

THREE YEARS AFTER YOLANDA: ECONOMIC
REHABILITATION VIS-A-VIS DOMESTIC WORKLOAD
AMONG WOMEN IN GUIUAN, EASTERN SAMAR

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Abstract

The differing level of participation and engagement in development processes among men and women and the low valuation of women's unpaid care work are among the relevant gender-related issues today. These two concerns intersect in the context of economic rehabilitation such as in post-calamity scenarios where women participation in livelihood programs contribute to the (re)classification of their domestic workload and vice versa. It is in this light that this study explored the level of participation in livelihood programs among women in two communities of Guiuan, Eastern Samar which was strongly hit by Yolanda, the country's deadliest typhoon on record. The interrelation between these engagements with domestic workload schemes were also examined. The data were gathered through participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and focus group discussions. One salient view among many informants is the primacy of women's role in the domestic space thereby making tasks outside of it as secondary. This inevitably shapes their participation in livelihood projects in terms of time and range of initiatives. Meanwhile, other factors such as limited social skills, economic independence from spouse, and higher educational attainment also appear to influence the lack of participation among other women. Hence, in order to facilitate enhanced women engagement, livelihood programs should take into account how women in a particular community view the domestic sphere and their roles in it. More importantly, there is a need to equip marginalized women with skills necessary to engage not only in livelihood projects but in wider economic development processes.

Keywords: women participation, economic rehabilitation, domestic workload, post-calamity, livelihood projects

INTRODUCTION

THE ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN is not only relevant in

realizing their rights but to also address broader development goals such as poverty alleviation, health, welfare, and education (Golla et al. 2011). However, several interrelated factors have been attributed to the differing level of participation and engagement among men and women in the context of economic development processes. Perhaps one of the classic reasons for this is the constrain brought about by the enduring gender roles that a society assigns and deems suitable for men and women, thus limiting their respective responsibilities in the social and economic spheres (Musshauer et al. 2006). A very common example is the greater share of domestic tasks assigned to women.

Given this preoccupation in the domestic sphere, women appear to have a significantly lower working ability index (WAI) compared with men (Camerino et al. 2006). This idea of work ability refers to how an individual cope with the physical and mental demands of an economic-based work in terms of their functional abilities, health status, and self-assessment (Tuomi et al. 1998). In other parts of the globe, meanwhile, this difference in economic participation between men and women is due to the restrictions imposed by state policies that create gender division labor which primarily caters to male; this greatly contributes to the declining economic opportunities for women (Massiah 1989). Among other cultural groups, there is also a socially institutionalized female seclusion such as the practice of *purdah* in many Muslim communities in South Asia that restrict socio-economic activities of women outside home (Kabeer & Anh 2000).

In this paper, we examine the level of participation among women in a post-calamity economic rehabilitation process in terms of their engagement in livelihood projects. We view this in relation to the idea of the so-called “double work burden” which has been considered a relevant factor that affects the simultaneous engagement of women in economic-based work and domestic responsibilities (Kergoat 1989 in Rotenberg et al. 2008). While we do not limit the inquiry on their level of participation in economic rehabilitation, specifically livelihood projects, solely in terms of their domestic workload schemes, we find it interesting to understand how their domestic responsibilities and, in general, their view on the domestic realm frame or shape their participation in the economic sphere. Or, perhaps, it would be better to attempt to understand how the overlap of these domains are viewed from their perspectives.

As listed in the Philippine Plan for Gender-Responsive Development (PPGD), the low valuation of women’s unpaid care work and the differing level of participation and engagement to development processes among men and women are among the relevant gender-related

issues today. In cases of economic rehabilitation such as in post-calamity contexts, these two issues clearly intersect since women participation in livelihood programs contribute to the (re)classification of their domestic workload and vice versa. The phrase ‘women participation’, as defined by the Harmonized Gender and Development Guidelines (HGDG), is about ensuring that women are active beneficiaries, as opposed to being passive recipients, of resources, services, and facilities in development processes. The goal of enhancing women participation in economic processes and the constraints related to such objective generally falls under the rubric women empowerment. This discourse on women empowerment, of course, is not limited to economic means but extends to the development of women’s status in the domains of politics, social, and health.

This inquiry on how women participation in livelihood projects affects their domestic workload schemes and vice-versa was conducted in two communities, Barangay Tagporo and Taytay, in the municipality of Guiuan in Eastern Samar where economic rehabilitation of the residents is of utmost importance. The municipality was at the center of the first landfall of typhoon Yolanda, internationally known as typhoon Haiyan, when it hit the Samar region last November 2013. It was the country’s strongest typhoon on record. Several other typhoons also devastated the area after Yolanda. This explains the major role of humanitarian organizations especially to farmers and fishers in the region.

Given this urgency for economic rehabilitation, humanitarian programs observe a differing degree of participation and access among male and female residents in different livelihood projects. In several studies conducted in Yolanda-affected areas, gender inequality and the lack of access to development processes among women were seen as major factors contributing to their low poverty and vulnerability in the entire Eastern Visayas (Gomez-Magdaraog 2016). One of the immediate observations made in relation to this issue is the amount of workload given to female members of households which eventually affects their available time and energy for other tasks outside the domestic sphere (TFM-Oxfam 2016). This paved the way to projects that lessen the burden of household chores such as the establishment of deep wells in the communities to reduce the amount of time and energy spent by housewives on fetching fresh water from a distance (TFM-Oxfam 2016).

While very helpful and practical, the initiatives to lessen the burden of household chores among women and girls do not immediately translate to enhanced female participation in the economic rehabilitation process. There is still a need to understand how the domestic sphere really shapes the economic participation of women. Further, there is a need to

understand how women themselves view this seemingly dichotomous domains of the domestic and the economic. More importantly, there is a need to go beyond this binary opposition between the domestic and economic spheres and attempt to understand their dreams in life. This study, therefore, is significant not only in understanding the interrelationship between domestic workload schemes and the economic participation of women in terms of livelihood projects. It will also attempt to formulate suggestions to address challenges or constraints in enhancing women participation in wider economic development processes.

As we will elaborate further in the paper, we argue that one important consideration in pursuing this topic is to understand how women view the domestic sphere and how they situate in it. In the communities where we conducted this study, many informants highlight the primacy of women's role in the domestic space thereby making tasks outside of it as supplementary. This inevitably shapes their participation in livelihood projects in terms of time and range of initiatives. Meanwhile, other factors such as limited social skills, economic independence from spouse, and higher educational attainment also influence the participation, or lack thereof, among other women. The efficiency and success of a livelihood program, therefore, lie in its design to take into account these interrelated considerations.

In the next sections, we will further contextualize our inquiry by elaborating other details about the research sites and the methods we employed. We will also discuss some background information about the livelihood projects in these areas. After these sections, we will also briefly discuss the theoretical framework in this paper. This will be followed by the presentation of data and analysis.

THE RESEARCH SITES

The province of Eastern Samar is part of the Samar Island which is surrounded by two large bodies of water – the Philippine Sea on the east and Leyte Gulf on the south. Because of this, the province is often subjected to storms and typhoons which is unfortunate given that agriculture and fisheries are the main sources of livelihood in the region. Their primary agricultural products include coconut, cacao, tobacco, root crops, rice and corn. Coastal communities engage in fishing and in the production of local handicrafts made from abaca, buri, pine apple fiber, and coconut husks.

The study was conducted in one of Eastern Samar's municipalities, Guiuan. In a 2015 census, Guiuan has a population of 52,991 (PSA 2015).

Waray is the first language in the island. The municipality was established over 400 years ago and is famous for being the site of Magellan's landing in 1516.

The key informants were drawn from two communities in Guiuan, namely, Taytay and Tagporo. Barangay Taytay is a fishing village. Most of its residents are involved in fishing and in selling of dried fish for livelihood. They have a total of 225 households. In Barangay Tagporo, residents are involved in making commercial shell crafts and weaving of mats. When they are not fishing, they also tend to their vegetable gardens which they cultivate for household consumption. The barangay has a total of 149 households.

Different non-government organizations (NGO) provided humanitarian support for the residents especially right after the calamity. Among these organizations is Task Force Mapalad (TFM) which the first author is a project manager and community organizer for more than half a decade now. The organization started as a federation of farmers advocating for land rights under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) since early 2000. For the past few years, it started engaging in humanitarian work through livelihood assistance to calamity-stricken communities. Its humanitarian work is funded by Europe-based NGOs, Heks and Oxfam.

In the six municipalities of the region that received livelihood assistance from TFM, a total of 137, 940 coconut farmers were deemed to be highly affected in terms of income loss. Moreover, the fishing villages hardly survived by relying on fishing and other marine produce given the length of time necessary to rehabilitate the marine ecosystem; fish pens and ponds were reconstructed. Meanwhile, most of the agricultural produce from local farmers were too meager to be distributed beyond household consumption. Because of this major economic impact on the entire region, most of the local government units or barangay relied heavily on the support coming from the national government and the non-government organizations. This is usually through seed capital for livelihood inputs and cash-for-work which refers to an assistance in the form of temporary employment in public projects such as road constructions for the most economically vulnerable residents.

To this day, non-functional facilities such as water reservoirs remain to be one of the problems in a number of areas. Villagers have no other choice but to walk for several meters, or even kilometers in some cases, in order to fetch potable water. This emerged to be one of the most cumbersome household chores among women and girls in these communities (TFM-Oxfam 2016). It was in this context of livelihood

rehabilitation that TFM through its partnership with an international non-government organization, Oxfam, established several projects in the different areas of Eastern Samar. This support included social preparation, capacity building, and agricultural rehabilitation specifically through financial assistance to local farmers and women-based organizations. The seven-month long program was a humanitarian support designed to achieve specific outcomes, several of which focus on gender. Among these goals was to provide women (target: 300) with access to improved economic opportunities through skills training. Another was to engage at least 600 families in gender-sensitive discussions that will focus on the distribution of (unpaid) care work responsibilities in households. Also, the project aimed to encourage women to take positions of leadership in their local communities and to establish a women-led community enterprise in the region that will work closely with private sectors engaged in agriculture and fisheries value chains. Other than these gender-related goals, the project also aimed to educate at least 1300 households about the importance of diversified sources of income as a measure to mitigate the risks associated with climate change. All of these were accomplished when the program concluded last September 2016.

It was in these contexts that the data from the research sites were gathered. Majority of the research informants are women from these livelihood projects and those who used to participate in these activities. Other residents in the areas where these projects were implemented also participated in our focus group discussions and engaged in casual conversations with us. Today, different women-led organization continue these livelihood projects in the research sites.

METHODS

The study employed the following qualitative methods in gathering the relevant data used in this paper: desk review, purposive and chain referral sampling, semi-structured key informant interviewing, participant-observation, and focus group discussions. Desk review included a survey of the policies employed in the livelihood programs for women in the research sites. The sampling through purposive and chain referral means involved a selection of informants considered to be knowledgeable on the given topic. This included members of the concerned organizations implementing the livelihood programs, local government officials, and women who are either active or inactive in the livelihood programs in their communities.

The participant-observation method was applied when we took

the part of an observer who, at the same time, participates in the events, interactions, and the daily routine of the informants. This is generally considered “the central and defining method of research in cultural anthropology” (Dewalt & Dewalt 1998). This method was helpful in our attempt to understand the explicit and, to a certain degree, implicit aspects of the social lives of the people. For the entire duration of the 6-month research project, the second author conducted participant-observation and informal group discussions among the key informants. Her primary role in the said sites was to manage and coordinate livelihood projects supported by TFM and an international humanitarian organization, Oxfam, for typhoon Yolanda victims. The first author conducted further formal focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews building on the observations and information gathered from the previous informal discussions and participant-observation.

A total of 26 key informants (mean age: 34) from the research sites in Guiuan, Eastern Samar were interviewed individually in a semi-structured scheme at their most convenient time. Out of these 26, 25 are married while the other one is widowed. All of the key informants have varying degrees of participation in the livelihood projects available in their area. Aside from these key informants, other female members of the two research sites were also surveyed. They are not considered as key informants, however, due to the limited time that we engaged with them. These individuals are mostly those who are either no longer members of the organizations or those who never signed up to be a member in any women-led organization at all.

Focus group discussions served as a venue for validation and further clarification of general patterns observed. The focus group discussions did not only include key informants but all other interested residents in the area. A total of three focus group discussions were conducted. The scope of follow up individual interviews were determined after these focus group discussions.

Informed consent was secured throughout the entire data gathering process. For confidentiality purposes, pseudonyms are used in place for the actual names of the informants cited in the paper. The research project abides by the ethical standards in human research and ensures the integrity and confidentiality of the data gathered. The focus group discussions served as one of the means of validating the data. Further validation was made by providing the communities with the chance to evaluate and comment on the results of the inquiry and the copies of the research paper draft.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Where gender is taken into account in the discussions relating to livelihood, there is a seemingly common tendency to focus on constraints that women face such as socio-cultural norms, child-rearing responsibilities, and unequal access to socio-economic resources such as capital and land (Kabeer & Anh 2000). For Naila Kabeer and Tran Thi Van Anh (2000), however, there is a need to further enrich such discourses. One way to do so is to put emphasis on the need to identify the many different kinds of constraints that affect women's ability and capacity to participate in livelihood strategies. Second is to understand the varying implications of these different constraints for the role of women in meeting their domestic needs. Another is to examine the extent to which such constraints represent policy failure and norms and expectations embedded within a cultural milieu (Kabeer & Anh 2000: 4).

Given these concerns, Kabeer (1994) proposes a "typology of regional patriarchies" which is constructed through a mapping of gender relations along two dimensions. The first dimension is concerned with the mobility of women in the public domain and identifies between contexts that involve socio-culturally restricted mobility (e.g., the practice of *purdah* among Muslim women) and contexts where the public-private divide is less highlighted. On the other hand, the second dimension focuses on the internal organization of the households and identifies between contexts wherein conjugal relationship is highlighted and contexts wherein it is less cohesive (Kabeer & Anh 2000: 4).

With due consideration to these dimensions, the constraints that women experience may then be categorized into three categories proposed in Kabeer and Subrahmanian (1996): gender-specific, gender-intensified, and imposed gender limitations (Kabeer & Anh 2000: 5).

A 'gender-specific constraint' is a classic form of limitation for women wherein their active engagement in different domains is curtailed due to the societal roles assigned to them. These roles often revolve around the household and reproduction. In other contexts, they appear in the form of a taboo. An example is a taboo in several South Asian communities about women touching the plough making the work exclusive to men (Kabeer 2012). In conditions where the constraint is not culturally institutionalized, women still encounter more challenges than their male counterparts due to reproductive duties.

A 'gender-intensified constraint', on the other hand, refers to a form of limitation to women that is brought about by unequal distribution of resources between men and women within the household. This

asymmetry relates to domestic decision-making and access to conjugal properties. Apparently, unlike gender-specific constraints reinforced by societal norms, gender-intensified constraints are reinforced within households.

Lastly, an ‘imposed gender constraint’ refers to biases, discrimination, and misconception against women in order to manipulate resource allocation. An example of this is a systemic deprivation of women from employment opportunities such as limiting their ranks or denying them of access to reproductive-related benefits. In a recent review in 141 countries, the World Bank (2011) cited variations of employment schemes between men and women in terms of differentiated incentives and their capacity to set up their own business (Kabeer 2012: 13).

Taking these different domains and categories into account is relevant especially in the context of policy and humanitarian implications. By distinguishing the varying degrees of constraints and the dimensions that needed to be taken into account, policy and humanitarian interventions will be informed with the varying levels of amenability of specific issues and concerns among women. This will inform decisions on what to prioritize as urgent and which issues require a long-term approach.

Women-Led Organizations in Guiuan, Eastern Samar

After the devastating effects of a number of typhoons, especially Yolanda, in the region, socio-economic interventions such as in the form of livelihood programs as well as capacity trainings increased in number. The outpour of humanitarian support in the province resulted in the establishment and facilitation of women-led livelihood projects and enterprises that are managed and built as a community-based organization. In order for a local resident to benefit from such initiatives, he or she must be part of a people’s organization. One of the most cited reasons why the women, so as all the other sectors, only started to organize themselves into people’s organizations after typhoon Yolanda is the lack of information about the organizing process. NGOs educated different sectors in the area about the process and facilitated the establishment of a number of associations.

Humanitarian support, especially in the form of livelihood assistance, is provided through people’s organizations rather than directly to individuals. As defined in the Philippine Constitution of 1987, a people’s organization is a legitimate association of citizens with demonstrated capacity of upholding the public interest through leadership, membership, and structure.

A common discourse among humanitarian organizations often

presents a software-hardware dichotomy when it comes to community interventions. “Software” involves advocacy and capacity trainings which would ideally support the ultimate goal of implementing a “hardware” intervention through concrete, usually economic, resources. In the post-Yolanda Eastern Samar, one form of “software” support was commonly in terms of seminars about income diversification and gender sensitivity trainings such as information dissemination about the need to distribute the domestic workload (Gomez-Magdaraog 2016). Another is through technical assistance for business management focused on skills training.

When it comes to “hardware” interventions, a common initiative is in the form of livelihood projects and enterprises given to different sectors including women organizations. This is enhanced with trainings in value chain development and market linkages. In the six municipalities covered by the TFM-Oxfam project, a total of 1,031 beneficiaries received, through their people’s organizations, livelihood and technical assistance in their community-based enterprises.

In the research sites, the target beneficiaries of the program were mostly women. The women-led people’s organizations in the areas, Taytay Women Association and Tagporo Abante Women Association, were established in 2014, a year after the devastating typhoon. The other NGOs that assisted the women in establishing the associations include Oxfam, Abante Women Federation, and Consuelo Foundation.

In early 2016, TFM and Oxfam collaborated to implement livelihood projects for these two women associations in Taytay and Tagporo. For the Tagporo Abante Women Association, the project was designed to technically support their shell craft enterprise. The association’s 59 all-female members are mostly housewives. This number in membership is around 90 percent of the entire adult female population in their barangay. Although they have started with shell craft designing way back in 2003, they had a hard time developing their enterprise due to lack of technical and financial assistance. Also, back then, they were pursuing the project individually rather than as a group or as an association. The project provided this women-led association with all the necessary materials and skills trainings. It also helped them start linkages to broader markets.

One of the shell crafts that they produce in large quantity is a necklace (see image 2) made of tiny seashells called buhong with a pendant made of a flat, smooth capiz shell. On the pendant reads “Welcome to Guiuan Mabuhay!” The necklace measures about 15 inches in length. The group sells this for five pesos a piece. The NGO project provided the association with the shells, other materials, and a humble wooden store at the center of the barangay where they can display their products to visitors.

The shells used were polished well. They received their supply of shells in sacks which they then clean with scrutiny using brushes.



Image 1. Members of the Tagporo Abante Women Association during a skills training for shell craft design



Image 2. Some of the shell crafts displayed in the Tagporo Abante Women Association booth



Image 3. A necklace made of shells with a capiz pendant for Php 5.00

The Taytay Women Association, meanwhile, was provided with livelihood assistance for their dried fish enterprise. Today, the group is consist of 72 members. Like in Tagporo, this number membership is around 90 percent of the entire adult female population in the barangay. They use different types of fishes and dry them under the sun. Depending on weather conditions, the drying process usually takes around one to two

days depending on the type of the fish. Through the TFM-Oxfam project, the group received assistance to purchase additional fish for drying and materials that include nets, coconut lumber, and UV plastic necessary for constructing fish dryers. They were also provided with a sealer to generate neatly sealed products.



Image 4. Fish drying beside a public road



Image 5. A member displaying dried fish in her store

So far, none of the organizations that provided livelihood assistance to these women-led associations ever included cash grants. Instead, the associations were provided with all the necessary materials and trainings in order to develop their respective projects. Therefore, they have to think among themselves about the specific plans for their enterprise such as the types of products they would like to commercialize. They are also continuously encouraged to innovate with their products and production processes. After a year, the success of their projects will be evaluated primarily in terms of profit growth. Their continued production and success is relevant in justifying any request for further assistance in the future.

Both associations collect membership fees from their members in order to come up with a revolving fund. This fund was often used for transportation expenses of the members during skills trainings and meetings. Now that the groups have attended several skills trainings already, their preoccupation has shifted to the marketing aspects of the enterprise.

The TFM-Oxfam project concluded last September 2016, hence these women-led organizations are now on their own feet in managing and maintaining these enterprises. Whenever a member sells her product, 5% of the sale will go to the group's revolving fund. The groups have also designed the said funds to cover for the costs of the supply of new materials now that the livelihood assistance from TFM and Oxfam already concluded.

Aside from engaging in livelihood projects, many of the members of these organizations find other sources of income. The most common means of doing so is to sell or vend snacks such as banana cue or *maruya*. Others have small retail or *sari-sari* store where they sell chips, laundry supplies such as detergent bars, and condiments. During low tide, some also collect shells from the shore to be sold at the market usually around 25 pesos per kilo. If they only collected a few, however, they will just cook the shells for dinner.

The 24-hour Clock

In order to gain an understanding of the relationship between the domestic workload and the livelihood participation of women in Guiuan, Eastern Samar, we collected a record of their respective daily routines. The table below represents the most common activities for every waking hour of the day among 36 informants, 13 of which are from Tagporo and 13 from Taytay. These informants have varying levels of participation in the available livelihood projects in their communities. From these 36 individuals, 26 are considered as key informants based on the time spent in interviews and the amount of information they have shared. Since this section will focus first on the assumed roles of the women in the domestic sphere, a more thorough discussion on the differing levels of participation among the research participants will be presented in a succeeding section.

Table 1. Most common daily activities among 36 surveyed women in Tagporo and Taytay

	Time	Most Common Activities	Other Activities	
AM	5:00	Preparing breakfast	77%	Preparing kids for school, watering plants, cleaning yard
	6:00			
	7:00	Washing clothes	62%	Feed kids breakfast, eat with family
	8:00			
	9:00			
	10:00	Engaging in livelihood project	42%	Prepare lunch, clean the house
	11:00	Preparing lunch	58%	Cleaning the house
	12:00	Eat lunch	81%	Washing dishes
1:00	Take rest	31%	Watching TV or listening to radio; engaging in livelihood project	
PM	2:00	Engaging in livelihood project	58%	Take a rest (<i>siesta</i>)
	3:00	Engaging in livelihood project	54%	Take a rest (<i>siesta</i>); watch TV
	4:00	Folding the laundry	41%	Engaging in livelihood project
	5:00	Preparing dinner	42%	Engaging in livelihood project; watering plants
	6:00	Pray the Angelus	46%	Preparing dinner; engaging in livelihood project
	7:00	Eat dinner with family	85%	Engaging in livelihood project
	8:00	Watching television	31%	Engaging in livelihood project; folding laundry; talk with family
	9:00	Sleeping	27%	Engaging in livelihood project; take rest (<i>pahangin</i>); watching TV

The table no longer includes the activities from 10:00 PM to 4:00 AM since majority of the informants indicated that this is usually no longer their waking time. All of the informants who were surveyed were asked to identify their usual activities for every hour of the day. We asked them to write it on a piece of paper that we provided them. They were asked

to write their responses at their most convenient time. Most of them, however, preferred to answer it right away while they still have vacant time. Most of our interviews with them were conducted at 10 o'clock in the morning and around 2 to 3 o'clock in the afternoon. During these times, their kids were at school and they have already finished their household chores. Hence, they find it as the most appropriate time to engage in the inquiry. As the table shows, these are the most common vacant times of the day for the informants which most of them spend on engaging in livelihood projects.

Based on the types of activities presented in Table 1, it is apparent that majority of these women are housewives with children. As much as we want to diversify the types of key informants for this study, the availability of other female members of the communities does not make them readily available for research interviews. Some of these women include those who are not married yet; they either work or study in the city and are seldom available in the area since they only come home at least once a month. Other female members of these communities currently work in Manila or overseas. A number of them did so after the devastating typhoon in 2013. While the elderly women are available, it is also unethical to subject them to prolonged discussions given that most of them have illnesses or disabilities.

Morning Routine. Almost all of the women are already awake by 5:00 am. Some even wake up much earlier especially those who have more than one kid. One of the priorities for the women is to maintain cleanliness. It seems that early in the morning is spent preparing the cleanliness and maintaining the aesthetic value of the outside of the house. This is apparent in activities such as sweeping the yard and watering of the house plants. Many explained that a littered yard and dried plants would indicate that a house is not being taken care of. From 5:00 to 6:00, the most common activity is to prepare breakfast and, for others, extra meals for their husbands and children who will need to take with them their lunch to work or school.

Some of the informants described how they would only have coffee for breakfast in order to serve enough food for their children given their limited budget. For those who often experience this, we asked if their husbands are also subjected to the same situation. They explained that their partners will need to consume enough breakfast since they need enough energy to get through their laborious work for the day. Most of the husbands of our key informants are either fishermen or tricycle drivers. Given how common it is for these women to cook meals, it is not surprising

that they believe that one of the roles of a woman in a house is to prepare meals for the family. When asked about a woman who does not know how to cook, an informant would tend to respond with a smile and a remark about the need to really acquire the skill even before getting married.

Preparing the kids to school does not only include cooking their food. It also includes bathing the younger ones and final checking of their school projects prior to submission. After breakfast, most of them will walk or ride with their kids to school so as to assure their safe arrival. For those with kids in pre-school, they also need to pick the kids up after school hours which is usually before lunchtime. The informants explained that they have to pick up the kids themselves since their husbands are engaged in more time-consuming economic tasks (e.g., driving or fishing).

Once they have sent their children to school, most of the informants would usually spend their time doing the laundry. This is done by many housewives at least thrice a week since their kids do not have too many spare clothes to use, which means that the clothes need to be washed immediately in order to be used again. Some would prefer to soak the clothes first so that they can engage in their livelihood project. In this way, they won't spend too much time with the laundry.

The most common time for the informants to engage in their respective livelihood projects in the morning is around 10:00 am. Out of the 36 key informants, 23 are actively participating in the livelihood projects of the women-led organizations in their barangay. A few of the other respondents are also members of the women-led organizations but are not as active as the others. At around 10 o'clock in the morning, the women who engage in shell craft making would tend to gather around while they create their products. They would need to insert thin nylons through the little shells in order to make bracelets, necklaces, and other ornaments. They explained that the task is mind-numbing, hence the company of their fellows doing the same thing would make them oblivious of the time. This is not an option, however, for those with younger kids at home. They would need to work at home in order to attend to the little ones. For others, the task is more challenging especially if the child around is too young to understand that the tiny shells should not be swallowed.

Cleaning the inside of the house is another part of their daily routine that needs to be accomplished before noon time. As the outside area of the house is supposed to be clean by around 6 o'clock in the morning, the inside also needs to be clean at least before lunch time. This cleaning task includes sweeping the floor and mopping it or applying floor wax on it. The wax is used to make a cement floor appear shinier. After the wax application, scrubbing is required using a coconut husk or *bunot*.

A rough floor and untidy house is embarrassing for them especially when they have visitors. It seems that a clean house is one of the standards to evaluate how well they are in assuming their role as a woman of the house.

Afternoon Routine. Most of the informants are able to take a rest after lunch time. They would either watch a noon time show on television or, for those who do not own a television, listen to the radio. For the women who are involved in shell craft making, this is also a perfect time to start with their projects. The younger kids, if any, would have already taken their nap by then. Most of the household chores would have already been done by this time as well. For women who engage in fish drying, there is not much to do during this time other than to make sure that the fish are getting adequate amount of sun exposure. Those who have a stock of dried fish might already start around this time the packing of each pieces in plastic wrappers. Some prefer to sell their packed goods through vending while others put them on display in their makeshift stores.

Around 4 o'clock in the afternoon, majority of the women would make sure to gather the laundry that were hanged under the sun during the day. When in meetings or trainings away from home, it is common to hear them worry about their hanged laundry especially if it starts getting cloudy. After securing their dry laundry, most of them will continue with their livelihood projects. For those who are into fish drying, they would have to always check the weather in order to take the fish inside before it starts to rain. For those who are into shell craft making, especially those with younger children, they would have to make sure that their materials are out of reach from the kids who might swallow the tiny shells.

Watering of the house plants is another common activity by the end of the day. The island of Samar tend to have very humid temperature all throughout the day. Unless it rains, house plants would wither without constant watering. Many of the houses also have hanging plants inside. They usually use empty plastic bottles of soft drinks stuffed with soil in order to hang vine plants inside the house. This form of beautification is another sign that the house is being taken care of. As many informants expressed, a well taken care house that is clean and comfortable is a lot better than a house filled with appliances.

By 6:00 PM, majority of the informants are usually reciting their Angelus prayer. The municipality of Guiuan has a very strong Catholic following. Especially after the overwhelming calamities in the island, regular praying serves as one source of psychological security for the residents. Their prayers, the informants explained, would always include an earnest request to spare their communities from destructive storms or

typhoons. They are still rebuilding their lives 3 years after Yolanda; they will not be able to afford any new losses at this point.

Tasks related to livelihood projects will continue for many of the informants until after dinner time or around 8:00 in the evening. Parallel tasks include preparing the dinner and washing the dishes after eating. For others, this will also include taking their younger children to sleep. Some of the housewives also mentioned that it is also important to make sure that they spend enough time with their husbands around this period. Those who expressed this mentioned giving their spouses a body massage after the latter's hard work during the day especially if their source of income is from driving or fishing. Their husbands, however, do not usually give them a body massage in return. When asked why, they said that their husband's work are much body-numbing than theirs – for instance, sitting on the boat the whole day under the intense heat of the sun or pedaling the *padyak* (a local means of transportation through a bike with an attached carrel).

Aside from this time with the husband, a number of informants also highlighted the need to discuss with their children the latter's daily experiences. It does not have to be too formal or serious, they explained. They just needed to get updates about their kids' experiences inside and outside of school. They would also need to regularly ask about school assignments. This is important especially if they would need to spend money on the said projects. If so, they will be able to promptly adjust the itemization of their regular budget to cover for such expenses.

Majority of them would have been asleep by 9:00 in the evening. Others who still have enough energy left will continue with the tasks related to their livelihood projects. They would usually do so while watching their favorite television series or while listening to the radio. During weekends or no-school days, they would have more time to spend on late night activities since they do not have to wake up as early as usual to prepare their kids to school.

Livelihood Strategies vis-à-vis Domestic Workload

By livelihood strategy, we do not mean to only refer to their participation in livelihood projects. We use the phrase to refer to a more general approach among women to look for ways to acquire or gain access to economic resources given their domestic conditions. For our informants, their livelihood strategy is often applied in the livelihood projects made available by NGOs after the calamities in the region. This does not mean though that they only limit their economic sphere in these projects. A

number of them still look for other ways proactively.

In this section, we would like to discuss how the domestic workload schemes presented above affected the livelihood strategies among our informants. We divided this section into two. First, we will talk about this interrelation of economic strategies and domestic load among women who are actively participating in the livelihood projects. Second, we will discuss the same interrelation but with women who are not actively engaged in livelihood projects. While we generally aim to show here the influences of women participation in a post-calamity economic rehabilitation on their domestic roles and vice versa, we also would like to show other factors that figure into this interrelationship.

Domestic Workload and Livelihood Projects

In the two research sites, the women who engage in livelihood projects, at least in the ones offered by TFM and Oxfam after Yolanda, all have families. As previously mentioned, the rate of membership in women-led associations that coordinate livelihood projects is around 90%. The active members of the women-led organizations, however, may be classified into categories. The most active usually consist a group of around five to six members with the association's elected president as the chief consultant. The other members in the circle of this most active group are usually very close friends and neighbors of the elected association president. Their involvement is most apparent in terms of attendance in meetings, trainings, and seminars. They are also the ones to hear the most recent updates about an incoming external support. When it comes to stipulating the time and place of an important meeting, the decision also tends to be within their hands; in the first place, they are the ones to initiate a meeting or a training for the group.

All of the members in the women-led organizations described above have children and have expressed an interest in providing additional income for the family. The word "additional" was significantly highlighted in the interviews given their views that the primary source of income in the household is their husband's livelihood. One widow, around the age of 50, even made a remark as a joke that she would like us to find her a husband. When asked for what reason, she explained that she needed someone who is strong enough to financially support her family. In fact, when asked about her specific qualifications for a partner, she indicated that it would be best to have a strong and healthy husband. This way, he will be able to endure a job without any problem. Either stated as a joke or not, remarks like this still show a hint of a view on how men's jobs serve as a source of

substantial income for a household.

In relation to this view that they are engaging in a livelihood project as a post-Yolanda economic rehabilitation in order to provide supplementary or secondary income for the household, another housewife expressed the need to really take care of their husbands physically so as the latter will not be open to the idea of leaving them and the kids. When asked to explain the consequences when a husband leaves, all pointed out its economic effect on the family especially the kids. It is commonly phrased as about losing someone who feeds the children.

This perspective on the economic dominance of men is one reason why venturing on livelihood projects among these groups of women serves only as an additional or supplementary income. This is aside from the apparent fact that their earnings from these projects are lesser than their husbands'. It is important to take note though that the amount of income from their respective preoccupations are influenced by the time the women invested doing domestic tasks.

As Table 1 in the preceding section shows, women only engaged in their tasks related to livelihood projects after they were finished with specific domestic tasks. In terms of temporal considerations, the amount of work that they can invest in a livelihood-related task is highly influenced by the domestic tasks they assume on a regular basis. For a specific example, a mother of three who is making shell crafts during her free time may be able to produce at least ten necklaces worth five pesos each in one day. Another member whose kids are grown enough not to require tending to every time and who may even be able to help already with the livelihood project could produce thrice or four times the quantity of the same shell craft.

Aside from this apparent correlation between the amount of domestic workload and the extent of time that a woman can invest in a livelihood project, another aspect that also needs to be highlighted is the range of initiatives and innovation that a member may offer. By initiative, we mean that there are certain novel ideas that a member may be able to present or pursue which would prove to be productive. An example is a member's initiative to attend all of the barangay fiesta (an annual celebration of the patron saint) in the neighboring towns so as to widen her social network and eventually the dealership of her dried fish. By establishing social connections and finding distant kin of her family and her husband's, she was able to return to specific houses to sell packs of dried fish.

Such initiative, however, would not have been applicable to her if she had children. Maria, 37 years old, explained that she was able to do

this because her children are all in high school already. This means that she can leave the house for a longer period of time and assign other domestic tasks to her kids. The domestic workload scheme was therefore reclassified or redistributed in order to make way for her public errands related to her livelihood project.

This shows that the domestic workload of women shapes not only their economic participation but also their engagement in the public domain in general. The classification and reclassification of their domestic roles which is made possible by the amount of time their husbands work outside the house and the number of their children that require frequent guidance and attention. It is also highly affected by the amount of resources that the family is able to afford such as in the case of how the number of clothing materials will affect the amount of time spent on doing regular laundry. All of these factors appear to be inversely proportional to the amount of time that the women can invest in livelihood projects.

Therefore, the relationship between domestic workload schemes and the degree of economic participation in terms of livelihood projects among these women is to be further viewed in the context of their current material resources and number of family members that require attention. While these may readily appear to be gender-specific constraints where the women assume reproductive roles such as taking care of the children, it is important to note that while most of these women depend on the income of their husbands, they still have control over household decisions. Since, as they explained, they are the ones who are most familiar with the needs in the house and the necessary expenses for the children's schooling, they have more control over deciding how to spend the income. This explains why everyone we asked did not see a problem with how their domestic workload schemes affect their chances of engaging in livelihood projects or any other economic process. For them, as long as they are able to significantly contribute in the decision-making process in the house, it does not matter who earns the highest income.

It may also be helpful to widen this view beyond gender-specific constraints and consider their economic constraints in general. The need to improve their economic conditions so as to increase their economic participation would mean that alleviation of poverty among women should not be focused only on women per se but the economic development of the entire family and the community. The women we interviewed do not view their economic status solely based on their own income but on the economic status of the entire family. The level of desire to participate in livelihood projects, and in wider economic processes in general, is therefore ultimately based on the economic condition of the entire family.

Domestic Workload and Other Forms of Economic Participation

Women in these two communities who are not active in livelihood projects have varying reasons. We will summarize it into three categories: disability, limited social skills, economic independence from spouse, and higher educational attainment. We will discuss each of this factor along with sample cases.

The primary reason for some women who are inactive in the livelihood projects is because they are physically incapacitated. This is often the case for women above 60 years old. Among the most common illnesses in the two communities are hypertension and rheumatism. Another common form of disability is cataract or opacity of the eye. These women end up staying inside their houses most of the time. Those who have grandchildren often share the domestic tasks related to taking care of the kids.

Another key factor that is related to non-participation in livelihood projects in these areas is the lack of social ties. As mentioned above, one's active participation in a women-led organization requires socialization among fellow members. There are usually groups within the bigger circle. When one belongs to one of these smaller groups, they would feel more comfortable with participating in different group activities. Some of these inner circles are based on kinship where women who are related to one another either through their own clan or their husband's would tend to gather around and make decisions and share opinions together. Other is based on friendship and the proximity of each other's houses. The most active group also seem to be based on each other's social proximity with the organization's president. While there are these different small circles, all of the members are cordial with one another and even with others who are not members of the group. After all, these are small coastal communities wherein everybody knows everybody. One's close social ties, however, will impact one's level of comfort in engaging in social and public tasks which the livelihood projects always include.

This social aspect is one reason cited by some of the women who are not engaging in the livelihood projects. Some of them used to be members of the organizations who quit while others never considered to sign up for membership at all. This is despite the apparent need for women and all residents to engage in economic rehabilitation especially after the typhoons. They explained that they are not comfortable working with other women from their community. Although they are not enemies with them, these non-members just do not see themselves becoming economically

productive by working with certain individuals. Instead, they invest in economic activities that they can pursue individually. They are often the ones with small *sari-sari* or retail stores where they sell condiments (e.g., small packets of soy sauce, vinegar, cooking oil), laundry supplies such as detergent soaps, and small packets of junk foods for children. It appears that their target buyers are also mothers and children around their neighborhood. Others also prefer to sell afternoon refreshments such as juice in a cup and banana cue. They would either display it outside their house or vend it around the neighborhood or in a nearby school.

These cases show that aside from gender-specific constraints, there are also social considerations that affect the level of participation among women in livelihood projects. Still, they are able to engage in economic processes by pursuing tasks individually.

Meanwhile, the other two factors, economic independence from spouse and higher educational attainment, are highly related. By economic independence from spouse, we are referring to their level of self-sufficiency. Although this is very rare in the communities we visited, there are still a few women who could confidently say that they can provide for their children on their own. These are usually women who have attained a higher educational attainment than most of the women in the communities. Possessing a higher educational attainment in these areas means that one was able to reach college. Most of these women who exude economic independence have office jobs for having either finished a clerical degree or rigorous technical trainings such as the ones offered by the state's Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA).

These two conditions influence their level of participation in livelihood projects since they are more motivated to look for stable jobs wherein they can earn more. In doing so, they are also able to hire someone to help them with their domestic roles or compensate a relative to do such tasks. These cases, although rare, show that the lack of participation among some women in livelihood projects is not merely about gender-specific or gender-intensified constraints. Here, it is because they are able to gain access to other forms of economic processes.

Therefore, social skills and educational attainment are also relevant factors that need to be taken into account when examining the level of participation, or lack thereof, among women in livelihood projects. Hence, humanitarian organizations that aim to increase the level of participation among women in these projects might be more productive in looking for ways to address the access of women to education and other means of economic rehabilitation. In this way, they will be opened to wider economic processes in general.

Mga Inop (Dreams)

A discussion about the dreams among these women may also give a good glance at their situations and intentions. The Waray word *inop* means a dream or an ambition in English. Dreams are referred to as such since such experiences are, most of the time, imagined rather than lived. The dreams of the women we spoke with also reveal interesting contexts that need to be taken into account. Among the key informants in this study, the following are the most commonly shared *mga inop* (dreams):

Prepare delicious foods for the family

All of the informants expressed their dream of being able to prepare their family with foods that are *marasa* (delicious). These include *embutido* (a variety of dry, cured sausage), fried chicken, pork, apple, and other tropical fruits. Since Eastern Samar has limited access to fruits due to their infertile soil, they would have to commercially bring in fruits from other provinces which then leads to high prices. When it comes to meat, their most common viand is fish and *utan* which is a soup made of mixed vegetables. During the typhoons, due to their lack of access to fish and agricultural produce, their most common food is *balanghoy* or cassava. In some cases, as mentioned in a preceding section, many women will pair coffee with rice as their breakfast in order to prioritize the nourishment intake of their children who need to go to school. Buying of packed noodles and canned goods is also considered a luxury since these are also considered expensive given their daily household budget.

To have a house that can withstand typhoons

Among the key informants, a house that is *maupay* or ideal is a shelter made of cement. Cement will secure it from violent storms and heavy winds that they often experience in the island. Three years after Yolanda, many of the houses in the communities are still made of tarpaulin-made roofs and makeshift walls. Another criterion they pointed out for an ideal house is its space. A spacious house would mean that they will be able to entertain many guests and can offer plenty of seats. During our interviews, many would express their embarrassment for not being able to provide us with enough space to sit on. For them, the ability to entertain guests especially relatives from far places will give more life to a house.

To be able to send the children to college

Majority of the key informants expressed inability to send their children to college. The few ones whose kids are currently in college or whose children were able to get a college degree obtained help through scholarship programs offered by some politicians in the province. Every after elections, they worry about the status of the scholarship especially if the politician who offered it was not able to secure a position back in public office. As they explained, sending a child to college is a great achievement. With a college degree, they will be able to secure a stable job. It will also help lessen their chance of marrying early. Only 12 percent of the total key informants have children studying in college or who were able to graduate with a college degree. Those who graduated now either work as primary school teachers or government employees. They are helping their parents send their siblings to school. The most common courses that parents want their children to take up in college are education, commerce, and information technology.

To be able to provide clothes and vitamins for the children

It has been pointed out previously that many women needed to do their laundry at least thrice a week because their kids have limited spare clothes. Hence, they need to wash it immediately in order for it to be re-used for school. It is not surprising then that one of their simple dreams is to be able to provide enough clothes for their children. They also expressed that it would be ideal to send their children to masses in nice clothes. These communities have a very strong Christian following. Another dream among these mothers is the ability to provide vitamins for their children. Except when there are NGOs that provide vitamins, they are likely unable to afford these given their tight budget.

Key informants refer to these ideas as dreams since these are experiences they want but very rarely able to live through. These show a peek into the need to obtain economic rehabilitation in these communities. One may notice how these dreams among the women are about their families rather than themselves. It seems that their fulfillment is based on their family's needs rather than their own.

Regardless of the means of obtaining extra income for the household, the housewives in these communities share many common expenses. While their husbands' income usually cover for the most basic needs such as food, the money they earn from either participating in

livelihood projects or in other economic means are often spent on school-related expenses for their children. This would often include school projects especially the need to pay for internet usage in order to do some researches. Other items would include notebooks, pens, and slippers. Many of the kids in these communities go to school without the right pair of slippers. For mothers whose girls are in high school or college, they also set aside a budget for face powder, lotion, and cologne.

As many of the key informants pointed out, their value as a woman is based on how well they are able to support their family in different ways. For them, this means that the phrase ‘economic rehabilitation of women’ would always mean economic rehabilitation for the whole family. The domestic sphere, therefore, is not a mere space around the house. It is an intimate dimension to which these women associate their worth. As many of them kept reiterating, “it is always about the family”.

Given the chance to have extra resources to get something for themselves, the most common preference among the key informants is to get good clothes for themselves, something that they can wear to church. Some also indicated that cologne and powder will also be a nice indulgence that will keep them from looking too worn-out. These views on simple forms of indulgence imply that they actually have not forgotten about themselves amid the current conditions in their communities. However, their top priority is the collective good for the family. Therefore, the struggle for economic rehabilitation among these women is not about being a female individual but a social being who is situated within a complex web of social relations and priorities.

CONCLUSION

Based on the discussions presented above, several notes may need to be highlighted. The most apparent perhaps is that domestic workload schemes among these women do affect the level of participation, specifically in terms of time and range of initiatives, in livelihood projects and in wider economic processes in general. However, they have been trying hard to efficiently manage their time in order to function well on both domains. Redistribution of domestic workload especially among older children in the household has been used as a practical means of addressing this. More access to resources are also shown to be relevant in unloading their domestic tasks. For instance, as pointed out in several cases, the ample time spent on doing laundry regularly would have been lessened if they, especially the children, have more spare clothes to use. One way to increase the level of participation among women in livelihood projects, therefore, is

to help find ways to lessen their domestic burden.

In a greater scheme of things, of course, another way to address this inverse proportion with the time spent on domestic tasks and economic participation among women is to point out the different forms of gender-related constraints that hamper their wider economic engagement. In these communities, however, traditionally assigning domestic roles to women is generally not considered a constraint but a way of life. In order to make sense of this perspective, it is important to understand how these women situate themselves in a web of social relations as it will show how strongly they associate themselves with a collective unit (i.e., family). Hence, it is not simply the dichotomy between public and private dimensions that needs to be taken into account; it is about different forms of collectivity in which the women engage. Foremost in these forms of collectivity is their family. Other collective spheres include their kin, friends, and fellow members.

Further, there are other factors that are as relevant in understanding other women's lack of participation in such projects. These include aspects relating to sociability or extent of social networks, physical capacity, educational attainment, and level of economic independence from spouse. It is important to put an emphasis, therefore, on the need to equip women not only with skills necessary to participate in economic forms of rehabilitation and development. It is equally important to pursue a long-term goal of empowering them by means of ensuring their access to other social services especially education as it provides them with wider options as shown in the cases here.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the interrelationship between women's domestic workload and their level of participation in activities related to economic rehabilitation, there is a need to put emphasis on several points that may be useful for agencies implementing livelihood programs and projects.

One set of recommended actions are intangible and advocacy-oriented, which is why these are commonly referred to as the "software" part of a program in gray literature. First, there is a need to mainstream women's care work as equally valuable to paid labor. The goal is to increase awareness for this type of contribution so as to eliminate the stigma associated with doing unpaid labor at home. An increased recognition of this idea in gender programs both in government and private sectors is considered here as an empowering tool for women. Second, there is a need to incorporate these ideas in the educational system in order to debunk

the dichotomy between bread winners and domestic caretakers. Young learners must understand that this is not a hierarchical relation; both roles are equally important.

The second set of recommendations are referred to as “hardware” in gray literature since these involve concrete actions. First, implementing agencies must promote more household-based livelihood projects. This is the strategy applied in the two communities described in this paper. Second, a space suitable for children should be taken into consideration when providing a workspace in livelihood programs. In this way, women with children will not be hindered to participate. Most importantly, a livelihood program must consider the need to identify and address the most burdensome household activity in the community to which a livelihood project will be given. In doing so, the program could lessen the potential hindrances for women participation. A similar strategy has already been applied by some non-government organizations such as Oxfam. An example is a livelihood program that involves helping residents gain easier access to potable water. In the said community, fetching water from far sources generally falls under women’s domestic work. By providing more water facilities that are closer to the houses, the program is able to lessen the impediments for female residents to engage in livelihood-related activities.

END NOTES

1 This paper is based on a 2016 research project with the University of the Philippines Center for Women’s and Gender Studies (UPCWGS).

2 These municipalities are Lawaan, Balangiga, Giporlos, Quinapondan, Salcedo, and Guiuan. The Eastern Samar region is comprised of 22 municipalities.

ACRONYMS USED

HGDG	Harmonized Gender and Development Guidelines
NGO	Non-government Organization
PPGD	Philippine Plan for Gender-Responsive Development
PSA	Philippine Statistics Authority
TESDA	Technical Education and Skills Development Authority
TFM	Task Force Mapalad
WAI	Working Ability Index

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