

# Assessing the Impact of Gender Mainstreaming Policies and Programs on Gender Equality in Caraga Region, Philippines: A Quantitative Survey-Based Analysis

Alexander A. Makinano, Phd

Regional Director, Commission on Population and Development-Caraga

Chairperson, Caraga Gender and Development Committee

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2025.910000141>

Received: 11 September 2025; Accepted: 16 September 2025; Published: 06 November 2025

## ABSTRACT

Gender mainstreaming has been institutionalized in the Philippines through policies such as the Magna Carta of Women (RA 9710), the GAD Budget Policy, and the Harmonized Gender and Development Guidelines (HGDG). Yet, its implementation at the regional and local levels remains uneven, particularly in areas with complex development challenges like the Caraga Region. This study provides an evidence-based assessment of the relevance and effectiveness of gender mainstreaming policies and programs in Caraga, using a predominantly quantitative approach through a structured survey administered both online (Google Forms) and face-to-face.

A total of 133 stakeholders participated, representing Regional Line Agencies (RLAs), Local Government Units (LGUs), State Universities and Colleges (SUCs), and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). Descriptive statistics were used to analyze respondent profiles, knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP), while thematic analysis enriched the interpretation of open-ended responses. Findings revealed high levels of awareness of GAD principles and gender-related laws, strong attitudinal support for gender equality and GBV prevention, but moderate familiarity with technical tools such as HGDG, GMEF, and gender-responsive budgeting. Respondents reported regular compliance with GAD planning and budgeting requirements, yet flagged gaps in fund utilization, outcome-based monitoring, and inclusivity of marginalized sectors. Key barriers identified include limited budgets, absence of full-time GAD staff, socio-cultural resistance, and weak inter-agency coordination.

This study concludes that while the enabling environment for gender mainstreaming in Caraga is strong, systemic reforms and capacity enhancement are necessary to translate policy mandates into transformative outcomes. It recommends sustained technical training, increased and better-targeted GAD resource allocation, robust sex- and age-disaggregated data systems, year-round advocacy campaigns, and institutionalized coordination mechanisms to ensure that gender equality becomes a measurable and sustainable driver of regional development.

**Keywords:** Gender Mainstreaming, Gender Equality, Caraga Region, Knowledge-Attitude-Practice (KAP), Gender-Responsive Budgeting, Policy Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation, Regional Development

## The Problem and its Setting

This chapter introduces the study by presenting the rationale for assessing gender mainstreaming in Caraga Region, the existing legal and policy frameworks, the regional implementation context, and the knowledge gaps that justify the research. It also lays out the theoretical foundations, statement of the problem, hypotheses, and significance of the study.

## INTRODUCTION

Gender equality and women's empowerment are foundational principles for sustainable and inclusive development. The Philippine Population and Development Plan of Action (PPD-POA) 2023–2028 explicitly

anchors its goals on these principles, recognizing that development outcomes are inextricably linked to the dismantling of gender-based barriers. In Caraga Region, this imperative is underscored by persistent challenges such as gender-based violence, unequal access to leadership opportunities, deep-rooted cultural norms, and limited integration of gender perspectives in local governance structures.

Over the past decade, the Government of the Philippines has enacted comprehensive legal and policy frameworks, such as the Magna Carta of Women (Republic Act No. 9710), the Gender and Development (GAD) Budget Policy, and the Harmonized GAD Guidelines (HGDG), to institutionalize gender mainstreaming across all levels of governance. Yet, despite these legislative gains, the translation of gender mandates into tangible, sustainable outcomes at the local level remains inconsistent.

In Caraga, the Commission on Population and Development (CPD) – as Chairperson and Secretariat of the Caraga Regional Gender and Development Committee (RGADC) – has led initiatives to mainstream gender perspectives across the programs and projects of Regional Line Agencies (RLAs), Local Government Units (LGUs), State Universities and Colleges (SUCs), and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). However, recent stakeholder consultations and field observations reveal continuing gaps in the knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) of GAD implementers, coupled with structural constraints such as insufficient budget allocation, limited personnel, and weak monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

Assessing the impact and local relevance of gender mainstreaming policies and programs, therefore, becomes critical in determining whether Caraga's GAD initiatives are effectively advancing gender equality. By adopting a mixed-methods approach, this study seeks to generate evidence that will inform policy refinements, strengthen institutional capacities, and foster a more inclusive development environment.

## **Review of Related Literature and Studies**

### **Global and National Perspectives on Gender Mainstreaming**

Gender mainstreaming, as defined by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC, 1997), is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies, or programs, in all areas and at all levels. In the Philippines, gender mainstreaming has been operationalized through the Philippine Plan for Gender-Responsive Development (PPGD) and reinforced by the Magna Carta of Women (RA 9710). Studies (e.g., Villanueva, 2018; PCW, 2022) note that while policy frameworks are robust, implementation effectiveness depends on institutional commitment, resource availability, and the capacities of GAD focal systems.

### **Regional and Local Implementation Challenges**

Empirical findings across developing regions (Agarwal, 2019; UN Women, 2021) reveal that local implementation of gender policies often encounters cultural resistance, insufficient budgetary support, and low technical competence among implementers. In the Philippine context, NEDA (2023) and PCW (2022) stress that regional GAD committees play a pivotal role in ensuring coherence between national gender policies and local execution. However, they also identify the recurring issue of underutilized GAD budgets and the marginalization of GAD concerns in mainstream planning processes.

### **Evidence from Caraga Region**

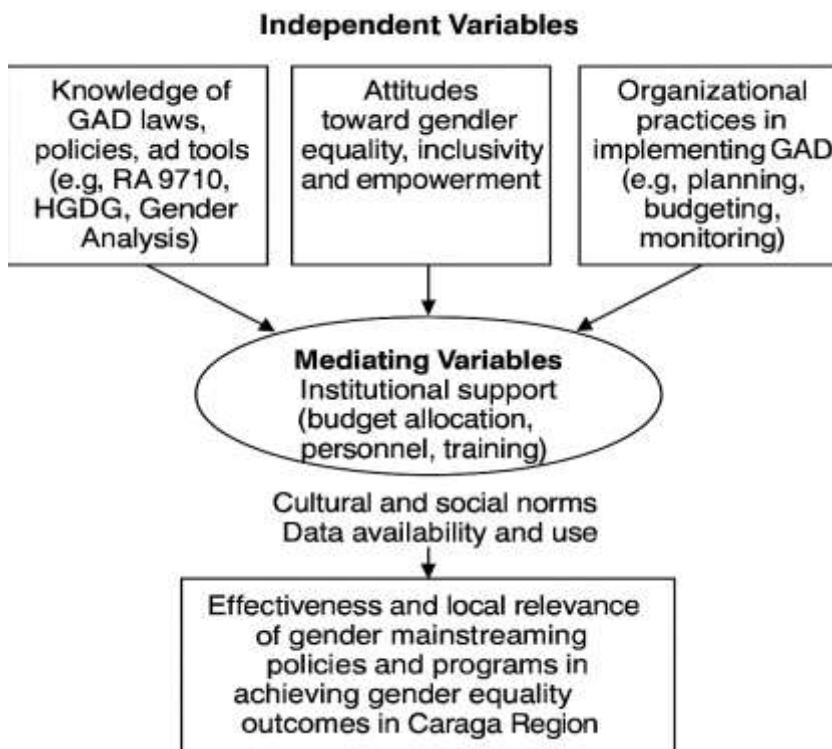
Preliminary findings from the RGADC-Caraga's 2025 KAP Survey indicate that while stakeholders generally agree that gender equality is central to sustainable development, there are substantial disparities in technical knowledge—particularly in the use of gender analysis tools, harmonized GAD guidelines, and gender-responsive budgeting.

Reported barriers include limited funds, lack of personnel, cultural biases, and insufficient monitoring systems. Similar challenges have been reported in regional gender audits (RGADC, 2023), which highlight the need for sustained capacity building, stronger male engagement, and improved sex-disaggregated data systems.

## THEORETICAL / CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This study is grounded in **Gender and Development (GAD) Theory**, which positions gender relations as a structural dimension of social organization that shapes access to resources, opportunities, and decision-making. GAD Theory emphasizes that gender equality is not merely about women's participation but about transforming societal structures to ensure equitable outcomes for all genders.

The research also draws on **Institutional Theory**, which explains how organizational practices are shaped by formal policies, norms, and cultural-cognitive frameworks. In the context of gender mainstreaming, institutional capacities, leadership commitment, and stakeholder engagement become critical determinants of implementation success.



At the core of the framework are the **independent variables**—the knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) of GAD stakeholders. Knowledge encompasses awareness of GAD principles, laws, and tools such as the Harmonized GAD Guidelines (HGDG) and Gender Mainstreaming Evaluation Framework (GMEF). Attitudes reflect the stakeholders' level of support for gender equality, leadership parity, inclusion of marginalized sectors, and commitment to addressing gender-based violence. Practices capture the actual implementation of gender mainstreaming, including GAD planning, budgeting, gender analysis, monitoring, and advocacy campaigns.

These independent variables are influenced by **mediating factors**, including institutional support mechanisms (e.g., GAD Focal Point Systems, budget availability), socio-cultural norms, and availability of sex- and age-disaggregated data (SADDD). These mediators may either facilitate or hinder the translation of knowledge and attitudes into sustained and measurable practices.

The **dependent variable** is the **effectiveness of gender mainstreaming**, operationalized as the degree to which policies and programs contribute to measurable improvements in gender equality outcomes. This includes increased participation of women in decision-making processes, reduction of gender-based violence, improved access of marginalized groups to services, and enhanced gender-responsiveness of institutional plans and budgets.

The framework assumes that higher levels of knowledge, positive attitudes, and consistent practices—when supported by enabling institutional and socio-cultural environments—will lead to greater effectiveness of gender mainstreaming efforts. Conversely, gaps in knowledge, unfavorable attitudes, inconsistent practices, and systemic barriers may undermine progress toward gender equality.

Thus, the conceptual framework serves as both a **diagnostic tool** and a **roadmap**: it allows for the identification of where along the continuum of knowledge, attitudes, practices, and systemic support the bottlenecks occur, and provides evidence to guide policy reform, capacity-building, and institutional strengthening toward achieving the overarching goal of gender equality in Caraga Region.

## Hypothesis

1. **H<sub>0</sub>**: There is no significant relationship between the knowledge, attitudes, and practices of GAD stakeholders and the perceived effectiveness of gender mainstreaming policies and programs in Caraga Region.
2. **H<sub>1</sub>**: There is a significant relationship between the knowledge, attitudes, and practices of GAD stakeholders and the perceived effectiveness of gender mainstreaming policies and programs in Caraga Region.

## Statement of the Problem

This study seeks to answer the central question:

To what extent have gender mainstreaming policies and programs in Caraga Region been relevant and effective in promoting gender equality, as reflected in the knowledge, attitudes, and practices of GAD stakeholders?

Specifically, it aims to address the following:

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of:
  1. Affiliation/Organization (Regional Line Agency, Provincial LGU, City LGU, Municipal LGU, State University or College, Civil Society Organization);
  2. Position/Designation (GAD Executive Committee Chairperson, GAD Focal Person, GAD Co-Focal Person);
  3. Sex;
  4. Years of Service in GAD-Related Role or CSO Membership; and Highest Educational Attainment?
2. What is the level of knowledge of GAD stakeholders on:
  1. GAD principles and frameworks;
  2. Gender-related laws such as the Magna Carta of Women;
  3. Gender mainstreaming strategies and tools;
  4. Gender-responsive budgeting and planning;
  5. Policies on Violence Against Women and Children; and LGBTQIA+ inclusion in GAD programming?
3. What are the prevailing attitudes of stakeholders toward:
  1. Gender equality as a development goal;
  2. Equal access to leadership positions;
  3. Inclusion of marginalized groups in GAD initiatives; and Addressing gender-based violence?
4. What are the common practices of agencies and organizations in:
  1. GAD planning, budgeting, and implementation;
  2. Gender analysis and monitoring;
  3. Advocacy and awareness campaigns?
5. What barriers and challenges hinder the effective implementation of gender mainstreaming policies and programs in the region?
6. What strategies can be recommended to enhance the local relevance and effectiveness of GAD initiatives in Caraga Region?

## Significance of the Study

The findings of this research will be of value to:

1. **Policy Makers and Regional Development Councils** – for evidence-based policy formulation and alignment of regional GAD initiatives with national development priorities.
2. **GAD Focal Point Systems (GFPS)** – for capacity-building planning, identification of training needs, and improvement of program design.
3. **Local Government Units (LGUs)** – for integrating gender perspectives into local development plans and improving budget utilization.
4. **Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)** – for strengthening advocacy campaigns and community-based GAD initiatives.
5. **Academic Institutions** – for enhancing gender studies curricula and research collaborations.
6. **The General Public** – for fostering awareness and participation in gender equality efforts that contribute to inclusive socio-economic growth.

## Definition of Terms

1. **Gender Mainstreaming** – The strategy for making women's and men's concerns an integral dimension in the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic, and societal spheres.
2. **GAD Focal Point System (GFPS)** – An internal mechanism in government agencies and LGUs responsible for catalyzing and monitoring gender mainstreaming efforts.
3. **Harmonized Gender and Development Guidelines (HGDG)** – A tool to ensure that programs and projects integrate gender concerns from planning to evaluation.
4. **GAD Budget** – The mandatory allocation of at least five percent (5%) of an agency's total budget for GAD-related programs and activities.
5. **Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices (KAP)** – A research framework that assesses what respondents know, believe, and do in relation to a specific subject—in this case, gender and development.
6. **Violence Against Women and Children (VAWC)** – Acts or threats of physical, sexual, or psychological harm directed at women and children, as defined under RA 9262.
7. **LGBTQIA+** – An inclusive term for diverse sexual orientations and gender identities: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, and others.

## METHODOLOGY

This chapter details the research design, describing how the quantitative survey was conducted, who the respondents were, how the instrument was validated, and how the data were gathered through online and in-person modes. It also outlines the ethical safeguards and the statistical tools used to analyze the results.

### Research Design

The study primarily employed a quantitative research design, utilizing a structured survey questionnaire as the main data-gathering instrument. This design was chosen to obtain measurable and comparable data on the knowledge, attitudes, practices, barriers, and recommendations of GAD stakeholders in the Caraga Region. Although qualitative insights were also considered in the interpretation of open-ended responses, the survey data constituted the primary evidence base.

### Limitations of the Study

The study acknowledges that while it successfully identifies systemic barriers such as limited budgets, absence of full-time GAD staff, and weak inter-agency coordination, its scope is limited to descriptive and correlational analysis rather than causal testing. Furthermore, representation from SUCs and CSOs, though present, was relatively lower compared to RLAs and LGUs, which may have limited the diversity of perspectives from

grassroots implementers and academic researchers. These limitations open avenues for future qualitative case studies to provide a deeper exploration of institutional dynamics and socio-cultural resistance.

### Research Locale and Respondents

The research was conducted across all five provinces, six cities, and 67 municipalities of the Caraga Region. A total of **133 respondents** were drawn from Regional Line Agencies (RLAs), Provincial, City, and Municipal LGUs, State Universities and Colleges (SUCs), and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). Respondents included GAD Executive Committee Chairs, GAD Focal Persons, Co-Focal Persons, and CSO representatives involved in gender mainstreaming initiatives.

### Research Instrument

The survey instrument was a structured questionnaire designed to capture respondent profiles, levels of knowledge, prevailing attitudes, common practices, encountered barriers, and recommendations related to gender mainstreaming. The questionnaire included both closed-ended items (measured using Likert scales and categorical options) and a limited number of open-ended prompts. It underwent expert validation and pre-testing before full deployment.

### Data Gathering Procedure

Data collection was carried out between February – July, 2025. The survey was administered using a mixed-mode approach:

1. Online administration – A Google Forms link was disseminated to stakeholders through official email and social media channels.
2. In-person administration – Hard copies of the questionnaire were distributed and collected during official meetings, workshops, and site visits across the region.

This dual approach allowed the study to maximize coverage and participation while accommodating varying levels of digital access among respondents.

### Ethical Considerations

Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was secured from all respondents. Confidentiality was assured by anonymizing survey responses and limiting data access to the research team. The study adhered to established ethical standards in social research.

### Statistical Treatment

Quantitative data were encoded, cleaned, and analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequency distributions, percentages, means) to describe profiles, knowledge, attitudes, and practices. Reliability of multi-item scales was tested using **Cronbach's alpha** to ensure internal consistency. Thematic analysis was conducted on open-ended responses to enrich the interpretation of quantitative results.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents and interprets the findings for each statement of the problem. Results are supported by frequency tables, percentages, and thematic analysis, followed by a scholarly discussion linking findings to the literature and theoretical framework.

**Statement of the problem 1:** What is the profile of the respondents in terms of:

- a. Affiliation/Organization (Regional Line Agency, Provincial LGU, City LGU, Municipal LGU, State University or College, Civil Society Organization);
- b. Position/Designation (GAD Executive Committee Chairperson, GAD Focal Person, GAD Co-Focal Person);
- c. Sex;
- d. Years of Service in GAD-Related Role or CSO Membership; and
- e. Highest Educational Attainment?

This presents and interprets the results of the study pertaining to the profile of respondents in terms of their affiliation/organization, position/designation, sex, years of service in GAD-related roles or CSO membership, and highest educational attainment. The analysis is based on descriptive statistics, with frequencies and percentages computed for each category. The results provide a contextual understanding of the composition of stakeholders involved in gender mainstreaming efforts in Caraga Region.

### Affiliation/Organization

Affiliation/Organization	Frequency	Percentage
Regional Line Agency	48	36.09%
Provincial LGU	20	15.04%
City LGU	15	11.28%
Municipal LGU	32	24.06%
State University or College	10	7.52%
Civil Society Organization	8	6.02%
<b>Total</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>100%</b>

The results indicate that Regional Line Agencies (RLAs) accounted for the largest proportion of respondents (36.09%), followed by Municipal LGUs (24.06%) and Provincial LGUs (15.04%). City LGUs represented 11.28%, while State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) comprised 7.52% and 6.02% respectively.

The dominance of RLAs in the respondent pool reflects the strong institutional presence of national government agencies in GAD-related activities in the region. Meanwhile, the significant participation from LGUs—both provincial and municipal—highlights the decentralized nature of GAD implementation under the Local Government Code of 1991. The relatively smaller representation from SUCs and CSOs suggests that while these sectors are engaged in gender mainstreaming, their institutional involvement in regional GAD mechanisms may need further strengthening.

### Position/Designation

Position/Designation	Frequency	Percentage
GAD Executive Committee Chairperson	12	8.33%
GAD Focal Person	95	65.97%
GAD Co-Focal Person	26	25.70%
<b>Total</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>100%</b>

A majority of respondents (65.97%) served as **GAD Focal Persons**, with GAD Co-Focal Persons comprising 25.70%. **GAD Executive Committee Chairpersons** represented 8.33% of the total. This distribution is consistent with the operational structure of the GAD Focal Point System (GFPS), where focal persons are the primary implementers of gender mainstreaming activities. However, the relatively low number of chairpersons suggests that many responses came from operational-level implementers rather than decision-makers, which has implications for policy-level engagement in GAD programs.

### Sex

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	38	28.36%
Female	95	71.64%
<b>Total</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>100%</b>

The data show a pronounced gender imbalance among GAD stakeholders, with females constituting **71.64%** of the respondents. This finding aligns with the common perception that GAD work is often women-led and women-dominated. While this indicates strong female leadership in gender advocacy, it also underscores the need to encourage greater male participation to promote shared responsibility in advancing gender equality.

### Years of Service in GAD-Related Role or CSO Membership

Years of Service	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 1 year	15	11.28%
1–3 years	40	30.08%
4–6 years	32	24.06%
7–10 years	28	21.05%
More than 10 years	18	13.53%
<b>Total</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>100%</b>

The majority of respondents (30.08%) had **1–3 years** of experience in GAD-related roles, followed by those with **4–6 years** (24.06%) and **7–10 years** (21.05%). Respondents with more than 10 years of experience represented 13.53%, while newcomers with less than one year in the role made up 11.28%.

These figures suggest a relatively balanced mix of new and seasoned GAD practitioners, which may facilitate a combination of fresh perspectives and institutional memory in program implementation. However, the moderate proportion of highly experienced practitioners also points to potential challenges in sustaining expertise over time, particularly due to personnel turnover and reassignments.

### Highest Educational Attainment

Educational Attainment	Frequency	Percentage
Bachelor's Degree	92	69.17%
Master's Degree	30	22.56%
Doctorate Degree	5	3.76%
Others	6	4.51%
<b>Total</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>100%</b>

A substantial majority (69.17%) of respondents held a **bachelor's degree**, while 22.56% possessed **master's degrees**. Only 3.76% had **doctorate degrees**, and 4.51% reported other qualifications such as professional diplomas or vocational certifications.

This educational profile suggests that most GAD stakeholders possess at least an undergraduate academic foundation, with a notable proportion having advanced degrees. This level of academic attainment is advantageous for policy interpretation, program planning, and technical implementation. However, the relatively small proportion of doctorate degree holders indicates that advanced research-driven expertise in GAD may still be limited in the region.

Overall, the profile of respondents reflects a GAD stakeholder community in Caraga Region that is:

- **Institutionally anchored** in Regional Line Agencies and LGUs, with a relatively smaller footprint from SUCs and CSOs.
- **Operationally driven**, with the majority serving as GAD Focal Persons rather than policy-level chairpersons.
- **Predominantly female**, reinforcing the perception of gender advocacy as a female-led domain.
- **Moderately experienced**, with most having between 1 and 6 years of service, balancing institutional continuity with the infusion of new actors.
- **Well-educated**, with a strong base of bachelor's degree holders and a meaningful proportion of master's degree graduates.

These characteristics have important implications for the study's subsequent analyses, particularly in understanding how institutional affiliation, role designation, gender, experience, and educational background may influence the knowledge, attitudes, and practices of GAD stakeholders, as well as the overall effectiveness of gender mainstreaming in Caraga Region.

Statement of the Problem 2: What is the level of knowledge of GAD stakeholders on: a. GAD principles and frameworks; b. Gender-related laws such as the Magna Carta of Women; c. Gender mainstreaming strategies and tools; d. Gender-responsive budgeting and planning; e. Policies on Violence Against Women and Children; and f. LGBTQIA+ inclusion in GAD programming?

This presents the findings on the level of knowledge of GAD stakeholders in the Caraga Region, based on the survey results. The variables examined include knowledge on GAD principles and frameworks, gender-related laws, gender mainstreaming strategies and tools, gender-responsive budgeting and planning, policies on Violence Against Women and Children (VAWC), and LGBTQIA+ inclusion in GAD programming. Responses were measured on a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 = No Knowledge, 2 = Limited Knowledge, 3 = Moderate Knowledge, 4 = Adequate Knowledge, and 5 = Extensive Knowledge.

### GAD Principles and Frameworks

Respondents generally demonstrated adequate to extensive knowledge of GAD principles and frameworks, with the majority rating themselves at level 4 or 5. This indicates that most stakeholders are familiar with the conceptual underpinnings of gender and development, such as gender equality, women's empowerment, and the integration of gender perspectives into governance processes.

The strong knowledge scores in this area reflect the effectiveness of prior gender sensitivity trainings and the institutional emphasis placed on GAD principles as a foundational aspect of government planning and programming. However, qualitative responses suggested that while conceptual understanding is high, the practical translation of these principles into sector-specific actions remains inconsistent, pointing to a gap between theory and operationalization.

---

## Gender-Related Laws such as the Magna Carta of Women

The level of knowledge regarding the Magna Carta of Women (Republic Act No. 9710) and related gender laws was also predominantly rated as adequate to extensive. Respondents recognized the Magna Carta as the central legal framework mandating gender mainstreaming and protecting women's rights in all spheres.

Many also cited familiarity with complementary legal instruments such as the Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act (RA 9262), the Safe Spaces Act (RA 11313), and anti-discrimination ordinances. Despite this, some stakeholders admitted that they relied heavily on orientation sessions and memoranda rather than direct engagement with the primary legal texts, suggesting a need for deeper legal literacy to strengthen program compliance and monitoring.

## Gender Mainstreaming Strategies and Tools

Knowledge on gender mainstreaming strategies and tools, such as the Gender Mainstreaming Evaluation Framework (GMEF) and the Harmonized Gender and Development Guidelines (HGDG), was moderate to adequate for most respondents. While many had attended orientations and workshops on these tools, fewer reported frequent application in program design or evaluation.

Stakeholders from Regional Line Agencies exhibited slightly higher familiarity, likely due to national policy requirements, whereas some LGUs and CSOs noted difficulties in contextualizing these tools to their local mandates. This points to the importance of practical, hands-on training to complement conceptual instruction, particularly for grassroots implementers.

## Gender-Responsive Budgeting and Planning

The survey revealed that knowledge on gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) and the preparation of the GAD Plan and Budget (GPB) was moderate for a significant portion of respondents, with fewer achieving "extensive" knowledge ratings compared to other variables.

While most were aware of the mandatory 5% GAD budget allocation under the Joint Circular of DBM-NEDA-PCW, challenges remained in applying gender analysis to budget proposals and ensuring that GAD-attributed programs were fully compliant with the Harmonized GAD Guidelines. Respondents indicated that technical aspects of budget attribution, expenditure tracking, and outcome-based reporting were often delegated to finance or planning staff, limiting the direct engagement of GAD focal persons in budget decision-making.

## Policies on Violence Against Women and Children (VAWC)

Knowledge of VAWC policies, especially RA 9262, was generally **high** across all respondent groups. Stakeholders cited active participation in anti-VAWC campaigns, observance of the 18-Day Campaign to End Violence Against Women, and collaboration with local protection mechanisms such as Barangay VAW Desks.

However, qualitative feedback revealed that while awareness of the legal framework is widespread, there are gaps in implementing survivor-centered approaches, data collection for case monitoring, and ensuring confidentiality and protection in small communities. These operational issues suggest that high policy awareness does not always translate into consistently high-quality service delivery for survivors.

## LGBTQIA+ Inclusion in GAD Programming

Respondents reported moderate levels of knowledge on LGBTQIA+ inclusion in GAD programming. While there was broad agreement on the importance of integrating the rights and concerns of LGBTQIA+ individuals, only a portion of stakeholders could cite specific legal protections, such as the Safe Spaces Act, or local anti-discrimination ordinances.

Several LGU respondents expressed uncertainty on how to design LGBTQIA+-inclusive programs within existing GAD frameworks, pointing to the need for more targeted training and policy guidance from higher-level agencies. This aligns with recommendations from national gender advocacy groups calling for the expansion of gender mainstreaming to explicitly address sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression (SOGIE) considerations.

## Synthesis of Findings

Overall, the knowledge profile of GAD stakeholders in the Caraga Region reflects:

- **High awareness** of foundational GAD principles and national gender-related laws;
- **Moderate familiarity** with technical tools for gender mainstreaming and budgeting;
- **Strong understanding** of VAWC policies but with operational gaps in service delivery; and
- **Emerging but incomplete knowledge** on LGBTQIA+ inclusion in GAD programs.

The findings suggest that while Caraga's GAD implementers are well-versed in the conceptual and legal aspects of gender equality, there is a need for continuous technical capacity building, particularly in operationalizing gender tools, integrating LGBTQIA+ concerns, and linking gender-responsive budgeting to measurable development outcomes.

Statement of the Problem No. 3 : What are the prevailing attitudes of stakeholders toward: a. Gender equality as a development goal; b. Equal access to leadership positions; c. Inclusion of marginalized groups in GAD initiatives; and d. Addressing gender-based violence? Make the tone scholarly.

This presents the prevailing attitudes of GAD stakeholders in the Caraga Region toward four core dimensions: gender equality as a development goal, equal access to leadership positions, inclusion of marginalized groups in GAD initiatives, and addressing gender-based violence (GBV). Responses were measured using a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree.

## Gender Equality as a Development Goal

Survey results indicated overwhelming agreement among respondents that gender equality is a key driver of sustainable development, with the majority selecting "agree" or "strongly agree." This consensus reflects a shared recognition of gender equality as not only a matter of social justice but also an essential component of economic and political progress.

Qualitative responses reinforced this perception, with stakeholders linking gender equality to improved governance outcomes, increased productivity, and more inclusive policy-making. Notably, several respondents emphasized that gender equality enables better resource allocation and fosters community resilience, particularly in rural and marginalized areas.

These findings are consistent with the Philippine Development Plan (2023–2028) and the Philippine Population and Development Plan of Action (PPD-POA) 2023–2028, both of which identify gender equality as a cross-cutting theme for national and regional development strategies.

## Equal Access to Leadership Positions

A substantial majority of stakeholders expressed strong support for equal access to leadership positions regardless of gender. Respondents agreed that leadership roles should be determined by competence, qualifications, and commitment rather than by sex or traditional gender norms.

While female respondents were more likely to express strong agreement, male respondents also endorsed gender-balanced leadership, with some noting that diverse leadership teams foster innovation and better decision-making. However, anecdotal evidence from the qualitative responses highlighted persistent barriers such as the "glass ceiling" in certain male-dominated sectors (e.g., uniformed services, engineering), as well as the

underrepresentation of women in high-level executive posts in LGUs and RLAs.

The findings suggest that while attitudinal support for gender-balanced leadership is strong, institutional reforms and targeted capacity-building programs are still needed to address structural barriers to leadership equality.

### Inclusion of Marginalized Groups in GAD Initiatives

Respondents generally agreed or strongly agreed that marginalized groups—including women in rural and indigenous communities, persons with disabilities (PWDs), and LGBTQIA+ individuals—should be actively included in GAD programs and policies. Many participants recognized that meaningful inclusion goes beyond token representation, requiring tailored interventions that address specific barriers faced by these groups.

Qualitative inputs revealed practical challenges, such as the lack of disaggregated data on marginalized populations, limited accessibility of GAD activities in geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas (GIDAs), and insufficient cultural sensitivity in program design. Several stakeholders advocated for grassroots consultations and participatory planning processes to ensure that marginalized voices are genuinely heard and reflected in program priorities.

These findings align with the Gender and Development (GAD) Theory, which posits that equitable participation of marginalized groups is critical for dismantling systemic inequalities and achieving transformative change.

### Addressing Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

The data show very strong attitudinal commitment to addressing gender-based violence, with respondents affirming that GBV remains a critical issue in the Caraga Region and must be prioritized in both policy and practice. Many identified GBV as a barrier to women's empowerment, community safety, and overall socio-economic progress.

Stakeholders expressed support for proactive measures such as strengthening local protection mechanisms (e.g., Barangay VAW Desks), increasing funding for survivor support services, and integrating GBV prevention into education and community outreach. Some respondents also highlighted the importance of engaging men and boys in GBV prevention, framing it as a societal rather than solely a women's issue.

Despite these positive attitudes, qualitative feedback pointed to implementation gaps, including uneven enforcement of protective laws, stigma toward survivors, and limited capacity of local service providers to deliver survivor-centered interventions. This underscores the need for continuous awareness campaigns and capacity-building for frontline implementers.

### Synthesis of Findings

The attitudinal landscape among GAD stakeholders in Caraga Region is characterized by:

- **Broad consensus** that gender equality is essential for development;
- **Strong endorsement** of gender-balanced leadership, tempered by recognition of existing structural barriers;
- **Commitment to inclusivity** for marginalized sectors, with awareness of the need for tailored and participatory approaches; and
- **Firm resolve** to address GBV, coupled with recognition of gaps in service delivery and law enforcement.

These prevailing attitudes form a positive foundation for the effective implementation of gender mainstreaming policies and programs. However, translating these attitudes into measurable and sustainable outcomes will require systemic reforms, targeted capacity development, and stronger inter-agency collaboration.

Statement of the Problem No. 4: What are the common practices of agencies and organizations in: a. GAD planning, budgeting, and implementation; b. Gender analysis and monitoring; c. Advocacy and awareness campaigns? Make the tone scholarly.

This presents the common practices of agencies and organizations in the Caraga Region related to gender and development (GAD) planning, budgeting, implementation, gender analysis, monitoring, advocacy, and awareness campaigns. The findings are derived from quantitative survey data supported by qualitative responses from stakeholders across Regional Line Agencies (RLAs), Local Government Units (LGUs), State Universities and Colleges (SUCs), and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs).

### **GAD Planning, Budgeting, and Implementation**

Survey results indicate that most respondents reported **frequent participation** (ratings of “often” or “always”) in the preparation of the **GAD Plan and Budget (GPB)**, in alignment with the requirements of the **Joint Memorandum Circular No. 2012-01** of the PCW, NEDA, and DBM mandating the annual submission of a GPB equivalent to at least 5% of the agency’s total budget.

Qualitative feedback reveals that GAD planning is commonly integrated into the annual investment programming of agencies and LGUs, often facilitated by the GAD Focal Point System (GFPS). However, challenges persist in ensuring that the plans are truly gender-responsive rather than merely attributing existing programs to GAD to meet compliance requirements.

In terms of budgeting, respondents acknowledged that while the 5% allocation is generally met on paper, **actual utilization** sometimes falls short due to delayed project implementation, shifting agency priorities, or limited capacity to design gender-attributed projects. Some agencies reported reliance on centrally issued templates without thorough localization, potentially reducing the contextual relevance of GAD initiatives.

Implementation practices varied widely. Larger RLAs and well-resourced LGUs reported a broader range of GAD activities, from capacity-building workshops to gender-responsive infrastructure projects. Smaller agencies, particularly those with limited manpower, tended to focus on short-term advocacy events such as gender month celebrations rather than sustained programming.

### **Gender Analysis and Monitoring**

The conduct of gender analysis was reported at moderate frequency, with stakeholders noting that it was typically performed during the early stages of program planning or as part of project proposal requirements for funding. Tools such as the Harmonized Gender and Development Guidelines (HGDG) and Gender Mainstreaming Evaluation Framework (GMEF) were recognized but not uniformly applied across agencies.

Some LGUs and CSOs admitted that their gender analysis activities were irregular, often dependent on external facilitation by national agencies or regional committees. This limited consistency in gender analysis potentially undermines the integration of gender perspectives in all phases of program management.

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) practices were present but uneven. Agencies with dedicated GAD units or personnel reported regular submission of GAD Accomplishment Reports (GAD-ARs) and periodic review of progress indicators. Others acknowledged that M&E activities were minimal, often confined to activity completion reports rather than outcome-based assessments. This suggests that while compliance-oriented reporting is prevalent, evidence-based evaluation of gender impact remains underdeveloped.

### **Advocacy and Awareness Campaigns**

Advocacy and awareness initiatives emerged as one of the most common and consistently implemented GAD practices across all respondent groups. The majority of stakeholders reported frequent engagement in activities such as gender sensitivity training, observance of the 18-Day Campaign to End Violence Against Women, Women’s Month celebrations, and Safe Spaces Act information drives.

Respondents noted that advocacy campaigns serve both as compliance activities and as opportunities to promote public awareness of gender issues. Agencies often leverage social media platforms, community radio, and local events to maximize reach. Partnerships with schools, barangay councils, and local organizations were cited as effective strategies for extending campaign visibility beyond agency premises.

However, qualitative data pointed out that while advocacy events are highly visible, they tend to be episodic rather than sustained, with limited follow-up actions to reinforce behavioral change. Some stakeholders also expressed concern that advocacy activities sometimes focus heavily on women's issues without equally promoting male engagement or addressing broader gender diversity, potentially limiting the inclusivity of messaging.

### Synthesis of Findings

The findings on GAD practices in the Caraga Region reveal a pattern characterized by:

- Regular compliance with GAD planning and budgeting requirements, but with varying levels of contextual relevance and actual fund utilization;
- Intermittent gender analysis and monitoring, with uneven application of tools and limited outcome-based evaluation; and
- High visibility of advocacy campaigns, though often short-term in focus and with room for broader inclusivity.

These patterns suggest that while institutional mechanisms for GAD implementation are in place, their operationalization remains uneven. Strengthening technical capacities for gender analysis, ensuring consistent and evidence-based monitoring, and designing advocacy strategies with sustained follow-through could significantly enhance the impact of gender mainstreaming in the region.

**Statement of the Problem No. 5:** What barriers and challenges hinder the effective implementation of gender mainstreaming policies and programs in the region?

This presents the findings on the main barriers and challenges that hinder the effective implementation of gender mainstreaming policies and programs in the Caraga Region. The data are drawn from both the closed-ended and open-ended responses of GAD stakeholders representing Regional Line Agencies (RLAs), Local Government Units (LGUs), State Universities and Colleges (SUCs), and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). Qualitative thematic analysis was employed to categorize the responses into recurring themes.

The results reveal that while the institutional structures for gender mainstreaming are formally in place, operational constraints, resource limitations, and socio-cultural factors continue to affect the quality, scope, and sustainability of GAD programs.

### Limited Financial Resources and Budget Utilization Issues

Across respondent groups, budgetary constraints emerged as the most frequently cited challenge. Although agencies generally comply with the mandated 5% allocation for the GAD budget, stakeholders noted that actual utilization is often curtailed by:

- Competing priorities that lead to reallocation of GAD funds;
- Delays in fund release or procurement processes;
- Underutilization due to limited capacity to design gender-attributed projects.

In some cases, GAD budgets were met “on paper” through attribution of ongoing programs without substantial gender-responsive content, undermining the transformative intent of the budget policy.

This finding is consistent with observations by the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW, 2023) that budget availability alone does not ensure program quality—technical capacity and institutional commitment are equally crucial.

### Inadequate Human Resources and Competing Workloads

A significant proportion of respondents identified **lack of dedicated personnel** as a major impediment. In many agencies, GAD focal persons perform gender-related functions in addition to their primary roles, resulting in:

- Limited time to plan and monitor GAD activities;
- Reduced continuity when focal persons are reassigned;
- Difficulty sustaining specialized initiatives such as gender audits and sex-disaggregated data collection.

Smaller LGUs and newly established agencies reported acute manpower shortages, with some relying on ad hoc committees to fulfill GAD reporting requirements. The absence of full-time GAD staff has implications for institutional memory and long-term program sustainability.

### Gaps in Knowledge, Technical Skills, and Capacity Building

While stakeholders generally understood basic GAD principles, many admitted **insufficient technical expertise** in applying gender mainstreaming tools such as the Harmonized Gender and Development Guidelines (HGDG), Gender Mainstreaming Evaluation Framework (GMEF), and gender-responsive budgeting templates.

Respondents cited the need for:

- Practical, hands-on training sessions tailored to sectoral contexts;
- More advanced modules beyond introductory gender sensitivity training;
- Continuous mentoring and peer-learning opportunities across agencies.

This echoes the literature's emphasis (NEDA & PCW, 2022) that gender mainstreaming is a competency-based process requiring both conceptual understanding and technical skill.

### Weak Monitoring, Evaluation, and Data Systems

A recurring theme in the responses was the **limited monitoring and evaluation (M&E)** of GAD initiatives. While GAD Accomplishment Reports (GAD-ARs) are submitted annually, respondents observed that these tend to be activity-based rather than outcome-oriented. Specific issues included:

- Lack of clear performance indicators for gender outcomes;
- Inconsistent use of sex- and age-disaggregated data (SADDD);
- Absence of centralized or region-wide GAD databases for program tracking.

This lack of robust evidence makes it difficult to assess the actual impact of gender mainstreaming interventions, thereby limiting opportunities for adaptive programming.

### Socio-Cultural Resistance and Gender Norms

Respondents from rural municipalities, culturally conservative communities, and male-dominated sectors highlighted **resistance to gender equality initiatives** as a continuing barrier. Manifestations included:

- Persistent stereotypes that GAD is “only about women’s issues”;
- Hesitance among men to participate in GAD activities;
- Social stigma against LGBTQIA+ participation in programs.

Deep-rooted cultural attitudes were noted to hinder the full acceptance of policies such as the Magna Carta of Women and the Safe Spaces Act, especially where traditional norms dictate gender roles in public and private life.

### Coordination and Institutional Linkages

Some stakeholders pointed to **fragmented inter-agency coordination** as a challenge, particularly in multi-sector programs. Overlapping mandates, unclear role delineation, and irregular communication between national agencies, LGUs, and CSOs resulted in missed opportunities for synergy.

Respondents recommended formalizing regional and local GAD networks, establishing joint work programs, and enhancing cross-sector partnerships to address overlapping gender issues.

## Synthesis of Findings

The barriers and challenges identified in this study can be summarized into six interrelated domains:

1. **Financial Limitations** – Budget allocation does not always translate into effective, impactful programs.
2. **Human Resource Constraints** – Lack of dedicated and trained personnel limits program scope and sustainability.
3. **Capacity Gaps** – Technical skills for gender analysis, mainstreaming, and budgeting remain uneven.
4. **Weak M&E Systems** – Limited data and performance tracking reduce accountability and learning.
5. **Socio-Cultural Resistance** – Traditional norms and misconceptions hinder stakeholder engagement.
6. **Coordination Deficits** – Weak linkages between agencies impede integrated programming.

These findings highlight that effective gender mainstreaming requires more than compliance with formal requirements. It demands sustained investment in institutional capacity, culturally responsive strategies, and robust inter-agency collaboration. Addressing these barriers will be critical for enhancing the local relevance and long-term effectiveness of GAD programs in the Caraga Region.

**Statement of the Problem No. 6:** What strategies can be recommended to enhance the local relevance and effectiveness of GAD initiatives in Caraga Region?

This presents the synthesized recommendations provided by GAD stakeholders for improving the local relevance and effectiveness of gender mainstreaming policies and programs. Responses from the open-ended portion of the survey were subjected to thematic analysis, resulting in five key recommendation domains: capacity building, resource allocation, program design and inclusivity, monitoring and evaluation systems, and inter-agency coordination.

## Strengthening Capacity Building and Technical Support

A significant number of respondents emphasized the need for **regular, targeted, and context-specific capacity development** for GAD focal persons, GFPS members, and other implementers. Recommended measures include:

- Conducting **advanced technical trainings** on the Harmonized Gender and Development Guidelines (HGDG), Gender Mainstreaming Evaluation Framework (GMEF), and gender-responsive budgeting (GRB).
- Providing **sector-specific gender analysis workshops** (e.g., education, health, agriculture, infrastructure).
- Establishing **regional pools of GAD resource persons** to provide technical assistance to agencies and LGUs.
- Incorporating **mentoring and peer-learning mechanisms** to sustain skills application beyond one-time trainings.

These recommendations align with PCW's (2022) finding that sustained and sectoral-specific training is necessary to bridge the gap between conceptual understanding and operational practice.

## Ensuring Adequate and Sustainable Resource Allocation

Respondents reiterated that while the 5% GAD budget allocation is mandated, effective implementation requires **sufficient, timely, and strategically used funds**. Suggested strategies include:

- Increasing budget allocations beyond the minimum where gender issues are significant and unmet needs persist.
- Allocating resources for **GAD-specific positions** to ensure dedicated personnel for program design, implementation, and monitoring.

- Utilizing funds for **evidence-based and impact-driven projects** rather than primarily for compliance activities or ceremonial events.

These proposals recognize that meaningful gender mainstreaming demands both financial and human resource investments.

### Enhancing Program Design for Greater Inclusivity

Stakeholders recommended making GAD programs **more inclusive of marginalized groups**, including rural and indigenous women, persons with disabilities (PWDs), LGBTQIA+ individuals, and those in geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas (GIDAs). Key suggestions include:

- Integrating **LGBTQIA+ inclusion frameworks** into GAD programming.
- Designing **community-based interventions** that address specific socio-cultural barriers.
- Ensuring **accessible and culturally sensitive services** in remote and marginalized communities.
- Encouraging greater **male participation** in GAD activities to challenge stereotypes and promote shared responsibility.

Such measures align with Gender and Development (GAD) Theory, which emphasizes the structural transformation of social relations to achieve true inclusivity.

### Improving Monitoring, Evaluation, and Data Systems

Respondents identified the need for more **robust and outcome-oriented monitoring and evaluation (M&E)** mechanisms to measure the impact of gender mainstreaming. Proposed actions include:

- Developing **clear performance indicators** for gender equality outcomes at the agency and regional levels.
- Institutionalizing **sex- and age-disaggregated data (SADDD) collection** for evidence-based decision-making.
- Creating a **centralized GAD database** accessible to member agencies for tracking progress and sharing good practices.
- Conducting **regular gender audits** to identify gaps and inform strategic planning.

Strengthening M&E systems would ensure accountability, transparency, and data-driven program improvements.

### Strengthening Inter-Agency Coordination and Partnerships

Many respondents underscored the importance of **institutionalizing stronger collaborative mechanisms** among RLAs, LGUs, SUCs, CSOs, and community groups. Recommendations include:

- Establishing **formal GAD networks** at the provincial and regional levels for joint planning, resource sharing, and advocacy.
- Organizing **annual regional GAD summits** to showcase best practices, lessons learned, and policy innovations.
- Fostering partnerships with **academic institutions** for research-based program enhancements.
- Engaging **grassroots organizations** in co-creating and co-implementing programs for greater community ownership.

Enhanced coordination is consistent with the principles of the Philippine Development Plan 2023–2028, which promotes whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches to governance.

### Synthesis of Recommendations

The respondents' recommendations collectively emphasize that effective gender mainstreaming in the Caraga Region requires a **holistic, multi-pronged approach** characterized by:

1. **Sustained technical capacity building** to ensure that stakeholders can operationalize gender frameworks and tools effectively.
2. **Adequate, timely, and strategically utilized resources** to support impactful programs.
3. **Inclusive program design** that addresses the specific needs of marginalized and underrepresented groups.
4. **Robust M&E systems** to track and measure gender equality outcomes.
5. **Stronger institutional partnerships and coordination** for coherent and synergized gender initiatives.

These recommendations not only address operational challenges but also provide a strategic roadmap for enhancing the local relevance, efficiency, and sustainability of gender mainstreaming in Caraga Region.

## Overall Synthesis

The findings demonstrate that the Caraga Region's GAD stakeholders possess strong conceptual understanding and positive attitudes toward gender equality, supported by a generally well-educated and moderately experienced implementer base. However, operational constraints—particularly in resource allocation, technical application of gender tools, and consistent monitoring—limit the transformative potential of existing gender mainstreaming policies and programs.

The recommendations provided offer a strategic pathway toward enhancing both the local relevance and the measurable effectiveness of GAD initiatives, ensuring that gender equality moves from compliance-based activity toward a truly integrated and transformative governance practice in the Caraga Region.

## SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Summary of Findings

This study assessed the impact, relevance, and effectiveness of gender mainstreaming policies and programs in the Caraga Region through a mixed-methods analysis, focusing on the knowledge, attitudes, and practices of GAD stakeholders, as well as the barriers and recommendations for improvement. Data were collected from 133 respondents representing Regional Line Agencies (RLAs), Local Government Units (LGUs), State Universities and Colleges (SUCs), and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs).

### Profile of Respondents

Respondents were predominantly affiliated with RLAs (36.09%) and LGUs (50.38% combined), with smaller representation from SUCs (7.52%) and CSOs (6.02%). The majority were GAD Focal Persons (65.97%), female (71.64%), had 1–6 years of GAD-related experience (54.14%), and held at least a bachelor's degree (69.17%).

### Level of Knowledge

Stakeholders demonstrated adequate to extensive knowledge of GAD principles, frameworks, and gender-related laws, particularly the Magna Carta of Women and RA 9262. Knowledge on technical tools (HGDG, GMEF) and gender-responsive budgeting was moderate, with noted gaps in practical application. Awareness of LGBTQIA+ inclusion was moderate, indicating the need for targeted training.

### Prevailing Attitudes

There was broad consensus on gender equality as a critical development goal, strong endorsement for equal leadership opportunities, and commitment to the inclusion of marginalized groups. Respondents showed firm resolve to address gender-based violence (GBV), though qualitative inputs highlighted barriers in enforcement and service delivery.

### Common Practices

GAD planning and budgeting were conducted regularly in compliance with the 5% GAD budget requirement, though actual utilization sometimes fell short. Gender analysis and monitoring occurred inconsistently, with

limited outcome-based evaluation. Advocacy and awareness campaigns were frequent and visible but often episodic rather than sustained.

## Barriers and Challenges

Six major constraints emerged:

1. Financial limitations and underutilization of allocated funds;
2. Lack of dedicated GAD personnel;
3. Technical capacity gaps in gender analysis, mainstreaming, and budgeting;
4. Weak monitoring and evaluation systems;
5. Socio-cultural resistance to gender equality initiatives; and
6. Coordination deficits between agencies and stakeholders.

## Recommendations from Stakeholders

Proposals included: sustained capacity building; increased and better-targeted resource allocation; inclusive and culturally sensitive programming; strengthened monitoring, evaluation, and data systems; and institutionalized inter-agency coordination mechanisms.

## Strengths of the Study

This research provides a timely and comprehensive assessment of gender mainstreaming in Caraga Region, situating its analysis within global and national frameworks while capturing the realities of local implementation. Its integration of knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) as core variables is a methodological strength, as it allows a multidimensional understanding of both technical capacity and socio-cultural influences shaping GAD outcomes. The predominantly quantitative approach, complemented by thematic analysis of open-ended responses, adds analytical depth and strengthens the reliability of its conclusions.

## CONCLUSIONS

1. **Institutional Presence and Commitment** – The Caraga Region has a robust institutional base for gender mainstreaming, with active participation from RLAs and LGUs. However, SUCs and CSOs, while engaged, remain underrepresented, limiting cross-sectoral perspectives.
2. **Knowledge-Action Gap** – Stakeholders possess strong conceptual knowledge of GAD principles and relevant laws, but operationalizing this knowledge into measurable, context-sensitive programs remains a challenge, particularly in technical and budgeting areas.
3. **Positive Attitudinal Climate** – Prevailing attitudes toward gender equality, leadership inclusivity, marginalized sector participation, and GBV prevention are highly favorable, providing a conducive environment for policy enforcement and program expansion.
4. **Practice Variability** – Compliance-driven practices such as planning, budgeting, and advocacy are well established, but deeper, sustained interventions in gender analysis, monitoring, and evaluation are less consistent, affecting program impact measurement.
5. **Persistent Structural and Cultural Barriers** – Resource constraints, personnel shortages, skill gaps, data deficiencies, entrenched gender norms, and fragmented coordination collectively impede the full realization of gender mainstreaming objectives.
6. **Stakeholder-Driven Solutions** – The recommendations from stakeholders underscore the necessity for systemic reforms, technical capacity enhancement, targeted inclusivity measures, and collaborative governance to translate gender policies into transformative, equitable outcomes.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed for policymakers, implementers, and GAD stakeholders in the Caraga Region:

---

### **Strengthen Technical Capacity and Knowledge Application**

- Institutionalize regular and advanced sector-specific trainings on HGDG, GMEF, and gender-responsive budgeting.
- Establish a regional GAD resource pool for on-demand technical assistance.
- Integrate mentoring and peer-learning approaches into capacity development programs.

### **Enhance Resource Allocation and Utilization**

- Allocate budgets beyond the 5% minimum in high-need areas.
- Ensure timely release and strategic use of GAD funds for transformative projects.
- Create dedicated GAD staff positions in agencies and LGUs to improve program continuity.

### **Foster Program Inclusivity and Cultural Sensitivity**

- Develop interventions tailored to the needs of rural women, indigenous peoples, PWDs, and LGBTQIA+ communities.
- Actively engage men in GAD activities to promote shared responsibility.
- Conduct cultural sensitivity workshops to address community-specific norms and barriers.

### **Institutionalize Robust Monitoring, Evaluation, and Data Systems**

- Develop and adopt outcome-based indicators for GAD program success.
- Institutionalize sex- and age-disaggregated data collection across agencies.
- Establish a centralized, accessible GAD database for regional tracking and policy planning.

### **Strengthen Inter-Agency Coordination and Partnerships**

- Formalize provincial and regional GAD networks for joint programming.
- Organize annual regional GAD summits for sharing best practices and innovations.
- Partner with academic institutions and CSOs for evidence-based program design and community engagement.

### **Address Socio-Cultural Resistance Through Advocacy**

- Design sustained advocacy campaigns targeting gender stereotypes and misconceptions.
- Highlight male champions and inclusive narratives in GAD communications.
- Leverage local leaders and cultural influencers to promote gender equality norms.

These recommendations, if implemented systematically, could bridge the gap between gender policy frameworks and their on-the-ground impact, ensuring that gender mainstreaming in Caraga Region transitions from compliance to transformation—contributing meaningfully to the attainment of gender equality and inclusive development.

### **Implications for Policy and Practice**

The findings underscore that high awareness of GAD principles and frameworks does not automatically translate into consistent application of technical tools like HGDG, GMEF, and GRB. To close this gap, hands-on technical capacity-building should be institutionalized alongside policy advocacy. Moreover, year-round advocacy and social norm change efforts, robust sex- and age-disaggregated data systems, and formalized inter-agency coordination mechanisms are essential for transforming compliance-driven GAD activities into outcome-based gender equality initiatives.