



Women's BULLETIN

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DILG Bureau and Service Directors: Catalyst of Real Change

British novelist and famous author of the Harry Potter series J.K. Rowling once said: *"We do not need magic to change the world, we carry all the power we need inside ourselves already: we have the power to imagine better."*

Amid the present administration's drive for paradigm shift in the national government, the women service directors of Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) revealed that they have the power inside them and that they are unfazed with the massive tasks at hand.

"Filipino women are strong enough to perform all the duties of a man but a man cannot do all that a woman can do. Filipino women are also fortunate that we have various laws that protect women's rights," shares Dir. Anna Liza F. Bonagua of the Bureau of Local Government Development (BLGD).

Pursuant to the Republic Act (RA) 9710 otherwise known as Magna Carta for Women, the DILG through the BLGD is mandated to review the Annual Gender and Development (GAD) Plan and Budget ensuring the 5% GAD allocation before integration to their respective Annual Investment Plan (AIP). Dir. Anna leads the Bureau's conduct of training programs such as preparation of GAD plan and budget, monitoring and evaluation system; formulation of GAD Code; establishment of GAD database; creation and/or strengthening of the GAD Focal Point System; and mainstreaming gender in local development plans.

For an exemplary woman who rose from the ranks, Dir. Rolyn Q. Zambales of Office of Project Development Services (OPDS) ensures that around 50% of her 100-strong force are women. She firmly believes that as a leader, she gives due importance on putting the staff in a position where their unique talents will flourish so that they will develop greater confidence to perform extraordinarily and contribute more to the success of OPDS.

"Leadership skills can be nurtured and developed. We get better at doing things through time, experience and practice. With proper motivation, we can become the better leader that we all strive for. As women with distinct natural and nurtured traits and talents, we can go wherever we want to go," Dir. Zambales said.

Atty. Jena Javarez, the Acting Director for the Administrative Services also acquiesced with Dir. Zambales. *"Throughout the history of women striving for empowerment, achieving economic independence has been at the forefront of gender equality worldwide,"* she said.

Atty. Javarez coordinated with the NAPOLCOM officials for the availability of the Lactation Room at the 9th floor. She also supports the expanded maternity leave for women from 60 to 100 days. She also ensures that Gender and Development (GAD) principles is incorporated in the Department's

Enhance Program on Awards and Incentives for Service Excellence (PRAISE).

As an empowered and successful Filipina, Atty. Jen's advice to the DILG women is *"Believe in yourself and be responsible for your actions. What men do, women can do better."*

Gender equality should also be exemplified not just in opportunities but also in responsibilities. In a commonly male-dominated environment, OIC Director Loida S. Linson of the Information Systems and Technology Management Service (ISTMS) ensures that there are equal responsibilities for both men and women.

"I maintain same level of work relationship with each of them which results to harmonious delivery of services needed not only from our Service but to the entire Department," Linson said.

For her, women empowerment truly manifests when you know how to uplift your workers' spirit at work. *"When you value the collective efforts of your staff, appreciate every bit of it and believe in their distinct capabilities, you are not only empowering yourself, you are becoming a channel of their self-empowerment,"* she explained.

Officer-in-Charge Sara Jane M. Cerezo of the Internal Audit Service (IAS) shares the same view when it comes to changes that would benefit not just the DILG but the entire country.

"I encourage all Filipino women and the women of DILG to actively participate in any government activities and decision-making processes to ensure that women's voices are heard and concerns of women are being addressed at the highest level, not overlooked nor ignored," Cerezo said.

She always ensures that both men and women of IAS have equal opportunity when it comes to office promotions, trainings/skills development activities, and other assignments even in terms of field work or project validation.

Indeed, these women directors have the real power inside that drives them to foster justice, dignity, tenacity, equality, independence and respect in their own respective capacities. They are the epitome of DILG women who are catalysts of real change.

May they be a shining example to all Filipino and DILG women. Happy Women *"Works Of Ma'am En Nanay"* Month to all of you!!!

—Ma. Evelyn Castino-Quilas
Photo by: Darel Melgar