

ENGENDERING QUEZON CITY*

Mary Ruby M. Palma**

City Scenarios

Ours is a premier city, and for tenable reasons:

Quezon City is the largest among the 12 highly urbanized cities in Metro Manila, and is envisioned to become the seat of governance in the country.

Created 64 years ago through Commonwealth Act. No. 502, Quezon City has grown fast as a social, territorial and business capital. Based on the 2000 census, the city is populated by 2.173 million residents, the highest in Metro Manila. Of these, 52 percent are women. More than a third of the total population is below 15 years old. Around 1.4 million or 65% are of working age from 15 to 65 years, and 997,000 or more than 70% of these are reportedly employed. The rest are presumably not working, wanting work, or are currently engaged in informal labor. Some 158,947 households are categorized as informal settlers.

*This is only an initial report.

**The author is an MPA graduate and doctoral candidate of the UP, convener of the Gender Resource Network, the founding president of SENTRO ng Manggagawang Pilipina, and a Fulbright-Hubert H. Humphrey Fellow for Planning and Resource Allocation. She was the first awardee of the IIE-USIA in 2000 for promoting democracy through citizen participation in social and political life. She now heads the QC GAD Resource and Coordinating Office under the Office of Mayor Feliciano Belmonte, Jr.-- the first of such office established in the National Capital Region.

The entire population is dispersed in a total land area of about 16,112 hectares, almost a fourth of the entire area of Metro Manila. This land is mostly used as commercial/industrial, government and residential sites. Locals and an increasing number of residents in nearby cities are serviced by more than 54,000 business establishments, 150 government offices, 512 learning institutions including universities and technical/vocational schools, 18 public and 42 private hospitals, 54 public health centers, and a few tertiary and specialized hospitals. Quezon City residents also enjoy the benefits of eight television networks excluding radio stations and printing offices, 982 neighborhood parks excluding major parks and other specialized parks (water reservoirs, arboretum and wildlife, the QC Circle, and sports and other recreational spaces). The city planning unit lists 17 historical sites, three public cemeteries and three private memorial parks, five military camps, 11 power substations through MERALCO, and 51 markets. Ten percent of the country's top 1,000 corporations are based in the city, among them the leader steel, paper mill, pharmaceutical and metro rail industries. The Eastwood Cyberpark, reportedly the country's first free trade area for information technology, is in the city's third district. This growth area alone is projected to trigger an expansion of the business area twice the present commercial neighborhood in seven years.

The Vision: from President Quezon to Mayor Belmonte

The administrations who created, ruled and developed our city in the span of more than 63 years continued to reaffirm the city's reason for existence.

This oft-quoted dream statement came from President Manuel Luis Quezon who wanted the city as the political seat

of national government, the cultural paradise of the people and the social conscience of the nation through low-cost and decent shelter for the disadvantaged—all these through an economically viable society:

I dream of a capital city that, politically, shall be the seat of the national government; aesthetically, the showplace of the nation—a place that thousands of people will come and visit as the epitome of culture and spirit of the country; socially, a dignified concentration of human life, aspirations, endeavors and achievements; and economically, as a productive, self-contained community.

President Manuel L. Quezon served as first mayor of the city. He was followed by: Tomas Morato, Florencio T. Cruz, Oscar Castelo, Savino de Leon, Ponciano Bernardo, Nicanor Roxas, Ignacio Santos-Diaz, Norberto Amoranto, Adelina Rodriguez, Brigido Simon, Jr., and Ismael Mathay. Norberto Amoranto governed it the longest for 22 years.

Adelina Rodriguez was appointed by Ferdinand Marcos in 1976, elected in 1980, and served so far as the only woman mayor of the city for 10 years. She was a commissioner of the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women, and official of several women-friendly organizations, such as the Philippine National Red Cross, League of Women Voters and League of Puericulture and Family Planning Centers of the Philippines. She was at one time the president of the Rizal Federation of Women's Clubs and National Federation of Women's Clubs.

When Mayor Feliciano Belmonte took over as the 13th mayor on July 1, 2001, he added these values to the Quezonian dream: *effective governance, responsible leadership, and partnership with the citizenry in building an ideal community.* His administration's mission benchmarks: improved quality of life, strengthened

business and productivity, and good government and social responsibility.

Strategies to be employed are capacity-building of the city government to govern, comprehensive but integrated programs, political will and passion for reform-oriented, innovative and participatory governance, enhanced professionalism and prudent and judicious use of resources.

True enough, after only a year of duty, the city's fiscal indicators of progress have shown welcome reversals under Mayor Belmonte and his team. Beyond financial soundness and effective management, Belmonte also pursued a vision for a quality community which include adequacy and equity of services. Some of these are the barangay-based waste management and ecological development initiatives; consultations with the youth and private sectors in development planning, reduction in crime volume and rate, additional funds for the city's poor, family welfare programs, maternal health care, scholarships for the youth, more classrooms, computers, and textbooks, and health assistance for the poor, through *Sagip Buhay*. There are also plans for a public museum and crematorium.

For women, he established a Grameen-like banking and livelihood project that has benefited 560 women in poor communities in only a few months. This is through his *Sikap Buhay* program.

City Gender Profile—Baseline Realities

But how do Quezon City's women and men fare at present? What is their share in the city's development efforts, in terms of equal contributions and benefits; in allocation of resources, in access to services and the law? How do they stand in terms of the city's shortfalls or losses?

The above performance, impressive as it is, stands another kind of reality check—one that reflects the status of women vis-à-vis men in the city. This gendered framework of development, which has been enshrined in the Constitution, was made mandatory under the Women in Nation-Building Act (RA 7192) and other budgetary and administrative issuances. The law's operationalization was further made comprehensive through the 30-year Philippine Plan for Gender-Responsive Development. These national mandates served as enforcements of the government in its international commitments: the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and the UN Platform of Action for Women (PFA), as well as other human rights instruments to which government has affixed its compliance.

The redefinition of development which has included a rights-based and gender orientation is captured in the following statement:

The advancement of women and the achievement of equality between women and men are matters of human rights and conditions for social justice and should not be seen in isolation as a women's issue. They are the only ways to build a sustainable, just and developed society. Empowerment of women and gender equality are prerequisites for achieving political, social, economic, cultural and environmental security for all peoples. (Par.41, Beijing Platform for Action, 4th UN World Conference on Women, Beijing, 1995).

For an effective implementation of the abovementioned local and international mandates in national and subnational levels, the government, through the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women, the Department of Budget and Management and the Department of the Interior and Local Government have jointly encouraged their translation in national and local governance and monitored compliance.

Rights and gender-based criteria would naturally be an integral part of Mayor Belmonte's benchmarks of quality of life, productivity, good governance and social responsibility. These could serve as benchmarks against which the administration's equality and equity indicators can be measured over the medium term. A gender assessment of raw data and reports gathered, to the extent that these are gender-disaggregated, or can be manually processed as such, show an interesting initial profile of the city as to women and men's rights over survival, development, participation and protection.

Survival Rights: Population, Health, Household and Income-Related Trends

On the national level, life expectancy at birth in 2001 is reportedly higher for women (71.9 years) than men (66.6 years). National infant mortality per 1,000 live births on the other hand is slightly higher in males (39.4) than in females (32.3). In the city level, however, such survival disparities cannot be outrightly determined simply because most indicators such as morbidity and mortality rates, infant death and child mortality rates as well as crude birth and death rates are not sex-disaggregated. No data also exists in terms of nutrition/food deficiencies and health care between sexes and across age groups, save for maternal concerns. Reproductive health is still widely interpreted in terms of childbirth and motherhood, to the exclusion of single and unmarried women including lesbians, as well as adolescents and girl children. Its limited applications have also denied data on the mental and emotional status of women and men/girls and boys, as well as sexuality and sexual orientation, as part of reproductive health. At best, we can glean survival status/differentials in terms of other trends in population, health and household characteristics.

Crude death rate in Quezon City in general was reported at four per 1000 population in 2001. Upper respiratory tract infection and pneumonia were the top two leading causes of morbidity for both sexes, although they seem to affect more number of men than women. On the other hand, pneumonia is a leading cause of death affecting an equal number of women and men, but the second leading cause, cerebrovascular accidents, affected more men.

Majority of women and men in QC are of the reproductive age group, seeking reproductive, including maternal health care. Translated in another way, three out of 10 of the city population are women within the reproductive ages 15-49 years. Annual reports from the City Health Department, to the extent that raw data are sex-disaggregated, show the following:

- Maternal mortality rate per 1,000 live births in the city was 0.5.
- Almost 35% of pregnant women monitored deliver babies at home, showing the need for more community-based services by trained or licensed midwives to complement the number of doctors. Indeed, records of births by attendance show that deliveries were attended mostly by midwives and *hilots*, comprising more than 44% of service providers. High risk groups, i.e., teenage pregnancies (which is roughly 6% of total cases in 2001) and pregnancies among the 40 year age group and above (or 3%) specifically need pro-active advice and pre-delivery care.
- Child-rearing and elderly care differentials could be illustrative of traditional biases in socialization between male and female children among majority of Filipino families, which undervalues or subordinates females. One observation made by a multi-cluster survey conducted

in 2001 showed that male babies tend to be regularly weighed than female babies. Likewise, “a child who is not living with either or both parents is likely to be a female than male.” (Zablan 2001).

- There was a dramatic decrease of fertility rate per 1000 of the 15-49 female age group, or 65.87 compared to an annual average of 142.00 for the past five years. By actual sex count females are still the more aggressive sex in terms of use of contraceptives and other methods and the males more risk-averse (which could show concern as to losing virility as a symbol of their “*pagkalalake*”). In the city’s family planning program report for 2001 for instance, there were only 41 males (current users) reported to have accepted vasectomy compared with 6,734 women who subjected themselves to sterilization. These numbers, however, reflected a significant decrease from total figures the year before of 1,469 males and 9,013 females. On the whole, however, the program had 154,259 men and women opting to use various forms of family planning in 2001 compared with 144,616 in 2000. These figures, however do not necessarily reflect in-depth knowledge and conscious pursuit of reproductive and health rights among the city’s men and women.
- Average household size in the city is a little below five persons per household. The same multi-indicator cluster survey cited above shows that children below 18 years comprised 35% of QC households surveyed and adults 18 to 59 years, a majority of 59%. The elderly group, 60 years and above, make up 6%.
- Women predominated in the adult and elderly group. There were also more separated female solo parents than male solo parents. Interestingly, female solo parents are

more likely to join support groups than males, despite taking on dual roles in the family.

- There were differences in health and maintenance of the elderly household members, i.e., there was a significant difference in terms of nourishment of nine out of 10 elderly persons regarded as well nourished; of these, 96% were males, and 86% were females. On the whole, elderly males tend to suffer from problems of eyesight, blood pressure and lung-related illnesses while older females, from rheumatism and diabetes.

Economic indicators for survival, such as income and poverty levels for women and men in the city, income levels by household and by sex, and employment/unemployment rates can only be estimated in the absence of sex-disaggregated data from the City Industrial Relations Office, Anti-Poverty Team, and City Planning. In QC, unemployment rate for both sexes reached 16% in 2001, (higher than the national figure) and labor force participation rate, 65%.

Development Rights: Literacy, Employment, Access to Information, Knowledge and Skills, Political Life and Other Leadership and Decision-making Roles

Literacy level between the sexes are almost equal, with males having a slightly higher literacy rate of 98% than females, 96%. In terms of access to education, the Division of City Schools noted that as of June, 2002, more male students enrolled in the elementary grade (150,596) compared with female students (145,067). This corroborates the statement in other surveys that “boys have significantly higher chances of being enrolled than girls,” although more girls have a headstart in early childhood education offered by nurseries, daycare centers and pre-schools.

In the secondary level though, there were more female students (83,731) than males (79,559).

Gender division of labor in the national level remains reflected in Quezon City. Teaching remains a predominantly female profession as male teachers only composed almost 11% of the total teaching workforce in the public and private elementary and secondary schools in the city. The city government workforce (combined contractuels and regulars) appears to have little gender bias in favor of males (2477) than of females (2191) as of FY 2001. By category, however, male employees dominate the first clerical level, while majority of the female employees occupy the second level or technical positions. As in national trends, female city employees (28) composed only almost half of the males (51) enjoying the top or managerial level. On the other hand, the city's law enforcement unit has 135 policewomen out of a total of 2,504, reflecting a low 5.4%. Employment of women in the city judiciary is also low.

Volunteer and unpaid work in the city are provided mostly by its women population. Community health workers in the city are all females except for one male. These are divided into 15 barangay nutrition scholars who work without compensation, and 175 health workers with allowances ranging from P200 to P6,000 pesos monthly. The participation of barangays in 123 ecological management committees and 29 ecocenters also involves hundreds of volunteer women who, by tradition have been in the forefront of guarding the safety and cleanliness of their homes and immediate environments.

On the other hand, employment data in the private sector is lacking at the city level.

Political Empowerment is part of one's development or capacity to do and to be. Quezon City always had a larger voter

turn-out among women than men per records of the city COMELEC. In the 2001 national elections, female registrants and actual voters comprised more than 53% of a total of 1,075,207 resident voters. About the same proportion of females also comprised the registered and actual voters in the 2002 barangay elections.

On the other hand, male candidates have the upper hand in the turn-out of winners. In 1997, female councilors won 18% of total seats but this share increased in 2002 with eight women councilors comprising 33% of the total 24 seats in the city council. The proportion of females is lower in the barangay captain position (19% in 1997 and just 17% in 2002); and 23% and 27% in the *kagawad* positions in 1997 and 2002, respectively.

It is in the younger elected officials (whose ages were lowered in the 2002 elections from 18 to more than 16 and less than 18 years) that the city's womanpower seems to have a future, if their leadership in public office and life is sustained and governance and political skills are harnessed. Women chairpersons of *Sangguniang Kabataan (SK)* composed 53% of the total SK winners in 2002. On the other hand, female SK *kagawads* make up 54% of total winners in this category.

Political empowerment in terms of representation in local bodies also need some mainstreaming both in sex disaggregated data and gender responsive objectives plans and programs. The Local Development Council, which was convened for the first time under the Belmonte administration, is seen to provide women their rightful seat. As of the moment, however, only 40 women's groups have been registered and conferred eligibility to be elected for a seat in the LDC. From these, the newly constituted Gender and Development Council would have its nucleus of members.

Responding to Gender Concerns: The Quezon City GAD Resource and Coordinating Office

Issues regarding the current situation of women in Quezon City are being addressed gradually. When Charito Planas was vice mayor she established the Women's Desk in the city, the first such desk to be opened in a local government unit. Councilor (later Vice Mayor) Connie Angeles established a day care center for children of city hall employees, which now caters to nearly 50 children on a daily basis. Councilor Nanette Castelo-Daza authored an ordinance establishing a Women's Crisis Center, but that has not been funded. Anyhow, the need to counsel women in need is being addressed by NGOs which run women's crises centers in different parts of the city, apart from a burdened social services unit under the mayor.

In the government itself, the Sentro ng Manggagawang Pilipina which initiated a gender program called QC PROGAD in March, 1997, signed a memorandum of agreement with then Mayor Ismael A. Mathay, Jr. for a cooperation on projects involving women's concerns, and the Sentro was given office space in the city hall compound. This was followed by actual city policy. In 2001, women councilors of the city headed by Ma. Fresca Biglang-awa successfully authored what became SP 1036, An Ordinance Creating City Gender and Development (GAD) Council and the GAD Resource and Coordinating Committee under the Office of the City Mayor. It was signed by Mayor Mel Mathay on March 30, 2001.

Invoking the mandate of Republic Act 7192, the Women and Nation Building Act, the ordinance created a GAD Council composed of the following:

1. The city mayor as honorary chair;
2. A woman city councilor or a department head appointed by the mayor as co-chair;
3. Representatives of the city government/line agencies with specific programs on women or GAD, who shall constitute not less than one third of the members of the fully organized GAD Council;
4. Representatives of the women NGOs operating in the city who shall constitute not less than a third of the members;
5. The president of the Liga ng mga Barangay Quezon City chapter;
6. The chief executive officer of the City GAD Office, or Sentro ng Manggagawang Filipina Focal Point.

To assist the GAD Council in the formulation of a city-wide gender-responsive plan, the ordinance mandated the Q.C. Barangay Operations Center to set consultations with barangays. The head of the Council Appropriations Committee was added to the council.

Membership of NGOs was to be determined through the regular accreditation process with the council.

To act as GAD Council secretariat, focal point and resource group, the ordinance created the GAD Resources and Coordinating Office and designated SENTRO's PRO-GAD in an interim capacity.

However, because the ordinance was enacted shortly before the 2001 elections, no appropriations were provided for the GAD office; it relied on the SENTRO PRO-GAD for supplies and payment of utilities. GAD programs such as workshops and seminars were held through externally-sourced funds and at times, from the mayor's discretionary funds. Mayor Mathay

provided P1M to sustain various capacity-building and advocacy activities of SENTRO from 1997 to 1999. Staffing, however, were all voluntary.

On July 1, 2001, Mayor Feliciano Belmonte, Jr. took over as mayor of Quezon City. Immediately, SENTRO organized a dialogue of NGO leaders with the new mayor, to appraise him about the situation of women in the city and to get his commitment for implementing the GAD ordinance. Also, Justice Leonor Ines Luciano and Ruby Palma, SENTRO officers and convenors of the GAD movement, along with other NGOs volunteers and a technical working group, sought an audience with him to inform him about the need to institutionalize a GAD office. The mayor responded by providing SENTRO a grant of P1 million, which was used to pay outstanding utility and other bills from 1999 to March 2002.

The GAD office came to exist formally upon its inauguration on March, 2002. Just before this, a UNDP project with Dr. Proserpina Tapales of the Center for Local and Regional Governance of the National College of Public Administration and Governance, University of the Philippines, was piloted in Quezon City in October of 2001. It was a seminar-workshop on gender orientation for five selected barangays in Quezon City. It was attended by barangay chairs and *kagawads*, both female and male. The mayor addressed the participants and handed certificates during the closing program. That seminar provided clout for the gender office at city hall.

That event was followed by the issuance of EO No. 16, which appointed the members of the GAD council from the Executive Councilor Alma Montella as co-chair to the mayor and action officer. By the same order, Ms. Palma was appointed as GAD office technical director/head, followed by the appointment of five staff members. By the third quarter of 2002, the GAD

Resource and Coordinating Center became a regular office under Mayor Belmonte, with its capital operating budget of P1M. In fact, the GAD advocates celebrated with the inauguration of its GAD office as its culminating activity on women's month.

With a big sign outside its office proclaiming the Gender Office as part of the mayor's office, the director and staff have been much motivated. Since 2002, the GAD office has been conducting several activities. Among these are the production of a city GAD tabloid, to which NGOs/POs, elected official and QC personnel contributed ideas and articles; GAD orientation for different sectors of the Quezon City government; cooperation with the Office of the Vice-Mayor for the Gintong Ina Awards; conduct of a photo contest during women's month; cooperation with other entities as resource speaker/facilitators to workshops, such as the Department of Labor and Employment, TESDA, POEA, as well as project proposal makers for international agencies like UNDP, UNIFEM, and UNICEF.

Goodwill and information dissemination between the LGU and civil society was also continued by the office, in terms of priorities a special gender library; free venues and resource speakers for the city's women's groups and for visitors, wanting to know the city's strides for gender equality. Most importantly, the office and its technical volunteer painstakingly advocated the need for sex-disaggregated information system among the executives.

The director and the Technical Working Group of the Quezon City Gender and Development Resource and Coordinating Center are more inspired by the upcoming formation of the NGO sector in the GAD Council in December 2002. With a GAD Council in place, the gender advocates are confident about coming up with a GAD Plan Code for the city

by 2003. They look forward to more activities such as:

1. Annual gender profiling and monitoring system for the city;
2. Capacity-building of planners and finance officers on gender-responsive planning and budgetting;
3. Capacity-building of the legislative staff and department heads on gender and local governance/gender-responsive legislation;
4. Pilot-testing of the first all women automotive training cum production course at city hall;
5. Integrating gender and rights-based topics on the city's licensing, work permit and counseling activities.

The GAD Office Surges on

The establishment of the Quezon City Gender Resource and Development Office shows how NGOs (as leading resource), and the local government through the executive and legislative political will can work effectively together. The leaders of Sentrong Manggagawang Pilipina/PROGAD prodded the Quezon City female councilors to establish a gender office. They successfully pushed for the passage of an ordinance and the acquisition of office space within the compound, in a small building shared with the City Anti-Drug Council. SENTRO meanwhile continued to provide support through its savings, office supplies, equipment and furnitures and networking with other NGOs/POs.

The ordinance creating the council and the office is the first such policy establishing a gender mechanism in Metro Manila. Despite the lack of funds, the NGO leaders moved on, seeking funds from different sources. Partnership with academic

institutions like the University of the Philippines and Miriam College led to the design and implementation of the gender orientation workshops in October 2001. Moreover, the Quezon City PRO-GAD also kept close relationships with gender-aware barangay chairs, such as Augustia Veluz of St. Joseph, La Rainne Sarmiento of Doña Aurora, and Mel Advincula of UP Barangay, who helped mobilize their officials and others to attend the three day workshop held at Quezon City Hall.

The election of Mayor Belmonte provided the needed boost to the PRO-GAD. Trusting SENTRO's demonstrated commitment and the competence of its technical group, Belmonte provided the office an initial grant, and then a yearly budget. He also approved the plans for "GAD-VAW" community-based action oriented course for officials and NGOs/POs for 2003, and a schedule of GAD Planning workshops for the executive departments. With confirmed cooperation from Mayor Belmonte, who by the way was involved in approving gender budget resolutions in Congress, the gender advocates of Quezon City are confident that equality and empowerment for women will now be consciously addressed.

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