

# Podcast

Sustainability of  
Gender-Based  
Survivors: Challenges  
and Mechanisms



## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Heartfelt gratitude is due to the entities and persons who have extended their assistance in making this fellowship a reality especially to the Sisters of Mercy, represented by Sr. Angela Reed and the most supportive, Ms. Marietta Latonio.

This work would not have been possible without the strength and courage of survivors of gender-based violence who continue to share their stories, despite the pain and stigma they carry. Their voices are the heart of this research and their resilience inspires the call for change. This work is dedicated to every survivor – past, present, and future (I hope there will be no more victim survivor.) May this serve as a reminder that they are not alone, that their struggles are recognized, and that the fight for dignity, equality, and freedom from violence is a collective responsibility we all share.

I would like to extend my deep gratitude to the community organizations, shelters, women's groups, and advocates in Cebu City, the USWAG Association, who tirelessly provide support, protection, and empowerment to those affected by violence. Their commitment demonstrates that change begins at the grassroots, where compassion meets action.

I also acknowledge the role of government agencies, healthcare providers, and law enforcement units who work to uphold justice and ensure that survivors have access to services and protection. Though challenges remain, their efforts contribute to building a safer and more inclusive community.

To the survivor's family, relatives and friends for their unqualified support and fervent prayers, and all those who, in one way or another helped me in this journey, and most of all, to the Almighty Father for all the graces and guidance.

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### Background of the Study

Gender-based violence (GBV) is a pervasive phenomenon that deeply undermines dignity, rights, and community trust. According to the World Health Organization, nearly 1 in 3 women globally has experienced physical and/or sexual violence in her lifetime. GBV takes many forms, including intimate partner violence, sexual harassment, trafficking, psychological abuse, and harmful traditional practices. Beyond immediate physical harm, survivors often endure long-term psychological trauma, social stigma, and economic insecurity (Heise et al., 2019).

In the Philippines, the 2022 National Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) found that 17.5% of Filipino women aged 15–49 had experienced physical, sexual, or emotional violence by an intimate partner at least once (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2022). GBV in the Philippines manifests across varied forms such as physical assault, emotional abuse, economic control, sexual violence, and cultural norms that perpetuate harm (Philippine Commission on Women, 2023).

With the digital transformation underway, online gender-based violence (OGBV) has emerged as an alarming new frontier. The Foundation for Media Alternatives (FMA) documented 56 OGBV cases in the Philippines for the entirety of 2023, including non-consensual image sharing (41.7%), threats/blackmail (22.2%), and cyber prostitution/pornography (14.8%). In 2024, FMA recorded a further 23 new OGBV cases, several originating in Central Visayas, including around three in Cebu Province (Foundation for Media Alternatives, 2024).

Underlying these expressions of GBV are unequal power dynamics, entrenched cultural norms, and systemic gender inequality. Survivors often remain silent due to fear of backlash, economic dependence, or the stigma of being blamed, contributing to significant underreporting. Despite legal protections such as the Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act (RA 9262), many Filipino survivors hesitate to seek help because of distrust in institutions or societal pressure to maintain family reputation (UN Women Philippines, 2022).

Survivor responses and coping mechanisms vary widely depending on cultural background, access to support systems, and perceived safety. Some resort to silence, denial, or avoidance to protect themselves or their loved ones, while others courageously pursue legal and community-

based support. Nevertheless, widespread challenges, such as limited awareness of available services, resource constraints, and institutional shortcomings, often impede these efforts toward recovery and justice (UNFPA, 2021).

Although many countries have strengthened their response to GBV through survivor-centered services, such as safe shelters, psychological support, legal aid, and medical care, numerous developing nations still struggle with service delivery gaps. Survivors frequently encounter judgmental attitudes, bureaucratic obstacles, and disjointed systems that undermine their attempts to obtain holistic care (World Health Organization, 2021).

Gender-based violence is not just a private issue – it is a deep wound in our communities that affects families, weakens social trust, and denies people their right to live with dignity. In Cebu City, as in many parts of the Philippines, countless women, children, and even men continue to face different forms of abuse – physical, emotional, sexual, and online. What makes the problem more painful is that much of it goes unseen. Survivors often remain silent, trapped by fear of stigma, judgment, or retaliation. Others are bound by economic dependence or cultural expectations that normalize violence and discourage speaking out. Behind these realities are survivors who are forced to endure in silence, struggling not only with the harm done to them but also with a society that often fails to fully protect them. Each untold story represents a cry for justice, for safety, and for compassion. It is a reminder that gender-based violence is not only about individual suffering – it is about the collective responsibility of a community to confront injustice and to uphold the rights of its most vulnerable members. And yet, alongside these challenges, Cebu City has also seen the rise of support systems that serve as lifelines for survivors. At the grassroots level, barangay women and children's desks provide a first line of assistance. Government agencies, health institutions, and law enforcement units are mandated to respond, while civil society organizations, faith-based groups, and women's rights advocates continue to fill the gaps by offering shelter, legal aid, counseling, and empowerment programs. These services are not perfect, but they represent important steps toward a stronger, more compassionate response.

Defining sustainability for survivors can be complex as it might include factors like economic stability, mental health well-being, social integration, and freedom from further exploitation, making it difficult to quantify success solely through a single metric. Survivors often face systemic challenges, including unemployment, lack of access to education, mental health struggles, social stigma, and weak institutional support. Despite rehabilitation programs,

many survivors struggle to achieve sustainable reintegration into society. Many organizations working with survivors reports positive outcomes in areas like improved access to legal assistance, shelters, counseling, and skills trainings but why is it still affecting the sustainability of a survivor? By exploring these additional facets, we gain a multi-dimensional view of the reintegration process and the challenges survivors face in achieving long-term sustainability. Understanding these aspects allows us to develop more effective, compassionate, and context-sensitive strategies to support survivors. This is about transforming mindsets, empowering survivors to reclaim their voices, and building communities that refuse to tolerate violence in any form. It is about challenging harmful traditions, breaking the silence, and replacing fear with solidarity. Most of all, it is about creating a culture where respect, equality, and safety are lived realities for everyone. The struggle against gender-based violence is long and difficult, but it is also a struggle filled with hope. Every advocate, every survivor who speaks out, every community that chooses to act instead of staying silent adds to the movement for change. Thus, the unfinished story of “the lost, the least and the last” culminates in more in-depth features of “the found, the favored and the first.”

### **Statement of the Problem**

Gender-based violence persists as a widespread societal issue despite various interventions and laws. Survivors experience not only the immediate consequences of violence but also long-term psychological, social, and economic impacts. Survivors' behaviors, ranging from silence to active help-seeking, are influenced by personal, cultural, and institutional factors. Moreover, while survivor-centered services exist, gaps in accessibility, responsiveness, and coordination remain.

This study aims to address the following objectives:

1. Identify the common patterns and forms of GBV experienced by survivors.
2. Examine the coping behaviors and responses of survivors in the aftermath of GBV.
3. Analyze the challenges survivors face in reporting violence and seeking justice.
4. Evaluate the survivor-centered services available and their adequacy in addressing the needs of GBV victims.
5. Propose insights for strengthening GBV responses based on identified themes.

## **Significance of the Study**

This research is significant for several stakeholders. For survivors, it offers recognition of their experiences and highlights systemic barriers to healing and justice. For policymakers and institutions, it provides evidence of recurring challenges that require more targeted reforms and improved service delivery. For civil society organizations, it identifies opportunities to strengthen survivor-centered approaches and advocacy. Finally, for academia, it contributes to the growing body of knowledge on GBV through a thematic analysis of patterns, behaviors, and service gaps.

## **Scope and Delimitations**

This study focuses on the patterns, forms, survivor behaviors, challenges, and services related to GBV as reflected in existing literature and reports. It does not include first-hand interviews or fieldwork but relies on secondary sources for thematic analysis. While examples may draw from Philippine and global contexts, the findings are not limited to a specific geographic area. The study is delimited to survivors' perspectives and institutional service delivery, excluding perpetrator-focused analysis or criminological profiling.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

#### **Patterns and Forms of Gender-Based Violence**

Gender-based violence (GBV) manifests in multiple patterns and forms that reflect structural inequalities in society. The most common include physical, sexual, psychological,

and economic abuse, each of which may overlap in the lived experiences of survivors (WHO, 2021). Physical and sexual violence often receive the most attention, but psychological forms such as coercive control, intimidation, and harassment are equally damaging, though less visible (Heise & Kotsadam, 2015). Economic abuse, including the restriction of resources, employment, or financial independence, has also been recognized as a controlling mechanism within intimate relationships (Postmus et al., 2020). These forms reveal that GBV is not only an individual act of aggression but also a manifestation of power imbalances and systemic gender discrimination.

## **Forms of Gender – Based Violence**

Gender-based violence takes many forms, and survivors often experience more than one type at the same time. The most common include:

1. Physical Violence – Acts that cause physical harm, injury, or pain.

Examples: hitting, slapping, kicking, choking, burning, use of weapons.

2. Sexual Violence – Any sexual act forced against a person's will, including coercion and exploitation.

Examples: rape, marital rape, sexual harassment, sexual exploitation, child sexual abuse, trafficking for sexual purposes.

3. Psychological/Emotional Violence – Behaviors that cause trauma, fear, humiliation, or loss of self-worth.

Examples: constant criticism, threats, intimidation, verbal abuse, isolation from friends/family.

4. Economic/Financial Violence – Controlling or limiting access to resources to exert power.

Examples: withholding money, preventing a partner from working, taking away earnings, or denying basic needs.

5. Digital/Online Violence (growing in prevalence in the Philippines) - Abuse facilitated through technology and digital platforms.

Examples: non-consensual sharing of intimate images (“revenge porn”), cyberstalking, online harassment, sextortion, and digital surveillance.

## 5. Harmful Traditional or Cultural Practices—Practices that perpetuate inequality and harm under the guise of tradition.

Examples: forced or early marriage, honor-based violence, dowry-related abuse.

### **Patterns of Gender – Based Violence**

Gender – based violence is rarely a single event – it usually follows patterns that reinforce control and dependency:

#### **1. Cycle of Violence**

Tension Building → abuser becomes irritable, controlling, or threatening.

Incident → physical, sexual, or emotional abuse occurs.

Reconciliation/Honeymoon → abuser apologizes, promises change, shows affection.

Calm → temporary peace before the cycle restarts.

#### **2. Escalation Over Time**

Violence often begins with verbal/emotional abuse and escalates to physical or sexual violence.

#### **3. Intergenerational Transmission**

Children who witness or experience GBV are at higher risk of becoming victims or perpetrators later in life.

#### **4. Normalization and Silence**

Survivors may stay silent due to stigma, fear, financial dependence, or community pressure. This allows abuse to continue unchecked.

#### **5. Power and Control**

Across all forms, the pattern is rooted in maintaining dominance, using intimidation, isolation, and dependency to limit the survivor’s choices.

Gender-based violence is not random – it is systematic and patterned. At its core, it is about power, control, and inequality, reinforced by cultural norms and social structures.

## **SOCIO – ECONOMIC IMPACTS ON SURVIVORS**

Gender-based violence is not only a violation of human rights but also a critical development issue with far-reaching consequences on individuals, families, and communities. Survivors often carry the burden of physical and psychological harm, but beyond this, GBV creates lasting socio-economic impacts that hinder personal growth, disrupt livelihoods, and perpetuate cycles of poverty and inequality. In Cebu City and across the Philippines, these impacts are compounded by cultural stigma, inadequate support systems, and systemic barriers to justice and recovery.

### **Loss of Income and Productivity**

Survivors of GBV often experience absenteeism, job loss, or reduced work performance due to trauma and physical injuries. Many are forced to abandon their jobs entirely when abuse spills into the workplace or when abusers deliberately sabotage employment opportunities. This results in income loss and contributes to economic dependency on perpetrators. Survivors often miss work or school due to injuries, trauma, or stigma. Some are forced to leave jobs entirely. This leads to loss of wages, stalled careers, and poverty.

Example: The USWAG Association (Group of experiential advocates/ survivor advocates which is funded by the MERCY SISTERS) partnered with VERITA CORE INC. (a BPO Company) for us to refer the women/girls for a livelihood. After weeks of training with salary, all of a sudden, the women/girls would not come back and when we follow up the girls, it started that they are ashamed to go to work because they have black eyes, injuries, and some will not go to work because they are experiencing mental health disorder. Unfortunately, the company closed and another management took over but they will not accept the women/girls anymore.

### **Employment Barriers**

Abusers may sabotage employment by preventing survivors from working, stalking them at the workplace, or withholding transportation money. Survivors may also face discrimination when employers learn about their situation.

Example: USWAG Association often encounters cases like this. The partner perpetrator will go to the workplace and will fetch the women/girls. We have referred a lot to DalangpananInc. (Another partner company who train the women/girls in fashion accessories making) but only a few lasts long because of this reason.

### **Healthcare Costs**

Survivors spend significantly on medical care for injuries, reproductive health complications, and long-term psychological services. These costs can push families into debt or deeper poverty.

Example: We have the Cebu City Health Department assisting us in terms of medical check-ups and hygienes but we don't have the financial resources to be used in the transporation and buying the medicines so the women/girls will not continue taking the medication anymore.

### **Generational Poverty**

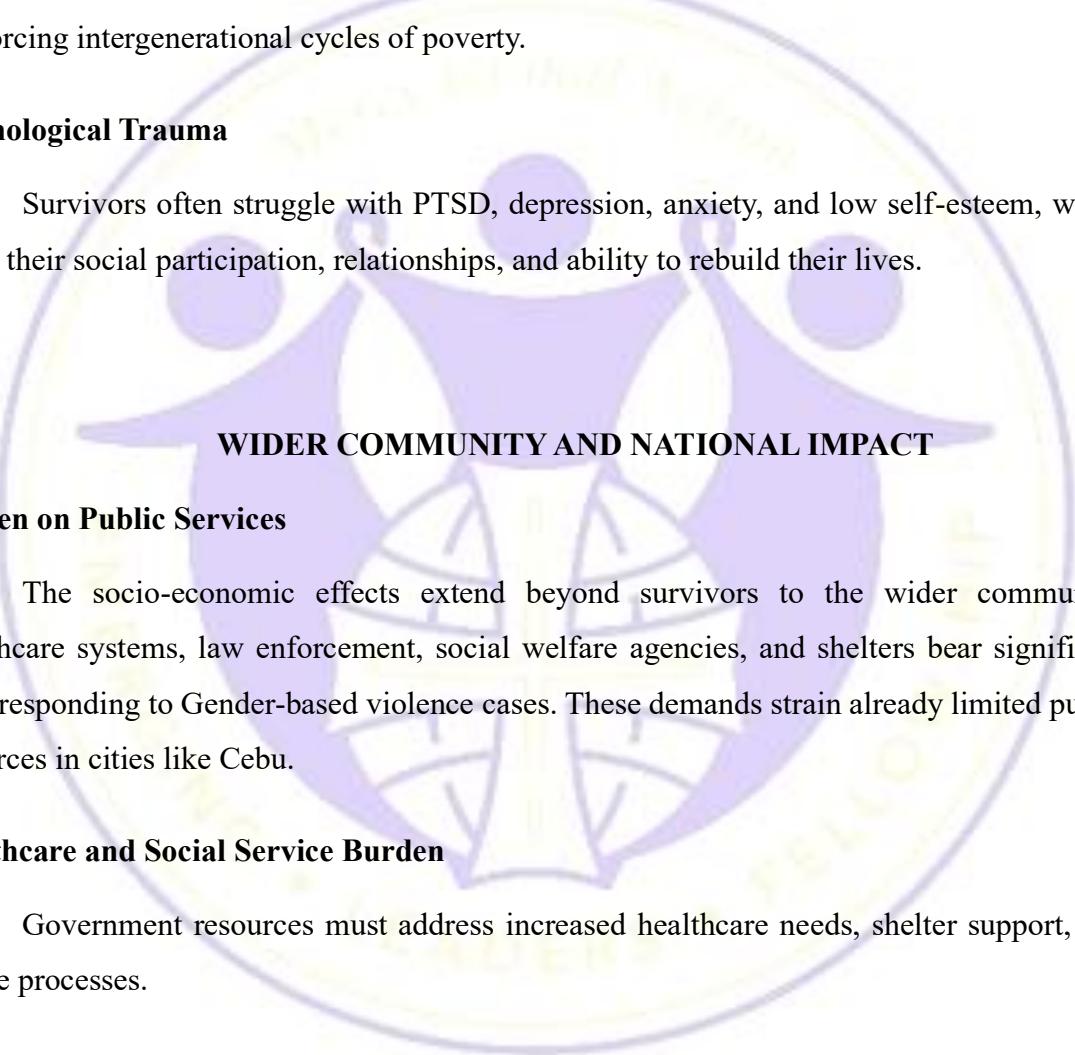
Gender-based violence destabilizes families, affecting children's emotional well-being and academic performance. Children who witness violence often suffer long-term trauma and are more likely to repeat patterns of abuse in adulthood, either as victims or perpetrators, perpetuating intergenerational cycles of violence. Children of survivors often suffer disrupted education, malnutrition, and trauma, perpetuating cycles of poverty and vulnerability.

## **SOCIAL IMPACTS ON SURVIVORS**

### **Stigma and Isolation**

Survivors frequently encounter victim-blaming ("Why didn't you leave?") and discrimination within families, workplaces, and communities. Such stigma discourages reporting and isolates survivors from essential networks of support, further limiting their economic and social participation. Survivors may face victim-blaming or shame from family and community. This leads to social isolation and reluctance to seek help. Sometimes, the agency or center workers also blames the victims and when they commit mistakes, they will remind them of their past issues that is why some of the survivors do not build trust.

### **Breakdown of Family Structures**



Abuse destabilizes households, affecting children's mental health, trust, and development. Some families are forced apart when survivors seek shelter or leave unsafe homes.

### **Loss of Education**

Young survivors, particularly girls, often drop out of school due to stigma, pregnancy from sexual violence, or the need to support their families financially. Educational disruption translates into fewer opportunities for skills development and long-term employment, reinforcing intergenerational cycles of poverty.

### **Psychological Trauma**

Survivors often struggle with PTSD, depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem, which affect their social participation, relationships, and ability to rebuild their lives.

## **WIDER COMMUNITY AND NATIONAL IMPACT**

### **Burden on Public Services**

The socio-economic effects extend beyond survivors to the wider community. Healthcare systems, law enforcement, social welfare agencies, and shelters bear significant costs responding to Gender-based violence cases. These demands strain already limited public resources in cities like Cebu.

### **Healthcare and Social Service Burden**

Government resources must address increased healthcare needs, shelter support, and justice processes.

### **Reduced Workforce Participation**

When survivors cannot work or reach their potential, communities lose valuable skills and economic productivity.

## **INTERGENERATIONAL IMPACT**

## **Loss of Human Capital**

Survivors diminished participation in education, work, and community life translates into a loss of skills, talent, and innovation. When a portion of the population is unable to fully contribute due to violence, economic growth and social progress are undermined.

## **Poverty and Inequality**

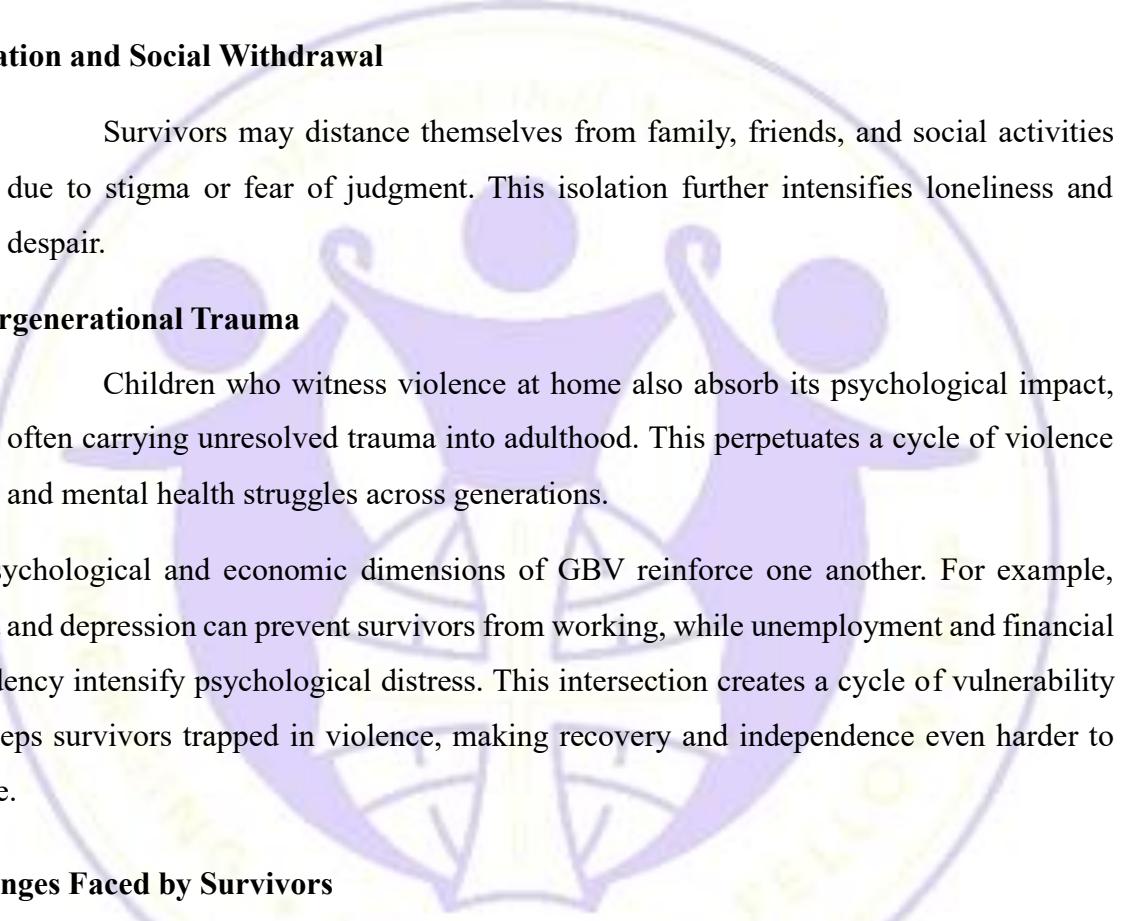
Gender-based violence perpetuates cycles of poverty by keeping survivors economically dependent and socially marginalized. Women face structural inequalities that limit access to decent work, property ownership, and financial independence – conditions that abusers exploit to maintain control. Children who witness GBV are more likely to experience or perpetrate violence as adults, creating cycles of trauma and inequality that hinder social development.

## **BEHAVIORAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT**

The consequences of GBV extend beyond the immediate act of violence, significantly influencing survivors' behaviors, coping mechanisms, and mental health. Studies have shown that survivors may exhibit withdrawal, avoidance, or heightened vigilance due to trauma and fear of re-victimization (Campbell, 2002). Anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and self-blame are common psychological outcomes that affect both daily functioning and long-term well-being (Dillon et al., 2013). Survivors often adopt adaptive behaviors, such as silence or compliance, to minimize further harm, though these coping strategies can inadvertently reinforce cycles of abuse. This highlights the need to understand survivor behaviors not as passivity but as resilience and survival strategies in contexts of violence.

Gender-based violence leaves survivors with scars that extend far beyond the immediate harm of abuse. Its impacts are both psychological and economic, shaping the lives of survivors long after the violence ends. In communities such as Cebu City, where poverty, cultural stigma, and systemic gaps persist, these effects often compound, trapping survivors in cycles of trauma and dependence. Understanding these dimensions is crucial for building effective support systems and policies that promote healing and empowerment.

### **1. Trauma and Mental Health Disorders**



Survivors often suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and anxiety. The constant fear and exposure to violence can lead to nightmares, flashbacks, and hypervigilance, severely affecting daily functioning.

## 2. Low Self-Esteem and Loss of Identity

Emotional abuse and controlling behaviors erode a survivor's sense of self-worth. Many internalize the blame for their situation, leading to guilt, shame, and helplessness.

## 3. Isolation and Social Withdrawal

Survivors may distance themselves from family, friends, and social activities due to stigma or fear of judgment. This isolation further intensifies loneliness and despair.

## 4. Intergenerational Trauma

Children who witness violence at home also absorb its psychological impact, often carrying unresolved trauma into adulthood. This perpetuates a cycle of violence and mental health struggles across generations.

The psychological and economic dimensions of GBV reinforce one another. For example, trauma and depression can prevent survivors from working, while unemployment and financial dependency intensify psychological distress. This intersection creates a cycle of vulnerability that keeps survivors trapped in violence, making recovery and independence even harder to achieve.

## Challenges Faced by Survivors

Despite the availability of services in many contexts, survivors frequently encounter barriers in disclosing abuse and seeking support. Fear of stigma, victim-blaming attitudes, financial dependence, and cultural expectations of silence discourage survivors from speaking out (Yoshihama, 2002). In patriarchal societies, these challenges are compounded by systemic inequalities that normalize violence and prioritize family reputation over individual safety (Jewkes et al., 2015). Furthermore, institutional challenges such as inadequate law enforcement response, lack of sensitivity in service providers, and limited resources further hinder effective support. These barriers underscore the complexity of survivor decision-making and the importance of survivor-centered interventions.

## Service Utilization and Gaps in Support Systems

While many survivors recognize the potential benefits of available services, actual utilization often remains limited. Research has found that even when survivors are aware of services, mistrust in institutions and fear of secondary victimization—being judged, dismissed, or retraumatized—deter them from seeking help (Meyer, 2010). Moreover, service delivery is frequently fragmented, with shelters, hotlines, healthcare, and legal aid operating in silos rather than through integrated support systems (Goodman & Smyth, 2011). This fragmentation contributes to dropouts in the help-seeking process, leaving survivors vulnerable and unsupported. These gaps reflect the need for more holistic, survivor-centered models that acknowledge the interplay of individual, social, and structural barriers.

## Available Survivor Services and Interventions

Globally and locally, various interventions have been developed to address the needs of GBV survivors, ranging from immediate protection to long-term empowerment. Shelters and safe houses provide temporary refuge, while hotlines offer immediate crisis support and referral pathways (UN Women, 2020). Psychosocial services, including counseling and trauma therapy, play a crucial role in addressing the emotional impacts of violence. Legal aid ensures survivors can navigate justice systems, though accessibility remains uneven. More recently, livelihood programs and economic empowerment initiatives have been recognized as essential for helping survivors rebuild independence and break cycles of dependency (Vyas & Watts, 2009). However, despite these efforts, many interventions remain underfunded and inaccessible, particularly in low-resource settings. This points to the urgent need for scaling up comprehensive, sustainable, and survivor-focused services that bridge the gaps identified in earlier discussions.

## CHAPTER IV

### COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS AND STIGMA

Gender-based violence is not only pervasive—affecting an estimated one in five Filipino women aged 15–49 over their lifetime—it is often reinforced by cultural norms that silence survivors. Yet societal attitudes frequently discourage disclosure and help-seeking,

entrenching cycles of violence and isolation. Understanding these perceptions and how they create stigma is vital for designing community-based interventions, especially in local settings like Cebu City.

### **Understanding Stigma and Community Dynamics**

Based on social norms theory and stigma research, several factors shape community perceptions:

#### **Victim-Blaming and the Culture of “Family Honor”**

There is a pervasive expectation in many Filipino communities that a woman or girl should keep violence within the home to protect family honor. This contributes to shame and discourages reporting; survivors are often seen as tarnishing the family's reputation.

#### **Patriarchal Norms and Gendered Expectations**

Traditional gender roles—men as household heads, women as subservient – are frequently reinforced. Such beliefs can normalize violence, for example, by casting intimate partner abuse as a private issue or justifying it as corrective behavior.

#### **Fear of Reprisal and Social Exclusion**

Survivors often fear being ostracized, not believed, or being labeled "marumingbabae" ("dirty woman"), hindering their willingness to speak out.

Globally, only a small fraction—around 7%—of GBV survivors report to formal institutions, often due to stigma, fear of not being believed, or concerns over confidentiality. In the Philippine context, about 41% of victims reportedly do not seek help.

#### **Stigma in Action**

Stigma manifests through internalized shame and societal traumatization – where survivors face judgment from insiders rather than support.

#### **Impacts on Help-Seeking Behavior**

Women in more traditional or lower-income communities tend to delay or avoid reporting abuse due to economic dependence, cultural expectations, or fear of retaliation.



## CHAPTER V

### POLICY LANDSCAPE IN CEBU CITY

Barangay-Level VAW Desks. Under the Barangay Violence Against Women (VAW) Desk system (mandated by national guidelines.) Each barangay is required to establish a

frontline support facility for survivors. These desks receive reports, issue Barangay Protection Orders, and initiate referrals for further help.

**City-Level Social Welfare Services** Cebu City's Department of Social Welfare and Services (DSWS) serves as an essential local institutional hub. It provides direct assistance, referral coordination, and case management services for survivors of domestic violence and other forms of GBV.

**City Ordinances Targeting GBV.** According to Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) Region VII, Cebu City has enacted 11 city ordinances related to GBV and women's welfare, though specific details of each ordinance are not outlined in accessible sources.

**Community Campaigns & Local Government Engagement** 18-Day Campaign to End Violence Against Women. The Cebu City Council has actively supported observance of the 18-Day Campaign to End Violence Against Women, signaling political and civic commitment to raising awareness and reinforcing policy efforts.

**Multi-Sectoral Community Initiatives** Historical NGO-led surveys revealed that up to six out of ten women in Cebu City reported experiencing battering or sexual abuse. In response, a multi-sectoral initiative "Community Initiatives and Partnerships to Respond to VAW and Other Gender Concerns" was launched to address and mitigate GBV through collective actions.

**Summary of Policy Landscape Policy Domain Current Status in Cebu City** Barangay-Level Support Mandatory VAW Desks in barangays to manage initial screening, protection orders, and referrals.

**City Social Services** Cebu City DSWS offers key survivor support and coordinates with barangay desks and other agencies.

**Local Legislation** eleven city ordinances addressing GBV and related women's issues, though specific provisions are not publicly detailed. Awareness & Response Engagement in national campaigns (e.g., 18-Day Campaign) and multi-sectoral partnerships signals local government's supportive stance.

### **Gaps, Opportunities & Next Steps Transparency and Accessibility:**

The lack of detailed public information on specific ordinances limits public understanding of survivors' rights and avenues for support.

### **Enhanced Coordination:**

Clearer collaboration between barangay desks, DSWS, law enforcement, healthcare, and NGOs can streamline response and improve survivor outcomes.

### **Capacity Building:**

Ensuring barangay officials, social workers, and local leaders receive trauma-informed training can reinforce the effectiveness of services offered.

### **Public Engagement:**

Sustained advocacy, community dialogues, and survivor-centered campaigns can help strengthen societal support and reinforce policy mechanisms.



## **CHAPTER VI**

### **INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT MECHANISMS**

#### **National-Level Frameworks & Standard**

**Magna Carta of Women (RA 9710)** — Enacted in 2009, this landmark law mandates systemic support for women's rights, including GBV survivors. It institutionalizes protections across government bodies and ensures gender-responsive policies at all levels.

### **Barangay, Police, Healthcare, and Social Welfare Units**

The national policy framework calls for the establishment of Women and Children Protection Desks at barangays, police stations, hospitals, and social welfare offices, providing immediate access to assistance, reporting, and referrals.

### **Safe Spaces Act (RA 11313)**

This legislation addresses harassment in public and online spaces, reinforcing legal protection against gender-based public aggression.

### **DOH-Designed GBV Training Curriculum**

The Department of Health's Task Force on Social Science and Reproductive Health has developed integrated GBV training modules for medical and nursing students. These cover early detection, legal procedures, referral systems, and post-GBV reintegration.

### **Local Government and City-Level Support – Cebu City**

**Implementation of Barangay VAW Desks** — In Cebu City, barangays establish VAW desks to serve as first responders: recording complaints, issuing Barangay Protection Orders, and facilitating referrals to broader support networks.

### **City Social Welfare Services**

The Cebu City Department of Social Welfare and Services (DSWS) plays a central role in managing case intake, coordinating care, and linking survivors to legal, medical, and psychosocial resources.

### **Civil Society and NGO Contributions**

**International Justice Mission** — Provides counseling, legal help, and community-based advocacy tailored to survivors of rape, domestic violence, and broader VAW issues.

**Villa Maria Good Shepherd Sisters, Inc. with USWAG Association** — Offer shelter, trauma-informed care, referrals, and peer support for survivors of sexual violence.

**Friends of the Poor and the Marginalized (SVDs Fr. Heinz Kulueke and Bro. Paulino Bongcaras)** — A grassroots NGO delivering primary services to women and children, including GBV survivors, serving marginalized communities across Metro Cebu.

**Bantay Bata 163**— Though child-focused, its services benefit GBV survivors in cases involving children. The program provides emergency hotlines, counseling, and collaboration with social welfare departments.

**Everfree Philippines (formerly Paglaum Training International)**— Offers economic empowerment services for under resourced people, including victims of GBV.

### **Capacity Building & Community Awareness Programs**

Paralegal Training on GBV – Local initiatives, such as those organized by the Commission on Human Rights in Central Visayas, train community stakeholders including barangay workers and volunteers on human rights and GBV response.

### **Gender and Development Local Learning Hubs –**

The Philippine Commission on Women(PCW) supports Visayas-based learning hubs to improve local governance on GBV response, resource-sharing, and capacity building.

### **Referral Pathways & Multi-Sector Coordination**

The national “policy and institutional mapping” report outlines a multi-tiered referral structure:

Cases begin at barangay desks, escalate through police, social welfare, or health services.

Survivors are then directed to medical, legal, and prosecutorial systems, ensuring an integrated, survivor-centered pathway.

## **CHAPTER VII**

### **ECONOMIC REINTEGRATION STRATEGIES**

#### **Skills Training and Livelihood Development**

**Vocational and Technical Training:** Survivors can be equipped with practical skills in areas like food processing, tailoring, digital literacy, or hospitality services – industries that have employment opportunities in urban centers like Cebu.

### **Entrepreneurship Programs**

Small business training combined with financial literacy empowers survivors to build sustainable livelihoods. Local cooperatives or women's associations can provide mentorship and peer support.

### **Accredited Certifications**

Linking survivors to TESDA (Technical Education and Skills Development Authority) certification programs increases employability and formal sector opportunities.

### **Access to Employment Opportunities**

**Job Placement Programs:** Partnerships with private companies, NGOs, and local businesses to guarantee safe, gender-sensitive employment opportunities.

### **Workplace Sensitization**

Training employers to support survivors, ensure non-discrimination, and provide flexible arrangements during reintegration.

### **Public Employment Services**

Strengthening ties with the Public Employment Service Office (PESO) in Cebu to prioritize GBV survivors for job referrals.

### **Financial Inclusion and Support**

**Microfinance and Start-up Capital:** Small loans, grants, or seed funds to help survivors start micro-enterprises.

### **Savings Groups and Cooperatives**

Community-based savings initiatives allow survivors to pool resources, reduce vulnerability, and build financial resilience.

### **Banking Access**

Encouraging survivors to open accounts for financial independence, with assistance in overcoming documentation barriers.

### **Social Protection and Government Assistance**

**Cash Transfer Programs:** Survivors may access social safety nets such as the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps), emergency cash assistance, or livelihood subsidies through the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD).

**Shelter-to-Work Pathways:** Shelters and crisis centers should integrate economic reintegration plans, ensuring survivors transition smoothly into independent living.

**Legal and Labor Protection:** Enforcing anti-discrimination laws and workplace protections to ensure survivors are not re-victimized in employment settings.

### **Psycho-Economic Support**

**Trauma-Informed Economic Empowerment:** Programs must combine psychosocial healing with livelihood training, recognizing that trauma affects confidence and productivity.

**Peer Support Networks:** Survivor groups provide not just emotional healing but also collective opportunities for entrepreneurship and advocacy.

**Mentorship Models:** Linking survivors with women leaders, entrepreneurs, or professionals who can model resilience and offer guidance.

### **Community and Multi-Sector Collaboration**

**Local Government Initiatives:** Cebu City's barangay and city social welfare offices can coordinate reintegration through partnerships with TESDA, PESO, and private businesses.

**NGO and CSO Engagement:** Civil society groups like Villa Maria Good Shepherd Sisters, Inc. with USWAG Association have existing advocacy and training models that can be scaled up for economic empowerment.

**Faith-Based and Community Organizations:** Churches and civic groups can provide both financial assistance and moral support for survivors' reintegration.

## **CHAPTER VIII**

### **CASE STUDIES IN SURVIVOR EMPOWERMENT**

#### **Narrative Resilience: Survivors' Social Construction of IPV**

Survivors actively reconstruct their experiences to foster empowerment. By reframing their traumatic narratives, individuals not only overcome intimate violence but also reclaim autonomy over their lives. The study emphasizes tailoring support to individual needs, recognizing that each survivor's empowerment journey is unique. Empowerment is deeply personal, structured narrative reframing can serve as a powerful tool to help survivors transition from victimization to healing.

### **Inner Strength and Coping Strategies:**

Survivors harness their inner strength – guided by aspirations like peace ("pag sinabtanay"), unity ("panag-hiusa"), and hope for a better future for their children, to cope and survive. Their resilience was grounded in faith, maternal love, and relentless hope. Cultural values and personal aspirations can be powerful motivators for survivors. Empowerment initiatives should honor these deeply held sources of strength.

### **Grassroots Empowerment in Action**

Based in Cebu City, NGOs like Friends of the Poor and the Marginalized, JPIC – IDC, Inc., Villa Maria Good Shepherd Sisters, Inc. has for decades provided multifunctional support to GBV survivors through organizing, education, and services. Their efforts include:

Empowering grassroots women through awareness-raising and leadership training.

Offering legal aid, counseling, and referrals for survivors.

Facilitating livelihood programs like handicrafts and accessory-making to promote economic independence.

Responding to disasters by providing rehabilitation support.

The integration of psychosocial support, livelihood opportunities, and legal aid empowers survivors holistically, enhancing both resilience and sustainability.

Facilitating survivor-focused livelihood programs aimed at fostering independence. Combining advocacy with practical tools like training manuals and livelihood support enhances both survivor recovery and frontline response quality.

## **CHAPTER IX**

### **THE PROPOSAL**

#### **PODCAST PROPOSAL**

## Title: SUSTAINABILITY OF GBV SURVIVORS

### Introduction

This podcast series aims to shed light on gender-based violence (GBV) in Cebu City and the Philippines by weaving together research, survivor stories, expert insights, and community initiatives. Through storytelling and dialogue, the podcast will amplify survivor voices, break down stigma, and highlight pathways toward healing and empowerment.

### Objectives

1. Raise Awareness – Expose the prevalence and forms of GBV in Cebu City and across the Philippines.
2. Challenge Stigma – Tackle harmful community perceptions and normalize survivor-centered conversations.
3. Promote Empowerment – Showcase case studies of survivors, grassroots initiatives, and institutional support.
4. Educate & Advocate – Provide knowledge about policies, reintegration strategies, and support mechanisms.
5. Foster Solidarity – Inspire community members, policymakers, and advocates to work collectively against GBV.

### Target Audience

Survivors and their support networks

Local communities in Cebu and across the Philippines

Advocates, NGOs, and social workers

Policymakers, law enforcement, and local government units

Students and young leaders passionate about gender equality

### Podcast Format

Style: Documentary-style storytelling combined with conversational interviews

Length: 20 minutes per episode

Frequency: Weekly (1 episode per month)

Tone: Empathetic, empowering, community-driven

## **Proposed Episode Guide**

Season 1: Breaking the Silence

### **Episode 1 – The Face of GBV in Cebu City**

Discuss prevalence, forms, and patterns of GBV.

Feature data from national and local studies.

Include testimony from a survivor (with consent).

### **Episode 2 – The Hidden Wounds: Psychological & Economic Impacts**

Focus on trauma, stigma, and economic struggles survivors face.

Interview with a psychologist or social worker.

### **Episode 3 – Voices Against Silence: Community Perceptions and Stigma**

Explore how community norms shape survivor experiences.

Use street interviews or focus group clips to show perceptions.

### **Episode 4 – Institutions that Care**

Spotlight barangay VAW desks, Cebu City DSWS, NGOs like Villa Maria Good Shepherd Sistres and USWAG.

Interview government officials and NGO workers.

### **Episode 5 – From Survival to Empowerment: Case Studies in Cebu**

Share real-life stories (e.g., from research and local centers).

Show how survivors find resilience and inner strength.

### **Episode 6 – Pathways to Freedom: Economic Reintegration**

Highlight livelihood programs, microfinance, and skills training.

Interview with TESDA/PESO officer and a survivor who built a business.

## **Episode 7 – Advocacy in Action: Building a Culture of Safety**

Discuss campaigns like the Orange Walk, the 18-Day Campaign, and Zonta initiatives.

Showcase how communities can get involved.

## **Episode 8 – Looking Forward: A Cebu City Free from GBV**

Panel discussion with survivors, policymakers, and advocates.

Call-to-action for community solidarity and policy reform.

### **Partnerships & Collaboration**

Government Units: Cebu City DSWS, Barangay VAW Desks, Commission on Human Rights Region VII.

NGOs/CSOs: Women's Resource Center of Visayas (WRCV), GABRIELA, Zonta Club Cebu II, Visayan Forum.

Academia: University of San Carlos (for research input).

Media Partners: Local radio stations, online platforms, and youth networks for wider reach.

### **Expected Outcomes**

Increased awareness of GBV and its impacts in Cebu City.

Greater understanding of survivor empowerment strategies.

Strengthened linkages between survivors, institutions, and communities.

Mobilization of youth, advocates, and policymakers to push for systemic change.

### **Distribution**

Platforms: Spotify, Apple Podcasts, YouTube, Facebook Live (for wider reach).

### **Promotion:**

Social media campaigns, partnerships with local orgs, schools, and advocacy networks.

**SUSTAINABILITY OF GBV SURVIVORS** seeks to transform how communities perceive gender-based violence shifting the narrative from silence and stigma to empowerment and collective action. By amplifying survivor voices and highlighting both struggles and solutions, the podcast will serve as both an advocacy tool and a platform of hope for Cebu and beyond.



## **CHAPTER X**

### **SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

#### **SUMMARY:**

This research inspires me to create a version of how we will be heard and will go along with what social media has to offer, and the exposures we have during live events in YouTube and radio stations. This podcast interview explores the critical topic of the sustainability of gender-based violence survivors, the challenges and mechanisms focusing on the long-term reintegration, resilience of survivors into the society. There have been a lot of efforts to address

the issue, often immediate action and legal process, but limited focus on sustainability. Through interviews of the survivors, this highlights the key challenges survivors face including economic dependence, social stigma, mental health struggles, and gaps in support systems. The podcast interview also will provide us the mechanisms that promote sustainable recovery, such as access to education, livelihood programs, and community-based support. By hearing survivor voices and best practices, this podcast aims to inform the advocates and service providers to contribute to a survivor-centered approach that will ensure not just survival but long-term healing, empowerment, and reintegration for gender-based violence survivors.

## **FINDINGS:**

GBV in Cebu City is deeply rooted in cultural, economic, and gender inequalities, with survivors facing multi-layered challenges. Survivors experience severe psychological and socio-economic consequences, often compounded by stigma and community silence. While there is a strong policy framework in place, implementation is uneven, and survivors often lack trust in institutions. Institutional and NGO-led interventions have provided important lifelines, but economic empowerment and stigma reduction remain critical gaps. Survivor empowerment is most successful when it combines legal protection, psychosocial care, economic reintegration, and community support.

## **CONCLUSION:**

The psychological and economic impacts of gender-based violence are inseparable and deeply intertwined. Survivors are not only burdened with emotional scars but also with structural inequalities that limit their ability to rebuild their lives. Addressing GBV requires holistic interventions—counseling, trauma-informed healthcare, livelihood programs, and financial empowerment—that prioritize the dignity and resilience of survivors. Only by tackling both psychological and economic barriers can communities like Cebu City create lasting pathways toward healing, independence, and justice. Addressing GBV requires more than emergency interventions—it demands systemic reforms that combine legal protection, economic empowerment, psychosocial support, and community-based advocacy. By strengthening survivor-centered mechanisms and addressing the structural roots of inequality, Cebu City and the Philippines at large can begin to break the vicious cycle of violence and poverty.

Stigma and problematic community perceptions are formidable barriers for GBV survivors, silencing voices and limiting access to justice. By understanding how norms like

victim-blaming, family honor, and patriarchal expectations operate locally, in places like Cebu City, researchers and advocates can target interventions more effectively. A combined empirical and community-driven approach can begin dismantling stigma and fostering environments where GBV survivors are heard, believed, and supported.

Cebu City's policy landscape for GBV survivors reflects a foundational framework combining national mandates, city-level service delivery, local ordinances, and community-driven awareness efforts. While this demonstrates strong intent and institutional presence, further transparency, enhanced implementation, and community engagement are key to ensuring these structures truly serve survivors.

Cebu City benefits from a robust national GBV policy framework supported by layered institutional mechanisms – from grassroots barangay desks to city social welfare services. NGOs fill critical gaps through direct services, while national strategies are supported through health sector training and coordinated referral systems. Opportunities for strengthening the system include:

Enhancing collaboration across municipal services and NGOs,

Expanding training for frontline responders,

Increasing public awareness of survivor rights and available services,

Monitoring effectiveness at each stage of the referral chain.

Economic reintegration is not just about restoring income—it is about restoring agency, dignity, and independence. For GBV survivors in Cebu City and across the Philippines, sustainable reintegration strategies must blend skills training, employment opportunities, financial inclusion, social protection, and psychosocial healing. Ultimately, survivor-centered programs that bridge economic empowerment with community solidarity are the strongest tools to break the cycle of violence and ensure lasting resilience.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

### **Norm-Shifting Campaigns**

Engage religious, barangay, and youth leaders to reshape harmful norms—like emphasizing that GBV is a crime, not a private family matter.

### **Survivor-Centered Messaging**

Promote stories of courage and healing. Encourage language that affirms survivor dignity rather than blaming behaviors.

### **Community Dialogue Initiatives**

Create safe spaces through Civil Service Organizations or schools where GBV can be discussed openly to weaken stigma and build collective accountability.

### **Training First Responders**

Equip barangay officials, teachers, and frontline workers with understanding of trauma, confidentiality, and local referral pathways

This research underscores a vital lesson: Empowerment is multi-dimensional. Effective survivor support blends personal resilience, social support, economic opportunity, and institutional tools. For meaningful change, programs must be culturally responsive, survivor-driven, and supported by community networks.

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By: SR. MARY SOLEDAD L. PERPIÑAN, RGS

Third World Movement Against the Exploitation of Women

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**CENTERS:**

Villa Maria Good Shepherd Sisters, Inc.

USWAG Association

Everfree Philippines Inc.

# APPENDICES



## **PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM**

### **Sustainability of Gender-Based Violence Survivors: Challenges and Mechanisms**

Researcher: JEWELLYN M. ENEMECIO

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#### **Purpose of the Research**

You are invited to take part in this research project, which aims to understand the challenges faced by survivors of gender-based violence and the strategies that help them build

sustainable, independent lives. Your story and insights may help shape better programs, policies, and public awareness.

### **What Participation Involves**

**Interview:** You will be asked about your personal experiences, challenges, and recovery journey.

**Recording:** With your permission, the interview may be audio- or video-recorded for accuracy.

**Use of Information:** Your contributions may be included in research papers, presentations, podcasts, or publications, in ways that protect your identity unless you choose to be named.

### **Your Rights**

Participation is voluntary — you may stop at any time without any negative consequences.

You may choose not to answer any question you do not wish to discuss.

You may request changes or removal of your information before final publication.

You may choose how you want to be identified: (please put check on the box)

- Use my real name
- Use a pseudonym (false name)
- Keep my contribution anonymous

### **Risks and Support**

Talking about past experiences may cause emotional distress. You are encouraged to pause or stop the interview at any time. If you wish, we can connect you with free counseling or support services.

### **Confidentiality**

Your information will be stored securely and only used for the purposes you agree to. If pseudonyms or anonymity are chosen, identifying details will be removed from any public materials.

### **Consent**

By signing this form, you confirm that:

- You understand the purpose of this project.
- You have had a chance to ask questions.
- You freely agree to take part.

Signature of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Participant (printed): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Researcher: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Optional Permissions

Please tick any that you agree to:

- My interview may be recorded.
- My quotes may be used in publications.
- My photo/video may be used (only with separate visual consent).

### GLOSSARY OF TERMS:

**BPO** – Business Process Outsourcing

**DILG** – Department of Interior and Local Government

**DSWD** – Department of Social Work and Development

**DSWS** – Department of Social Welfare and Development

**GBV** – Gender Based Violence

**IJM** – International Justice Mission

**NGO** – Non-Government Organization

**TESDA** – Technical Education and Skills Development Authority

**USWAG** – United Services for Women Advocates of the Good Shepherd's Association

**VAW** – Violence Against Women

**VAWC** – Violence Against Women and Children

