

PhilHealth XII observes Women's Month with activities

By: Hannah Naanep, Public Affairs Unit, PRO XII

To honor and empower women in the workplace within the purview of gender equality and inclusive society, PhilHealth XII through its Gender and Development (GAD) Committee conducted a series of activities for the entire month of March.



GAD PhilHealth XII Committee Members during the Outreach activity at the South Cotabato Rehabilitation and Detention Center, City of Koronadal on March 10, 2023

The celebration began with a Thanksgiving Mass followed by the presentation of guidelines and mechanics for various contests, such as digital poster and slogan making contest, Inter-Division Quiz Bee, and singing contest for the female category. The activities lined-up for the month-long celebration were also unveiled.

Koronadal City Councilor Ellen Subere-Albios served as guest speaker during the singing and digital poster and slogan-making contests held on March, which coincided with the International Women's Day. In her speech, she remarked that filling the gender gap is hard because gender inequality and the resulting discrimination of women are deeply rooted in history, culture and tradition.

This issue according to her has been detrimental to women's mental health and persists as a weakening stigma, which lowers women's dignity and sense of self-worth. "I hope none in the audience experienced nor heard *"wag ka na mag-aral, mag-aasawa ka lang din naman"* from



Women in purple during the Women's Month Celebration in March 2023 at PhilHealth XII

their parents while growing up. Because our education will set us up for better job opportunities and income in the future," she said.

"Achieving gender equality will have a significant positive impact in the world when women are given equal education," she added. As a government official and a legislator, she stressed that the community needs every one's help to face and overcome adversity in terms of implementing, enforcing, and maintaining key programs to eliminate gender inequality in the country. She likewise asked the audience's support to work hand in hand to achieve, *"Gender equality in an inclusive society"*.

In adherence to the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW) campaign and highlight the idea of gender equality, the committee also required all employees to wear anything purple every Wednesday during the Women's Month. Those who complied received special recognition.

Emily C. Bismar, PhilHealth XII GAD Focal Point Person on the other hand, conducted Gender Sensitivity orientation to the newly hired personnel and motivated them to ensure balanced participation of men and women as public service providers and public servants, consider parity system, strengthen collaboration with everyone and encouraged both gender to become empowered GAD advocates in all social institutions.



Residents of St. Vincent Strambi - Home for the Aged in Gen. Santos City participating in a special number during the program on March 24, 2023

Bismar challenged them to make affirmative actions and measures to streamline advocacies regarding women's empowerment on volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity or popularly known as VUCA.

Also part of the month-long celebration is the Outreach Program to some 60 Women Deprived of Liberty at the South Cotabato Rehabilitation and Detention Center. Through the committee, selected women inmates received toiletries, slippers, lingerie, towels, alcohol, facemasks, coffee and energy drinks. South Cotabato Jail Warden, Senior Jail Officer Lory Celeste thanked PhilHealth XII for the visit.

Weeks prior to the closing ceremony, the committee along with Local Health Insurance Office (LHIO) Gen. Santos officers had another outreach activity at St. Vincent Strambi - Home for the Aged in Gen. Santos City. Strambi residents received individually wrapped goodies with food supplements such as multi-vitamins, Ascorbic Acid, and B-complex; powdered milk, fresh eggs, crackers, instant oats, towels, slippers, body wash, baby powder and detergent powder.

Elizabeth T. Esmeres, one of the social workers assigned with them thanked PhilHealth XII for the visit along with the Philippine National Police Regional Office XII personnel.

A speaker from Sultan State University, Susie Dumajel – Daza, also graced the celebration. According to her *"The Philippines, compared with other countries, has a higher gender index and all the efforts done by women is all worth it,"*

She lauded how PhilHealth XII has given value to the lives of women in the community and challenged the team to sustain these activities. *"Keep doing them not only during Women's Month. Take them as best practice in your organization. Gender equality does not only mean uplifting women but also men,"* she added.



L-R: Emily C. Bismar, Human Resource Unit Head; Merlie C. Sabug, MPA-Management Services Division Chief; Dr. Antoniette M. Ladio, Health Care Delivery and Management Division Chief; Susie Dumajel, guest speaker during the Closing Ceremony on March 30, 2023.

In the end, among the employees who won in the contest are Queenie Jane Tamalla and John G. Silabay for Inter-Division Quiz Bee; Regalia Lariago for the Singing Contest and Deo Dexter G. Guillermo for the Digital Poster and Slogan Making Contest. They received special recognition and tokens for their active involvement.

"As we culminate the month long activity like other government offices are doing, we have made unprecedented advances towards achieving women's rights," Health Care Delivery and Management Division Chief Dr. Antoniette M. Ladio said.

Although there are still biases and disparity in the workplace in women's role in society, this year's theme, *"WE for gender equality and inclusive society"* is timely and relevant for it also reflects our activities and the country's women's month theme, *"We Make Change Work for Women"*, he stressed.

PhilHealth XII Regional Vice President, Dr. Hector Zenon Leonardo P. Malate served as the over-all Chair of the Region's GAD Committee assisted by the Human Resource Unit under the Management Services Division. ###