

Gender Mainstreaming in a Bangsamoro Public High School: Basis for Intervention

Alibon M. Mangigin, Pearl Ann M. Mancao

Master of Education Major in Educational Management University of Southeastern Philippines Davao City

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to describe the current state of gender mainstreaming in Bangsamoro Public High School in terms of policy, people, enabling mechanisms and programs, projects, and activities. It also aims to identify issues and challenges to develop interventions in improving GAD mainstreaming. The study used a mixed-method approach that included surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions on describing the mainstreaming of GAD in public high schools. At the same time, qualitative data was used to determine the issues, challenges, and interventions in Gender and Development mainstreaming in school services. The study revealed that respondents positively defined the existence of Gender and Development in their school in terms of having a policy, conducting programs, activities, and projects (PAPs), and enabling mechanisms. Themes such as family conflict, early marriage, and teenage pregnancy were recorded in terms of issues and challenges. Findings highlighted that the program is not a priority, and the policy is not successfully implemented, so the budget allocation is not utilized correctly. Moreover, participants emphasized that there is no formal flagship program on GAD and an absence of application on the national government's issued order or policy, resulting in the poor status of gender and development mainstreaming in public high schools. This study proposed the intervention plan be implemented to be the basis for policy reform, GAD mainstreaming curriculum development, and improving the school's management capabilities.

Keywords: Gender Mainstreaming, Bangsamoro, Public School, Intervention based violence remains a significant

INTRODUCTION

Gender inequality remains a persistent challenge in educational settings worldwide despite increased advocacy and legislation (Potvin et al., 2018). One of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for 2030 emphasizes achieving gender equality through equitable access to education. The integration of Gender and Development (GAD) programs within school systems is a crucial strategy in realizing this objective (Dar, 2018). However, school-related gender-concern, with an estimated 246 million children affected globally in 2014, a number anticipated to rise in current contexts (UNGEI, 2017).

In the Philippines, gender mainstreaming in education is a national priority to reduce disparities (Fernandes et al., 2015). Philippine statistics from 2016 reveal that 53.1% of enrolled students were female, compared to 46.9% male. Similarly, 59% of graduates were female, while 41% were male, largely attributed to male students opting to support their families rather than pursue education (San Buenaventura, 2019). Recognizing this imbalance, the Philippine Commission on Women developed the Enhanced Gender Mainstreaming Evaluation Framework (GMEF) to guide institutions in ensuring gender equality in policy and practice. The framework also serves to assess the extent of gender mainstreaming efforts in alignment with the Magna Carta of Women.

To institutionalize these efforts, the Department of Education (DepEd) issued Order No. 32, s. 2017, introducing the Gender-Responsive Basic Education Policy (GRBEP). This policy mandates the integration of gender-responsive principles in the provision and governance of basic education. It promotes inclusive education by ensuring equal access to learning opportunities, fair treatment in educational settings, and equitable outcomes

for all learners. GRBEP aligns with broader legislative frameworks such as the Magna Carta of Women (RA 9710) and the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 (RA 10533), as well as international commitments, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

However, gender inequality remains deeply rooted in the Bangsamoro region, where cultural norms often favor men over women, particularly in accessing education. Since the implementation of DepEd Order No. 32, s. 2017, public high school teachers in Lanao del Sur have faced challenges in integrating gender-responsive principles into daily educational activities. Limited training and insufficient resources have hindered the policy's effective implementation. Despite previous GAD programs, the need for comprehensive teacher training and resource allocation remains evident. A further concern in the region is the recruitment of young boys into armed groups, exacerbating gender-related challenges in schools (Ardivilla, 2017). Deep-seated cultural beliefs continue to contribute to inequalities in educational access and opportunities, particularly for girls (Abdulwahab, 2018). To counteract these issues, the implementation of a gender-responsive curriculum and the establishment of inclusive school services are imperative. Schools play a vital role in fostering equitable values and promoting gender sensitivity among students.

The COVID-19 pandemic has further intensified these challenges. With schools shifting to remote learning, the educational gap between male and female students in Lanao del Sur has widened. Gender mainstreaming efforts in the education sector are crucial to mitigating these disparities. This study seeks to explore the implementation of GAD programs in public high schools within the province, focusing on identifying challenges, assessing the effectiveness of current initiatives, and proposing strategies for sustainable gender mainstreaming in the post-pandemic context.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to describe and assess the mainstreaming of Gender and Development (GAD) in Bangsamoro Public High School in the Municipality of Balabagan, Lanao del Sur, Bangsamoro, Philippines. It aims to examine the current status of GAD implementation by evaluating key areas, including policies, people, enabling mechanisms, and programs, projects, and activities. Furthermore, the study seeks to identify the issues and challenges faced by the school in promoting gender equality and inclusivity. Based on the findings, the study intends to propose appropriate interventions and recommendations to enhance the effectiveness of GAD mainstreaming efforts within the school community.

METHODS RESEARCH DESIGN

The study utilized the mixed method research design. Firstly, the quantitative descriptive research design was used to obtain information concerning the current status of the phenomena described and what exists with respect to variables or conditions in a situation (Shuttleworth, 2008). Thus, the researcher examined the status of mainstreaming gender among the subjects of the study. Quantitative research is used to quantify the problem by generating numerical data or data that can be transformed into usable statistics. Furthermore, this qualitative descriptive aspect of the study quantified and described the mainstreaming of Gender and Development in public high schools. Moreover, it used the qualitative design to determine the issues, challenges, and interventions in GAD mainstreaming in school services. The mixed-method collects data using surveys, interviews/focus group discussions and analyzes them using statistical tools to explain phenomena or situations (Cresswell, 2014).

Sources and Data Collection

The study involved education supervisors, principals, and teachers from a public high school in Balabagan, Lanao del Sur, during the school year 2020-2021. A total of 59 respondents participated in the quantitative survey, while eight individuals joined the focus group discussion (FGD) conducted via Google Meet, facilitated by an external moderator. Additionally, four participants were interviewed in person by the researcher.

A total enumeration sampling technique was applied, including all members of the target population. This

method was deemed appropriate due to the population's manageable size, ensuring comprehensive data collection (Cresswell, 2014).

Data were gathered using a survey questionnaire adapted from the Gender Mainstreaming Evaluation Framework (GMEF). It consisted of three parts: a four-point Likert Scale to assess gender mainstreaming, open-ended statements to identify issues and challenges, and suggested interventions. The questionnaire was validated by two professors from the University of Southeastern Philippines and one external evaluator. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha with a sample of 12 participants.

The following Likert scale was used to interpret the results:

Table 1. Scale for Interpreting Manifestation of Gender Mainstreaming

Scale	Status	Description
5	Very High	The status of mainstreaming gender is highly manifested.
4	High	The status of mainstreaming gender is manifested.
3	Moderate	The status of mainstreaming gender is fairly manifested.
2	Low	The status of mainstreaming gender is rarely manifested.
1	Very Low	The status of mainstreaming gender is not manifested

For data gathering, permission was secured from the school principal. Surveys were administered through Google Forms™, and the FGD was facilitated online. In-person interviews were conducted while observing health protocols. Participants were assured of confidentiality and informed of their right to withdraw at any time. Quantitative data were analyzed with statistical tools, while qualitative data from FGDs and interviews were subjected to thematic content analysis.

Data Analysis

Mean was used in the study to describe the research locale's current status of GAD mainstreaming. On the other hand, qualitative data from the interview was analyzed through manual thematic content analysis.

Data gathered from the interview were transcribed and reviewed through readings. In the coding process, this is utilized to develop a description or categories/ themes for analysis. The transcripts were then coded to extract general meanings, which contains words or phrase with coherent meanings. These were gathered regardless of the research question. Coded meanings related to the research question were grouped accordingly. It is also essential to design detailed descriptions for different forms of the research initiative. Lastly, the ultimate step mandates the researcher to advance how themes were represented in the qualitative narrative. Each interview had these sets of clusters, and from these clusters, themes were extracted.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Status of Gender and Development Mainstreaming

The status of mainstreaming gender development in the Bangsamoro Public High School is shown in Table 1. The findings revealed that respondents frequently observe mainstreaming gender and development manifestations in the Bangsamoro Public High School. Furthermore, it was revealed that the status of gender and

development mainstreaming is highly manifested in the following: 3.77 for Policy, 3.68 for Programs, Activities, and Projects (PAPs), and 3.59 for Enabling Mechanisms. However, in terms of People, the respondents indicated that gender and development are pretty manifested.

Table 2. Status of Gender and Development Mainstreaming

Table 2.1

Indicator	Mean	Status	Description
A. Policy	3.77	High	The status of gender mainstreaming is manifested.
1. The school issues initial policies on Gender and Development (GAD) Mainstreaming.	3.69	High	
The school integrates GAD Mainstreaming in the Organization's Policies.	3.81	High	
The school updates and continuously enhances the GAD Mainstreaming Policies	3.81	High	
2. The school models practices maintaining GAD Mainstreaming applied Policies.	3.76	High	

Table 2.1 presents the status of Gender and Development (GAD) mainstreaming in terms of policy. The overall mean score of 3.77, described as "manifested," indicates that respondents generally agree with the statements related to GAD policy implementation. Specifically, respondents acknowledged a fair manifestation of GAD integration into school policies, with a mean score of 3.81. The same score was also observed for the regular updates and continuous enhancement of GAD strategies.

Furthermore, the respondents recognized the school's commitment to sustaining GAD practices through established policies, as reflected by a mean score of 3.76. Also, they agreed that the school had issued initial GAD policies to support mainstreaming efforts, with a mean score of 3.69. Despite these efforts, gender inequality remains a significant challenge, and further advancements in promoting inclusive policies are necessary to ensure the sustainable progress of GAD initiatives (Atli, 2017).

Table 2.2

Indicator	Mean	Status	Description
B. People	3.49	Moderate	The status of gender mainstreaming is manifested.
1. The school establishes a unit and appoints personnel as coordinators to facilitate GAD Mainstreaming activities.	3.76	High	
2. The school conducts GAD Mainstreaming sponsorship and related programs as one of the capacity development initiatives such as Gender Sensitivity Training (GST) and the use of Gender Mainstreaming Evaluation Framework (GMEF) tool for Planning.	3.49	Moderate	
3. The school appoints GAD Mainstreaming champions as Program Implementers.	3.31	Moderate	
4. The school hires GAD Mainstreaming experts.	3.38	Moderate	

Table 2.2 presents the status of Gender and Development (GAD) mainstreaming in terms of people, with an overall mean score of 3.49, described as "moderate." This indicates a divided perception among respondents regarding GAD-related initiatives in the school.

The findings reveal limited implementation of capacity development initiatives, such as gender sensitivity training and the use of the Gender Mainstreaming Evaluation Framework (GMEF) tool, with a mean score of 3.49. Moreover, respondents disagreed on the employment of GAD champions (3.31) and the recruitment of GAD experts (3.39), reflecting a lack of dedicated personnel to lead GAD programs. However, respondents acknowledged occasional efforts in forming units and designating coordinators to oversee GAD mainstreaming, as indicated by a mean score of 3.76.

These results align with Russell (2016), who emphasized the need for schools to adequately equip teachers with knowledge of non-discrimination principles. Strengthening the presence of GAD advocates and providing continuous training would enhance the effectiveness of GAD mainstreaming within educational institutions.

Table 2.3

Indicator	Mean	Status	Description
C. Enabling Mechanisms	3.59	High	The status of gender mainstreaming is manifested.
The school sets up essential GAD Mechanisms.	3.63	High	
The school has functional GAD Mechanisms.	3.58	High	
The school integrates GAD into the organization's mechanisms.	3.61	High	
The school model's GAD Mainstreaming structures and systems.	3.54	High	

Table 2.3 presents the status of Gender and Development (GAD) mainstreaming in terms of enabling mechanisms, with an overall mean score of 3.59, described as "manifested." Respondents generally agreed that the school has established essential GAD mechanisms (3.63) and integrated GAD into its operational systems (3.61).

However, while respondents acknowledged the presence of functional GAD mechanisms (3.58), they only moderately agreed that the school models effective GAD structures and systems (3.54). These findings align with Sperandio and Kagoda (2015), who argued that insufficient political support and funding for GAD initiatives often result in limited technical capacity and human resource development. Subsequently, many nations have struggled to meet gender parity targets. Increased investment and institutional commitment are essential to enhance the implementation of GAD mechanisms within schools.

Table 2.4 presents the status of Gender and Development (GAD) mainstreaming in terms of programs, activities, and projects (PAPs), with an overall mean of 3.68, described as "manifested." Respondents generally agreed that the school demonstrates a commitment to GAD mainstreaming (3.73) and initiates efforts to promote GAD through both client- and organization-focused activities (3.71). In addition, the school's modeling of PAPs for GAD mainstreaming (3.69) and the application of GAD initiatives (3.58) were moderately acknowledged.

These findings align with Walker (2015), who stressed the importance of providing sufficient resources like pamphlets and posters to raise public awareness and influence behavior regarding gender equality. Similarly, Nasser (2016) emphasized that resource adequacy is crucial for reinforcing GAD efforts in schools.

While respondents acknowledged moderate GAD mainstreaming across policies, enabling mechanisms, and PAPs, they disagreed regarding the presence of people facilitating GAD initiatives. This indicates a lack of human resources necessary for program implementation and leadership. Effective gender mainstreaming

requires both institutional commitment and continuous capacity-building.

The study applied the Enhanced Gender Mainstreaming Evaluation Framework (GMEF) (2016) to assess the institution's gender responsiveness. The GMEF serves as a tool to help Gender and Development Focal Point System (GFPS) members measure progress, identify gaps, and refine strategies for sustainable GAD implementation.

Table 2.4

Indicator	Mean	Status	Description
D. Program, Activities and Projects (PAPs)	3.68	High	The status of gender mainstreaming is manifested.
1. The school initiates activities to facilitate in promoting GAD Mainstreaming commitment and institutionalization, such as client and organization-focused GAD activities.	3.71	High	
2. The school establishes commitment towards GAD Mainstreaming.	3.73	High	
3. The school has a GAD Mainstreaming application.	3.58	High	
4. The school models implemented Program Activities and Projects (PAPs) towards GAD Mainstreaming.	3.69	High	

Issues and Challenges of Public High Schools in Mainstreaming Gender and Development

Based on the researcher's interview and focus group discussion, the data on issues and challenges of public high schools in mainstreaming gender and development are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Issues and Challenges of Public High Schools in Mainstreaming Gender and Development

Formal Some teachers and stakeholders are not culturally aware of the dos and don'ts of the community.

"Sometimes, we had a hard time adjusting on how to handle cases with regards to our Meranao Muslim students especially girls because their relatives are the ones

DISCUSSION

Proper Themes Patterns of Ideas

who want to handle this case due to "maratabat" in which this Meranao culture

Policy Family-related source of distress and frustrations limits GAD principles'

Family feud Early marriagehas always been visible since then. "Recruitment of boys to become a soldier - young warriors adoptionTeenage pregnancy"*We need to integrate cultural sensitivity to Generic or broad GAD implementation guidelines*

Not given priority and policy not well implemented, the budget allocation should be used appropriately.

Implementation procedures

The policy is never a problem when it comes to implementation; sometimes, the acceptance and time. In terms of policy, the issue here is the application. Even though the matter is there, the people around were not informed, directed, and guided of what is really in the policy than the issue in the application/implementation of the matter.

The problem that we encountered was the imposition of wearing a veil (Kumbong/Salimot) to all-female learners, but others don't follow it because the

Enabling Mechanisms Generic gender- sensitive system, process, and guidelines Weak vertical acquire the best results.”Stakeholders nor stockholders were not allowing LGBT members to join programs, activities about pageantry. They claim that deserving title holders of any crowns, especially beauty contests, are natural in gender.

Absence of auditing 5% GAD fundsAbsence of systems and mechanismsProcesses on how to apply in such a way that we cannot provoke their beliefs.

I think there are no clear directives on the orientation, discussion, and giving applications on the said matter.

Lack of cooperation, appreciation, andDepEd national policy did not mandate it.

Less participation of stakeholders in the implementation of programs.Stakeholders' participation in the implementation of the program.No schema regarding these GAD PAPs and **horizontal** engagement **participation**No allotted budget Usually, activities are very limited because of financial constraints.They do not allocate this 5% GAD Budget **Inadequate human, technical, and resource investments** Administrator lack GAD orientation and knowledge.No GAD experts Most of the female teachers are not so well informed, and the application of this

Fragmented Programs, and non-Activities, and systematize

“I think the only problem is the source of funds to implement this program. But, somehow, we can always find ways.”

No formal flagship program on GAD Absence of application on the issued

People Cultural dynamics program is not whole year-round. Lack of knowledge, Lack of staff and facilities Availability of item/positionTradition and culture. The people are sensitive in terms of gender equity. **Projects (PAPs)C. WhateffortsExtensive and** order/policy from the national government There must be balance in the giving o opportunities and embracing some activities involving GAD among students. Selected learners that were good i cognitive were prioritized to join in some activities conducted. Educating the students and the**customaryInterventioninstitutionalized stakeholders on Gender and Development laws, norms,Plan can youInformation,on how they will understand the importance and traditions) contradict propose to address the Education, and of GAD and their Communication differences in role in the school and theGAD standards issues, problems, and challenges on policy, people, enabling mechanisms and PAPs you have encountered towards gender mainstreaming n your school?Campaignsociety.Students have a different understanding of their rights as Gender-Sensitive individuals, but often they were confused and abusive We need to elaborate them what is GA because it is new to them Heightened awareness in GAD to promote MainstreamingBenchmarking**

Sufficient and sustaining financial and physical resource investments for GADimplementationParallel and harmonized linkages Funds for training and workshops

Bangsamoro GAD office and website Linkage with LGUs Linkage with community NGOs Linkage with PCW and Bangsamoro Shariah The researcher's interview and focus group discussions highlighted narratives shared by respondents from the public high school. According to the findings, family conflict, early marriage, and teenage pregnancy are the primary sources of family-related unhappiness Court (law) and disappointments that hinder the Context and culture-based strategic Formulation of Bangsamoro GAD vision, mission, and goal adoption of GAD principles. Respondents acknowledged that the direction of GAD There would be thorough planning among the or BARMM school administrators regarding the different activities which will enhance GAD. There should be enough training for GAD coordinators and school principals. GAD program is

not a priority, the policy is not effectively implemented, and the budget allocation is not properly utilized due to generic or broad implementation.

Integral to the GAD approach is Gender Mainstreaming (GM), identified as a strategy to integrate gender perspectives in institutional policy, programs, and activities. It is operationalized by building GAD capacities and sharing accountability in all areas and at all levels of program and project implementation. Gender mainstreaming recognizes that development activities may ignore gender biases that lead to unequal impacts among men and women beneficiaries (GMEF, 2016). The Enhanced GMEF retained the four entry points of gender mainstreaming: Policies, People, Enabling Mechanisms, and Programs, Activities, and Projects (PAPs). Policies refer to the official statements and pronouncements of support for gender mainstreaming issued by the organization. These may be in the form of department orders, special orders, administrative orders, memoranda, and executive orders that articulate an organization's commitment to pursue gender mainstreaming. Policy enhancement and improvements, including the use of gender-fair language and images, are also expected to develop a model GAD policy for potential replication and innovation. Guidelines. The issue lies not only in the existence of policies but also in their execution. Many people remain uninformed, undirected, or misguided about the policies. A specific challenge mentioned was the requirement for all female students to wear a veil (Kumbong), which some did not comply with as it was not mandated by DepEd's national policy. Additionally, stakeholders displayed a lack of interest in program implementation, and GAD PAPs often lacked proper design and implementation frameworks.

The respondents noted that inadequate human, technological, and resource investments are due to the administrators' lack of GAD orientation and awareness, along with the absence of GAD experts. Teachers were also identified as being uninformed and lacking understanding of GAD principles, compounded by limited access to resources, insufficient personnel, and inadequate infrastructure. People as an indicator of mainstreaming gender development involve cultural dynamics, including customary laws, norms, and traditions, that contradict GAD standards. Gender equality remains a concern within school traditions and cultures, with some teachers and stakeholders being unaware of the community's cultural norms. Moreover, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) students reported being excluded from pageantry-related programs and activities.

Respondents further shared challenges in addressing issues involving Meranao Muslim students, particularly girls. Relatives often intervened in such matters due to the concept of "Maratabat" or pride, deeply embedded in Meranao culture. Also, some boys were reportedly recruited to become troops or young warriors. Integrating cultural sensitivity into GAD initiatives remains a challenge for schools seeking to mainstream gender development effectively. Enabling Mechanisms, as another indicator, also faced challenges related to generic gender-sensitive systems, poor vertical and horizontal collaboration, and budget constraints. Respondents emphasized the lack of clear processes, methods, and auditing for the 5% GAD fund. In addition, issues with policy application were evident, as some respondents expressed confusion due to the absence of clear guidelines for policy orientation, discussion, and implementation.

Poor cooperation, lack of appreciation, and inadequate leadership also contributed to the challenges in GAD program implementation. Teacher collaboration and the absence of organizations supporting GAD initiatives further hindered progress. Limited participation of male students in information dissemination and non-compliance with existing policies were also noted. Respondents highlighted the importance of adequate budget allocation, as misappropriation of the 5% GAD fund and insufficient Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE) posed significant challenges. Financial constraints restricted the scope of GAD activities, leading to limited program outcomes.

In terms of Programs, Activities, and Projects (PAPs), respondents noted fragmented and non-systematized efforts. The absence of a formal flagship program on GAD and the lack of proper implementation of national government policies resulted in poor GAD mainstreaming in public high schools. Respondents suggested that these challenges could be addressed by providing more opportunities for GAD-related activities and encouraging the participation of students and learners with the potential to engage actively.

To address these issues, an Intervention Plan is proposed, consisting of Gender and Development Orientation

and Consultation, Hands-on Training on Immediate Policies and Retooling of Guidelines, School-to-School Facilitation of Gender and Development Campaigns, and Innovations and Adaptations of Gender Mainstreaming aligned with local culture, customs, and traditions. Furthermore, the plan includes the creation of sustainable GAD activities at the community, division-wide, district- wide, and school-wide levels. Through these targeted interventions, it is expected that schools can foster greater gender awareness, build inclusive environments, and advance gender- responsive development.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that gender mainstreaming is highly evident in terms of policies, programs, activities, projects (PAPs), and enabling mechanisms. However, an indifferent attitude towards Gender and Development (GAD) mainstreaming was observed among participants, particularly in terms of people's engagement. Several challenges were identified, including family conflicts, early marriage, and teenage pregnancy, which contribute to resistance in adopting GAD principles. Policy implementation also remains problematic due to limited stakeholder interest, the absence of well-designed programs, and inadequate investments in human, technological, and financial resources. The lack of GAD experts, insufficient training, and poor infrastructure further hinder effective mainstreaming efforts. Despite these challenges, the implemented intervention plan demonstrated its potential to benefit students, lawmakers, legislators, teachers, and school administrators. It serves as a valuable foundation for policy reform, curriculum development for GAD integration, enhancement of school management capabilities, and further research on the effective implementation of GAD programs.

The study also recommends that legislators consider the results of this study to develop relevant interventions and techniques for improving the Gender and Development (GAD) program. Administrators, school leaders, and teachers are encouraged to collect and utilize data as a basis for enhancing GAD implementation through curriculum and teaching integration. Stakeholders, as school partners, may conduct GAD assessments and extend direct support to schools and their beneficiaries. Future researchers are also advised to explore similar studies using the factors and indicators identified in this research. Additionally, the proposed intervention plan may be adopted to address the existing challenges and improve the overall execution of the GAD program.

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