Gender Mainstreaming in the General Education and Professional Education Courses

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Abstract - Taking into account the increased research on the status of women and on gender concerns which lead to question the stereotyped assumptions about gender elations and the roles and responsibilities of men and women, the study determined the gender mainstreaming in the General Education and Professional Education Courses in one Higher Education Institution in the Philippines where there were 21 participants interviewed through two sets of focus group discussion. The result of the study showed that there is an apparent inclusion of gender and development in General Education and Professional Education Courses which can be categorized into explicit or implicit integration. Moreover, there were variety of teaching strategies and materials used inintegrating Gender and Development (GAD). It ranges from film showing followed by critical discussions, research output presentations, role-play, class discussions, art analysis, literary analysis, and lecture/forum of an expert. From the employed strategies and materials, it articulates the meaning of GAD that men and women must be provided with equal opportunities to realize their full potentials. Such articulation, however, requires committed interpretation especially from the faculty members. From there, it gives students an awareness and to an extent of self-interpretations. The university can further help in GAD initiatives by defining the university's GAD framework so as to integrate GAD in the level of the curriculum, research, extension, planning, materials, policies, and budget.

Keywords - Curriculum, gender mainstreaming, qualitative method

INTRODUCTION

With the increased research on the status of women and on gender concerns in the Philippines leads us to question stereotyped assumptions about gender relations and the roles and responsibilities of men and women. Similarly, weare led to consider alternative viewpoints and new categories of analysis of societal problems and issues. By successfully mainstreaming gender in education, it has the potential to contribute in ensuring that all girls and boys are able to receive agender equitable education and in transforming relations in and beyond schools [1]. This calls for a curriculum that takes new realities into account and gives a fuller and fairer account of the lives and experiences of Filipino, both male and female.

In July 1997, as discussed by the Ingeniero and Domingo-Almase [2], the UN Economic and Social Council defined the concept of gender mainstreaming as "the process of assessing for women and men any planned action, including legislations, policies and

programs, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all economic, political and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality."

According to Licuanan as cited in Valencia [3], the mandate for gender mainstreaming can be traced from the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action as a resulting document of the United Nations Fourth in 1995. World Conference Women on Governments and civil society actors participating in the said conference endorsed the strategy of gender mainstreaming in all public policies in order to bias [4]. Recognizing these counter gender developments and the lack of data on gender mainstreaming in the general education and professional education courses of the University of

Southeastern Philippines (USEP) Tagum-Mabini Campus, the study hopes to fill in the discrepancy.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The general objective of this study is to generate baseline data on the gender mainstreaming in the general education courses and professional education courses. Specifically, this study seeks to: (1) identify and describe courses and topics that mainstream GAD; (2) identify the teaching strategies and materials used in mainstreaming GAD; and (3) describe the experiences of students and faculty members in mainstreaming GAD in terms of their views, consequences and challenges.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A casestudy design was conducted at the USEP Tagum-Mabini Campus, Tagum City Davao del Norte, Philippines where there were a total of 21 purposively chosen participants, consisting of 10 selected faculty members and 11students.Of the 10 faculty members, there were 6 females and 4 males. Of the 11 students, there were 7 females and 4 males. Participants were selected based on their knowledge and experience of gender and development integration in general education and professional education courses. There were two sets of focus group discussion (FGD), one for faculty members and the other for the students. Each FGD was scheduled separately in the afternoon, which was the most convenient and available time of the participants for about two hours. An interview guide was also prepared ahead of time to guide the conduct of FGD. The data were supplemented with the course syllabi from the General Education Department and BEED and BSED Departments. The availability of the course syllabi was made possible through formal request address to the program heads. Prior to the conduct of research, permissions were obtained from the target participants. They were informed about the research objectives of the study and the potential benefits that they may get from the study. Names were withheld upon the participants' request in order to preserve their anonymity for the sharing of confidential information.

The data obtained in the focus group discussion were analyzed through categorizing strategies. The classic way to start in categorizing strategy is to break up data from the responses of the respondents into constituent parts and then place it into similar categories or similar themes. Categorizing

data and placing them into sorted categories had removed data from their original format. In return, what is gained is an organization of information, which aids analysis as it allows the researcher to draw out commonalities and divergences [5].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Mainstreaming of GAD in General Education and Professional Education Courses

The integration of gender and development can be classified either in the general education courses and professional education courses. In the general education courses, GAD was integrated in social sciences, humanities and natural science. Specifically, in social sciences, GAD was in Social Science 1-Society and Culture with Family Planning, Social Science 2- Philippine History, Social Science3-Philippine History, Social Science 5-Psychology, and Social Science 6-Basic Economics with Taxation and Agrarian Reform. In Humanities, GAD was introduced in Humanities 1-The Arts, Humanities 2-Philosophy and Ethics, Literature 1-Literatures of the Philippines, English 1-Study and Thinking Skills in English and English 2-Writing Discipline, whereas, in natural science, GAD found its integration in Natural Science 2-General Biology in professional. education courses, GAD is integrated in Education 1- Child and Adolescent Development, Education 4- Social Dimensions of Education, Education 5-The Teaching Profession. Education 7-Principles and Strategies of Teaching 2, English 11- Structure of English Language, English 15-Reading Diagnosis and Remediation, English 30-Language Research and Geography 2- Philippines and World Geography andits Natural Resources.

Common in this general education coursesis the introduction of the concept of sex and gender. And that sex is not just an action word but it pertains to biological characteristics. Sex categorization is made according to reproductive function. On the other hand, gender refers to the differentiated social roles, behaviors, capacities, and intellectual, emotional and social characteristics attributed by a given culture to women and men[6]. From introducing the basic concepts of gender and development, the general education courses and professional education courses had identified gender issues and concerns that will fit in the varying areas of knowledge. There had been a leeway provided for

faculty members to utilize their gender knowledge in integrating GAD. This, in a way, manifest, that GAD issues and concerns are comprehensive and can cut across in various disciplines.

Mainstreaming of GAD: Teaching Strategies and Materials Used

Social Science 1

As an introductory discussion for gender and development, one can begin with the animated video "Impossible Dream" produced by the United Nations in 1983. It will take the audience to the reality of the differing roles perform by men and women. The main material that is shared by the General Education Social Science Faculty members is the powerpoint presentation on Gender Concepts from the Mindanao Commission on Women (MCW). In order to better understand the concepts and terms used in the said presentation, the faculty may consider using the reference on "Sex and Gender in Philippine Society" [7].

Another video, which is used by the General Education Social Science Faculty L, is the documentary film entitled "Desert Flower." It surfaces the experience of gender discrimination of a successful woman in the fashion industry back when she was still in her childhood years. She had been subjected to genital mutilation. According to the World Health Organization [8]genital mutilation is recognized internationally as a violation of the human rights of girls and women. It reflects deep-rooted inequality between the sexes, and constitutes an extreme form of discrimination against women. Initiatives were also taken by Social Science 1 faculty members in inviting experts for lecture/forum on reproductive health rights.

Social Science 2

To create a fairer view as to women's representation in history, the General Education Social Science Faculty members made an effort to include women's role and contribution in Philippine history. The article of Zeus Salazar [9] on "Ang Babaylan sa Kasaysayan ng Pilipinas" is a useful material in defining women's role in Pre-colonial Philippines. The article recognizes that a woman could perform the role of Babaylan (priestess) who is regarded as one of the most esteemed position in the context of barangay. Moreover, the high regard for women during those times can also be gleaned in the Filipinos concept of

creation wherein both men and women (Si Malakas at Si Maganda) came out together as the bamboo split. Another material that can be used is the documentary film by Lourd de Veyra "Ang Mga Bakla sa Katipunan."It is of interesting note that the interviewees-historians remarked that, "Having gays, if there are any, does not make them less as a hero. In fact, such diversity must be celebrated. They added further that, "Being a gay was never an issue. What is important is your view on the state of the nation."

Social Science 3

In Social Science 3, the subject can be connected with GAD by looking into the struggles of women's movement in its quest for equal political rightswith men. This had been enunciated in the article of Tirona [10] on "Panuelo Activism." Also the book of Hector de Leon [11] made mention of the amendment of the 1935 Constitution, the grant of women's right of suffrage. Aside from the fundamental law of the land that enshrines women's equality, there are also now a number of statutory laws, which empower women and protect them from vulnerability. Notable among these are the Anti-Sexual Harassment Act, Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act, Anti-Violence against Women and their Children and Women in Nation-Building and the Paternity Leave Act of 1996.

Social Science 5

In Social Science 5, the gender stereotypes and the socialization of boys and girls were included on topics human growth and development, motivation and intelligence. As shared by the General Education Social Science Faculty O, he is allowing the students to view the film, "The Science of Lust." It provides a concrete evidence in understanding the difference between men and women.

Social Science 6

The integration of GAD on Social Science 6 was done through the labor and employment topic. In which, as pointed out by one of the General Education Social Science Faculty S, the experience of discrimination and subordination of women in the labor sector are discussed. Angeles [12] explains in details that women are likely to receive lower wages or salaries than their male counterparts. They are usually concentrated in low-paying and routine types of jobs where there are poor working conditions, less security of tenure and dim prospects of promotion and mobility.

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To address some of the gender issues and concerns, the Labor Code of the Philippines contains provisions, which protect women from discrimination and had required employers to guarantee the provision of facilities for women while at work. Furthermore, the Women in Development and Nation-Building Act afford women equal opportunities with men. Another recent addition to the list of statutory leaves for female employees is the paid leave of up to ten days for victim of violence and the two months special leave following surgery caused by gynecological disorders [13].

Humanities 1

General Education Humanities Faculty introduces in arts the timeline, from Greek Art to Post- modernism which also included Romanticism Period. Common in Romanticism Period is the taking of female subject in art, symbolizing their struggles and eventually their emancipation. One of the paintings being analyzed is the "Liberty Leading the People" by Eugene Delacroix. The painting depicts a woman who is half-naked revealing her breasts while raising a flag. As analyzed by the General Education Humanities Teacher, "The symbolism of a woman represents the struggles of women to be empowered. Looking back in history, they were restrained and they were not given the capability to handle position. They were powerless up until the time that they fought for their rights. It was a continuous struggle."

Humanities 2

In Humanities 2, GAD is embedded in the topic human nature through understanding the context of men and women. In addition, General Education Social Science Faculty S shared that, as a strategy for the topic-ethics, debate is conducted examining into society's different ethical standards for men and women.

Literature 1

In Literature 1, General Education Humanities Faculty B, bring in gender and development discussion through the use of the reading material entitled "SapayKoma." "It's an essay by Jhoanna Lyn Cruz. Most of her subjects in her essays are about third sex. In Sapay Koma, it talks about the struggles being in a married life." The literary piece won 3rd prize, Essay in English, Don Carlos Palanca Memorial Awards for Literature 2008.

Another strategy which Faculty B made use, together with the other General Education Humanities Faculty, is digital story telling. It is intended for Information Technology (IT) students where they will come up with a storyboard containing animation. The said faculty members also tried digital filmmaking wherein the students had used gender issues and concern as the subject of their story.

English 1

The strategy that is used is literary analysis using the feminist perspective wherein students are allowed to read the short story entitled "Of Fish, Flies, Dogs, and Women," by Timothy Montes. The story is about the struggles of a battered wife, of raising children and of protecting children from abusive relationship. After the teacher discussed the story and pinpointing the need to empower women who are in vulnerable situations, the statutory law on "Anti-Violence against Women and their Children Act is also introduced. Another initiative that was taken by the General Education Humanities Faculty E and B is through digital storytelling. Their students created digital animation in educating children about the struggles of women.

English 2, English 11, English 15 and English 30

BSED Faculty I generalizes that in teaching English subject, the idea of GAD and gender sensitivity can be integrated by making use of literature, teaching using literature strategy. It is a literature based strategy or whole language strategy. "Literature can be used in teaching English. It is for the teacher to use the literary pieces as a springboard for discussion. There are many literary pieces that could tackle about gender sensitivity. The limitation, however, is for you the to be knowledgeable where will you find latest literary pieces which infused gender sensitivity."

Education 4

In Education 4, the syllabus, identified gender and development as one of the contents of the course. Included as part of its subtopics are the differentiation of sex and gender, gender inequality and gender and power.BEED Faculty H has employed Disney Princesses pictures in mirroring society's expectation for men and women. It has provided a critique on the standards of beauty, love and marriage. Films can also be used like Pride and Prejudice, Not Without my

Daughter, The Desert Flower and Ang Pagdadalaga ni Maximo Oliveros.

Education 1, Education 5, Education 7, Geography and Natural Science 2

Since GAD is embedded in the subjects ofEducation 1, Education 5, Education Geography and Natural Science 2, the strategy used by the faculty members is through guided discussion. In Education 1, in the topic the growth and development stages, especially the puberty stage, gender issues and concerns surfaced through discrimination and bullying, specifically looking into the experience of the homosexuals. BEED Faculty K is able to use and discuss gender related laws for Education 5. It is crucial, as it becomes part, in defining the teacher- student relationship. Examples of these laws are the Revised Penal Code and the Anti-Sexual Harassment Act.In Education 7, BSED Faculty I emphasized to the future teachers to use culture and gender sensitive learning materials. In Geography, apart from discussing the physical characteristics and features of one's country, gender issues and concerns were raised especially on the context of labor and employment. And in Natural Science 2, the General Education Biology Faculty N shared that he instilled GAD through the differentiation of sex and gender concepts.

Mainstreaming of GAD: Views, Consequences and Challenges

The faculty and student participants find the integration of gender and development to be interesting. As elaborated by Student C, "it is interesting because it is very realistic. You can practically identify with the issues. Apart from the relative easiness in relating with GAD and understanding one's self and other people of different sexual orientations, participants come to know gender bias. As expressed by, Student E, "It is interesting because we can identify gender bias and eliminate it. There are works associated with men, which women can also do. Like in the different fields or disciplines, it is possible for girls to become engineers. In the same manner that boys can be fashion designers."

There is a recognition that the students, in their own level, they know how to respond to gender issues and concerns. This had been elucidated by Student K who made mention that, "I like the integration because it is not just an opportunity to be knowledgeable but you will know also how to react if

you experience gender bias." For Social Science General Education Faculty B, "To create awareness so that in the future when they marry they know what to do in cases of physical abuse." Since there is already a law that protects women and their children from abuse, it must be popularized. This is important so that those in need of its application can access justice [14].

It is of value that there are male student participants whose view of GAD integration is an opportunity to help in addressing gender gaps. Student V was able to say this, "I am very positive with the integration of GAD within the context of education. In most cases, in handling sex education, this is given to women teachers. Men can handle too. It is about time that men will also do the lead. It is a good avenue for future educators to destroy or eliminate the bridge that causes gap between men and women. It is a step so that the Philippines can attain its progress in addressing gender gaps."

Valuing Oneself and Others

There is one participant, Student D, who comes to share that she is confused with her sexual orientation. With GAD topic, she understands herself better. To Student J, "with GAD, it helps a lot because it encompasses the value of respect and how we treat others with respect. It is treating people fairly even if they have different sexual orientations." This brings us back to GAD topic on sex and gender roles as well as topics on gender discrimination. From here, students come to realize that there people with varying sexual orientations. And that, as an added consequence, according to Student C, "You cannot judge people out rightly."

Gender Analysis

There are also student participants who are quick in using their know how in GAD as lens in analyzing various situations. For example, Student K, who is fascinated with online games, was able to analyze how the online game creator had relegated the role of women. In most games, women played supportive roles while men do the violent acts. For Student V, the ability to use gender lens in addressing gender gaps is through men's engagement. He said this, "Its time that men will lead for change. That, as men educators, we can also integrate GAD." Bhasin [15] underscores the need for the engagement of men in order to achieve equal gender relations. Gender issues are not

just women's issues. Men are also victims of patriarchy through stereotyping.

Role Reversals

Gender roles are not rigid. It is not determined by one's biological make-up. It is a social construct, a product of society's construction. Hence, gender roles and expectation vary over time and from one society to another. This is incorporated in GAD topic. Expectedly, students came to realize that there are certain disciplines, which are not a monopoly of men or women. Specific realization came in when students recognize that agriculture is not just for men or women but gays as well. In the same manner, that education and engineering are also open to students of different sexual orientations, given that they pass the admission requirements. This realization is consistentwith the work of Medel-Anonuevo [16], who according to him, "The main thrust should be the development of an alternative mode of thinking where women and men can explore a variety of lifestyles without the limitations of rigid and impersonal gender roles."

Responses to Cases of Abuse

As a consequence of integrating GAD, faculty members learn if students are also under abusive relationship. Thus, the needed support can immediately be given. These are exemplified in instances by which students would share that they too are victims of abuse. In another class, according to Student V, while having a topic of sexual harassment, he had a classmate who had a break down and was given an immediate counsel by the psychologist teacher. The student had kept for long that her stepfather harassed her. The topic provided a venue where the youngstudent was able to pour out her emotions and she was given the needed psychological help.

Another student participant, Student C, triggered by the discussions in the topic sexual harassment, was able to share her fearful encounter with a driver. She was still in the primary level, while on her way to school, a man driving a motorcycle approached her and asked if she wanted a ride. She politely refused and the man drove away. Upon approaching the national highway, she was shocked to see that the same man was waiting for her and had shown her his private part. It left her in trauma and she would see all drivers looking the same with her harasser. According to Ahmad [17], women experienced fear

and stress because of the harassment. With the GAD lessons, Student C was able to get a perspective of her situation and was able to let go of the trauma.

Teacher's Resourcefulness

One of the challenges that the faculty members encounter in integrating GAD is the limitation on the availability of GAD materials especially in Professional Education Courses.

According to BEED Faculty H, "The topic is interesting but it is really up to the teacher to be creative in finding available materials." On a similar note, the BSED Faculty I, had this to say. "I do not have any materials for my class because it's just implied. Gender issues are in the surface. It's up for the teacher to dig into that context. You can make use of the literary pieces but it's for you to be knowledgeable where will you find latest literary pieces which infused gender sensitivity." The faculty members prefer materials, like books with GAD integration, but they find it very limited.

Handling Untold Stories

The faculty members were able to raise their encounters of handling cases of gender related concerns and issues. They have difficulty handling cases of abuse as there is no concrete guideline or referral system. Also, not all faculty members are equipped to give counseling. Other issues, which they raised include: the university's policy on handling pregnant students, indecent proposal received by students from teachers; and teacher's harassment.

GAD Extension Program

With the DepEd's full implementation of Senior High School that covers the last two years of the K to 12 Program and includes grades 11 and 12, students will go through a core curriculum. Most of this are the general education subjects which had been removed from the tertiary level. BSED Faculty echoed this sentiment, "With the K to 12 Curriculum, most of the general education subjects are included in the senior high school. Is GAD integrated in their framework? GAD should not only be integrated in the higher level because not all students will enroll in tertiary education. Some of them will be up to senior high only. Her point is to allow the continuation of the GAD integration in the new curriculum of the secondary level.

USEP GAD Framework

BEED Faculty K, on a theoretical level, was able to identify that there is also a challenge for the university to provide a concrete framework for GAD. Such framework is important because that will institutionalize the level of GAD mainstreaming not just in extension, curriculum but as well as in research, planning, materials, policies, references and budget. As noted by Student J "Gender can be integrated in almost all aspects."

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

There is mainstreaming of gender and development in General Education and Professional Education Courses. However, such mainstreaming can be categorized into explicit or implicit integration. There is an explicit integration because of the inclusion of GAD in the face value of the course syllabi. On one hand, the implicit integration entails GAD's embeddedness in the given topics. As such, the integration is dependent upon the teachers' initiative. It is worth mentioning that for most of the faculty members who were able to integrate gender and development, they were able to do so because of the previous background that they had. regular faculty members they had participated in the Gender Sensitivity Trainings. For part-timers, it was done through seminars and the integration of GAD in their tertiary education. Thus, the capability to mainstream solely depend if the faculty is wellequipped and ready to embrace the mainstreaming in the existing curricula.

There are variety of teaching strategies and materials used in integrating GAD. It ranges from film showing followed by critical discussions, research output presentations, role-play, class discussions, art analysis, literary analysis, and lecture/forum of an expert. From the employed strategies and materials, it articulates the meaning of GAD that men and women must be provided with equal opportunities to realize their full potentials. Such articulation, however, requires committed interpretation especially from the faculty members. From there, it gives students an awareness and to an extent of self-interpretations. This leads to some become conscious and make assertions of their experiences. In sharing these experiences, there can be unexpected encounters, which the faculty members must be equipped with. It is on this aspect where the university can help in providing support on gender initiatives. Foremost, in this aspect is for the university to strengthen its institutionalization of gender and development by defining the GAD's framework. In doing so, this will trickle down to the level of curriculum, research, extension, planning and budgeting. The study reinforced the mandate as specified in the Beijing Platform for Action the gender mainstreaming in education. The experiences in gender mainstreaming in general education and professional education suggest that it is more than giving students awareness but allowing them to be conscious of the unequal gender power relations and empowering them to transform such power relations at their varying levels.

Compile the materials used for GAD mainstreaming. This will facilitate sharing and recommendations of available materials for general education and professional education subjects.

Creation of GAD Office and GAD committee to coordinate all gender related activities.

Seminars for faculty and students on gender related laws such as the Anti-Sexual Harassment Act, Anti-Violence against Women and their Children Act and the Magna Carta for Women.

Establish the campus referral system in handling cases of abuse and conduct basic counseling seminar for faculty members.

Define the university's GAD framework so as to institutionalize GAD in the level of the curriculum, research, extension, planning, materials, policies, references and budget.

Proposal and implementation of a GAD extension program targeting the K to 12 Curriculum.

The study is limited only to USEP Tagum-Mabini Campus and had focused on gender mainstreaming in the general education and professional education courses. For future investigation, major courses can also be examined as to the extent of gender mainstreaming.

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