



**CONTRIBUTIONS OF WOMEN OF WAR PROGRAM TO THE
MEMBERS IN MATANOG, MAGUINDANAO**

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This study was conducted primarily to describe and validate the contributions of women of war Program to the members in Matanog, Maguindanao. Data were gathered through focus group discussions which was translated and analyzed using the qualitative method. The study revealed that the participants experienced financial constraint due to financial dependence on their husbands, loss of self-worth, and loneliness. Nevertheless, due to their membership in the organization the participants were educated on parenting skills, human rights and women's rights, and were given assistance in their micro-finance and livelihood skills. They were also given Small Medium Enterprises (SME's) Building. As a result, they felt happy, gained self-confidence and financial independence. The participants also shared insights on how to improve the program. They recommend to have additional fund, strengthen their skills in marketing and management and additional linkages in the community.

Keywords: *Program contributions, support, community development, development*

Introduction

Women are more disadvantaged when compared to men in almost all aspects of life. Globally, women are deprived of equal access to education, health care, capital, and decision making powers in the political, social, and business sectors. Thus, women and girls are often more burdened by the poverty of their household and their environment than men and boys. In spite of this reality, women play a major role in society. No less than the United Nations and Development Programme (2012) took cognizance of such role, such that its agendum on women empowerment is to uphold and protect the women's rights for them to develop and become partners of community development.

Moreover, women empowerment is a pathway to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and sustainable development. In similar view, the National Statistical Coordination Board (2013) reported that women are active players of MDGs, especially on the goal of achieving full and productive employment, decent work for women, and the promotion of gender equality. Indeed, women empowerment can serve as a mechanism for effecting deep and widespread social development as it promotes social inclusion, empowering the vulnerable, building cohesive and resilient societies, and making institutions accessible and accountable to citizens.

In the Philippines, the social image of Filipino women are still that of weak persons, poster of domestic help, expert in double burden, and sexual object (Anonuevo, 2000). However, Fusilero (2012) stated that the nation has greater achievement in pursuing Women's right than in other parts of the South East Asia and concluded that Filipino women improved performance in the fields of education, health and survival, economic participation and political empowerment.

In 2005, there were about 109 registered women organizations in the Philippines. Accordingly, women can become empowered through joining organization. Thus, effective organizing is the foundation of the process of change. Women organization does not only promote independence and cohesion but also provides training and education. They also develop tools and skills of community organizing to work for the empowerment of the community (Community Participation, 2000).

In Matanog, Maguindanao, the Local Government launched the women development programs of Local Government Unit in 2014. This is an effort to make governance gender responsive by promoting pro-gender equality and equity activities, programs and other measures to enable women's participation in the formulation and implementation of plans for local development.

The Women of War (WOW) was composed of 240 members coming from the eight barangays of the municipality. They started as

one small group with only thirty active members. As part of the LGU's programs to capacitate women, members of Women of War were beneficiaries of many of the LGU's program, projects, and activities for their active participation and enthusiasm.

At present, the LGU-Matanog is in continuous support to gender and Development programs and is financing Small and Medium Economic enterprises for women in different barangays who have greater earning potential, so they are able to secure their families' futures. One of the strategies observed is promoting women organizations in all barangays of the municipality. "Women of War" (WOW) is one of the women organizations organized in the municipality which has demonstrated success and significance in the effort of the LGU to transform the municipality's reflections.

Based on this reality, it is imperative to study the shared circumstances of the members of Women of War towards the contribution of the program and also to identify the organization's role in changing their lives. Further, the researcher would like to discover if the beneficiaries have fully received the interventions that the LGU's have programmed as an aid for uplifting their living condition. It is in this context that the researcher finds the urgency to conduct this study.

Research Questions

The study was conducted to determine the Contributions of Women of War Program to the members in Matanog, Maguindanao.

Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the challenges faced by the participants?
2. What forms of support do they receive?
3. How does this program affect the lives of each member?
4. What are the insights of the participants in terms of organizational improvement?

Research Methodology

The study used qualitative method as it excels in narrating the story from the participant's view point (Trochim, 2006). Focus group discussion is used to have interacting individuals as a way to get information about a specific or focused issue. It also gives opportunity to immediately add on to clarify, and either confirm or renounce certain ideas or information that one member expressed or presented (Cuizon, Castillo, and Magdayao, 2008) the interview was focused on the participant's personal encounters, feelings, and views as it would answer the research problem.

The researcher particularly utilized the phenomenological approach that Cresswell (1998) specified. The researcher would like to discover events that are occurring in the life of people but will remain true to the facts (Groenewald, 2004). Moreover, the researcher also aims to describe accurately the event people can be certain about how things appear in, or present themselves to, their consciousness (Eagleton, 1983).

Krueger (1988) said that “phenomenology is concerned with understanding social and psychological experience from the view point of the participant. According to Groenewald (2004) a researcher applying phenomenology is concerned with the lived experiences of the people involved, or who were involved, with the issue that is being researched. Furthermore, the researcher hoped to gain understanding on the essential truths of the lived experiences of the participants.

The study was conducted in the Municipality of Matanog, Maguindanao specifically at the 3 barangays where the participants have been residing from Barangay Bugasan Norte, Barangay Bugasan Sur, and Barangay Langkong.

The researcher utilized the system of purposive selection. Patton (1990) said that in selecting information-rich cases, the study for in-depth is without needing or desiring to generalize all such cases. The participants of this study are members of Women of War Organization such as widows. Three sets of focus group discussions (FGD) were conducted. Each FGD consisted of six members were represented by the members from each three barangays. There were eighteen (18) women participants in all who had contributed by the program.

An Interview guide was used as the research instrument in this study since it is qualitative. An interview guide is a list of questions that the researchers asked to the participants during the interview (Parker and Yan, 2013). Before the researcher proceed to data

gathering, the lists of questions to be asked to the participants were already validated by the research adviser.

In this study, the participants gave their feedback, experiences and perceptions on the services that were rendered to them by the organization. Thus, the researcher narrated important and relevant events as experienced by the participants. FGD protocol was also observed. After sending a formal letter to the organization, the researcher was helped by the organization leaders in choosing the participants in FGD.

In this research, the researcher formulated open-ended questions which provided direction for focus group discussion. Marczack & Sewell (1998) defined focus group discussion as a group of interacting individuals having some common interest or characteristics brought together by a moderator, who uses the group and its interaction as a way to gain information about a specific or focused issue.

Krueger (1988) identified three phases in conducting this method. These are conceptualization, interview, analysis and reporting. Marczack & Sewell (1998) identified several advantages in conducting focus group discussion first it requires less preparation, second it is comparatively easy to conduct, third it allows the researcher to directly interact with the respondents, thus, making clarification and follow-up questioning easily made. Finally, focus

group discussion has gainful information from non-verbal responses to supplement or contradict verbal responses of the study participant.

The identified participants were given informed consent forms to accomplish. Those who agreed to be part of the research were invited in one meeting place for the interview. FGDs were held in the Barangay Hall. It was made sure that the interview setting was free from background noise and interruptions.

In qualitative research, the researcher followed the qualitative data analysis according to Creswell (2003). In data analysis of qualitative research, the researcher must be able to examine the transcriptions of the participants, as Orgill (2002) specified. The researcher was able to identify not only the similar experiences, but also the differences between them. In this process, the researcher developed initial categories that described different people's experiences of the given phenomenon.

In this method, the researcher organized and prepared the data for analysis. Data were read all throughout. Coding was done, cleaned the data and retained those necessary. Themes were created based on the data, and finally the data were presented and interpreted.

In this research, there were positive circumstances that helped the researcher in data gathering feasible and convenient. The target area was accessible and beforehand had obtained permission from the Offices of the Local Government Unit and Barangay Unit.

During the interview process, the researcher used recording while jotting down notes. The researcher was able to transcribe all the relevant information and interpreted the recorded narrations, and was assisted by a helper in doing field notes to capture information that was essential or necessary to the study.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed four criteria for evaluating interpretive research work: credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability. In this study, the researcher was able to conduct engagement in the field, persistent observation, checking interpretations to make sure credibility was made. Coder's knowledge and experience have significant impact on the credibility of research results. It is necessary to provide coders precise coding definitions and clear coding procedures.

In this research, the major technique for establishing dependability and conformability was through in-depth examination of the research processes and findings. Hence, conformability was determined by checking the internal consistency of the research product, namely; the data, the findings, the interpretations or conclusions, and the recommendations.

This study observed research ethics to prevent, reduce, or undo harm to research participants (Davis, 2000). The researcher distributed informed consent concerning this matter (Creswell, 1998). Participants were informed on the purpose or objectives of the study and only those with confirmation were scheduled for the focus group

discussion. Participants were assured of confidentiality with regards to this activity and personality.

Pseudo names instead of the real names of the participants were used, in other words, all the names mentioned in the narration were not real but code names only. The researcher cautiously observed permission to terminate participation as Davis (2000) stated that penalty, coercion, or shame must be avoided in case the participant decided not to join the focus group discussion.

Results and Discussions

This chapter presents the data gathered from the participants during the conversations, their analysis and interpretations. The researchers used themes to identify the commonalities in the answers of the participants. Statements by the participants were also included to justify the themes that the researchers have come up with. Pseudo names were also used in this research to keep their identity.

WOW-Matanog” is composed of 240 members coming from the eight (8) barangays of the municipality. They started as one small group with only thirty (30) active members. Women are identified as one of the vulnerable sectors of the society. As already been known, women in Matanog, Maguindanao are mostly suffering mothers, sisters, widows and women of the battlefield in the past arms conflicts transpired in the municipality. However, they believed that with the initiative of LGU aimed to alleviate the innate potential of this women who are capable of undertaking social responsibilities, their ability,

knowledge and skills will be an instrument in realizing the envisioned development and progress of the town.

In 2014, the LGU initially started the construction of the Women Development Training Center within the municipal town center, purposely to serve as venue for women's capacity building. It was followed by the foundation of Women of War (WOW) which the LGU established linkage and partnership to empower and improve women participation and presentation in local governance. In considering that women can provide in reshaping our societies for a sustainable, inclusive and resilient future, the LGU continues to implement activities, programs, and projects for the benefit of the women constituents. WOW has been known for their strong partnership with LGU in implementing socio-economic programs and activities aiming to realize the envisioned development and progress of the town. As part of the LGU's programs to capacitate women, members of WOW were beneficiaries of many of the LGU's program, projects, and activities for their active participation and enthusiasm.

In the past years, the municipal government focused on extending livelihood trainings for women like *food processing* and the like. The "*Palapa*" and "*Native Coffee*" were the major products produced by the members of WOW out of the food processing training. The activity was conducted by the LGU in coordination with DAF-ARMM. With the continued endeavour of its members attending various skills trainings

and seminars through the assistance of the local government, the organization has now become more extensive and profitable.

As part of the LGU's effort to widely inspire women constituents of the municipality, the LGU focused on providing financial assistance and other technical support for WOW members to start business in their respective barangays called Small and Medium Enterprise Development Project through Livelihood Assistance Program of the LGU.

This is an initiative of the organization to give a significant recognition and trust to individual members of WOW, which the member is given the chance after portraying interest and passion to create and manage its own small business enterprise of her choice. The purpose of the idea is to ascertain that in the passage of time, women are inspired to become more capacitated and independent.

Here are some testimonies of WOW members on what triggered them to join the organization.

According to Casana, her family was then a happy one not until her husband died and left her. Life was indeed a miserable especially when no one can hold and lean on during the times of difficulty.

She said, "nang mamatay ang asawa ko, para bang gumuho ang aking mundo, dahil hindi ko alam ang gagawin ko, kung papaano ko itataguyod at papa-aralin ang mga anak ko. Nagsimula akong magtanim at magtindang mga gulay para masuportahan ang aming

pangangailanagn, ngunit hindi pa sapat ang aking kinikita para makapag-aral ang mga anak ko. Dumating ang araw na nakilala ko ang WOW kaya sumali ako sa pag-asang mababago nito ang estado ng pamumuhay namin". (The least that came to my mind to sustain our daily needs, raising my children and send them to school was planting and selling vegetables. Until the day has come I've known the WOW and I joined with the hope that this organization can change our living condition).

Accordingly, they joined the organization with the hope that it can uplift their living condition. The members of WOW are widows who lost their husband in the battlefield. With the effort and support of the LGU, WOW has now become a competent women organization which foster significant role in the socio-economic development of Matanog.

The Women of War members divulged that they have encountered a difficult life that led them to join the organization. The Women of War members are widows who lost their husband in the battlefield. As already been known, women in Matanog, Maguindanao are mostly suffering mothers, sisters, widows and women of the battlefield in the past arm conflicts transpired in the municipality. As we've known, women are identified as one of the vulnerable sectors of the society. The participants revealed that there were problems they encountered that trigger them to join the WOW such as Financial Constraint, Loss of self-worth and Loneliness.

The participants encountered Financial Constraint. After the death of their husbands they had difficulties in gaining income due to lack of skills and most of them are elementary graduate. All of the participants are homemakers. They devote most of their time at home and their children. They were not able to have jobs and only depend on the income of their husbands.

The participants expressed that they experienced loss of self-worth. The lost of their husband brought them lack of confidence. They became withdrawn from others. They preferred to stay at home than to mingle with relatives and friends. They were preoccupied with their problems and think of negative things about themselves. Sometimes the participants can't manage and control their temper. Thus, they put the blame of being poor and the existence of their children.

The participants also felt loneliness. The death of their husbands made them feel alone and lonely. The participants could not hide the sorrow and grief they felt brought about by the death of their husbands. They pitied themselves and kept it. They always thought of their husbands and felt sad that they could not have them around anymore. They were jealous of other families who have fathers beside them. They cannot share their feelings to others because they do not want to be a burden to them.

Nevertheless, they were hopeful that their situation would be changed someday.

As Nazla expressed, life was not that easy. She is married to a former MILF combatant who has undergone multiple major operations which affected his physical capacity to earn and support the family. After he suffered injuries, gun shots wounds, and bomb explosions during the all-out war in 2000, lately he died. Having six (6) children who are all into school, the family's survival is a total burden.

She quoted, "Sumali po ako sa WOW dahil umaasa po ako na matutulongan ako ng organisasyon na maresolba ang aking problema". (I joined WOW believing that the organization would be of help of some my personal issues).

She added, "nagbabakasakali po ako na maiahon ang aking pamilya sa kahirapan o kahit makaluwag lang kame sa estado ng pamumuhay namin. Hindi po ako nabigo dahil natupad po ang aking kahilingan na mabigyan ng pangkapital, sa ngayon ay nakakaluwag napo kame at nabubuhay ng maayos". (I am hoping that through this organization our living condition will be uplifted. I wasn't failed of hoping that through this organization, I can receive a capital that I can manage for our living cost. Now, our living condition has been uplifted).

However, Nazla is one of the pioneering members of WOW-Matanog and with her active participation in all the organization's

activities, she was chosen to receive financial assistance from the organization for the establishment of her WOW Bakery. At present, she has an estimated income of fifteen thousand (15,000.00) pesos per month which is sufficient enough to support the needs of the family.

The researcher found out during the data gathering that the problems triggered them to join the organization was needed to put an end.

“Women of War” (WOW) is an organization consisting of widows who lost their husband in battlefield. It is one of the women organizations organized in the municipality which have demonstrated success and significance in the effort of the LGU to transform the municipality’s reflections. The WOW programs and services consist of Capacity building, Livelihood Skills training and micro finance and Small Medium Enterprises (SME’s) building.

The participants were convinced to join the Women of War program. They attended several trainings and seminars that were conducted by the Local Government Unit of Matanog, specifically the office of Gender and Development. They were educated on parenting skills, human rights and women’s rights, were given assistance in their micro-finance and livelihood skills. They were also given Small Medium Enterprises (SME’s) Building. They identified the Government and Non-Government agencies that extended help to their organization.

The participants attended capacity building. The participants felt revived through several trainings and various seminars they attended conducted by the Local Government Unit, specifically the office of Gender and Development. The participants have gained livelihood skills. Additionally, they were educated on parenting skills, human rights, women's rights, and were given assistance in their micro-finance and livelihood skills.

Moreover, as the members showed their willingness and interest, the Local Government Unit believed that with the members aimed to alleviate the innate potential of themselves who are capable of undertaking social responsibilities, their ability, knowledge and skills will be an instrument in realizing the envisioned development progress to their lives and the town as well.

They have granted Small Medium Enterprises Building in support to their livelihood assistance and skills. They identified the Government and Non-Government agencies that extended interventions to their organizations.

Hana narrated that she was one of the old members of the organization. She was married to the man of her dreams. However to her, life is not a fairy tale, her husband died and left one child to her. At her young age, she is confronted with family issues which normally become a triggering factor of arguments. Hana started to join WOW-Matanog in 2014.

She recalled,” *hinikayat ako ng aking pinsan na sumali sa organisasyon ng WOW-Matanog dahil sasali rin daw siya*” (I was encouraged by my cousin to join in the WOW-Matanog because she will be joining as well).

According to her, at first she was hesitant to be part of the organization, but when she attended the first meeting, she felt she was accommodated by the members and she realized that she needed to get out from her daily routine to discover more of herself.

She actively participated in all the activities of WOW. She always grabbed opportunities of exploring and expressing her innate potentials by cooperating in her very best. She realized that life is beautiful and out of her learnings, she developed herself as a responsible and considerate woman. For all of the said traits she possessed, she became active in the organization. She was selected to be a recipient of the LGU Small and Medium Enterprise Development Project. She is now earning in her sari-sari store and has enough to raise her only child.

The participants manifested happiness, established self-confident and feeling accomplish brought about by the contributions of the program to the WOW members.

Happiness was felt in the lives of the participants. They have experienced joy because they were able to survive life’s adversities and were able to manage problematic situations. The participants revealed that they have become a better and wiser individual than before.

They are now self-confidence and put value on their capability. They have shown community involvement where they joined activities not only in their organization but in the Barangay and Municipal, too.

They felt accomplished due to establishing responsibility to their homes and the community. They were able to handle the responsibility that their husband left. Furthermore, they savored positive independence which they couldn't do before because they were not yet capacitated. They were able to extend help voluntarily to their neighbors and to the community. They valued the spirit of camaraderie and volunteerism.

Naima, a widow for twenty one (21) years and mother of eight (8) children. Is also a pioneering member of WOW. Prior to her membership, Naima used to personally cultivate her farm land left by her deceased husband.

According to her, *“simula nang mamatay ang asawa ko, ako na mismo katulong ang mga anak ko ang namahala at nagsasaka sa kunting lupang naiwan niya saamin upang buhayin ang walo naming anak.”* (When my husband died, with the help of my children we are the ones cultivating our own farm land).

As a woman indulged in farming, her crop produce is very low for lack of farm inputs and skills. Naima focuses on native coffee production and serves the best native coffee in town. Currently, she is earning about eight thousand (P8,000.00) pesos a month from her

small businesses and where the family's sustenance depends on. The LGU supports her native coffee production by promoting it nationally and internationally.

She stated, *"hindi po ako nagsisi na sumali ako sa WOW dahil malaki po ang naitulong nito saakin at sa pamilya ko. Tinulongan po nila akong mapalago ang aking negosyo dahil sila po ang pangunahing bumibili sa paninda ko, pinakilala din po nila ito sa lahat ng bumibisita sa aming munisipyo. Kung dati po ako ang naghahanap ng bibili sa aking produkto, ngayon sila na po ang naghahanap saakin at umo-order, Alhamdulillah"*. (I never regret joining WOW, It is a great help for me and to my family. WOW helped me widen my business, they were fully supported my business and the employees became my regular costumer. They have also served and shown the product to the visitors of our municipal. Before, I was the one who's looking for costumer and now that my Coffee business has been known for its sweet aroma, they were the one who's looking for me to order, Thanks to GOD).

Naima is blissful on what she has right now despite being widow and less fortunate, she can now raise her child on her own sweat without depending on government assistance and supplies. After one year of pursuing and giving ample time on her small business without

wasting her leisure time, finally she's now harvesting her fruitful hard work.

Furthermore, Hasmina was one of the pioneering and an active member of WOW who has demonstrated interest in micro-enterprise. She joined in the organization in 2014 and considered an elderly member of WOW.

She said, *“namatay ang aking asawa ‘nong 2005 at naiwan sa akin mag-isa ang aming apat na anak, hindi ko alam ang gagawin ko ng mga panahong ‘yon dahil ang mga kapatid ko ay may kanya-kanya na ring pamilya at tamang-tama lang sakanilang gastosin ang kanilang kinita. Mula noon, lahat ng klase ng alam kong pagkakakitaan ay ginawa kona, dumating sa punto na nangungutang ako ng kapital sa umaga at binabayaran sa hapon, ang tanging gahensya ko lamang ay ang kinakain namin sa buong araw para lang maitaguyod ko ang mga anak ko.”* (My husband died last 2005, left with me our four (4) children and raised them independently. At that time, I didn't know what to do, my siblings had their own family and their income was only intended for their daily survival. Starting that day, I tried all the source of income I've known. There was a time that I borrowed the capital in the morning and paid it in the afternoon due to the crisis.

I took the risk even though my income was just good for our daily survival).

She was selected as one of the beneficiaries of the Small and Medium Enterprise Development Project based on her active participation, dedication, and capability to become an entrepreneur. She received ten thousand (P10,000.00) pesos as financial assistance from LGU for her to start independent and sustainable source of livelihood. A facility for her small venture is being constructed. Her stall was assigned to her as a facility where she could start her small business. With her average income of six thousand (6,000.00) pesos per month, their living cost is well supported.

To add more, Norjana is a typical mother where her time is purely spent in doing house chores, raising children and takes care of their needs. She is described as introvert where she seldom deals with other people of the community even with women. She was convinced to join WOW on February 2017. Despite the short period of time being a member, Norjana shown her active participation, interest, and unconditional support to the activities and programs of WOW.

Norjana narrated, *“nang marinig ko po ang tungkol sa WOW ay inalam ko kung sino ang pwedeng mga sumali at ano ang ginagawa nila, kase nakita ko na maganda ang resulta ng kanilang organisasyon hindi lamang sa komunidad kundi pati na rin sa kanilang sarili. Dahil doon ay nakumbensi ako na sumali sa organisasyon. Dahil*

umaasa po ako na matutulungan ako ng organisasyon at nang mga miyembro nito na mabago ko po ang ugali kong ayaw makisalamuha sa iba at higit sa lahat gusto ko po na masala sa mga oportunidad na pangkabuhayan". (When I heard about the WOW, I searched about its background, the qualification and their roles, because I saw and witnessed the empowerment it brought not only to the community but to the members of the organization as well. Thus, it convinced me to join, hoping that my introvert attitude could be extrovert as time passed by and help engaging in different Socio-economic activities). With her dedication, she was chosen to manage WOW bakery, established in their barangay. The opening of WOW bakery brought gladness to people of the barangay as it is one of the far flung areas in the municipality.

Furthermore, Jehanie, is a 55 years old and 30 years widow who raised her three children alone without any person to hold on.

She said, *"dati noong hindi pa po ako miyembro ng WOW kung saan-saan po ako nangungutang para lang tustusan ang aming pangangailangan dahil hindi sapat ang kinikita ko sa aming sari-sari store. Ilang beses ko na rin napagdaanan na hindi ako pinahiram ng inu-utangan ko, hindi ko rin po sila masisi dahil wala silang nakikita na pwede nilang kunin ung sakali man na hindi ako*

makapagbayad. Kaya laking pasasalamat ko na nakasali ako sa organisasyon ng WOW dahil nabago nito ang estado ng pamumuhay namin simula nang bigyan nila acme ng capital pangkabuhayan.” (Way back before, when I was not yet a member the organization I found myself borrowing money wherever my foot brought me just to sustain our daily needs. There were times that those people I tried to borrow refused me and I can't blame them because there's no assurance when can I pay and what could I pay to them if I don't have enough cash. I'm so thankful that I became a member of WOW because it changed and uplift our lives by giving us livelihood assistance).

She added, *“Minsan isang beses lang po kame kumakain ng kanin sa isang araw at minsan naman ay kamote lamang ang kinakain namin para lang maibsan ang gutom namin. Kaya kahit masakit ay napagdesisyonan ng panganay kong anak at sinangayonan ko naman na magtrabaho siya bansa para mabayaran ang mga utang namin, mabuhay kame at makapg-aral kahit papaano ang mga kapatid niya.”* (Due to the shortage of our source of income there were times we only ate once a day and sometimes we only ate Cassava just to feed our empty stomach. Therefore, my

eldest daughter decided and even it was against my feelings I had no choice, but to allow her to work abroad in order to pay our debt, support us and send to school her young siblings).

She is one of the active members of WOW and one of the beneficiaries of the LGU's Small and Medium Enterprise Development Project. She was given financial assistance to start a business on the later part of 2016 to sustain the needs of her family. The assistance extended was in the form of capital for her small business. Jehanie now is earning about six thousand five hundred (P6,000.00) pesos per month and sufficient enough to support the other needs of the family.

Further, Hannade, is a well-known hardworking woman in their barangay. She tries everything she knows that can benefit her especially her children. Hannade was too reliant to her children. Amid trainings, seminars, and several exposures she attended, Hannade was endowed knowledge and skills of becoming an independent and resourceful woman.

She quoted, *"Bilang isang biyuda, wala akong ibang pagpipilian kundi ang maging masipag at matatag para sa mga anak ko. May mga panahon na nawawalan na ako ng gana sa buhay at pinanghihinaan ng loob dahil kahit anong pagtatrabaho ko ay hindi pa rin kame nakakaahon sa hirap pero pag naiisip at nakikita ko ang aking mga anak, kung ano ang magiging kinabukasan nila ay bigla*

akong nabubuhayan ng loob para magpatuloy.” (As a widow, I had no choice but to be a hardworking and strong woman for my children. I admit, there are times that I felt hopeless and feeling weak because no matter how I strive in working just to uplift our living condition seems like nothing happened. On the other hand, everytime I saw my children and thought about their future, on what might be tommorow that awaits them I courageously faced the day with hope and faith).

She added, *“masaya ako at nagpapasalamat dahil nakasali ako sa organisasyon ng WOW kung saan nabigyan ako ng kapital para magkaroon ng mini-grocery at nabigyan ng pagkakataon na ipakita ang aking karunungan sa pagluluto kung saan nagiging pandagdag rin sa kinikita ko pang araw-araw”.* (I am so blessed and fortunate that I had given a chance to be a member of WOW wherein they gave me a livelihood capital to start my mini-grocery and also I grabbed the chance to showcase them my skills in cooking. Whereas it became add-ons to our source of income).

She now operates WOW mini-grocery. She is also a member of WOW since 2014 whose potential to conduct a business was visible. Hannade was one of the leading women of WOW contributing to the strong foundation of the organization like other women in the

community. Now, she is earning about fifteen thousand (15,000.00) pesos a month with her mini grocery funded by the LGU. She continues to inspire other women in their community and aiming to be an instrument in uplifting the socio-economic goal of WOW organization to its members.

“Beautifying Lake Marayag” located at Brgy. Bayanga Norte, Matanog, Maguindanao. WOW-Matanog members are the forerunner in beautifying it. It is an abandoned place in the past that is now being developed as a tourism destination in the place. WOW members maintain the surroundings of the place which include cleaning and flower gardening. With the active and collective participation of women, the municipality of Matanog is now known for its beautified Marayag Lake.

It aims to transform the widely devastated areas of the place brought about by the arm conflicts in the past, it is the portion of the locality which was known for horrible human activities (criminalities) such as high way robbery. The area was a dumping site of murdered/salvage victims. An abandoned place that terrifies travelers. It is also the sole flooded area in the municipality that water of the lake overflows and crossing the highway during rainy season and prevents vehicles from traversing.

To encourage others to come and visit the place, major activities for women are being held in the area. WOW-Matanog members maintains Marayag Lake and all its improvements. For this effort,

WOW-Matanog members have been recognized and featured in the Asia's Magazine as a group of women which contributed to transformation of Marayag Lake.

"Gulayan sa Barangay" was established by WOW-Matanog members surrounding the lake. In developing Marayag Lake, WOW-Matanog has been the partner of the LGU in conducting several socio-economic activities. This aims to discover, improve, and promote the stunning beauty of the lake as nature's haven.

Since Matanog residents suffer from reaching distant bazaar which could only be found in Poblacion, town center, WOW-Matanog members have established "Gulayan sa Barangay" or gardening as one of their activity which helps the WOW-Members gained income for their livelihood. "Gulayan sa Barangay" is a continuous effort of WOW-Matanog member since 2014. Every barangay has its own garden and is composed of varieties of vegetable. People doesn't have to move that far to provide for their viand and it does not only serve the residents but the travellers as well. Aside from being fresh harvest from own agriculture, it can help the widows to sustain and raise the orphans. LGU-Matanog employees are one of their purchasers to help them in sustaining their basic needs. As a matter of fact, some members of WOW used their income in sustaining the studies of their children. As for now, they can sell each P300-P500 a week and an average of P3,000.00 up to P5,000 per month, where living is well supported.

“Dagangan ni Kaka”, a long term plans of WOW-Matanog as the organizations primary economic activity. This is not a typical sari-sari store but one which will possibly provide all the basic needs of the populace of the municipality. Dagangan ni Kaka started in a small business enterprise of WOW-Matanog out of the small financial support of the local government. Initially, it provides only consumable goods for the day to day life of the surrounding communities. The *“Dagangan”* was extended to a *“carenderia”* with ready to eat foods. This concept was influenced by the fact that it is situated in the municipal town center. Among the avid customers of the establishment are the LGU officials and employees and by passers. It is also in the *“Dagangan ni Kaka”* where the transaction for food catering services of WOW-Matanog is being processed. This an initiative of WOW-Matanog in line with their livelihood program supportive to the other activities that they are pursuing like the restaurant and other food services they offer.

“Cofta Chairs for rent”, this is an alternative source of income of WOW-Matanog members. The place is being far from highly urbanized towns where socio-economic services are widely available, its constituents find it difficult to resort to this services to be used in times of various gatherings and occasions. This business being offered into a very low price is gaining positive reception from the people of the town for the objective is not merely to raise income but to provide service that is promoting convenience and conduciveness to everyone.

At present, WOW-Matanog has 350 “Cofta Chairs” available for rent at five peso per piece (P5.00/piece).

“WOW Resto”, the resto is located at Marayag Lake, Brgy. Bayanga Norte. As what has been said, WOW-Matanog members is the partner of LGU in developing Marayag Lake as an eco-tourist destination in the municipality. To fast tract, the physical changes in the area, the LGU allowed the group in building the resto in the place to expand their meaningful and resourceful activities. Just like in some other places of the country, Matanog through WOW-Matanog members is conceptualizing to establish a “Stop Over” where pasalubong center is visible and other recreational services are available. Currently, the operation of WOW Resto is aimed to serve travelers and walk in clients. As they say, the resto serves the best native coffee in the region.

As part of the WOW-Matanog member’s effort to widely inspire women constituents of the municipality, the GAD municipal government also recognized their Sakurab and Coffee products for exportation to Japan. With the effort and support of the LGU, WOW-Matanog members have now become competent women with beneficial role in the socio-economic development of Matanog, Maguindanao.

WOW-Sakurab is one of the well-known product of Matanog or in the province of Maguindanao, whereas it became the first product being exported in International particularly in Japan. They made it as one of the main ingredients in making “kim Chie.” It aims to widen the

scope industry of “kim Chi” from “sakurab or scallion bulb” in Matanog, Maguindanao.

WOW-Matanog members are multifaceted and do possess different skills that can be used in earning and utilizing income, some of them are engaged in dressmaking wherein the LGU-Matanog initiates and support them through supplying five sewing machine to be used. WOW-dressmakers are the ones who sew the school uniforms of their Co-WOW members’ children both uniform in Arabic and in English, aside from it they are already well-known in the municipality of Matanog as wholly seamstresses wherein most of the residents are their regular customers. Each of them can earn about P5, 000.00 a month, and is sufficient enough to support the other needs of the family.

The participants expressed the lapses faced by the organization. They agreed that they needed funds, have their own fund and they will hold their money to sustain the organization if the time comes that the administration changes they will still have the organization. They also suggested strengthening their skills in marketing and management to avoid bankruptcy. They also recommended that they were still in need for additional linkages in the community.

WOW Agri-mart is owned by samra. She is also a member of WOW-Matanog since 2014.

She quoted,” *Bilang isang miyembro ng organisasyon, hindi po namin maipagkakaila na meron din*

pong mga kakulangan na nagaganap. Kailangan po ng organisasyon namin ng sariling pundo para kahit po mapalitan ang kasalukuyang administrasyon ay magpatuloy pa rin ang pamamalakad ng organisasyon namin. Kailangan din po kameng turuan o mas lalong hasain ang aming kakayahan sa pamamahala ng negosyo para makaiwas sa pagkaluge. Kailangan din po namin ng iba pang tulong na mag-uugnay saamin sa komunidad para mapalawak ang aming organisasyon.”

She added “*Alhamdulillah! sa dalawang taon na pagnenegosyo ko ng agri-mart ay lumago ito ng mabilis dahil lahat ng taga dito saamin ay dito na namimili, at dahil sa patok ang negosyo ko kinakailanagn ko magpatayo ng dalawa pang building na ngayon ay sinisimulan ng gawin.* (After 2 years in the making, the WOW Agri-mart has grown faster due to the demand of product in their barangay, and there is need for the extension since it is the only Agri-mart in the poblacion. Thus, Construction of two (2) storeys Agri-mart building is now ongoing. WOW Agri-mart not only gained profit for itself but can serve the residents suffer from reaching distant bazaar, people don’t have to move that far to buy products).

She was selected and qualified to be one of the recipient of the LGU Small and Medium Enterprise Development Project. She opted to venture into agri-mart as it is the product demand of the people in their barangay since most of the residents are farmers. With the establishment of the agri-mart, the supply for farm inputs is now readily available in the barangay. One of the goals of the LGU in strengthening women's capacity was achieved in her project as it plays a significant role in shaping the social and economic development of the society.

IMPLICATIONS

The participants' membership in the Women of War program provided them capacity especially by attending series of seminars and trainings like Parenting skills, Women's right and Human's right; micro-finance and livelihood skills trainings specifically in food processing, sewing and proper planting of veggies and fruits; and Small Medium Enterprises (SME's) building in support to their micro-finance and livelihood skills. They have also identified the Government and Non-Government agencies that extended help to their organization.

After joining WOW program, the participants felt happiness because they were able to survive life's adversities and were able to manage problematic situations. The participants revealed that they have become a better and wiser individual than before. They are now confident that they put value on their capability. They have shown

community involvement where they joined activities not only in their organization but in the Barangay and Municipal too. Finally, they verbalized that they are now accomplished human beings because they can now have established responsibility to their homes and to the community. They were able to handle the responsibility that their husband left. Furthermore, they savored positive independence which they can't do before because they are not yet capacitated. They were able to extend help voluntarily to their neighbors and to the community. They valued the spirit of camaraderie and volunteerism.

The participants expressed the lapses faced by the organization. They agreed that they needed funds, have their own fund and they will hold their money to sustain the organization if the time comes that the administration changes they will still have the organization. They also suggested strengthening their skills in marketing and management to avoid bankruptcy. They also recommended that they were still in need for additional linkages in the community.

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