



Center for Women's and Gender Studies
UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES

Research Assessment on the Attitudes and Motivations of Women in Waste Generation, Diversion and/or Reduction in the Philippines

The **World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) - Philippines**, together with the **University of the Philippines Center for Women and Gender Studies (UP - CWGS)**, **Angat Bayi**, and **The Incubation Network**, conducted a research to assess the acceptance level of women in their roles in the plastic value chain. This research builds on women's perception of their plastic use, consumption, and in practicing the reduce, reuse, and recycle principle. Moreover, it looks at how women perceive their capacity and role in the plastic value chain, and their expectations from other stakeholders in the plastic value chain.

This study used 3 methods including online questionnaire, key informant interviews, and focus group discussion in 3 project sites (*Batangas City, Barugo, Cagayan de Oro*). From which, the following salient findings have been found:

- **Women have reproductive, productive, and community roles.** Reproductive roles include child care and household chores. Productive roles refer to their work to help in the household income. On top of these roles, women are expected to participate in community work contributing to the city's solid waste management system. In relation to solid waste management, study shows that women are expected to lead waste segregation and recycling in their homes, at work, and respective communities.
- **Waste segregation and recycling roles are tied to the home so these are assigned to women while those that require "going outside the house" to interact with waste workers, collectors, and junk shops are assigned to men.** Study shows that these arrangements are acceptable to women as this aligns with the traditional gender division of labor.
- **Local ordinances are important in reducing plastic consumption in their areas.** It has been observed that Local Government Units (LGUs) implementing policies on solid waste management influences positive actions such as bringing eco-bags.

- **Environmental action is only equated to keeping the surroundings clean.** There is a need to strengthen environmental awareness of plastic pollution and its impacts to influence deeper action such as waste segregation and recycling.
- **Waste workers are important players in the plastics value chain as they help in recovering and facilitating recycling plastic wastes.** However, study showed how waste workers experience discrimination, risky working conditions, low wages, and limited support received for livelihood opportunity and medical assistance.

These results the need for advocating gender fairness in solid waste management and in increasing support for our waste workers.

GENDER FAIRNESS

There has been no mention of gender roles in the abovementioned Philippine laws and plans, but have been instituted by societal expectations. RA 9003 emphasizes waste segregation at source but it did not specify that this should be carried out by women alone. The law calls for everyone's participation, regardless of gender, in practicing waste minimization activities in their households, communities, and workplaces.

The project has also created a communications toolkit to help bring awareness on the importance of everyone's participation, regardless of gender, in waste management activities. Concept focuses on using **#lahatdapat** (translates, everyone must) to

communicate the need for everyone to participate in waste reduction, segregation, reuse, recycling. This project hopes to create awareness on the need to break free from the societal norms on waste management roles and eventually push LGUs to adopt these messages in their policies. It has been observed in the study that policies are important in changing behaviors related to plastic use.

SUPPORT FOR OUR WASTE WORKERS

Waste workers have been vital in the country's recycling rate - currently at 9%. They have been helping households in recovering recyclable wastes for selling to junk shops, which households are mandated as per RA 9003. However, waste workers experience challenges including discrimination, health risks, and low wages especially for women.

Findings show that waste workers feel discriminated against with the low regard of community members to them and their work. They have shared that community members often tell them to get all the wastes even if they only need those that can be sold. Moreover, they shared that they are often not included in government programs that can incentivize them or provide an alternative livelihood. The pandemic has also placed the waste workers at risk of contracting COVID - 19 during work, especially those that more often do not have protective equipment or any medical assistance program.

Our hope is for the inclusion of these waste workers in the EPR programs that the businesses will submit for the implementation of the EPR law.