

# Effectiveness of Collaboration Between Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office and Violence Against Women and their Children Desks

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## ABSTRACT

This study looked into the effectiveness of the collaboration between the Municipal Social Welfare Development Office (MSWDO) and the selected Barangay Violence Against Women and their Children (VAWC) Desks in a municipality in Negros Occidental, Philippines. The study centered on the products and services provided by the MSWDO and VAWC Desks and the implementation of policies to measure the effectiveness of their collaboration. The study employed a descriptive, quantitative research design triangulated by means of interviews. The ten participants consisted of eight Barangay VAWC Focal Persons from the selected barangays and two MSWDO personnel. The results revealed that the extent of effectiveness of the products and services delivered by the MSWDO and Barangay VAWC Desks was generally excellent, illustrating a systematic observance and execution of referrals and monitoring between these offices.

## Keywords

*Focal persons, products and services, collaboration, VAWC, VAWC Desk, MSWDO, Social Work, Negros Occidental (Philippines)*

## INTRODUCTION

The home is often the most dangerous place for women, where many live in fear of violence daily. One out of three women is likely to experience physical or sexual abuse from men, usually someone known to them, in their lifetime (Mohammed & Pulmano, 2017). Violence against women and children (VAWC) is among the most adverse experiences oppressing women and children. The pervasiveness of such violence takes an enormous toll on individual victims and society's lives through innumerable behavioral, health, psychological, and economic consequences. Therefore, VAWC is an important issue that needs a strong government commitment (Koss et al., 2011).

The Philippine government recognizes every family's importance and has taken steps to mitigate and eliminate VAWC in the country (Mallorca-Bernabe, 2005). In this regard, the Philippine government enacted Republic Act 9262 or the Anti-Violence Against Women and their Children Act of 2004, recognizing the need to protect the family and its members, specifically women, and children, from violence and threats to their safety and security. In addition, Republic Act 9710 or the Magna Carta of Women, was enacted in 2009 to uphold women's rights and address discrimination against them. Furthermore, these laws enabled the establishment of the Violence Against Women (VAW) Desk in every barangay where women who experience abuse can

seek assistance and protection from the violence against them (Philippine Commission on Women, 2012).

The selected Municipality in Negros Occidental upholds the family as the nation's foundation and the basic social institution that seeks to protect families' natural rights to their survival, protection, development, participation rights, and duties in childbearing and rearing (Comprehensive Child, Youth, Family Welfare Development Code of Isabela, 2001). Accordingly, the municipal government institutionalized a Comprehensive Child, Youth, and Family Welfare Development Program and Support System to support family development. In addition, the local ordinance provided the creation and funding of a children's rescue team and programs for child abuse, exploitation, and discrimination (Ordinance No. 2010-15 Series of 2010).

In support of the nationally mandated establishment of VAW Desks through the Philippine National Police (PNP) and the Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office (MSWDO), the local government also passed local ordinances to respond to gender-based violence brought to the barangays (Ordinance No. 2017-06 Series of 2017). However, despite the intervention by the local government, VAWC cases continued to rise between 2015 and 2017.

The effectiveness of laws and ordinances lies in the functionality of each Barangay VAWC Desk in collaboration with the MSWDO as a response to VAWC cases. Collaboration is a strong relationship that aligns two organizations into a new structure committed towards a common defined mission (Perrault et al., 2011). This collaborative relationship enables organizations to deliver service more effectively (Sheng et al., 2013). As a delivery mechanism, collaboration can enhance the quality, quantity, cost-effectiveness, and accessibility of services. Collaboration can also reduce gaps and overlaps in providing services (Gray, 2002; McLaughlin & Covert,

1984). Working collaboratively with other entities is a recognized practice in delivering public services (Marek et al., 2015) to meet stakeholder needs if done effectively.

This study assessed the effectiveness of the collaboration between the Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office and selected Barangay VAWC Desks in the selected Municipality from 2015-2017. Specifically, this study determined the effectiveness of collaboration between the Municipal Social Welfare Development Office and the VAWC Desks in selected barangays in the selected Municipality in Negros Occidental and the effectiveness of products and services delivered by these two offices. Finally, the researchers identified policies that could be recommended to enhance the effectiveness of both offices.

This study is anchored on Emile Durkheim's theory of Structural Functionalism, also referred to as Functionalism, as well as Huxham & Vangen's (2013) recognition of successful collaboration as a management tool through substantive outcomes.

Shannon (2018) stated that functionalism revolves around the concept of society as a system of interrelated parts, wherein every piece has a function that may contribute positively to the operation of the system. The existence of an institution is its vital role in the functioning of society, and when there is an uprising of new sets of needs, new institutions are created to address these needs (Crossman, 2018). The many subsystems that make up an agency or organization interact together for it to function correctly. Sever (2012) analogizes the human body and society, supposing that society is like a human body with organs with particular functions and work interdependently. The whole system is affected once any of these malfunctions.

According to Giacomazzi & Smithey (2001), collaborative partnerships have emerged in the United States to develop a system that advocates for

the safety and welfare of victims of family violence and prevents further abuse. Even though these pieces may be diverse and complex, each piece compliments each other and builds a whole that influences other parts.

In order to prevent clients from “falling through the cracks” among institutions, collaboration is critical because effective collaboration is also the key to serving clients in the most extensive context possible. Furthermore, with effective collaboration, social welfare service providers may recognize differing viewpoints and wholly understand the clients’ needs (Young, 2000).

Utilizing Durkheim’s theory, it can be said that the LGU, specifically the MSWDO and VAWC Desks, are part of a bigger system of which they are subsystems with respective functions. The action of a subsystem affects other subsystems, which, in turn, creates a ripple effect and eventually affects the bigger system. These offices have functions that they need to effectively perform because the welfare of the people is at stake. Moreover, they have distinct and exclusive functions that only they can do; simultaneously, they have specific functions for which they need to collaborate to carry out their products and services effectively.

Collaboration is a process between MSWDO and VAWC Desks in which both offices work cooperatively to respond to the clients’ needs. It is a continuous engagement in the interchange of products and services, implementing policies, and resolving problems.

Globally, millions of women experience violence or live with its consequence, with most forms of violence being continuous over long periods (Watts & Zimmerman, 2002), yet the recognition of violence against women as a human rights issue was made only in 1993. This recognition during the World Conference on Human Rights expanded the definition of violence against women from a purely

private or domestic problem to a broader view that includes rape, trafficking for sexual exploitation, and harmful traditional practices (Tjaden, 2005 as cited in Johnson et al., 2007).

The effects of violence against women can be expansive, with one study suggesting that women who experience violence are more likely to suffer it again within a year, with adolescent violence more likely to predict victimization in college (Smith et al., 2003). Violence may also correlate with increased risks for current poor health, depressive symptoms, substance abuse, and the development of chronic adverse physical and psychological health outcomes; power and control are stronger determinants of these health outcomes than verbal abuse alone (Coker et al., 2002).

The protection of vulnerable populations, particularly women and children, is enshrined in the 1987 Philippine Constitution. Their protection is guaranteed by Republic Act 7610, Republic Act 9262, and the Gender and Development (GAD) Code of the Province of Negros Occidental. Therefore, it is necessary for the state to provide mechanisms and allocate and dispose of the state’s resources to gain access to and benefit from these programs and services (Flores, 2008).

Just as Huxham & Vangen (2013) consider collaboration as a management tool, Kożuch & Dobrowolski (2014) asserted that it bears benefits regardless of scope, forms, or relevance to informal relations among organizations or close connections within a collaborative partnership. Moreover, these contributing factors may, more or less, influence the character and scale of the benefits as well as their importance in meeting the shared goals of the collaborating organizations or groups. Huxham & Vangen (2013) cited one perspective that can be identified in determining effective collaboration as a management tool: substantive outcomes where there is a better use of public funds, improvements in

public service provision, and raised citizen awareness.

The researchers hoped to benefit the selected Municipality through the formulation and prioritization of GAD funds in implementing barangay GAD projects based on the findings of this study; MSWDO by crafting and formulating programs for development of support programs and services for women and children; National Government Agencies like the DSWD, PNP, DOH, CHR, and National Commission on Women by providing data and information for sustaining the programs of the local government unit to enhance the knowledge, skills, and attitude of the stakeholders in the implementation of barangay VAWC Desks; stakeholders by providing relevant data and input for a more skillful observance of protocol by the Barangay VAWC Desk Focal Person, MSWDO staff, Women Organizations, PNP, and other government agencies; the researchers by the implementation of national laws and local policies on the effectiveness of collaboration between the local government unit (MSWDO) and the barangays (VAWC Desks); and, future researchers by providing information that may be used in studies related to effectiveness of collaboration between MSWDO and VAWC Desks.

According to RA 9262, VAWC (Violence Against Women and their Children) denotes any act or series of acts of violence committed by any person against a woman who is his wife, former wife, or someone whom the person has or had a sexual or dating relationship, or with whom he has a common child, or against her child whether legitimate or illegitimate within it without the family abode, which results in or is likely to result in physical, sexual, psychological harm, or economic abuse. Moreover, a VAWC Desk is a facility that would address VAWC cases in a gender-responsive manner, managed by the VAWC Desk Focal Person, and is situated within the premises of the Barangay Hall. A VAWC Desk Focal Person is the personnel designated by the Punong Barangay, usually a female Barangay Kagawad or female

Barangay Tanod, who is trained in gender-sensitive handling of cases.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study utilized a quantitative research design and a descriptive research approach. A descriptive research method describes and interprets what it is. It is considered with condition or relationship which exist, a practice that prevails, beliefs, point of views or attitudes that are held, processes that are going on, effects that are being felt, or trends that are developing.

This endeavor is to study the existing conditions; therefore, descriptive research is the appropriate design. Triangulation was implemented, wherein a researcher-made questionnaire was primarily utilized to assess quantitative data in measuring the effectiveness of the collaboration of these specific offices. Memorandums, comparative reports, and other relevant documents were studied, and interviews were conducted to further analyze the quantitative data.

The subjects of this study are the two offices of the Municipal Government of Isabela, Negros Occidental; the Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office and Violence Against Women and their Children Desks of eight selected barangays. However, due to security concerns during the period covering the data gathering, the study was limited to only two MSWDO Staff, and eight VAWC Desk Focal Persons of rural and urban barangays of the said Municipality, wherein the said participants have been put into office in the years 2015-2017. Nevertheless, apart from the selected barangays, eight barangays from the same municipality were included in the reliability testing of the research instrument.

The participants of this research were the staff of the Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office and VAWC Desks Focal Persons of eight selected



barangays of the local government unit, with a total of 10 participants, of which two were from the MSWDO, four urban barangays, and another four rural barangays.

During the conduct of the study, there was a threat to the safety and security of the municipality. Therefore, the academe strictly considers the safety of the researchers. Thus, the supposed scope of the study, which is the 30 barangays of the municipality, has been narrowed down to only 16, wherein 8 of which were part of the population for the reliability testing of the research instrument, whereas the other eight participated in the actual study. Moreover, convenience sampling was used in choosing the participants due to restrictions that were swiftly implemented as a response to the said threat. Thus, participants who were near and accessible to the municipal proper, or población, were chosen.

The participants are knowledgeable of their products and services and participate in their delivery to the people. The study aims to assess their collaboration considering that it is supposed that just like a system, we are all interconnected, and every subsystem contributes and affects the whole system. Collaboration between the offices is practiced to deliver products and services; thus, through the parties involved, specifically the implementing units, that collaboration may be measured.

A researcher-made questionnaire was used to assess the effectiveness of the collaboration between the MSWDO and VAWC Desks of eight barangays. The research instrument included the collection of information relevant to the study. The participants were instructed to accomplish the questionnaires and to select their answers on the scale of 5 (Excellent) to 1 (Needs Improvement). In addition, an interview with the GAD FPS of the Municipality was conducted to further understand and validate the data collected. The whole conduct of the study lasted for eight (8) months, from planning through data gathering and

up to the last day of completion of the research report.

The participants were briefed about the research objectives before being involved in the research to allow them to freely decide whether they should participate in the research study or not and to give them time to be fully aware of the significance of their participation in this research study. The participants were asked whether they felt uneasy or uncomfortable participating in the study and were given the opportunity to withdraw from the research. All pieces of information they provided were treated with confidentiality. The materials that contained raw and electronic information derived from them were disposed of by deletion of electronic data and shredding of accomplished questionnaires a year after the completion of the study.

To gather data, the researchers sought the permission of the Punong Barangays who participated in this research. After receiving the official approval of the authorities, they went to the barangay halls to conduct the survey among the Barangay VAWC Focal Persons. As a result, the researchers reached the VAWC desk officers of four barangays, while those in the rural barangays were requested by the Head of the MSWDO to report to the appointed venue.

Part of the researchers' initial data collection was done by attending an Orientation Seminar on RA 9262, otherwise known as the Anti-Violence Against Women and their Children Act, last March 28, 2018, at an appointed venue in the Municipality. The MSWDO Head, together with the staff in coordination with PNP Station WCPD and the Gender and Development (GAD) Focal Point System and Technical Working Group (TWG), conducted the Orientation among the 29 Barangay VAWC Desk Focal Persons of the municipality. Furthermore, selected key informants in this study were interviewed to gather insights and details to explore future policy options. The researchers collected the comparative data cases on VAWC from Calendar Year 2015-2017 through the two



Table 1  
Effectiveness of Policy Implementation

| Policy  | M (SD)         | Interpretation |
|---|----------------|----------------|
| Provision of GAD programs and projects by the MSWDO | 4.3 (0.45826)  | Very Good      |
| Proper documentation of cases                       | 4.3 (0.64031)  | Very Good      |
| Issuance of BPO                                     | 4.3 (0.64031)  | Very Good      |
| Availability of application for BPO                 | 4.2 (0.6)      | Very Good      |
| Overall   | 4.275 (0.0748) | Very Good      |

Social Welfare Officers (SWO-1), WCPD In-Charge, and the Sangguniang Bayan Secretary/GAD FPS of the Municipality, and the SB Chairman on the Committee on Women and Family.

Municipal records from both the executive and legislative offices were also collected for data that may be useful in the study.

In analyzing the data collected, descriptive analysis was used. The mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the quantitative data on the effectiveness of the collaboration as a whole in terms of policy implementation and products and services. Also, interview responses were analyzed to support the quantitative results.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Upon assessing the effectiveness of the collaboration between the MSWDO and VAWC Desks of the selected barangays of the Municipality, the findings of the survey showed that the mean responses ( $M=4.15$ ;  $SD=0.33$ ) of the eight (8) VAWC Desk Focal Persons and two (2) MSWDO staff indicated that the effectiveness of the collaboration between the VAWC Desks and the MSWDO was excellent.

To answer Problem II, which seeks to explain the specific policy/policies that can be recommended to

enhance the effectiveness of the MSWDO and VAWC Desks, the effectiveness of policy implementation was first measured to serve as a basis for answering Problem II.

When it comes to the effectiveness of policy implementation, results showed that an individual mean score of 4.3 was yielded by the following items under this area: Provision of GAD programs and projects by the MSWDO, Proper documentation of cases, and Issuance of BPO. Meanwhile, the availability of the application for BPO got 4.2. All four items indicate that the effectiveness of policy implementation was very good.

Regarding the effectiveness of the products and services delivered by both the MSWDO and Barangay VAWC Desks, as stipulated in Problem III, the results indicate that the effectiveness of the products and services which are carried out by the MSWDO and VAWC Desks was excellent with a mean of 4.52. Of all the items under this area, meetings got the lowest mean of 4.4, while both the implementation of GAD VAWC programs and temporary shelter got the highest mean of 4.6. Besides the meeting, which was interpreted as very good, the other four items were excellent.

The results of this study, based on the data gathered, showed that the effectiveness of collaboration

between the MSWDO and VAWC Desks was excellent.

The overall rating of excellent in the effectiveness of products and services indicates an effective collaboration between these offices, thereby suggesting a systematic observance and execution of referrals and monitoring between these offices. Moreover, it means that the VAWC Desk Focal Persons of both the urban and rural barangays are responsive to the needs of their clients and are mindful of the clients' right to be referred to people or institutions that could address their needs if ever these needs could not be addressed at the barangay level. Every barangay VAWC Desk submits a quarterly report on Compliance Monitoring re: RA 9262 to the MSWDO. Cases of VAWC in terms of physical, sexual, psychological, and economic abuse are reported and calculated. Moreover, the report also monitors the total number of cases that have been acted upon in the form of referrals. There is likely a successful rate of addressing the client's unmet needs at the point of referral and monitoring if there is effective collaboration between offices/departments, agencies, and other social welfare institutions. Similar to Young's (2000) view, it is true that effective collaboration results in social welfare service providers or people in the social welfare industry who can understand the needs of the clients.

Sullivan & Skelcher (2003) said that the purpose of collaboration in the public setting is to add value to

activities that would not be as effective if left to an individual organization. To achieve beneficial community outcomes, Bryson et al. (2006) stated that people who desire this must understand that multiple sectors in the government must collaborate in order for them to deal with social problems effectively and humanely. The MSWDO and VAWC Desks are involved in social welfare because their policies, programs, and services are focused on the well-being of society, especially those under the marginalized and disadvantaged sectors such as women and children. With the acquired results, it could be inferred that the teamwork possessed by the MSWDO and VAWC Desks in delivering the products and services has remarkably contributed to society's welfare, especially in the aspect of addressing the needs of the residents of the selected municipality who are involved in VAWC-related cases.

The findings in the study also showed that the effectiveness of policy implementation is very good. The four items under this area showed that the policies were well-carried out by both the MSWDO and VAWC Desks. Moreover, the findings suggest how well the people from the MSWDO and VAWC Desks coordinated with each other and showed the discipline they possess to accomplish tasks. Khan (2016) stated that implementing a policy involves certain goals and objectives that are transformed into action.

Table 2  
Effectiveness of Products and Services

| Products and Services                          | M (SD)          | Interpretation |
|--|-----------------|----------------|
| Meetings                                       | 4.4 (0.663325)  | Very Good      |
| Participation of other stakeholders in the LGU | 4.5 (0.67082)   | Excellent      |
| Implementation of GAD VAWC programs            | 4.6 (0.8)       | Excellent      |
| Provision of GAD Budget                        | 4.5 (0.5)       | Excellent      |
| Temporary Shelter                              | 4.6 (0.489898)  | Excellent      |
| Overall  | 4.52 (0.074833) | Excellent      |

The products and services, which are as follows: Meetings, Participation of other stakeholders in the LGU, Implementation of GAD VAWC programs, Provision of GAD VAWC budget, and Temporary Shelter, resulted in a high rating with four items interpreted as excellent, whereas there is one product/service with a mean score interpreted as very good. However, overall, the effectiveness of the products and services is found to be excellent.

Nonetheless, according to the Sangguniang Bayan Secretary/GAD FPS of the Municipality, through the MSWDO, they provide the VAWC victims with a temporary shelter that can be accessed at any time. However, researchers have found out that the VAWC victims in the rural barangays at security risk find it challenging to go to the shelter considering its distance from their barangays. Kumar et al. (2014) stated that there is a causal effect of distance to the health facility on in-facility birth in rural India, taking into account the health facility's endogenous placement. According to them, women living far from health facilities are less likely to give birth at a health facility. It means that the distance hinders their access to these facilities. The same goes for those with VAWC-related cases in the rural barangays who are in need of temporary shelter to ensure their safety and security.

Furthermore, despite most barangay VAWC Desks having a specific area in the barangay hall to entertain clients with VAWC-related cases, the researchers have noted from the conduct of the survey that there are some barangay VAWC Desks with no proper space for them to entertain concerns regarding VAWC.

Based on the survey questionnaires answered by the evaluated barangays, protocols were observed in handling VAWC cases wherein the referral and monitoring system followed by these offices are well-coordinated. Cases that are beyond the authority and capacity of the barangay are endorsed and referred to the MSWDO for appropriate action. BPOs or Barangay

Protection Orders were issued if found necessary and upon the request of the victims. VAWC Desk Focal Persons are knowledgeable of BPOs as well as filling out the BPO forms which the barangay provides.

One VAWC Desk Focal Person, during the Orientation on RA 9262, Issuance of BPO and Protocol/Referral System of VAWC Cases, shared that she had encountered clients who sought her help to apply for a BPO even when she was already home past office hours.

For cases that could not be solved at the barangay level, the cases were endorsed to the WCPD and MSWDO for immediate action. The high scores yielded in the survey indicated that they are working well together towards responding to the needs of women and children involved in VAWC-related cases.

The response of the MSWDO and VAWC Desks with regards to assessing the effectiveness of their collaboration indicated very good collaboration. However, then, the MSWDO's response was a little lower compared to those of the responses of the VAWC Desks. Aid at the barangay level and support extended by the LGU contribute to the assessment of the effectiveness of collaboration. The implementation of measures, both of the MSWDO and VAWC Desks, towards the elimination of VAWC was very good.

The findings of the study reveal that the collaboration, in general, is effective, which supports Huxham & Vangen's (2013) perspective of recognizing effectiveness through substantive outcomes because there is a proper and excellent implementation of policies as well as provision of products and services.

In a system, the unity and functionality of each part affect the output. The products and services brought about by the MSWDO and VAWC Desks indicate the level of their functionality as a network of social welfare services. Each collaborating stakeholder has a role in the system and carries its strengths and competencies that they bring into the partnership,

thus, complementing each other. Collaboration could be measured not just through policy and research collaboration but through products and services, especially in the field of social welfare, because the essence of social welfare is to help ensure the well-being of the people in a certain society. Moreover, the collaboration would not be successful if one cannot do its role properly.

Effectiveness may be measured by a given standard in order to identify lapses and areas of concern. It could be measured if there is/are specific area/s to focus on in assessing effectiveness. In the field of social work and social welfare, collaboration with other professionals and institutions is vital in order to address the needs of people.

Through meetings, there is communication. Communication is one of the generic tools in social work practice (Lee-Mendoza, 2008). It is a two-way process that provides an opportunity for one to convey an idea and/or a problem for it to be taken into consideration and given a solution which is a must in any social welfare setting.

These collaborative initiatives in the form of products and services are geared towards responding to the needs of abused women and children. Moreover, collaboration entails a sense of interdependence where one may not fully function or maybe affected without the other. In the context of social welfare, collaboration may entail not only networking but staffing, directing, planning, and coordination as well.

Collaboration, whether within an agency or between other agencies, has been taught in the field of social work as a practical skill. It proposes combined efforts toward the interest of change and for attaining a shared goal which is to ensure the well-being of the vulnerable sectors of society.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings presented, the researchers

conclude that the collaboration between the Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office and the Barangay VAWC Desks in the selected Municipality in Negros Occidental is very effective, as shown by their collaborative efforts that yielded effective implementation of policies and delivery of products and services.

Another conclusion that can be drawn from this study is that the effectiveness in the areas of policy implementation and recommendation exhibited very good execution. This conclusion may entail that the provision of GAD programs and projects, proper documentation of cases, issuance of BPO, and the availability of the application for BPO have been commendably carried out by both the MSWDO and Barangay VAWC Desks.

The extent of effectiveness of delivery of the products and services by the MSWDO and Barangay VAWC Desks has generally been excellent, especially in the participation of stakeholders, implementation of GAD VAWC Programs, and the provision of GAD Budget in the barangay. Moreover, the attendance at quarterly meetings of Barangay VAWC Focal Persons showed that its effectiveness is only very good. Moreover, the researchers also conclude that even though the temporary shelter provided by the Municipality for VAWC victims functions effectively, it cannot fully uphold its function to protect and make its services accessible to the VAWC victims, especially in the rural barangays because of distance.

Considering the findings of this study, the collaborative efforts between MSWDO and Barangay VAWC Desks ranged from very good to excellent. Thus, the researchers have proposed continuous advocacies, especially in Information Education and Communication Programs (IECP), that aim toward changing behaviors through communication methods and principles within a pre-defined period of time.

The researchers also recommended that the

participation of Barangay VAWC Desks, MSWDO, and other stakeholders in local government processes should be broadened by institutionalizing their involvement in the barangays and the Municipality, especially in the areas of planning, policy formulation, and decision-making, production, monitoring, and evaluation. Also, there should be an improved process of productive engagement among the MSWDO, VAWC Desks, and other stakeholders in order to effectively formulate plans, programs, and activities to efficiently respond to gender-related violence cases in the different barangays.

The local government should also propose a policy to provide separate office space for Barangay VAWC to uphold confidentiality and privacy during the process between the victim and the Barangay VAWC Focal Person to address the Barangay VAWC Desks Focal Persons' concerns.

The researchers suggest that the selected Municipality may adopt Davao City's proposal in 2007 of hiring a social worker in every barangay. Through this, the researchers believe that it may pave the way for the LGU to respond appropriately to the problems of the marginalized sector, not just women and children, of society, as well as to augment the efforts done by the LGU to protect them at the community level.

The Municipality already has an existing college scholarship program under the GAD Plan and Budget for 2018 with 927 qualified poor and deserving students. The researchers humbly recommend that the LGU provide a Special Scholarship Fund for qualified students residing in Isabela who desire to take a Bachelor of Science in Social Work. It is further suggested that the Memorandum of Agreement between parties stipulates a condition that after completing the degree, the scholar shall serve the Municipality, particularly as a professional Barangay VAWC Focal Person in the different barangays of the Municipality.

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