



Strengthening Gender Impacts of Social Protection in the Philippines

Conditional Cash Transfers in the Philippines

Evaluations of many development initiatives have shown that women who handle cash directly are more likely to invest in critical household expenses, such as more nutritious food, better education, and improved health care for their children.

Based on this evidence, the Philippine conditional cash transfer (CCT) program gives cash grants to women (mothers) of eligible households. Cash is transferred directly to the bank accounts of the women beneficiaries. The CCT program is a key component of the Social Protection Support Project (SPSP) of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to assist the Government of the Philippines to implement and expand its social protection program, *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program* (or 4Ps). The 4Ps is a poverty reduction and social development program that provides conditional cash grants to poor households contingent upon certain verifiable actions, generally minimum investment in children's education and health. The cash grants are paid to poor households with children 0–14 years old and/or pregnant women. The grants are P500 (about \$11.10) per month for health and P300 (about \$6.70) a month per child for a maximum of three children for a 10-month school year. The cash grants are given for a period of 5 years as long as the household complies with health and education-related conditionalities.

Improved survival, health, and education of girl children and pregnant women are direct benefits of the 4Ps. In addition, cash transfers directly paid to mothers provide recognition of women's unpaid labor and can help increase women's bargaining power within the household. There is significant potential within the Project to support social equity and women's empowerment, including (i) provision of knowledge and skills through family development sessions, (ii) engendering increased confidence and self-esteem among women, (iii) increased social interactions and greater participation of women in communal and public life, (iv) mobilization of mothers' and women's groups to address their needs and concerns, and (v) promotion of savings and enabling women to invest in livelihood-enhancing activities.

During the design of SPSP, it was agreed that the 4Ps gender activities at the local level should be strengthened to go beyond current project activities for family development sessions and to more directly address some of the issues mentioned earlier, including increased focus on women's empowerment. Key issues highlighted

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by women included paying for transport costs to access cash transfers; mapping services and establishing referral mechanism for accessing complimentary services; accessing training on enterprise development; interim care support for women victims of violence; crèches for children; and building skills and support for women's mobilization around gender issues.

Integrating Gender into Social Protection

Recognizing the potential of the 4Ps to support social equity and women's empowerment, ADB approved a technical assistance grant for Strengthened Gender Impacts of Social Protection and linked it to SPSP. The technical assistance was designed as a complementary activity to support the 4Ps through the following outputs: (i) conduct of participatory gender audits of the implementation processes and impact of the 4Ps; (ii) design of community-driven municipal gender action plan (GAP) based on the specific needs of beneficiaries; (iii) provision of small grants to municipalities to implement the GAPs;

and (iv) preparation of knowledge products related to management of gender in the CCT program.¹

The localized gender audits and GAPs ensure that all activities are rooted in the specific local contexts of women; mobilize mothers' and women's groups to address the needs in their daily practical lives and ease their work burdens; increase social interactions and greater participation of women in communal life; and engender increased confidence and self-esteem among women.

The Philippine Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) has expressed strong interest and willingness to scale up the pilot initiatives to the overall program of the 4Ps, provided they are successful in the pilot and the proposed activities have great potential for leveraging larger positive impacts of the overall program. Devolving the responsibility for the design and implementation of the GAPs to the regional and municipal DSWD and women's groups will create greater ownership, commitment, and capacity on gender issues. The grant support for implementing the GAPs will lead to sensitization and mobilization of women with more sustainable gender equality results.

Endnotes

¹ Asian Development Bank. 2010. *Technical Assistance to the Philippines for the Strengthened Gender Impacts of Social Protection*. Manila (TA 7587-PHI, \$300,000, approved on 2 September 2010).

About the Asian Development Bank

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