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# Women's Empowerment towards Sustainable Development

Elmer Z. Ventura

San Clemente Central Elementary School  
Tarlac

Women's empowerment tops the most pressing issues around the world. But in the Philippines, the government established the economic strength of women as a contributory factor in achieving the platforms towards sustainable development. It advocates women empowerment since the K+12 program is aligned to enhance the full potentials of women by offering specialized tracks in the senior high school level which serve as a guide for learners in choosing the strand they want to pursue.

Empowerment in the real sense is a powerful advocacy of preserving the welfare of women at the household and in the broader society. Without women's empowerment, sustainable development would still remain a dream. If gender equality is not continued, it will impede the nation's improvement because gender inequalities lower high economic investment that leads to social inequities. Thus, one can recognize from such justifications that by deprivation of women in development agenda, all mechanisms of sustainable development cannot be achieved. Women should be motivated and likewise free to participate in contributing in all areas of improvement

to achieve long-term sustainability. Furthermore, if an individual seeks sustainable people-centered development in our country, it is important to have equal opportunities of women across various levels of decision-making. Their participation is crucial in gaining mutual respect and democratic decisions.

To maintain this social transformation of empowering women, education at school level is crucial. Therefore, attitudes and perceptions developed towards women regarding their status, role, and jobs are important to discuss in school. Therefore, one cannot undermine the role of the teacher in shaping the behavior of children. It is the teacher, from early childhood on, who brings up the learners because of their daily contact interaction with students in their school years.

The government must also initiate actions to bring about sustainable development in the different regions with women empowerment. By all means, the government should educate and maintain the health of women to improve social development and productivity as well. Give them full participation in different macro-level decisions in government agencies to better safeguard women's interests and to achieve quality governance. Moreover, protecting the rights of women makes them functional individuals in the economic, social, cultural and political consequently bringing about development.

*Without women's empowerment,  
sustainable development would still remain a dream.*



# A CALL FOR A RESPONSIVE GENDER SENSITIVITY INITIATIVES

Flordeluna F. Ramos

*Perez Elementary School, Basista, Pangasinan*

A thorough gender analysis is a critical starting point for any program or project that aims to be more gender sensitive. Questions such as the difference in impacts of the policy or program on women and men; the advantages and disadvantages; roles and responsibilities; who does what, who has what, who needs what; strategies and approaches in closing the gap between what men and women need, among others, need to be asked and analyzed in building a comprehensive picture of the existing situation. This will identify the lacks (that which is not there), gaps (that which is not enough), and mismatches (that which is not right).

Policies to a certain extent may not be enough since achieving a gender balance in meeting needs and concerns of both women and men does not just simply happen over time. There is a clear need for better capacity building and training to be undertaken to increase the viability and effectiveness of gender policies and programs, as well as proactively prevent discrimination and bias from happening. Awareness and sensitivity to gender equity has to be built in both women and men, particularly in those who are in positions of decision-making.

The criticality of incorporating gender considerations in any developmental or management action is well acknowledged. Having a closer and critical look at the situation, the focus and coverage of an initiative is the placing of gender within the context of overall development and management. The program can be operationalized by outlining the strategies and mechanics of implementation, expected outputs, targets, and results and timetable, based on these objectives.

While we are, as a matter of fact, all exposed to gender stereotypes, young people are particularly susceptible to them when forming an understanding of their place in society and their potential. It is in the very heart of the classroom being an ideal environment, where such gender awareness of these stereotypes is perked up and critical analysis encouraged in students, equipping them to come to their own informed conclusions.

Linkages with existing organizations or institutions that have gender programs could help materialize such gender initiatives in order to develop and implement a monitoring system for gender-responsiveness – facilitating transfer particularly within and beyond school setting. Initiating a gender balance within any organization, in the public or private sector, is critical to ensure that concerns and needs of both women and men are taken into account in decision-making and implementation. Day-to-day operations of an organization, whether a local government, a business, a company, or a school or university, need to benefit all its members.

## WOMEN THEN AND NOW

Revelyn T. Antonio

*Masisit Elementary School  
Sanchez Mira District*

In the book of Genesis, God created men and women equally. During the time of Jesus, he showed love and respect for women. We forget that in the olden time, women were not considered to be equal to their male counterpart.

Though we do not consider it, we owe much of these everyday freedoms to women of the past who struggled and pushed for equal rights and recognition that most of our women enjoy now. Women are indispensable in our society. The recognition of women is reflected in their active participation at the various levels of endeavour. They are no longer virtually excluded from any position. They are also conditioned to have different social roles, functions, and values. It is reasonable that women are more aware of the needs to have proper provision for the care of the children and others who are physically dependent. Women enjoyed protection against sexual violence and harassment and they can change the focus of the community and have an ini-



tial effect on the enlargement of scope and concerns. Issues such as child care, sexuality, and family planning are visible and seen now as major concerns. Women have come to regard the decision-making process as a very important role to play. Women continue to fulfil their households' responsibility while fulfilling their relationship duties. Women develop ideas and are ready to take responsibility for forming vision.

As we look back, women were unable to articulate and defend their interest because they did not have the courage to express it and were expected to depend on their husband or father for everything they needed and were supposed to be involved only in household affairs. Because of cultural stereotypes, there were fixed images and ascriptions of roles of women and men as dictated by culture and tradition that women should be concerned only with matters about the home but not about the community. Women were left behind because they were marked as not equally capable because they were weak, so limited opportunities were given to them. Women were not given priority opportunities in education and trainings that robbed them of the knowledge that could enable them to perform roles so, women very often failed to concentrate on the technical aspect, forgetting the wider view point and their exclusion from positions that improved life and inhibited the development of a just society. Although women have traditionally fulfilled supportive roles in serving the community, they gained the greatest joy and sense of accomplishment from being a mother and a wife.

# The Different Faces of Maria Clara

Grace N. Paz

*Teacher III, Castellano Elementary School  
Castellano, San Leonardo, Nueva Ecija*

**T**he Philippines is truly a beautiful tropical paradise with hospitable people. It is full of amazing beaches and tourist attractions. You will find this country very interesting because of its history, culture, and food. The biggest asset in the Philippines for bachelors is definitely the variety of pretty, petite ladies all over the country.

It is true that the Filipina women a.k.a "Maria Clara" show different personalities as time goes by. They fight for their own freedom, they speak their thoughts out loud; they are willing to sacrifice their happiness just to give a decent life for their family and loved ones, and, most especially, they fight for their rights as women. So are you ready to meet the different faces of Maria Clara? Join me as we discover the untold story of the Filipina women.



## 1. A Housewife:

Filipina women make the best wives in the world. Why? Because a Filipina woman is trained to be a good wife from a young age. Teaching girls to be good house wives seems to be a bit of a growing taboo in the Western world as women have had to fight to have the same jobs with equal pay as men, and now face a complete change in roles and respon-

*Continued on the next page*