Emerging issue: COVID-19 pandemic and GBV

The country’s responses to the COVID-19 pandemic have also presented challenges to addressing GBV, particularly the imposition of a community quarantine or lockdown starting March 16, 2020. In the tightest of lockdowns, people’s mobility is tightly regulated through the suspension of public transport, installation of checkpoints, and establishment of curfews. Restrictions are imposed on businesses and their workforce, including the shutdown of nonessential businesses. Families are expected to stay home, with only one family member issued a quarantine pass to run essential errands such as food shopping. This is problematic and likely to aggravate GBV in many ways, including in households where there is domestic violence as women and children are, in effect, trapped with their abusers inside their houses. As well, family tensions may increase and erupt into violent episodes, especially in households experiencing economic insecurity because of income deprivation during lockdown. Increasing online use by women and children—for schooling, employment, or entertainment—may also make them more vulnerable to cyber-GBV. Elderly women and children, under the pretext of protecting them from COVID-19 infection, are especially vulnerable to GBV because quarantine guidelines state that they cannot go outside of their homes, not even to buy food. Although unintended, the quarantine cuts off women,

children, and senior citizens from their social support systems—their families, friends, neighbors—from whom they can seek help against violence.²⁸

Absence of public transportation also impacts a woman's access to assistance if the barangay, hospital, or police station is located far from her house. Another layer to this is the availability of services because the same agencies providing direct assistance to GBV survivors are also in the frontlines of the government response to the pandemic. A result of this is a breakdown in the GBV referral pathway as these agencies grapple with overstretched material and human resources for COVID-19 response in addition to their regular work; in such cases, addressing GBV is relegated to secondary priority.

Other GBV issues arising or aggravated during the lockdown (UN Women 2020):

- Women face increased risk of gender-based violence, sexual harassment, and exploitation by law enforcement at COVID-19 checkpoints.
- Health care workers (72 percent of whom are women) have been subjected to discrimination, such as refusal of basic services and transport, as well as harassment.
- Indigenous women have experienced harassment and violence from officials, such as when they attempt to access their farmlands to plant or harvest crops, or protest in mining communities.
- There are reports of limited recognition of diverse families and LGBTIQ individuals and households by officials.
- With COVID-19 disrupting delivery of services to internally displaced people (for example, from the armed conflicts, especially in Mindanao), the multiple and intersecting hardships displaced women and girls face will be compounded, and their exposure to violence and their vulnerability to sexual exploitation and abuse is amplified.
- Women migrant workers who have returned home have suffered discrimination, including being denied entry to their home provinces. It is unclear whether repatriation processes are gender-sensitive or alternative accommodation arrangements are provided if violence exists in their homes in the Philippines.

Volunteer groups and CSOs have been quick to respond to the situation through online and SMS-based information campaigns on GBV reporting mechanisms, interventions, and referral systems. Several volunteer professional groups also established online counseling services on GBV. On May 4, 2020, the PCW, DILG, DOH, DSWD, CHR, and POPCOM came out with a joint solidarity statement against GBV during the COVID-19 crisis. The statement emphasized that concerned government agencies and LGU mechanisms addressing GBV should remain functional during the community quarantine.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The mapping of policies and institutional mechanisms addressing GBV in the Philippines reiterates what has been the observation of women's human rights and gender equality advocates worldwide: Good policies are not enough when these are not translated into concrete actions and, more crucially, result in development outcomes that equally benefit women and men, especially those belonging to marginalized sectors. Policies are important in setting standards for delivery of services, monitoring, and exacting

²⁸ Refer to Table 1 on people or institutions women usually turn to for help regarding GBV.

accountability. However, GBV policies have limited value for survivors when the stated responses are not grounded on, nor address, women's context of socioeconomic, cultural, and political disempowerment based on their age, religion and belief systems, ethnicity, (dis)abilities, and SOGIE, among other identities and affiliations. Similarly, the effectiveness of institutionalized mechanisms against GBV is constrained if institutionalization only refers to physical establishment of complaints desks and procedures. While these are important to address the immediate and practical issues of GBV, they do not strategically address the persistent and prevalent beliefs and attitudes supportive of GBV as a means to control women, as well as material factors that keep them at a disadvantaged position in their families, communities, and society in general.

A two-track approach to mainstreaming gender and women's human rights is relevant to address this point. The first track is building women's capabilities to engage economic, social, and political institutions in an empowering and transformative way. A recommendation in this regard is increasing women's economic empowerment to lessen their vulnerability to GBV. Income poverty and associated issues, such as lack of viable economic opportunities for women, women's unpaid work, and discrimination in credit and capital access, are driving factors of GBV in many cases. Increasing women's economic empowerment will entail not only providing opportunities for employment and livelihood but also looking into their financial inclusion and securing their rights to asset ownership and control. A second recommendation is organizing (or strengthening, as the case may be) women's collectives. This can be a means to increase women's agency and social capital, multiply GBV responses (for instance, community GBV response teams and support groups), amplify women's voices in the public sphere against GBV, and influence the wider social, cultural, and political environment to be more enabling for women.

The second track of gender and women's human rights mainstreaming—and a third recommendation of the report—involves strengthening institutions to fulfil their mandates under GBV policies and promote women's human rights. The broader goal is to influence institutions to become gender- and diversity-sensitive and responsive, not just service delivery for GBV survivors. Working with local government units is strategic because of their proximity to women and their communities, and their deeper understanding of the local factors and dynamics that influence women's conditions and experience of GBV. While LGUs follow the standards set at the national level, the Local Government Code gives them room to design and implement programs and interventions attuned to their context, as long as they are not contradictory to State principles. This presents opportunities to ensure policy implementation at the local level and improve service delivery to GBV survivors; address national policy gaps such as legislating local ordinances on GBV issues that have yet to be institutionalized through a national law (for example, antidiscrimination on the basis of SOGIE and antichild marriage); and nuance the discussion on gender equality by highlighting localized contexts and experiences. The last one will involve assisting LGUs with regard to GBV information collection systems and utilizing these data in conjunction with other indicators for analysis and local development planning in general.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the government's deployment of community quarantine as a response present a challenge in operationalizing some of this report's recommendations, particularly on the modes of communication and capability building at the grassroots level. Physical and social distancing as public health measures to contain virus transmission also constrains women's organizing, which builds on face-to-face and group interactions. Mobile and digital technologies have proven valuable in this regard during the lockdown; they became main channels for reaching out to GBV survivors, and even providing psychosocial, health, and legal counseling to them.

Thus, the recommendation to (1) secure women’s access to mobile and digital technologies, especially women in rural areas where infrastructure supporting such technologies is not always present or where women are less likely to own gadgets and know how to use them; (2) build institutional capacities of agencies providing direct services to GBV survivors to integrate and maximize these technologies in their work systems, for instance, with regard to GBV reporting and quick response, documentation, and monitoring; and (3) incorporate gender and cultural diversity and sensitivity in designing and implementing national public health guidelines and localized responses to the pandemic (for example, GBV response protocols during a community lockdown), as well as in recovery plans post-lockdown. Not all of the needs of GBV survivors can be addressed remotely. For instance, survivors may need to physically move out to escape VAWC, or police protocols require them to personally come to the station to report the abuse. However, the use of mobile and digital technologies can widen channels and facilitate response to GBV, with or without a pandemic or a lockdown. In this sense, it is critical that women are enabled to directly participate in community- up to national-level planning and decision-making bodies to shape GBV analyses and interventions as the country transitions to the “new normal.”

The recommendations correspond to the challenges identified in the report. Underlying these is a strong push to design and implement actions on GBV that consciously work toward creating an enabling environment for women to develop their capabilities and fulfil human rights.

General recommendations to the World Bank

The WB has published several documents that can provide guidance on addressing GBV issues that may arise during project development and implementation. These include World Bank Group Gender Strategy: Gender Equality, Poverty Reduction and Inclusive Growth (2016–2023); Global Gender-based Violence Task Force: Action Plan for Implementation (2017); Good Practice Note: Addressing Gender-based Violence in Investment Financing Involving Major Civil Works (2018); and Good Practice Note: Addressing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment (SEA/SH) in Investment Project Financing involving Major Civil Works (2020).

In addition to, or complementing, the action points in these documents, the following recommendations pertain to how the WB can play a key role in addressing GBV in the country, at the same time strategically advancing gender equality through its projects:

- (1) Ensure that existing policies relevant to mitigating, preventing, and responding to GBV are observed in its work setting; that is, within the WB, among project partners and contractors, and between the project implementers and the communities where the project is located. This refers to policies specific to GBV forms (such as the laws on VAWC, SH, SEA, trafficking) and laws that address factors that sustain women’s vulnerability to GBV (the Magna Carta of Women, Indigenous Peoples Rights Act, Reproductive Health Law, policies pertinent to rural and urban development, gender mainstreaming, and implementation of GAD budget policy, among others). Some action points in this regard are conducting orientations on gender and cultural diversity and sensitivity, national policies on GBV, WB Codes of Conduct with project stakeholders; ensuring a functional grievance mechanism on SH within the project (for filing administrative cases); and monitoring compliance with the requirements of the Philippine law and international human rights standards, particularly if project activities will entail displacement of communities.
- (2) Work with concerned national and local government agencies to strengthen standards against GBV within its scope of influence, for instance, in the implementation of its projects and the

management of their expected and unintended impacts. This can refer to mandatory integration in its internal or project policies prohibitions on GBV forms that are not yet legislated or find weak support in communities (for example, child and forced marriages, discrimination and hate crimes against LGBTIQ+, child labor); setting more progressive definitions on GBV and its redress (such as on prostitution and administrative responses to SH cases); and developing protocols (gender- and culturally diverse and sensitive disaster risk reduction and management). Practices such as gender disaggregation of data collected in the course of the project can also be strictly enforced. Similarly, the WB can require gender quotas or gender-equal participation in project implementation as a means to influence gender-biased beliefs and mindsets on women's capabilities.

- (3) Engage community-based stakeholders—LGUs, local organizations, CSOs, academe—in creating enabling environments for mitigating, preventing, and addressing GBV. This can be through activities such as partnerships for GBV awareness raising and education; provision of technical and material support for GBV institutional mechanisms to be fully functional; development of women's capabilities and collectives for viable economic activities (for example, employment, livelihood, social enterprise); and strengthening initiatives as regards organizing women and their communities against GBV, as well as other forms of discrimination and violence.
- (4) Strengthen institutional mechanisms through coordination with the national IACAT and IAC-VAWC (or, if at the local level, the LCAT-VAWC), which are the main government interagency bodies for policy and planning as regards addressing GBV and promoting gender equality.
- (5) Support documentation and research to build more solid, empirical, and nuanced GBV knowledge on which to base intervention planning and advocacy at the local and national levels. A general mapping of gender issues (not exclusively GBV) in project areas can also deepen understanding of factors that sustain or aggravate GBV occurrence in communities and within specific groups.
- (6) Engage third-party contractors to work with project partners to ensure compliance with national policies and standards to mitigate, prevent, and respond to GBV; assist or take the lead in developing proactive programs or interventions to gender issues arising from the project (including GBV cases) where this is needed; and monitor progress toward gender equality outcomes.
- (7) Specific to WB projects, the following issues (as identified in project documents) should be further studied for its gendered impacts and implications to GBV:
 - Influx of migrant labor due to the project (Agus Pulangi Hydropower Complex Rehabilitation and Pasig-Marikina River Basin Flood Management Project). Some of the GBV risks associated with this are increased cases of SH, workers' aggressive advances, and exploitative and illicit sexual relations with women and children in the local community. Women and children may also be trafficked or forced into prostitution to meet the demand for sex (World Bank 2016).
 - Displacement of communities (Metro Manila Flood Management and Pasig-Marikina River Basin Flood Management Project) and their relocation to off-city sites, which can result in loss of income and livelihoods; decreased access to basic services such as education and health care; and women's multiple burden from care work, paid and unpaid labor as well as

community engagement to secure basic needs. The latter often arises because women are left behind in the relocation sites while their spouses or partners return to the city for employment, going home only weekly or monthly. Such arrangements can lead to VAWC. There is also anecdotal information that some men have another partner in the city (Department of Public Works and Highways and Metro Manila Development Authority 2017).

The impact of displacement is compounded in the context of indigenous women (Pasig-Marikina River Basin Flood Management Project) and their communities because of their separation from their ancestral domain and cultural heritage.

- Peace and security issues in project locations (Agus-Pulangi Hydropower Complex). There is an active presence of rebels and terrorist groups in the areas covered by the Agus-Pulangi Hydropower Complex Rehabilitation, and incidents of armed encounters between these groups and the military have erupted in the past. This may pose several GBV risks for women traveling to and from project sites (for example, project staff or women selling food to workers) in addition to already existing vulnerabilities as women living in conflict areas are more likely to be income poor and have less access to education, health care, and employment and livelihood opportunities than women who live elsewhere.
- Participation of indigenous women in consultations and decision-making as part of the process of obtaining free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) (Agus-Pulangi Hydropower Complex Rehabilitation and Pasig-Marikina River Basin Flood Management Project). Although women's direct participation and representation in the public sphere is generally limited in the country beyond tokenism (such as counting the number of female attendees), this is particularly crucial with indigenous women who may belong to cultural communities with deeply held beliefs on the exclusivity of community decision-making for older males.

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ANNEX 1 LIST OF PERSONS AND AGENCIES INTERVIEWED FOR THE REPORT

Phone and Online Interviews

Abella, Alessandro (chief, Women and Children's Protection Unit, Philippine National Police), April 22, 2020.

Angsioco, Elizabeth (executive director, Democratic Socialist Women of the Philippines), April 13, 2020.

Bucoy, Rhodora (chairperson, Philippine Commission on Women), April 21, 2020.

Balmes, Kristine G. (deputy executive director for operations, Philippine Commission on Women), April 21, 2020.

Cristobal, Ging (project coordinator, Asia and Pacific Islands Region, OutRight Action International), April 17, 2020.

De Vela, Tesa (executive director, Women and Gender Institute, Miriam College), April 20, 2020.

Fortich, Selena (country program manager for child protection, PLAN International), April 17, 2020.

Jordan, Charisse M. (national project officer, Safe and Fair: Realizing Women Migrant Workers' Rights and Opportunities in the ASEAN Region, UN Women–Philippines), April 14, 2020.

Jucotan, Marivi Amor (social development specialist, World Bank Group), April 17, 2020.

Kindipan-Dulawan, Jeanette (gender adviser, Oxfam Pilipinas), April 16, 2020.

Mesina, Ma. Rosalyn G. (former consultant on the CHR Gender-Based Violence Observatory, Commission on Human Rights), April 14, 2020.

Raffiñan, Reinelda (division chief, Community Capacity Development Division, National Barangay Operations Office [NBOO], Department of Interior and Local Government), April 21, 2020.

Raghunath, Madhu (sector leader for sustainable development, World Bank Group), April 21, 2020.

Rivera, Norilyn Q. (GAD focal person, Department of Social Welfare and Development), April 10, 2020.

Rubin, Krissi Shaffina Twyla A. (OIC, Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights Center, Commission on Human Rights), April 16, 2020.

Santos, Maria Aimee (National Gender/GBV Program Officer, United Nations Population Fund), April 14, 2020.

Email responses to interview guide

Aljibe, Bianca (secretariat, Inter-Agency Council on Violence Against Women and Children), April 20, 2020.

Fortich, Selena (country program manager for child protection, PLAN International), April 18, 2020.

Rivera, Maria Arlene (supervising health program officer, Women and Men's Health Development Division, Disease Prevention and Control Bureau, Department of Health), April 23 and April 28, 2020.

ANNEX 2 LIST OF SELECTED PHILIPPINE LAWS AND RELATED POLICIES ON GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

A. Republic Acts

- Republic Act 3815 (Revised Penal Code)
- Republic Act 6237 (Women and Child Labor Law)
- Republic Act 6725 (Anti-Discrimination of Women in Employment)
- Republic Act 6955 (Anti-Mail-Order Bride Law)
- Republic Act 7192 (Women in Development and Nation Building Act)
- Republic Act 7877 (Anti-Sexual Harassment in Employment, Education or Training Environments Law)
- Republic Act 8042 (Protection of Overseas Filipino Workers and their Families)
- Republic Act 8353 (Anti-Rape Law)
- Republic Act 8369 (Act Establishing Family Courts)
- Republic Act 8504 (Prevention and Control of HIV/AIDS)
- Republic Act 8505 (Rape Victim Assistance and Protection Act of 1998)
- Republic Act 8551 (Philippine National Police Reorganization Act [includes establishment of Women and Children Protection Desks] WCPDs)
- Republic Act 8972 (Solo Parents Act)
- Republic Act 9208 (Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act)
- Republic Act 9262 (Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act)
- Republic Act 9710 (Magna Carta of Women)
- Republic Act 9775 (Anti-Child Pornography Law)
- Republic Act 9995 (Anti-Photo and Video Voyeurism Act)
- Republic Act 10175 (Anti-Cybercrime Act)
- Republic Act 10354 (Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Law)
- Republic Act 10361 (Domestic Workers Act or Batas Kasambahay)
- Republic Act 10364 (Expanded Anti-Trafficking in Persons Law)
- Republic Act 10398 (Declaring November Twenty-Five Of Every Year As “National Consciousness Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and Children)
- Republic Act 11313 (Safe Streets and Public Spaces Act)

B. Presidential Decrees and Executive Orders

- Presidential Decree No. 1083 s. 1977 (A Decree to Ordain and Promulgate a Code Recognizing the System of Filipino Muslim Laws, Codifying Muslim Personal Laws, and Providing for its Administration and for other Purposes)
- Executive Order No. 209 s.1987 (The Family Code of the Philippines)
- Executive Order 273 s.1995 (Approving and Adopting the Philippine Plan for Gender-Responsive Development 1995– 2025)
- Executive Order 12 s.2017 (Attaining and Sustaining “Zero Unmet Need for Modern Family Planning” through the Strict Implementation of the Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Act, Providing Funds Therefor, and for other Purposes)

C. Joint Memorandum Circulars

- PCW-DILG-DBM-NEDA JMC 2016-01 (Amendments to JMC No 2013-01: Guidelines on the Localization of the Magna Carta of Women)
- NEDA-PCW JMC 2016-01 (JMC 2016-01 Guidelines for the Creation, Strengthening and Institutionalization of a Regional Gender and Development Committee under the Regional Development Council)
- PCW-DILG-DBM-NEDA JMC 2013-01 (Guidelines on the Localization of the Magna Carta of Women)

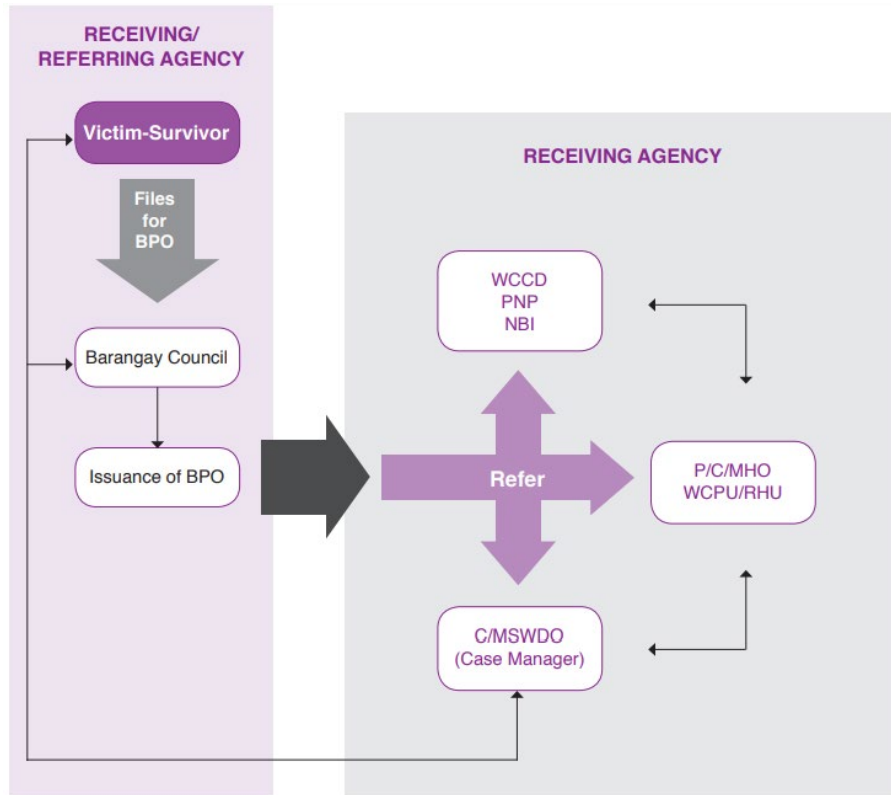
- NEDA-DBM-NCRFW JMC 1994-01 (Policy Framework and Procedure for the Integration of GAD into Agency Plans and Budget Proposals)

D. Department Guidelines

Agency	Number	Title
Civil Service Commission (CSC)	Memorandum Circular No. 30 s. 1995	Implementing Rules and Regulations on RA 7877, An Act Declaring Sexual Harassment Unlawful in the Employment, Education or Training Environment, and for other Purposes
	Memorandum Circular No. 19 s. 1994	Policy on Sexual Harassment in the Workplace
	Resolution No. 01-0940	Administrative Disciplinary Rules on Sexual Harassment Case
Commission on Higher Education (CHED)	Memorandum s. 2011	Submission by All Higher Education Institutions of Reports on the Compliance to Republic Act No. 7877 Otherwise Known as the "Anti-Sexual Harassment Act of 1995"
Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG)	Memorandum Circular 2012-61	Guidelines in the Establishment and Management of a Referral System on Violence Against Women (VAW) at the Local Government Unit Level
	Memorandum Circular No. 2017-114	Guidelines in Monitoring the Functionality of VAW Desk in Every Barangay
	Memorandum Circular 2005-034	Integration of Indigenous Peoples (IPs) Rights within the Framework of Gender and Development at the Local Levels
	Memorandum Circular 1999-146	To Adopt the GAD Budget Policy and Planning and Budgeting of the LGUs
Department of Health (DOH)	Administrative Order 1-B s. 1997	DOH Policy on the Establishment of Women and Children's Protection Units (WCPU)
	Administrative Order 2013-0011	Revised Guidelines on the Establishment of WCPUs in All Hospitals
	Administrative Order 2014-0002	Violence and Injury Prevention
	Administrative Order 2016-0005	National Policy on the Minimum Initial Service Package (MISP) for Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) in Health Emergencies and Disasters
	Administrative Order 2015-00027	Guidelines on the Registration and Mapping of Conscientious Objectors and Exempt Health Facilities Pursuant to the Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Act
	Administrative Order 24-A s. 1999	Strengthening the DOH Reproductive Health Program Amendment to AO No. I - A s. 1998
	Administrative Order 2006-0035	National Policy and Strategic Framework on Male Involvement in Reproductive Health
	Administrative Order 43 s. 2000	Reproductive Health Policy
	Administrative Order 1-A 1998	Creation of a Philippine Reproductive Health Program
	Administrative Order 2017-0005	Guidelines in Achieving Desired Family Size through Accelerated and Sustained Reduction in Unmet Need for Modern Family Planning Methods
Department of Justice (DOJ)	Department Circular 23 s. 2017	Standards for Gender Sensitive and Child Friendly Public Assistance Desks and Interview/Investigation Rooms
Department of Labor and	Administrative Order 68 s. 1992	Amending Administrative Order No. 80 s. 1991, Policy against Sexual Harassment

Agency	Number	Title
Employment (DOLE)	Department Order 208 s. 2020	Guidelines for the Implementation of Mental Health Workplace Policies and Programs for the Private Sector
	Administrative Order 250 s. 1995	Rules and Regulations Implementing Republic Act No. 7877 (Anti-Sexual Harassment Act Of 1995) in DOLE
Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD)	Administrative Order 069 s. 2003	Amendment to Administrative Order No. 67, Series of 2003 Guidelines in the Operationalization of a "Rape Crisis Center"
	Administrative Order 067 s. 2003	Guidelines in the Operationalization of a "Rape Crisis Center"
	Administrative Order 015 s. 2004	Policies for the Media Coverage of Victims of Abuse and Exploitation
	Administrative Order 019 s. 2004	Amended Omnibus Guidelines for Minors Traveling Abroad
	Administrative Order 002 s. 2006	Amendments to Omnibus Guidelines for Minors Traveling Abroad (AO 14 series of 2005)
	Administrative Order 004 s. 2006	Standards in the Implementation of Psycho-social Services to Women Victims-survivors of Violence and their Children in Center and Residential Facilities
	Administrative Order 007 s. 2005	Roles and Responsibilities of Social Workers in Handling Cases on Annulment, Nullity of Marriage, and Custody of Children
	Administrative Order 005 s. 2008	Omnibus Guidelines on the Management of DSWD-Operated Crisis Interventions Units
	Administrative Order 010 s. 2009	Standards for Rape Crisis Centers
	Administrative Order 001 s. 2011	Amendment to A. O. No. 5, Series of 2008 on Omnibus Guidelines on the Management of DSWD-Operated Crisis Intervention Units (CIUs)
	Administrative Order 008 s. 2011	Amendment to A. O. 1 series of 2011 re: Amendments to A. O. No. 5 Series of 2008 on Omnibus Guidelines on the Management of DSWD-Operated Crisis Intervention Units (CIUs)
	Administrative Order 005 s. 2012	DSWD Guidelines on Gender and Development (GAD) Mainstreaming
	Administrative Order 014 s. 2012	Guidelines on the Institutionalization of Gender Responsive Case Management (GRCM) as a Practice Model in Handling Violence Against Women (VAW) cases
	Administrative Order 002 s. 2013	Guidelines in the Implementation of the Comprehensive Intervention Against Gender-Based Violence
	Administrative Order 002 s. 2014	Guidelines in the Implementation of the Counseling Services for the Rehabilitation of Perpetrators of Domestic Violence (CSRPDV)
	Administrative Order 012 s. 2015	Enhanced Guidelines in the Implementation of the Comprehensive Intervention Against Gender-Based Violence (CIAGV)
Administrative Order 012 s. 2017	Omnibus Guidelines for Minors Traveling Abroad	

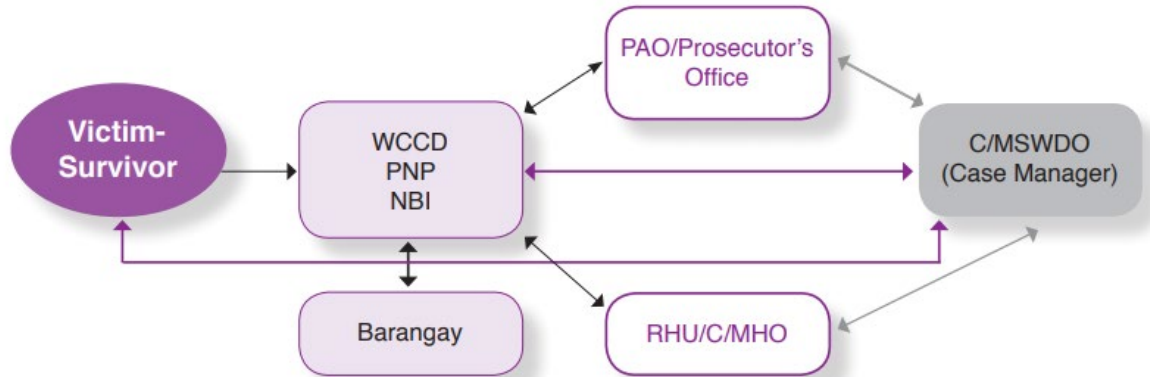
ANNEX 3 VAWC CASE REFERRAL AT THE BARANGAY LEVEL



The chart shows the entry of the survivor at the barangay level and the actions to be taken by barangays based on their roles and responsibilities particularly in the issuance of a barangay protection order (BPO). As mandated under RA 9262, they are to report within four hours of receiving the report of any VAW incident to the Philippine National Police (PNP) and the City or Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office (C/MSWDO). Emergency services such as counseling, but not mediation, and medical treatment (referral to the Rural Health Unit [RHU] or medical facility) may be provided as deemed necessary. The barangay also has to assist in the reintegration of survivor in coordination with the C/MSWDO/case manager.

Source: Philippine Commission on Women, and the Inter-Agency Council on VAWC. 2009. *Guidelines in the Establishment and Management of a Referral System on Violence Against Women at the Local Government Level*. <https://library.pcw.gov.ph/sites/default/files/vaw-referral-system.pdf>.

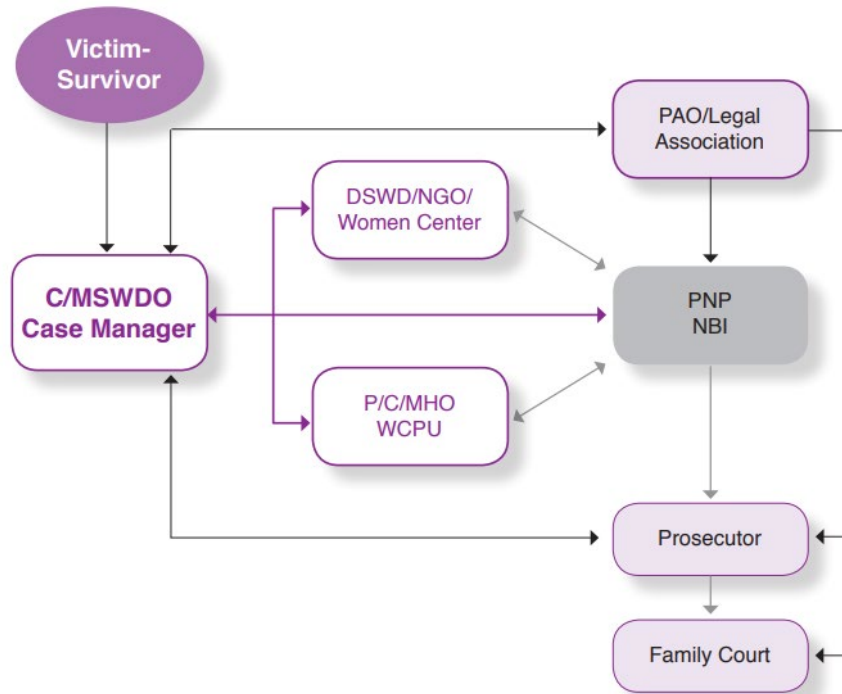
ANNEX 4 VAWC CASE REFERRAL AT THE POLICE LEVEL



The chart shows the entry of the survivor at the law enforcement level. The PNP-WCCD (Philippine National Police–Women and Children’s Concerns Desk) or the NBI (National Bureau of Investigation) takes appropriate action in consonance with its mandated roles and responsibilities and refers the survivor to the C/MSWDO (City or Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office) for further assistance or may directly refer to the RHU (rural health unit), CMHO (City or Municipal Health Office), or medical facility for treatment of injury, if any, and to the Public Attorney’s Office (PAO) or any legal association for legal representation/advice, as necessary. After the investigation and the survivor decides to file charges against the perpetrator, the PNP/NBI forwards the report to the prosecutor.

Source: Philippine Commission on Women, and the Inter-Agency Council on VAWC. 2009. *Guidelines in the Establishment and Management of a Referral System on Violence Against Women at the Local Government Level*. <https://library.pcw.gov.ph/sites/default/files/vaw-referral-system.pdf>.

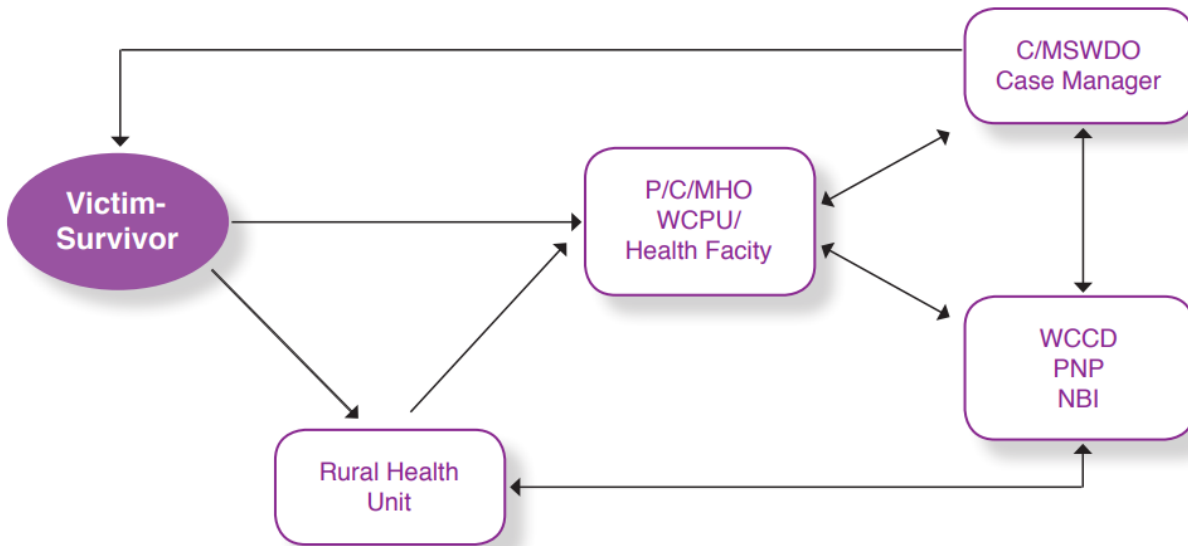
**ANNEX 5 VAWC CASE REFERRAL AT THE LOCAL SOCIAL WELFARE AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE
(PROVINCIAL, CITY OR MUNICIPAL)**



The chart shows the P/C/MSWDO (Provincial, City, or Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office) as the entry point for a VAW survivor and as the case manager, the referral/coordination made with various agencies in order to respond to the various needs of the victim-survivor. At initial contact, safety and security and medical needs are attended to by concerned agencies. Victims-survivors must report any incident on VAW to the LEA (law enforcement agency) with the support of the P/C/MSWDO. Legal advice and assistance are available in cases where the victims-survivors decide to seek justice and pursue their cases in court.

Source: Philippine Commission on Women, and the Inter-Agency Council on VAWC. 2009. *Guidelines in the Establishment and Management of a Referral System on Violence Against Women at the Local Government Level*. <https://library.pcw.gov.ph/sites/default/files/vaw-referral-system.pdf>.

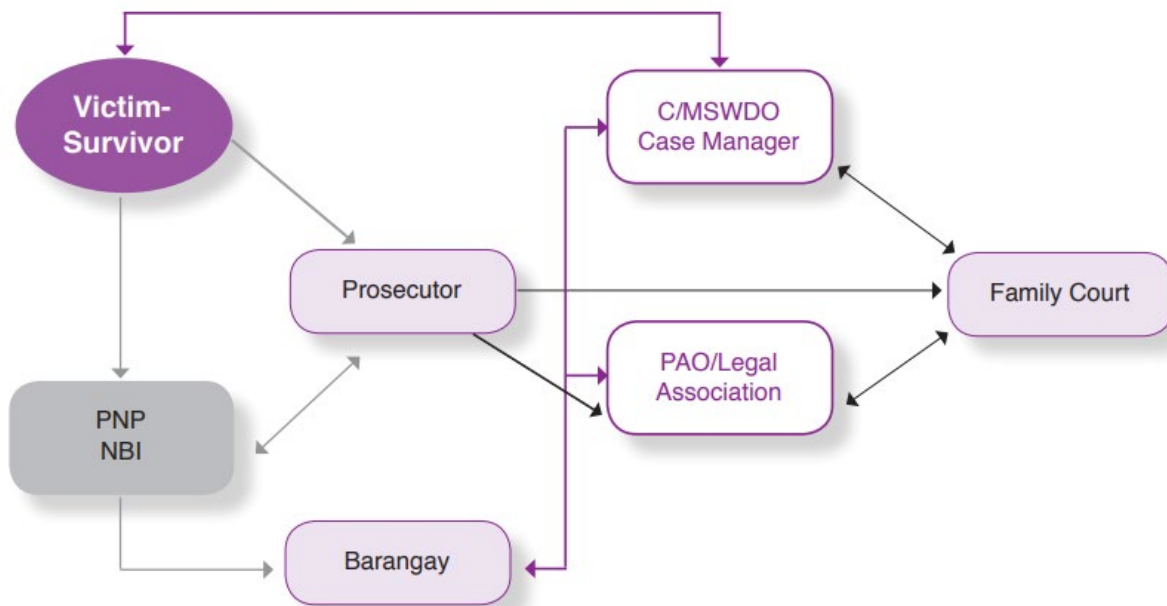
ANNEX 6 VAWC CASE REFERRAL AT THE MEDICAL OR HEALTH UNIT



The chart shows the entry of survivor at the rural health unit (RHU), or at the P/C/MHO (Provincial, City, or Municipal Health Office), or medical facility. Emergency medical services may be provided to the survivor by the RHU in view of its accessibility. However, referral must be made by the RHU to the P/C/MHO or tertiary level medical facilities for laboratory, medico-legal examination and other needed interventions. The results of medical examinations must be submitted to the LEA particularly if the survivor plans to file charges against the perpetrator. Medical practitioners need to coordinate with the C/MSWDO for reintegration services. Oftentimes, they are also required to testify in court proceedings on VAW cases.

Source: Philippine Commission on Women, and the Inter-Agency Council on VAWC. 2009. *Guidelines in the Establishment and Management of a Referral System on Violence Against Women at the Local Government Level*. <https://library.pcw.gov.ph/sites/default/files/vaw-referral-system.pdf>.

ANNEX 7: VAWC CASE REFERRAL AT THE PROSECUTOR LEVEL



The survivor seldom contacts directly the prosecutor for assistance. In the chart, the survivor gets in contact with the prosecutor through the law enforcement officer who files a report to the prosecutor's office for preliminary investigation or inquest. The prosecutor then contacts the C/MSWDO and the Public Attorney's Office (PAO) or a legal association for legal representation, if such has not been done earlier by the PNP or NBI. He/she files the case in court and pursues its disposition. On the other hand, the Family Court may require the C/MSWDO to submit a case study report in coordination with the court social worker. Meantime, the PAO/legal association continues to provide legal assistance to the survivor. For cases involving violation of the Anti-VAWC law, special proceedings such as the application of temporary/permanent protection order (T/PPO) may be referred to PAO or a private legal counsel (IBP or any legal association providing free/paid legal services).

Source: Philippine Commission on Women, and the Inter-Agency Council on VAWC. 2009. *Guidelines in the Establishment and Management of a Referral System on Violence Against Women at the Local Government Level*. <https://library.pcw.gov.ph/sites/default/files/vaw-referral-system.pdf>.