

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Introduction

The Women's Empowerment for Leadership in Development and Peace in the Bangsamoro (WELD Peace) is a three-year project funded by the Department of Finance and Trade (DFAT) completed by Oxfam in the Philippines and four partner civil society organisations (CSOs) in six provinces of the newly reconstituted Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) – North Cotabato, Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao, Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi.

The project was co-implemented by CSO partners, namely, Al-Mujadilah Development Foundation, Inc. (AMDF), Tarbilang Foundation, Inc., United Youth of the Philippines-Women (UnYPhil-Women) and Women Engaged in Action (WE weactAct) 1325 from July 2017 to March 2020.

Its overall goal was to enable women, representing diverse groups, to influence the peace and development efforts in the autonomous region. The specific target outcomes under this goal include the following behavioural changes:

- Outcome 1: Women demonstrating leadership in influencing the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL), the Bangsamoro Transitional Authority (BTA), and BARMM policies and plans
- Outcome 2: Women leaders able to shape social norms and mindsets within the BARMM with regard to women's issues and concerns, women's rights, and women's leadership

With the end of WELD Peace in March 2020, this End-of-Project (EoP) evaluation aims to assess achievements in terms of target outcomes, how partners' work contributed to such changes, and what insights emerged from their experiences to inform future initiatives.

## Methodology

This End of Project (EoP) evaluation used a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods through employing a survey with 1,101 treatment and control respondents from the six BARMM provinces. To ensure that the treatment and control groups are comparable, Propensity Score Matching technique was employed. In-depth interviews were also conducted with 17 local partners, including implementing CSOs, plus three FGDs with women partners on the ground. In addition, random and snowball sampling was used in selecting the survey respondents.

In measuring the empowerment of women in terms of leadership and in influencing Bangsamoro plans and policies, as well as their ability to shape social norms and mindsets, a Women Empowerment Index (WEI) was drafted based on VeneKlasen and Miller's (2002 as cited in Lombardini et.al, 2017) framework. The said framework puts emphasis on the three levels where changes can take place – personal, relational and environmental.

Since data gathering was conducted during the implementation of enhanced community quarantines due to the Corona Virus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) health crisis, all the preparatory activities were done online via Zoom and Messenger video conferences while most of the survey was done face-to-face (62%) and the rest was conducted via mobile phone calls (38%). As initially planned, the survey was to be done via phone calls; But, it turned out that many of the respondents had intermittent and/or no mobile phone signals in their residences, prompting the local researchers to conduct face-to-face interviews particularly in Bubong, Lanao del Sur; Talipao and Panglima Tahil in Sulu; Maluso, Lantawan and Tuburan in Basilan; Matalam in North Cotabato; and Panglima Sugala in Tawi-Tawi.

## Key Findings

Results of the survey, key informant interviews and focus group discussions revealed the following gains of the WELD Peace project:

### **Outcome 1: Women demonstrating leadership in influencing the BOL, the BTA, and BARMM policies and plans**

- ***Contributed to the yes votes for the BOL.*** The massive campaign on the BOL at the barangay and municipal levels in Maguindanao and other project areas contributed to the winning “yes” votes during the plebiscite. Survey results show that the BOL plebiscite recorded the highest participation rate among the project participants which reached 74% compared to 60% among non-project participants.
- ***Increased women’s participation to advocacy and lobbying activities.*** Survey indicated that the participation of WELD Peace partners to the following advocacy and lobbying on the following issues increased from 2017 to 2020: BOL, 30%-48%; GAD PB, 22%-34%; NAPWPS, 13%-28%; and women’s agenda, 26%-43%. These figures were also higher than the rate of participation of the non-WELD participants.
- ***Contributed to the inclusion of gender provisions in the BOL.*** The WELD Peace implementing partners and women leaders participated in the series of lobbying activities with the Bangsamoro Transition Commission and Congress during the deliberation of the BOL, which resulted in the inclusion of gender provisions in RA No. 11054<sup>1</sup> or the Organic Law for the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, specifically Article VII, Section 8, Article IX, Section 11, 12, to cite a few.

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<sup>1</sup> Republic Act (RA) No. 11054, otherwise known as An Act Providing for the Organic Law for the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, Repealing for the Purpose Republic Act No. 6734, Entitled "An Act Providing for An Organic Act for the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao," As Amended by Republic Act No. 9054, Entitled "An Act to Strengthen and Expand the Organic Act for the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao."

- **Successfully lobbied for an IP woman representative in the BWC.** Along with other comments on the draft BTA-Cabinet Bill No. 34<sup>2</sup>, the WELD Peace partners' proposal to include an IP woman representative in the BWC was reflected in the final version of the approved Bill.
- **Contributed to the BARMM GAD Code.** Through WE Act 1325, the WELD Peace partners have provided the underpinnings in the review of the BARMM GAD Code. Specifically, the organization initiated a comparative review of the ARMM GAD Code through ground consultations and forwarded results of the consultation for the refinement of the BARMM GAD Code.
- **Lobbied women's agenda with the BTA and LGUs.** The consolidated women's agenda was presented and submitted to 12 key BTA members, BWC, PLGUs of Lanao and Maguindanao, MLGUs and BLGUs in Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi.
- **Increased confidence among women partners.** The women partners developed confidence in sharing their experiences to other women in the community, and raise their issues and concerns during community discussions, meetings and sessions with the LGU officials. They also led in raising issues of women during community discussions. Such confidence was also evident in the survey results which indicated that project participants had higher WEI in terms of self-confidence at 0.71, compared to 0.66 of the non-project participants.
- **Women leaders involved in LSB and LGU processes.** A number of women partners in Maguindanao, Basilan and Sulu became members of the Barangay Peace and Order Council (BPOC), Local Youth Development Office (LYDO), Gender and Development (GAD) Office, Purok leaders and also volunteered as frontliners during the conduct of the local government's efforts to contain COVID-19.
- **Sustained formation of women's groups.** A number of women partners led the formation of the following women's groups: Ummahat, Bangsamoro Widows of Mujahideen, Sigay ng mga Babai and WELD groups. Women partners' ability to lead and manage groups was also evident in their high WEI scores in terms of leadership and degrees of influencing community groups at 0.71 compared to the 0.49 score of non-project participants.
- **Improved access to economic support and SRH services.** Survey results showed that project participants had higher WEI on accessing economic/livelihood support at 0.76 than the non-project participants at 0.71. Maguindanao and Lanao del sur WELD participants showed significant project outcome in this aspect compared to non-WELD participants. Maguindanao recorded the most significant result with project participants having a WEI of 0.80 compared to 0.51 of the non-project participants. The project participants in Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi also showed high scores but no significant differences with the non-project participants. A few women partners in Maguindanao and Basilan were able to earn income from accessed livelihood projects. On SRH services, partners which also

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<sup>2</sup> BTA-Cabinet Bill No. 34 entitled "An Act Creating the Bangsamoro Women Commission, Providing for its Powers, Functions and Compositions and Appropriating Funds Therefore"

implemented the CS and ARCHES projects claimed that their advocacy on access to and availability of SRH services continued beyond the said projects' terms. However, there is no available recent data as to the status of the availability and access to said services particularly in the face of the COVID-19 health crisis.

- ***Women participated in legislative and political processes.*** Led by the WE Act 1325, select women leaders from different project areas engaged the Congress during the deliberations on the BOL. The lobbying of the BOL continued at the regional level targeting the BTA in pushing for women laws and policies (e.g., bill for the widows and orphaned children of the mujahideen, inclusion of IP women representative in the BCW). At the local level, the women leaders also actively participated in the lobbying of women-related ordinances (e.g., right age of marriage, inclusion of women's rights in community awareness activities).
- ***Women gained commitments from duty bearers.*** Maguindanao and Basilan areas had significant project outcome in terms of women's ability to influence local and regional political processes having a WEI of .85 and .83, respectively, which are higher compared to 0.46 and 0.44 of the non-project participants. Sulu also registered a high WEI in this aspect but not significant compared to the non-project participants. In Maguindanao, women leaders gained commitments from the MLGUs of Guindulungan, Mamasapano and Datu Saudi Ampatuan (DSA) to include early and forced marriages and violence against women (VAW) in their programs. The latter also allotted space for the Ummahat groups' Women Friendly Space where weekly sessions on women's issues such as CEFM and VAWG were held. In other project areas, women partners gained BLGUs' and MLGUs' support in including programs and projects for women in their plans, as well as in enacting ordinances for women (e.g., inclusion of wives in Islamic teachings/sermons, early prevention of health issues among the youth).

## **Outcome 2: Women leaders able to shape social norms and mindsets within the BARMM with regard to women's issues and concerns, women's rights, and women's leadership.**

- Survey results showed that Basilan and Maguindanao had significant outcomes in terms of shaping norms and mindsets with project participants having a WEI of 0.85 and 0.84, respectively, which are higher than the WEI of non-project participants at 0.68 and 0.62. For Lanao del sur, there was no difference between the WEI of project and non-project participants at 0.69. Among the changes that were observed and shared by the project participants were the following:
- ***Changes in perspectives and actions among male LGU leaders and community members.***
  - In Basilan, the BLGU leaders of Pamucalin in Lantawan and Townsite of Maluso articulated their appreciation of women's rights during one of the WELD Peace consultations in the areas. They emphasized the importance of women leaders in community development processes. While the BLGU of Lower Banas in Lantawan showed support to women's empowerment by sending women to trainings outside the province.

- The men LGU leaders of Maguindanao acknowledged the negative impact of early and forced marriages, resulting in the crafting of the Ordinance on the Right Age of Marriage, and recognized the participation of women in LGU processes.
  - Husbands of women partners have become supportive of their wives by accompanying them in seminars and trainings and sharing household responsibilities.
  - Partner male LGU leaders in Lanao del sur have learned to invite women to barangay activities.
  - A partner BLGU leader in Maguindanao now consults women on barangay projects.
- ***LGUs allotted 5% of budget for GAD funds.*** LGUs in Sulu learned that five percent (5%) of their total budget would be utilized in activities supporting GAD plans and programs. The chairwoman of Barangay Panglima Tahil in Sulu allotted 5% for GAD-related activities such as seminars on GAD and other activities held during the Women's Month celebration in March 2020.
  - ***Changes in mindsets and practices on issues affecting women.*** These changes may not be solely attributed to the WELD Peace project as women partners also participated in Oxfam's previous projects such as ARCHES and Creating Spaces. Hence, the following changes are also considered part of the impact of Oxfam's intervention in the areas for more than a decade.
    - **On early marriage.** In Maguindanao and North Cotabato, partner women have learned the negative impact of marrying at a very young age. They are now discouraging early marriage in their communities. In Lanao del Sur, the women have learned that early and arranged marriage has no basis in Islam. They observed a decrease in incidence of early marriage in their own community. In Basilan, the women have become aware of the negative impact of early marriages and are now discouraging it.
    - **On gender-based violence.** Women who are mothers have increased their awareness on GBV. In Basilan, women in the community had no idea about GBV but are now aware of it as along with the VAWC desk where cases of violence can be reported. A BLGU leader in Taraka, Lanao del Sur learned about marital rape and shared this knowledge in a forum she attended. In response, participants of the forum started sharing their own experiences on the issue.
    - **On women's right to work and education.** Due to increased recognition of this right, women partners in Maguindanao are now allowed to work to help the husband in the family's finances. Their daughters are also sent to school. In Lanao, husbands now acknowledge the importance of women working to help the family financially. They realized that women who went to school are more empowered to speak up their minds. In Basilan

and Sulu, many women partners are now working and earning to help their family, and their husbands acknowledge their efforts.

- **On women managing their own income.** In Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur, Basilan and North Cotabato, husbands have learned the value of allowing their wives to earn their own income. Women partners are now empowered to manage the income of the household and share responsibilities with the husband.
- **On women's consent to marry.** Parents/partner women have become aware of the negative impact of deciding for their children's marriage. They now respect the decision of their daughters on the matter of marriage.
- **On women as leaders.** The women have observed that the Bangsamoro society and the men now acknowledge the importance of women in nation building. Women have become aware of the laws on women's rights and leadership, claiming to have shared their knowledge on the issue with other women in the community in order to correct misconceptions on these issues.
- **Women engaged in media advocacy.** A few WELD Peace partners have learned the skills on how to field questions from media, how to face the camera, how to be comfortable during actual interviews and how to conduct press conferences. With this new knowledge, some of them developed confidence in doing live interviews. For instance, Janin Balt of Lanao del Sur did an interview with CNN during a press conference on the BOL. She was also a guest in Salam Radio (under PTV) on the same topic. The AMDF was also interviewed in Usapang Every Woman on women's issues through Facebook Live. At the same time, WELD Peace partners have influenced media personnel's perspectives on the Bangsamoro issues, As a result, columnist Rina Jimenez David of the Philippine Daily Inquirer stated that "It is important that media understands the peace issues of Mindanao to be able to convey them to the public. It is also important that media people appreciate the value of working for peace and establishing the Bangsamoro region." At the local level, three women partners from the IDP group in Maguindanao have also done interviews with media in Manila on their plight as IDPs. They were also tapped by other NGOs as source of information about IDPs.

### **On Partner Women's Empowerment**

- Overall, the survey results showed that WELD Peace project partners have higher WEI at 0.73 compared to the non-project participants at 0.67. A significant difference in WEI results was recorded in the relational dimension and, in a decreasing fashion, in the environmental and personal dimensions as well. This suggests that the WELD Peace project had more impact in terms of the relational dimension. Performance of the WEI indicators under environmental dimension

shows that highest index for the treatment group was in “safety and protection” at .77, and “accessing economic and SRH support services” is second at .76 (See WEI summary matrix below)

Dimensions of change	WEI		Level of significance		
	Treatment (N=423)	Control (N=668)	a	b	c
<b>Personal dimension</b>	<b>0.73</b>	<b>0.69</b>	*	**	
Self-confidence	0.71	0.66		*	**
Knowledge	0.81	0.75	**	**	*
Leadership skills	0.69	0.64	*	**	
Personal autonomy	0.72	0.7			
<b>Relational dimension</b>	<b>0.73</b>	<b>0.63</b>	**	**	**
Leadership and degrees of influencing community groups	0.71	0.49	**	**	**
Recognition of women’s political role and leadership	0.75	0.61	**	**	**
Networking and alliance building	0.58	0.45	**	**	**
Equal say in household decision making	0.79	0.79			
Control over her own body	0.83	0.79		*	*
<b>Environmental dimension</b>	<b>0.74</b>	<b>0.67</b>		**	**
Influencing political processes	0.68	0.57		**	**
Shaping norms and mindsets of community	0.74	0.67	**	**	**
Level of support by groups	0.73	0.61	**	**	**
Accessing economic and SRH support services	0.76	0.71		**	**
Safety and protection	0.77	0.79			
<b>Women Empowerment Index</b>	<b>0.73</b>	<b>0.67</b>	**	**	**

- The most significant difference was observed in “leadership and degrees of influencing groups.” However, there is no significant difference in terms of the indicator on “having equal say in household decision making.” They both have 0.79 score. Thus, with or without WELD Peace project, the Bangsamoro women already have relatively high levels of participation in household decision making.
- Under the personal dimension, the highest index was observed in “seeking knowledge” followed by “personal autonomy,” “self-confidence” and “leadership skills.”
- In the relational dimension, the highest index was observed in “control over her own body” followed by “equal say in household decision making.” A significant difference between WELD and non-WELD participants was noted in “leadership and degrees of influencing community groups.” This means that the WELD Peace project has had a significant contribution in developing women’s leadership and capability to influence groups.

- Under environmental dimension, the highest index was observed in “safety and protection” followed by “accessing economic, and SRH support services,” “ability to shape norms and mindsets of community,” “level of support provided by groups to pursue own initiatives” and “ability to influence political processes at the local and regional levels.” A significant difference was observed in the “level of support provided by groups to pursue own initiatives.”
- All of the WEI scores were significantly different between treatment and control group except for North Cotabato. Significant in terms of difference in index between control and treatment respondents, which means that women who participated in WELD Peace project have higher index than women who have not participated in the project or the control participants.
- In Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur, Tawi-Tawi and Basilan, the treatment group had higher WEI scores. However, in Sulu, the treatment group had higher WEI scores due to limitation of the data where the control participants were mainly coming from the City proper and they had access to more resources.
- In comparing the **personal dimension** scores across provinces, the WELD Peace participants had higher WEI scores across provinces except for Basilan and Sulu. The results were significant in all provinces except for North Cotabato. In the **relational dimension**, the WELD Peace participants had higher WEI scores across provinces except for Sulu. There was also a high difference in WEI scores in WELD and non-WELD participants in Basilan. For the **environmental dimension**, the WELD Peace participants had higher WEI scores across provinces except for Lanao del Sur and Sulu. In Lanao del Sur, the non-WELD participants had higher index compared to the treatment group, which can be attributed to the current conflict situation in the area where most of the WELD participants are located.
- In terms of socio-demographic factors, it was noted that educational attainment significantly influenced the WEI score at 1% level of significance. This means that highly educated Bangsamoro women were more empowered. When Bangsamoro women earn an additional level of education (from elementary to high school level, for instance), their empowerment index increases by 0.026.
- In terms of economic factors, women who had other sources of income and had higher contribution to household income were more empowered. This signifies the important role of economic contribution to empowerment. Survey results showed that when Bangsamoro women had other sources of income, their empowerment index increased by 0.019. Similarly, when Bangsamoro women contributed to household income, their WEI also increased by 0.026 for every ordinal rank increase in contribution to household income. Thus, Bangsamoro women who have other source of income and contribute more to the household income are more likely to be empowered.
- In terms of community and public activities, women who had higher community and public engagements in 2017 prior to the commencement of the WELD Peace project, had higher empowerment index. This suggests that empowerment of women may be determined by their previous engagements in community and public events. This also implies that Bangsamoro women who had participated in community and public events in 2017 (prior to the start of WELD Peace project)



had higher WEI by 0.037 and 0.064, respectively. Thus, these activities can improve women's empowerment, in general. Focusing on these activities in future women empowerment projects can be a worthwhile endeavour as empirical data suggest that it has an impact on women empowerment.

- On the impact of WELD Peace engagement, participants identified themselves whether they are unaware (unaware of project and potential impacts), resistant (aware of project and potential impacts and resistant to change), neutral (aware of project yet neither supportive nor resistant), supportive (aware of project and impacts and supportive to change), and leading (aware of project and impacts and actively engaged in ensuring the project is a success). Relative to unaware participants, those who are neutral, supportive, and leading had higher WEI scores. The score increases as the level of engagement to WELD-Peace project improves. Hence, this indicates that engagement to the WELD-Peace project is one of the key indicators of women empowerment. As shown in Annex H, the participants who are neutral, supportive and leading had significantly higher WEI index and the index increases as the level of engagement also increases.
- On political participation, membership of participants to political bodies and government across all WELD Peace project sites showed that they had significantly higher participation from barangay to regional levels compared with the control group. The rate of participation was recorded highest at local levels within barangay (11%), barangay government (12%), political party (9%), and other governing bodies (8%) for the treatment group compared with the control group (3%, 2%, 2%, 4%, respectively). However, at the higher levels of governance, the rate of participation decreased.

## Recommendations

Based on the results of the evaluation, the Research Team recommends the following action points:

- Exert more effort in improving project outcomes in Sulu area.
- Conduct regular conversations with all project stakeholders.
- Expand network and build new alliances.
- Increase women's involvement in LSBs at the municipal, provincial and regional levels.
- Sustain and strengthen partnerships with LGUs.
- Continue engagement with the regional mechanisms such as the BWC, MSSD, BTA.
- Formalize women's groups through accreditation/registration with the BLGU, MLGU, MOLE and/or CDA.
- Organize women's groups to complement the women caucus in the BTA.
- Lobby for more comprehensive and sustained economic empowerment programs at the LGU level.
- Continue advocacy on SRHR issues and services.
- Further enhance women's capacities.
- Thoroughly document project gains and challenges.
- Engage more Bangsamoro women on the ground.

## 1.0 Introduction

The Women’s Empowerment for Leadership in Development and Peace in the Bangsamoro (WELD Peace) is a three-year project implemented by Oxfam in the Philippines (OiPh) in collaboration with four civil society organizations, namely: Al-Mujadilah Development Foundation, Inc. (AMDF), Tarbilang Foundation Inc., United Youth of the Philippines – Women, Inc. (UnYPhil-Women) and Women Engaged in Action on UNSCR 1325 (WE Act 1325).

The Project aims to enable women representing diverse groups to influence the peace and development efforts in the autonomous region (Figure 1). Specifically, the WELD Peace project aims to achieve the following behavioral changes:

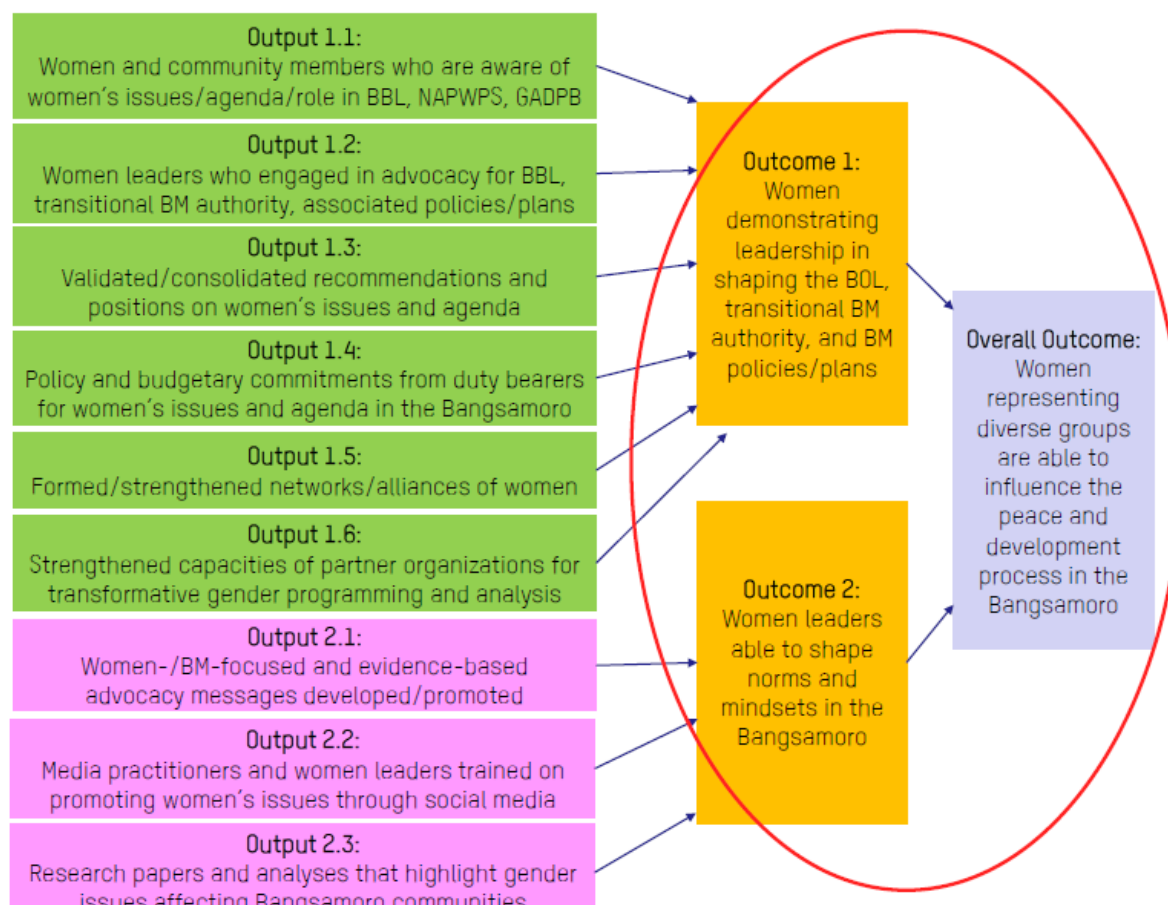


Figure 1. WELD Peace framework

The WELD Peace Project was implemented from 2017 to 2020 in the six provinces of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) – North Cotabato, Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao, Basilan, Sulu, and Tawi-Tawi.

After the Project ended in March 2020, this evaluation was done in order to assess project achievements in terms of target outcomes, how partners’ work contributed to such

changes, and what insights emerged from their experiences to inform follow-up initiatives. This evaluation also looked into the level of empowerment of women partners in three dimensions (personal, relational and environmental) as well as provide answers and evidence to the following inquiries:

- How the WELD Peace partners' interventions enabled women to: 1) demonstrate leadership in influencing the BOL, BTA, and BARMM policies and plans; and 2) shape norms and mindsets in the BARMM vis-à-vis women's issues, rights, and leadership?
  - What are the indications that the achieved level of participation of women/girls and of other groups will be sustained and enhanced after the WELD Peace project? What spaces or mechanisms are in place or being put in place to deepen and broaden such involvement?
  - What issues affecting women were acted upon/addressed and how? What indications show that such actions/policies will be sustained?
  - What were the gains from the campaigns or influencing efforts of women leaders and organizations e.g., in terms of policies, plans, programs, budget?
  - How do LGUs and BARMM officials view women's leadership/role within the BARMM? How has such view changed, and what are the evidence for such change? How did WELD partners contribute to such shifts in views and beliefs on women?
  - How many campaigns or media influencing activities were conducted over the project's timeframe? What women's issues/elements of women's agenda were tackled or covered?
  - Has the work of project partners around the two major target outcomes contributed to the achievement of WELD's overall objective or impact? In what ways or form?
  - How did WELD's efforts around building a women's agenda and promoting women's leadership complement or contribute to the efforts of other projects (e.g., CS, ARCHES<sup>3</sup>, or SHE<sup>4</sup>) working on similar issues and concerns?
  - How did WELD Peace's campaigns and other interventions contribute to shifts in public's or community members' views on women's issues/leadership in BARMM/target LGUs?
  - What were the most effective strategies, or combinations of interventions, in terms of facilitating such shifts in people's views?
  - What other factors, apart from the project's interventions, could have influenced views of community members and public on women's issues and leadership within the BARMM?
- What other unintended or unplanned changes, positive or negative, happened as a result of WELD partners' implementation of the project during the past three years?
- What other factors, apart from WELD partners' activities, contributed to attaining these changes in behavior and practices related to women's leadership in BARMM?

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<sup>3</sup> ARCHES (Improving Availability of Reproductive Health Services in ARMM) is a five-year (2015-2019) development project of Oxfam, funded by the European Union, that aims to protect the rights of women and girls, and address the gaps in the delivery of reproductive health services in the ARMM, now BARMM. It is co-implemented with Philippine Legislators' Committee on Population and Development (PLCPD), Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP), and four women's rights organizations (WROs) namely: Al Mujadilah Development Foundation, Inc. (AMDF), Pinay Kilos (PinK), Tarbilang Foundation, Inc. (TFI), and United Youth of the Philippines-Women (UNYPHIL Women) (Source: <https://philippines.oxfam.org/latest/press-release/oxfam-eu-deliver-php4-million-worth-medical-aid-muslim-mindanao>)

<sup>4</sup> SHE (Sexual Health and Empowerment) is a five-year (2018-2023) project of Oxfam which aims to empower women and girls, strengthen health systems and community structures to improve delivery of quality and gender sensitive health services as well as build the capacity of women's organizations and networks to advocate for the rights of women at all levels and prevent gender-based violence. The Project is funded by Global Affairs Canada and co-implemented by Oxfam Canada and Oxfam Pilipinas and civil society organizations namely, AMDF, UnYPhil-Women, Mayon Integrated Development Alternatives and Services, Family Planning Organization of the Philippines, Pambansang Koalisyon ng Kababaihan sa Kanayunan, Sibog Katawhan Alang sa Paglambo, and JHPIEGO (Source: <https://philippines.oxfam.org/latest/press-release/oxfam-embassy-canada-launch-reproductive-health-project-ph>).

- To what extent were the project’s objectives and interventions inclusive of the interests and needs of the most marginalized groups within the selected partner communities?
- To what extent have the WELD Peace partners, and trained women leaders laid down the conditions for sustainability of observed changes within the current BARMM system?

### 1.1 Project Evaluation Areas

The project evaluation was done in the six provinces of the Bangsamoro region (Figure 2).

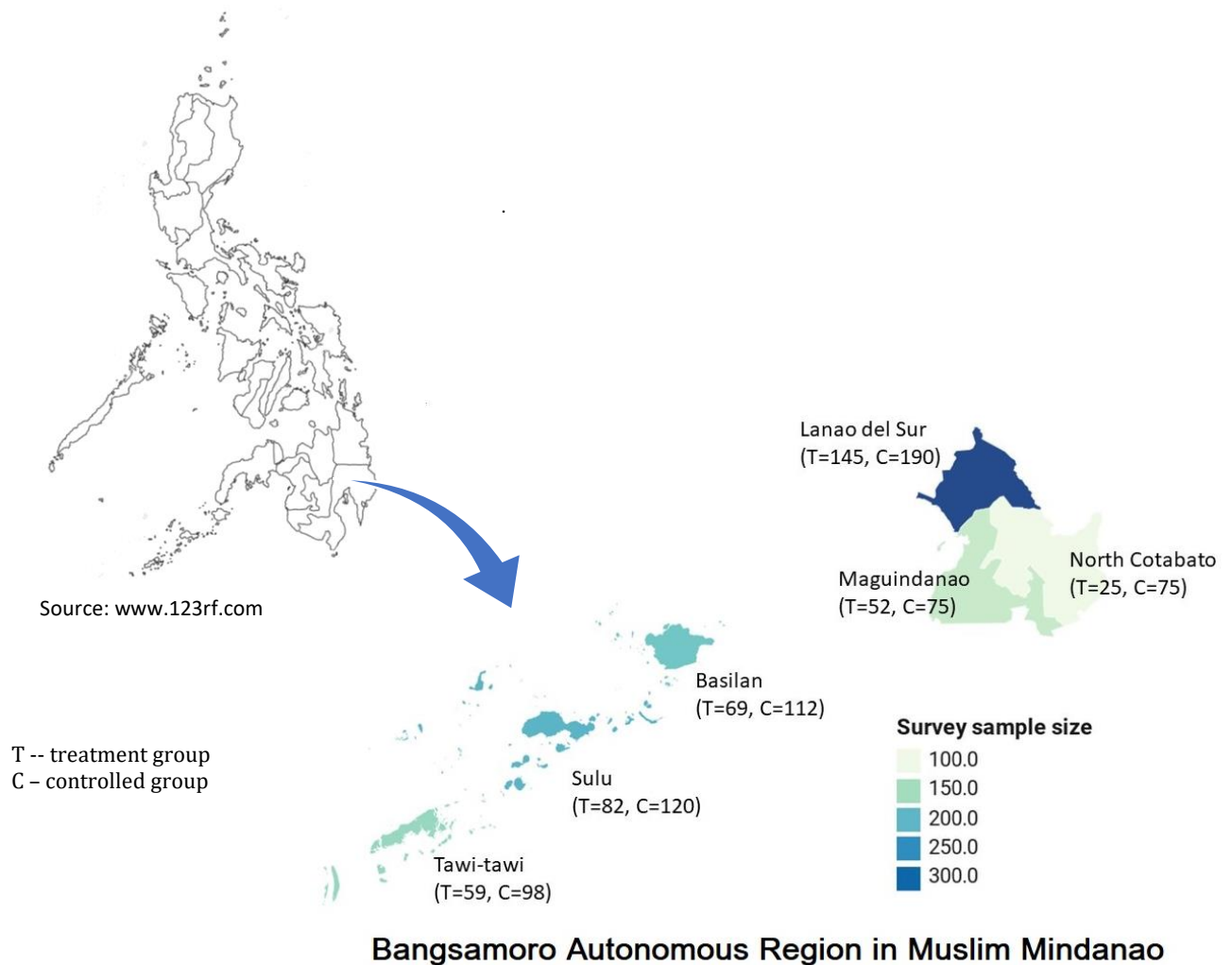


Figure 2. Project sites

## 1.2 WELD Peace Activities

For the three-year implementation, the WELD Peace project focused on the following strategies and activities:

- Massive campaign on the BOL at the barangay, municipal, provincial and national levels
- Community-based consultations on the Local Women's Agenda
- Lobbying of Women's Agenda in respective LGUs and in the BTA and BWC
- Capacity-building activities (trainings on women's Islamic leadership, transformation and righteous leadership, how to deal with media/face interviews; local and national workshops on the gender provisions of the BOL, National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (NAPWPS), and the status of the transition process, sessions on common gender issues and customary beliefs in Muslim communities, including unpaid care work and decision-making of women and girls in Muslim communities; advocacy workshops on sustainable programs in support of widows and orphans of the Bangsamoro leaders)
- Facilitation in the formation of women's groups at the local level
- Regular conversations on women's issues during weekly mothers' classes at the Madrasah
- Dialogues with LGUs, BTA members, widows of MNLF and MILF fighters
- Rapid survey on Bangsamoro women's experiences in relation to the COVID-19 health crisis
- Workshops on the review and localization of the NAPWPS in the context of BARMM and the Women's Provisions in the Bangsamoro Organic Law
- BARMM-wide consultations on the proposed BARMM GAD Code
- Forum with COMELEC on Women's Participation in the Plebiscite and Electoral Exercises in the Bangsamoro
- Marawi IDP press conference
- Exhibit on Promoting Women's Empowerment through Leadership and Participation
- Participation in the local public hearing/consultations on the BOL conducted by the Senate
- Conversations with media practitioners on the Bangsamoro and Bangsamoro women's issues/situation
- Research with the Bangsamoro Islamic Women Auxiliary Brigade (BIWAB) on women economic empowerment

## 2.0 Methodology

This assessment used a mix of quantitative and qualitative approaches. For the quantitative part, a survey involving 1,101 respondents with 431 treatment participants<sup>5</sup> and 670 control participants<sup>6</sup> was conducted. The survey participants were women from Maguindanao, North Cotabato, Lanao del Sur, Tawi-Tawi, Basilan and Sulu (Table 1).

**Table 1. Sample size**

<b>Province</b>	<b>Treatment</b>	<b>Control</b>	<b>Total</b>
Maguindanao	51	75	126
North Cotabato	25	75	100
Lanao del Sur	145	190	335
Tawi Tawi	59	98	157
Basilan	69	112	181
Sulu	82	120	202
<b>Total</b>	<b>431</b>	<b>670</b>	<b>1101</b>

The respondents of the treatment and control group were randomly selected from the master list provided by WELD Peace implementing partners. In areas where the list was not sufficient, the remaining needed respondents for the control group were identified through snowball sampling method where treatment group respondents were asked to refer a neighbour or a friend whom they knew had not participated in any activity within and outside of their community and was willing to be interviewed.

To ensure that the treatment and control groups are comparable, the team employed Propensity Score Matching (PSM)<sup>7</sup> technique where treatment and control respondents were matched based on socio-demographic variables<sup>8</sup> (See Annex A. Variables used in the study). Using the probit regression approach, 10 samples did not match, two were identified outside the common support region and eight samples had missing information. Thus, the total matched sample was 1,091 (423 treated samples and 668 controlled samples). (See details in Annex B on probit regression on the determinants of WELD Peace participation)

The matched treated and controlled samples did not significantly differ from each other; thus, any difference in the treatment and control could not be attributed to the respondents' socio-demographic, ethno-linguistic and economic variables. (See details of matched and unmatched samples in Annex C on Bias reduction from propensity score matching)

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<sup>5</sup> Treatment participants are women whom Oxfam engaged in the WELD Peace project. The number of treatment participants (431) was calculated using a population of beneficiaries estimated at 6,000 participants, 95% confidence level and  $\pm 5$  confidence interval.

<sup>6</sup> Control participants are women who have not participated in the WELD Peace project.

<sup>7</sup> PSM is a statistical technique that measures the effect of a treatment which, in this case, is participation in the WELD Peace project by accounting for the covariates that significantly affect the treatment outcome.

<sup>8</sup> The socio-demographic variables used in PSM are the following: educational attainment, age, marital status, household size, number of dependent household members who are less than 18 years old and 65 years old above, female respondent as head of household, income and income sources, among others.

For the qualitative approach, a total of 17 KIIs with implementing partners and local stakeholders in the six provinces and at the regional/BARMM level were conducted. Three FGDs with community women partners from Maguindanao, North Cotabato, Lanao del Sur and Basilan were also done (Table 2). The Research Team was not able to conduct the FGDs for Sulu and Tawi-Tawi due to lack of a stable communications signal in the respondents' area caused by bad weather conditions as well as difficulties in finding common available date and time among respondents.

**Table 2. Total number of KII and FGD respondents**

Areas	No. of FGDs	Total no. of respondents	
		FGD	KII
Maguindanao/ North Cotabato	1	3	3
Lanao del Sur	1	4	3
Basilan	1	3	2
Sulu	0	0	2
Tawi-Tawi	0	0	3
BARMM/Regional Level			4
<b>Total</b>		<b>10</b>	<b>17</b>

## 2.1 Measurement of Women's Empowerment

In measuring project participants' empowerment, the Research Team, along with the NGO implementing partners and Oxfam staff-in-charge of the Project, designed a survey tool following Oxfam's guide in measuring women's empowerment or the Women Empowerment Index (WEI) (Lombardini et al. 2017). The WEI highlights three dimensions of change: **personal, relational and environmental**. Each dimension has four to five indicators which became the basis in crafting the specific questions that would quantify women's empowerment based on the agreed indicators (Table 3).

**Table 3. WEI dimensions and indicators**

Dimensions	Description	Indicators
<b>Personal dimension</b>	This refers to changes taking place within the person; changes in how a woman sees herself, how she considers her role in society and that of other women, how she sees her economic role, and her confidence in deciding and taking actions that concern herself and other women	Under this dimension, four key indicators were identified. These included self-confidence, knowledge, leadership skills, and personal autonomy. <b>Self-confidence</b> refers to the respondent being confident in sharing her knowledge, thoughts and views in public; she can confidently lead advocacy activities; she is confident in articulating her views around women's issues (protection issues of displaced families, CEFM, birth spacing, SRH, GBV, unpaid care work, economic rights); she is confident in facing media during interviews. <b>Seeking knowledge</b> pertains to the respondent seeking knowledge on women's rights [in general], women's rights in the BOL, Bangsamoro transition processes, GAD-related policies, plans, programs, support services [SRH and other services] and women-related issues, mechanisms/spaces for women participation, services and programs of NGOs, GAs and LGUs, and interpretations of Islamic laws as declared in fatwa <sup>9</sup> . <b>Leadership skills</b> involve the respondent believing that she is capable of facilitating community activities, taking on leadership roles and positions [elected or appointed];

<sup>9</sup> In Islam, Fatwa is a formal ruling on or interpretation of a point of Islamic law given by a qualified legal scholar referred to as Mufti. "Fatwas are usually issued in response to questions from individuals or Islamic courts. Though considered authoritative, fatwas are generally not treated as binding judgments; a requester who finds a fatwa unconvincing is permitted to seek another opinion" (source: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/fatwa>)



Dimensions	Description	Indicators
		<p>in cooperatives, core groups or non-formal mechanisms] and/or running in elections; assuming roles in conflict resolution mechanisms (Lupon Tagapamayapa, Barangay Peacekeeping Action Team); pursuing referral pathways for GBV in local special bodies at the barangay and municipal levels.</p> <p><b>Personal autonomy</b> relates to the respondent making decisions about herself and her family; she can decide to participate in group/community activities, to engage in income generating activities, to access RH services, and to choose who to marry and when. (See Annex I. Detailed indicators of personal, relational and environmental dimensions of change)</p>
<b>Relational dimension</b>	<p>This describes the relationships and power dynamics within the woman's family and community/neighborhood. This includes changes both within the household and with women and men in the community.</p>	<p>Under relational dimension, five indicators were identified, namely: leadership and degrees of influencing community groups; recognition of women's political role and leadership; networking and alliance building; equal say in household decision making; and control over her own body.</p> <p><b>Leadership and degrees of influencing community groups</b> refers to the respondent being involved in managing a community group and in making and influencing decisions of the group; speaking on Bangsamoro issues in public; sharing knowledge and views on women and Bangsamoro-related issues; lobbying for women's rights and issues at the local government level.</p> <p><b>Recognition of women's political role and leadership</b> pertains to the respondent believing that she has the right to engage in civic and political action, peace-building and reconciliation, and other political activities; make decisions regarding household expenditures, investments, management, assets, income; address issues on unpaid care work; and, believe that other people in the community recognizes women's right to engage in civil and political action.</p> <p><b>Networking and alliance building</b> involves the respondent engaging in advocacy activities of other organizations, groups and networks; believing that she can lead activities along with other organizations/groups.</p> <p><b>Equal say in household decision-making</b> relates to the respondent having equal say in making decisions regarding household expenditures, investments, management, assets, income as well as issues on unpaid care work.</p> <p><b>Control over her own body</b> concerns the respondent having experience and reporting GBV incidences, access to and application of birth spacing/family planning, among others.</p>
<b>Environmental dimension</b>	<p>This describes changes that take place in the broader context. These can be informal changes, such as in social norms and attitudes and the beliefs of wider society, or they can be formal changes in the political and legislative framework. (e.g., policies, laws, social norms, attitudes, and the beliefs of wider society).</p>	<p>Under this dimension, five indicators were identified, namely: ability to influence political processes at the local (barangay, municipal and provincial) and regional levels; ability to shape norms and mindsets of community; level of support provided by groups to pursue own initiatives; accessing economic/ livelihood support/ SRH services, and safety and protection. This dimension is more focused on influencing policies, legal frameworks at the barangay up to the regional government levels which may eventually result to changing norms in the community.</p> <p><b>Ability to influence political processes at the local and regional levels</b> refers to the respondent having the ability to influence local and regional governments' plans or policies (e.g., Barangay Development Plan, Annual Investment Plan, Gender and Development Plan) by joining LGU development processes and by involving one's self in local special bodies.</p> <p><b>Ability to shape norms and mindsets of community</b> pertains to the respondent believing that women can influence social norms or women can lead campaigns on women's rights and leadership in the Bangsamoro.</p> <p><b>Level of support provided by groups to pursue own initiatives</b> involves support from Oxfam and local partners, network and alliances and potential support beyond project implementation.</p> <p><b>Accessing economic/livelihood support/SRH services</b> relates to the access to livelihood support, VAWC desks and referral package.</p> <p><b>Safety and protection</b> is related to breaking stereotypes and safety of movement outside the homes.</p>



Following Alkire et al. 2013, the team assigned equal weights to the indicators within the same dimension (Table 4). In assigning the weights for the dimensions, the core evaluation team and the project partners agreed that the critical base in influencing women empowerment is the personal dimension, which affects the relational dimension and eventually the environmental dimension. Hence, the team applied 50%, 30%, and 20%, respectively, to the three dimensions. This implies that each indicator under personal dimension has 0.125 weight, each indicator under relational dimension has 0.06 weight and each indicator under environmental dimension has 0.04 weight.

**Table 4. WEI using equal weights within the dimensions**

<b>Dimensions of change</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Weights</b>
Personal (50%)	Self-confidence	0.125
	Knowledge	0.125
	Leadership skills	0.125
	Personal autonomy	0.125
Relational (30%)	Leadership and degrees of influencing community groups	0.06
	Recognition of women’s political role and leadership	0.06
	Networking and alliance building	0.06
	Equal say in household decision making	0.06
	Control over her own body	0.06
Environmental (20%)	Ability to influence political processes	0.04
	Ability to shape norms and mindsets of community	0.04
	Level of support	0.04
	Accessing of economic/livelihood support /SRH services	0.04
	Safety and protection	0.04
Total (100%)		1.000

## 2.2 Data collection techniques

Since the project evaluation was conducted during the implementation of enhanced community quarantine in the whole country due to COVID-19 pandemic, all preparatory activities were conducted virtually. The core research team had four online sessions and meetings via Zoom and Skype with Oxfam Team along with the implementing partners from March to May 2020 to undertake the following:

- 1) Customization of the WEI to measure specific indicators of behavioral changes among the institutional partners and community women who were involved in the Project;
- 2) Development of survey tool based on the WEI;
- 3) Identification of survey respondents, key informants and FGD participants;
- 4) Discussions on protocols and processes in conducting remote data gathering; and

## 5) Discussion and feedbacking on the draft WEI, survey, KII tools, and FGD guide.

The WEI indicators and survey questionnaire were presented to the implementing partners during which they shared their insights particularly on the specific indicators and provided inputs on the enhancement of the WEI and the survey tool.

After finalizing the tools, the core research team hired enumerators. The main qualifications in selecting the enumerators were as follows: 1) she resides within the project area; 2) she can speak the local language; 3) she has previous experiences in conducting surveys; 4) she is able to conduct a mobile-assisted survey interview; 5) she has a background on women empowerment and gender issues; and 6) she has experience working with the lead researcher in previous research projects.

Upon completing the composition of the research team and getting the commitment of the enumerators and area supervisors, an online orientation on the WELD Peace Project, objectives of the evaluation, remote data gathering protocols and processes, and administrative and finance-related concerns were conducted with the enumerators on 1, 3, 4 and 22 May 2020. An online training on the use of Survey CTO was done on 21 May and conducted by Oxfam staff, Ms. Jenifer Marie Tiu. Another follow-through session on the use and familiarization of the Survey CTO was conducted by the lead researcher with the enumerators on 23 May, along with the finalization of the data gathering timeframe and processes in contacting respondents. A handout on remote data gathering provided by Oxfam was also discussed in detail with the enumerators.

The start of the data gathering was delayed since the research team needed to wait for the end of Ramadhan on 25 May 2020. This was done in deference to the observance of the Holy Month since most of the respondents were Muslims.

From 27 to 28 May 2020, a pre-test was conducted with five respondents whose names were taken from the master list given by the implementing partners. The respondents came from the different provinces covered by the project. After the pre-test, the core research team had an online meeting with the enumerators to discuss their experiences during the pre-test, particularly focusing on the challenges of remote data gathering and how such challenges were addressed. The survey tool was also revised based on the feedback of the enumerators after the pre-test.

As initially planned, surveys were to be conducted through phone interviews. However, after a week of contacting respondents, the researchers had difficulty contacting a number of respondents because there was no mobile signal in the community. Thus, the researchers decided to conduct face-to-face interviews after consulting with the core research team. Majority of the survey interviews were done via mobile phone (62%) while the rest were conducted face-to-face (38%) particularly in areas where mobile signal was very unstable such as Bubong, Lanao del sur; Talipao and Panglima Tahil in Sulu; Maluso, Lantawan and Tuburan in Basilan; Matalam in North Cotabato and Panglima Sugala and some areas in Bongao, Tawi Tawi.

The duration of the actual phone survey varied depending on the weather conditions, capability of the respondent to comprehend the questions and their openness in sharing

their experiences. The shortest was 40 minutes while the longest was 1 hour and 30 minutes. A number of interviews took a longer time due to intermittent mobile signal and inclement weather which caused phone calls to be interrupted many times. The duration also included the span of time needed to contact the respondents. In some cases, the researcher needed to explain each question well or repeat it more than once as the respondent could hardly hear the researcher's voice. For the face-to-face interview, the survey was done within 30 minutes.

### **2.3 Challenges in remote data gathering during the COVID-19 pandemic**

Since the enumerators were dependent on the master list provided by the implementing partners, it took them almost a week to verify and contact the mobile numbers indicated in the list. The enumerators encountered several problems such as mobile numbers that were no longer active, incorrect, unattended or could not be reached (no mobile phone signal), and a few that were not owned by the person indicated in the list. There were also a few cases where identified respondents refused the interview because of the following: they were not familiar with the implementing partner or Oxfam or WELD Peace Project; they were suspicious that the survey could be a scam (Maguindanao and North Cotabato areas); they were not included in any assistance (relief package and housing) provided by the implementing partner in their area especially after the Marawi siege (Lanao del Sur); they were too busy to accommodate the interview (Maguindanao).

Heavy rains which affected almost all project areas also added to the challenge where respondents and enumerators could hardly hear one another, causing interviews to be cut or postponed. For Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi, the major challenge was the lack of mobile signal in the community.

In managing the abovementioned challenges, the research team requested the assistance of the implementing partners to inform their women partners about the ongoing survey. The team also asked for an additional list of respondents to replace those who refused the interview. In North Cotabato, Lanao del Sur, Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi, the enumerators personally visited the community and managed to conduct face-to-face interviews. Movement of residents in the said areas was not yet restricted as they had no COVID-19 cases yet during the data gathering period. Before implementing the face-to-face interviews, the core research team conducted a brief online orientation on how to conduct face-to-face interviews while properly observing the COVID-19 protocols. Hence, the enumerators were required to wear face mask, maintain physical distancing, and disinfect with alcohol. They were also instructed to conduct courtesy calls with the barangay officials before entering the community.

In the case of Basilan and Sulu, the enumerators had to randomly select control respondents from the "población" area in order to finish all the surveys for the control group during the last two days of the data gathering period. In Basilan, the team also needed to hire an additional enumerator in the last five days as the assigned enumerator met a car accident while on her way home from data gathering. She needed to take a rest, though she still supervised the conduct of the remaining surveys virtually.

Due to intermittent and unstable signal in the project areas, the enumerators experienced difficulties in sending their encoded surveys to the server. As an alternative, they either saved the encoded surveys in the Edit Form tab of the Survey CTO or used a hardcopy during the actual survey and encoded all surveys on Fridays as they could hardly set an interview schedule on this day which is a holy day for Muslims. In sending the data to the server, they went to the “población” or areas where signal was stable and strong enough to connect to the server.

For the conduct of FGD, the main challenge was finding a common date and time among the identified participants. It took the team more than two weeks to set the date to conduct the FGD through a mobile phone group call. Another challenge was the intermittent mobile phone signal in all project areas due to bad weather conditions with heavy rains pouring almost every day. Thus, - only the Basilan FGD was pursued within the data gathering period.

Since all the tools were written in English, enumerators had to translate the tool in the local dialect to facilitate the conduct of the interview. In all interviews, local language was used for the convenience of the respondents.

In monitoring the conduct of surveys and documenting the researchers’ experiences, the area supervisors and the lead researcher conducted a two-hour weekly session via Messenger to discuss issues and concerns from the field, how they were able to manage them, and the ways forward.

## 3.0 Discussion of Results

### 3.1 On the achievement of WELD Peace project outcomes

This section discusses the results pertaining to the achievement of specific WELD Peace Project outcomes as gleaned from the results of the survey, KIIs and FGDs.

#### *Outcome 1: Women demonstrating leadership in influencing the BOL, the BTA, and BARMM policies and plans*

**Contributed to the yes votes for the BOL.** The WELD Peace partners especially in Maguindanao claimed that their massive campaign on the BOL at the barangay and municipal levels had contributed to the winning “yes” votes during the plebiscite. The community-level, house-to-house campaign on the BOL which was done a few months before the plebiscite helped enlighten women on the BOL and make them decide to go out and vote. As shown in the survey results, the BOL plebiscite recorded the highest participation rate among the project participants (treatment group), which reached 74% compared to 60% among non-project participants (control group) (Table 5).

**Table 5. Participation in public and advocacy events (all project areas)**

	Treatment	Control	p-value	
<b>Year: 2020</b>				
BOL plebiscite	74%	60%	0.00	**
BOL advocacy	48%	32%	0.00	**
Demonstrations	19%	11%	0.00	**
Public conference	42%	17%	0.00	**
Media appearance	6%	2%	0.00	**
GAD PB advocacy and lobbying	34%	27%	0.01	*
NAP WPS advocacy and lobbying	28%	4%	0.00	**
Women's agenda advocacy and lobbying	43%	15%	0.00	**
<b>Year: 2017</b>				
BOL advocacy	30%	27%	0.38	
Demonstrations	11%	7%	0.04	*
Public conference	23%	11%	0.00	**
Media appearance	3%	1%	0.01	**
GAD PB advocacy and lobbying	22%	25%	0.28	
NAP WPS advocacy and lobbying	13%	3%	0.00	**
Women's agenda advocacy and lobbying	26%	10%	0.00	**

In Tawi-Tawi, the women who were interviewed claimed that in remote areas, they observed that women were not participating in the past political activities such as voting during elections. With WELD Peace sessions on women's rights in the BOL, women realized the importance of having their voices heard, prompting them to participate in the plebiscite.

***Increased women's participation to advocacy and lobbying activities.***

Survey results indicated that the participation of WELD Peace partners in the advocacy and lobbying for the following issues have increased from 2017-2020: BOL, - 30%-48%; GAD PB, 22%-34%; NAPWPS, 13%-28%; and women's agenda, 26%-43%. These figures were also relatively higher than the rate of participation of the non-WELD participants (Table 5). Moreover, in relation to women's participation to advocacy activities of other organizations, survey showed that project participants had higher WEI at 0.58 compared to 0.45 of the non-project participants. This was a clear positive outcome of the WELD Peace project in terms of BOL advocacy and lobbying.

***Contributed to the inclusion of gender provisions in the BOL.*** In collaboration with other non-government organizations, the WELD Peace implementing partners and community women leaders participated in the series of lobbying activities for the inclusion of gender provisions with the Bangsamoro Transition Commission and in Congress during the deliberation of the BOL. Among the few gender provisions that were reflected in the BOL or RA No. 11054<sup>10</sup> were the following:

*Article VII. Bangsamoro Government*

Section 8. Election for Reserved Seats for Non-Moro Indigenous People.

(h) Gender equality.

Section 9. Regional Parties. The Bangsamoro Government shall ensure the inclusion of women's agenda and the involvement of women and the youth in the electoral nominating process of the political parties.

*Article IX. Basic Rights.*

Section 11. Participation of Women in the Bangsamoro Government. Aside from the reserved seat for women in the Parliament, there shall be at least one (1) woman to be appointed to the Bangsamoro Cabinet. The Parliament shall enact a law that gives recognition to the important role of women in nation-building and regional development, ensuring the representation of women in other decision-making and policy-determining bodies of the Bangsamoro Government.

The Parliament shall create by law a commission on women and shall define its powers, functions, and composition.

Section 12. Protection of Women. The Bangsamoro Government shall uphold and protect the fundamental rights of women, including the right to engage in lawful employment, and to be protected from exploitation, abuse or discrimination, as embodied in the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

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<sup>10</sup> Republic Act (RA) No. 11054 otherwise known as An Act Providing for the Organic Law for the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, Repealing for the Purpose Republic Act No. 6734, Entitled "An Act Providing for An Organic Act for the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao," As Amended by Republic Act No. 9054, Entitled "An Act to Strengthen and Expand the Organic Act for the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao."

**Successfully lobbied for an IP woman representative in the BWC.** As part of the BARMM transition, a law was passed to rename the commission to Bangsamoro Women's Commission (BWC) and redefine its mandate. Among the agenda lobbied by WE Act and other WELD Peace partners was for BWC to have a ministerial level position as well as an IP representation. The first item in the agenda did not materialize while the second one was considered. Other comments of the WELD Peace partners were included in the final draft of the bill<sup>11</sup> creating the BWC in January 2020.

**Contributed to the BARMM GAD Code.** Through consultations with women members of the community, the implementing partners were able to craft a local women's agenda which were consolidated, refined and polished through a workshop conducted by WE Act. The said agenda provided the underpinnings in the review of the BARMM GAD Code. WE Act also initiated a comparative review of the ARMM GAD Code through ground consultations. Among the major feedback in the consultations was the lack of information on the ARMM GAD Code and the lack of institutional mechanisms for its implementation on the ground. Given such a limitation, WE Act pushed for the social acceptability of the GAD Code before it was passed so that there would be enough critical mass of women and men who would claim it and demand for its enforcement on the ground.

**Lobbied women's agenda with the BTA and LGUs.** Along with the WELD Peace partners, WE Act initiated lobbying activities of the consolidated women's agenda and submitted a copy to 12 key BTA members and to the BWC. WE Act continued to engage the BTA members to determine and document their actions on the submitted agenda.

Furthermore, the local women's agenda of Maguindanao women partners were presented during the province-wide consultation on the crafting of the Provincial Action Plan on Women Peace and Security (PAPWPS) of Maguindanao. In Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi, their agenda were pushed in their respective LGUs. As a result, the women community members observed that their BLGUs became more conscious on women's issues and in allocating of budget for women's concerns. In Lanao del Sur, the local women's agenda referred to as HELPPPS (Health, Education, Livelihood, Political Participation, Protection, Peacebuilding and Sustainability of Environment and Resources) agenda was lobbied before the Provincial Government. The GAD Office of the Lanao del Sur committed to integrate the agenda in the Provincial GAD Code. The specific actions of the LGUs on this matter are yet to be documented by the implementing partner in the area.

Furthermore, the HELPPPS agenda was presented to MP Marjanie Macasalong as part of a lobby and presented as well in various activities such as the IDP press conference during the women's month celebration and Young Women Empowerment Summit in March 2020.

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<sup>11</sup> BTA-Cabinet Bill No. 34 entitled "An Act Creating the Bangsamoro Women Commission, Providing for its Powers, Functions and Compositions and Appropriating Funds Therefore."

## On the agenda of widows and orphans of Mindanao war

In many of the local consultations conducted by UnYPhil–Women in Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur and Cotabato City, urgent concerns of the widows of killed MILF combatants or the mujahideen<sup>[1]</sup> emerged as among the important issues of Bangsamoro women, and yet these gained less or no attention at all. The widows shared that they were rarely included in consultations, and thus their voices were seldom heard. For instance, in terms of programs in relation to the decommissioning process as stated in the GPH-MILF Peace Agreement, only the MILF combatants were consulted and included in the proposed programs and benefit packages. There was also no specific BARMM agency focused on their needs. With their participation in a number of activities of UnYPhil-Women, they realized the need to organize themselves in order to have a voice loud enough to be heard by the BARMM.

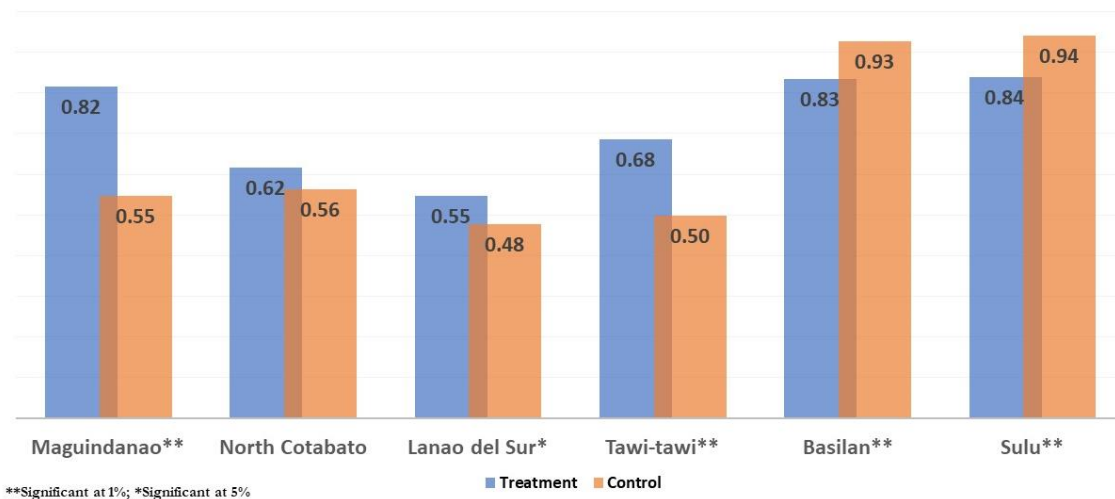
Among the issues they raised during the consultations were the support for the education of their orphaned children, livelihood to sustain their family, as well as health assistance, specifically inclusion in the Philippine Health Insurance (PhilHealth) of the national government.

Given the situation, UnYPhil- Women linked the widows' group to BARMM agencies. In 2020, the widows' group was able to engage the Ministry of Social Services and Development (MSSD) in conducting relief operations in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. They also engaged the Technical Working Group in charge of crafting the resolution for the proposed creation of the Bureau of Widows and Orphans. At present, there are around 170 widow-members in the municipalities of Datu Saudi Ampatuan and Guindulungan in Maguindanao and select areas in Lanao del Sur and Cotabato City. With the need to sustain the family that the MILF mujahideen have left, they hoped to have a share of the government's assistance to decommissioned MILF members, particularly livelihood programs.

<sup>[1]</sup> Mujahideen, an Arabic word which generally means Muslims who fight on behalf of the faith or the Muslim community. (source: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/mujahideen-Islam>)

***Increased confidence among women partners.*** According to KII respondents, the women partners of WELD Peace Project are now confident in sharing their experiences to other women in the community, and raise their issues and concerns during community discussions, meetings and sessions with LGU officials. In Maguindanao, women partners are tapped as resource persons in barangay-level discussions on women's rights. They have also led in raising issues of women during community discussions. Survey results indicated that project participants had higher WEI in terms of self-confidence at 0.71, compared to 0.66 of the non-project participants (Figure 3). Maguindanao recorded the most significant result with project participants having a WEI of 0.82 while non-project participants had 0.55. This is followed by Lanao del Sur with a WEI of 0.55 which was 0.7 higher than the WEI of non-project participants at 0.48. Results in Basilan and Sulu showed otherwise as non-project participants had higher WEI than the project participants, although project participants already had high WEI at .83 and .84, which were higher compared to those in the other three provinces.





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Figure 3. WEI results on self-confidence across provinces

**Women leaders involved in LSB and LGU processes.** The increased confidence among women partners in Maguindanao, Basilan, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi and Lanao del Sur enabled them to participate in BLGU and MLGU planning/meetings and get involved in LSBs (local special bodies). A number of them in Maguindanao, Basilan and Sulu claimed that they became members of the Barangay Peace and Order Council (BPOC). Some of them also volunteered as frontliners in the conduct of the local government’s efforts to address the COVID-19 problem. Others have become members of the Local Youth Development Office (LYDO), Gender and Development (GAD) Office while several have become leaders of a purok (a zone within a barangay).

In Maguindanao, Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi, WELD Peace women partners were able to participate in the drafting of BLGU GAD plans and budget as well as in barangay development planning. They have also sustained partnership with the municipal and provincial GAD focal system and have been invited to GAD activities. The barangay chairperson of Lower Banas in Lantawan, Basilan, for instance, said that because of the WELD Peace project, she has been invited to municipal level GAD meetings and became the municipal president of the 4Ps.

Relatedly, survey results showed that membership of project participants in local special bodies at the barangay level increased from 5% (2007) to 11% (2020), significantly higher than the membership of non-project participants which is consistent at 2% from 2007-2020. However, there is less membership in LSBs at the provincial and regional level at 1%-2% only (Table 6).

**Table 6. Membership in political bodies and government in all project sites**

	Treatment	Control	p-value	
<b>Year: 2020</b>				
Political party	9%	2%	0.00	**
Local special body at barangay level	11%	3%	0.00	**
Barangay government	12%	2%	0.01	*
Local special body at municipal level	3%	0%	0.00	**
Municipal government	2%	0%	0.00	**
Local special body at provincial level	1%	0%	0.02	*
Provincial government	2%	0%	0.00	**
Regional government	1%	0%	0.03	*
Other governing bodies	8%	4%	0.01	*
<b>Year: 2017</b>				
Political party	7%	1%	0.00	**
Local special body at barangay level	5%	2%	0.00	**
Barangay government	8%	2%	0.00	**
Local special body at municipal level	1%	0%	0.01	*
Municipal government	3%	0%	0.00	**
Local special body at provincial level	1%	0%	0.01	*
Provincial government	1%	0%	0.03	*
Regional government	1%	0%	0.01	*
Other governing bodies	6%	4%	0.10	

***Sustained formation of women’s groups.*** According to the project’s women participants, most of them were confined in their homes in the past as they were taking care of their children and household chores. But now, they are actively involved in community women’s organisations. A number of them even led in the formation of women’s groups. In Maguindanao and North Cotabato, women partners have organized themselves into groups such as the Ummahat, Bangsamoro Widows of Mujahideen, Sigay ng mga Babai and community facilitators while partners in Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi have formed the WELD groups. Women partners’ ability to lead and manage groups was evident in their high WEI scores in terms of leadership and degrees of influencing community groups at 0.71 compared to the 0.49 of th non-project participants.

As part of sustaining their organizations, the women’s groups in Maguindanao have applied for accreditation<sup>12</sup> at their MLGU. They also plan to register either at the Ministry of Labor and Employment (MOLE) and/or at the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA) (Maguindanao) in the future.

<sup>12</sup> “Pursuant to Article 64 of the Implementing Rules and Regulations of the Local Government Code of the Philippines, the LGUs, upon the assumption of the newly elected Sanggunian must have an accreditation of CSOs for purposes of representation in local special bodies.” With this provision, the LGUs accredit CSOs in their locality. Once accredited, the said CSOs can participate in the sessions at the local government as PO representative in Local Special Bodies (Source: DILG Memorandum Circular No. 2016-97, July 19, 2016 regarding Accreditation of CSOs and election representatives to the local special bodies (Source: <https://dilg.gov.ph/issuances/mc/2016-Accreditation-of-Civil-Society-Organizations-and-Selection-of-Representatives-to-the-Local-Special-Bodies/2346>)

### **The women's convergence in BaSulTa**

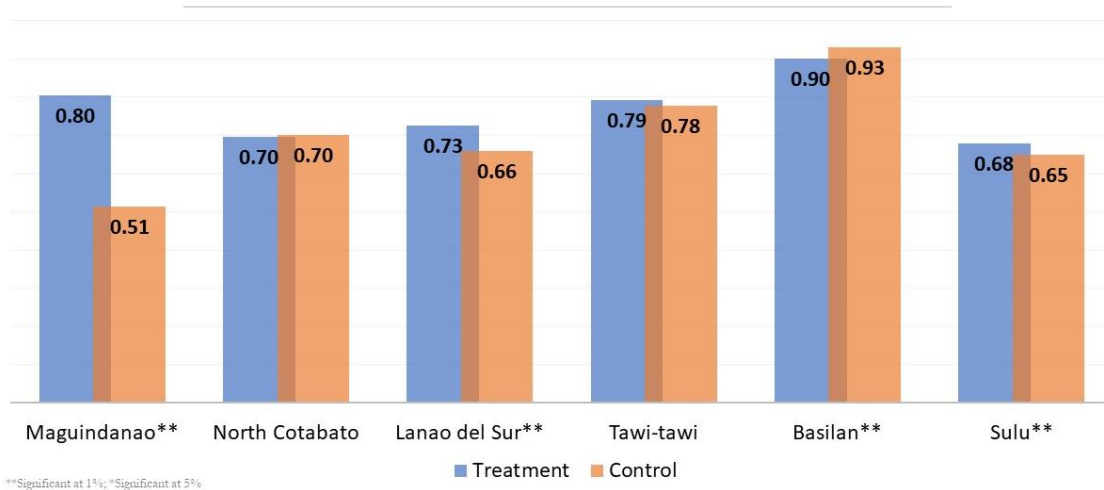
The women engaged by the WELD Peace Project in Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi (BaSulTa) organized themselves and called their group, WELD Groups. The WELD Groups are informal groups consisting of around 40 community-based women which sought to consolidate women's voices at the community level and make them heard by the LGU leaders. The said groups also aimed to empower women through knowledge sharing sessions on women's issues and concerns such as reproductive health, gender and development planning and budgeting, women in Islam and NAP WPS.

The WELD Groups started with a few women actively participating in the WELD Peace Project since 2018. At present, the groups have around 360 members across the BaSulTa provinces. The WELD group members have been capacitated on GAD PB, NAP WPS, gender analysis, women's political participation, normalization and transitional justice, gender-based violence, women's leadership, social media advocacy as well as networking and alliance building.

In Basilan, there are four WELD groups based in barangays Pamucalin and Lower Bañas in Lantawan municipality and barangays Townsite and North Gaunan in Maluso municipality. Among the achievements of the WELD Groups are the following: women's active participation in local development processes by conducting dialogues with the barangay and municipal government to lobby for inclusion of their concerns in the GAD planning and budgeting process. As a result of these efforts, the WELD groups are now recognized by their BLGUs and the municipal governments of Lantawan and Maluso. In sustaining the WELD groups, the women registered their organization with the BLGU and MLGU. They also plan to register with the Ministry of Labor and Employment (MOLE) in the future.

In Sulu, four WELD groups were formed in the municipalities of Hadji Panglima Tahil and Talipao. Each group consists of 40 members. In Tawi Tawi, there is one WELD group with 46 members from Bongao and Panglima Sugala municipalities.

***Improved access to economic support and SRH services.*** With the women partners' awareness of available SRH programs and services in all project areas, they became conscious in accessing them at their barangay health center. Survey results showed that project participants having higher WEI on accessing economic/livelihood support at 0.76 than the non-project participants at 0.71. Maguindanao and Lanao del sur WELD participants showed significant project outcome in this aspect compared to non-WELD participants. Maguindanao recorded the most significant result with project participants having a WEI of 0.80 compared to 0.51 of non-project participants. The project participants in Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi also showed high scores but no significant differences with the non-project participants. The selection of the control participants who were residing in "población" areas could be one reason that they also accessed livelihood and SRH services because of accessibility and availability.



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Figure 4. WEI results on accessing economic, livelihood support and SRH services across provinces

In Maguindanao and Tawi-Tawi, women participants claimed that they had become economically empowered as they are now able to provide for their family's daily needs. Project partners in Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi also stated that they were able to access livelihood projects from the GAD budget of their BLGU and MLGU, while Maguindanao partners accessed the same from the MLGU-GAD, Provincial Agriculture Office and TESDA-BARMM.

In terms of access to SRHR services, implementing partners (which also implemented the CS and ARCHES projects) shared that they continued advocating the availability and accessibility of said services. However, there is no available recent data that will show whether the number of women accessing said services have increased or decreased. During the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, project implementers in Maguindanao stated that they received reports that women had difficulty accessing health services at the LGU due to travel restrictions, fear of being exposed to risks of contracting the virus, fear of being tagged or suspected as COVID-19 positive especially when experiencing any of its symptoms. There were also women who resorted to home birthing due to these uncertainties including risks associated with being confined in hospitals. Cases of teenage pregnancy were also recorded in the area. On the other hand, the information drive on SRHR issues continued despite the pandemic. There was also an ongoing radio program discussing women's issues and the pandemic, an initiative of UnYPhil-Women.

In Tawi-Tawi, there was increased appreciation that women's rights and RH are supported with an Islamic perspective as cited by KII respondents. Consultations on RH matters are now gradually practiced within families.

**Women participated in legislative and political processes.** The recognition of women's political role and leadership by the community and institutions somehow facilitated women's participation in legislative and political processes. Led by WE Act 1325, select women leaders from different project areas engaged members of the House of Representatives and the Senate during the deliberations on the BOL. With the ratification of the BOL and the establishment of the BARMM, lobbying continued at the regional level,

targeting the BTA in pushing for women laws and policies such as the proposed bill for the widows and orphaned children of the mujahideen, and inclusion of IP women representative in the BCW. Lobbying efforts for these policies are ongoing at the BTA/Bangsamoro Parliament.

At the local level, the women leaders also actively participated in the lobbying of ordinances. The WELD Peace Midterm Report cited the significant contribution of the WELD Peace partners in making the MLGU of DSA become responsive to women's concerns. As mentioned by the former municipal administrator of Datu Saudi Ampatuan in Maguindanao, their long-term engagement with UnYPhil Women (starting from the ARCHES and Creating Spaces projects) resulted in the drafting of a municipal ordinance on the right age of marriage, although the said ordinance has not been passed due to changes in the Municipal Administration brought by the midterm elections in 2019. The UnYPhil-Women's interventions also facilitated the implementation of municipal programs for women particularly projects focusing on responsible parenthood and early marriages. At the provincial level, women leaders have contributed in the crafting of the Maguindanao Provincial Action Plan on Women Peace and Security (PAPWPS). The local women's agenda that they lobbied for was considered in the PAP WPS. Partner women leaders in Maguindanao have also been included in the planning and designing of activities and budgeting/allocation of funds at the municipal level. They now raise their issues direct to municipal officials as part of the Municipal Core Group<sup>13</sup>.

Before joining WE Act, women IP in South Upi refused to join any programs and activities in BARMM. But with WE Act's intervention, they are now excited every time they are invited to attend activities. There is no more resistance to participate.

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<sup>13</sup> The core group is established in DSA, Maguindanao in 2018. It is composed of officials from the Mayor's Office, Local Civil Registrar, Budget Office, DOH, representatives from women and religious sector and from UnYPhil-Women. The group conducts monthly meetings which tackles issues affecting women such as women's rights, SGBV (rape, harassment cases), child early marriage, human trafficking as well as the calendar of activities of the municipality. It may also decide on minor issues related to the abovementioned concerns. The Municipal LGUs of Guindulungan and Mamasapano also send representatives to the core group monthly meeting in order to harmonize related municipal activities. The core group sessions is oftentimes facilitated by the UnYPhil-Women.

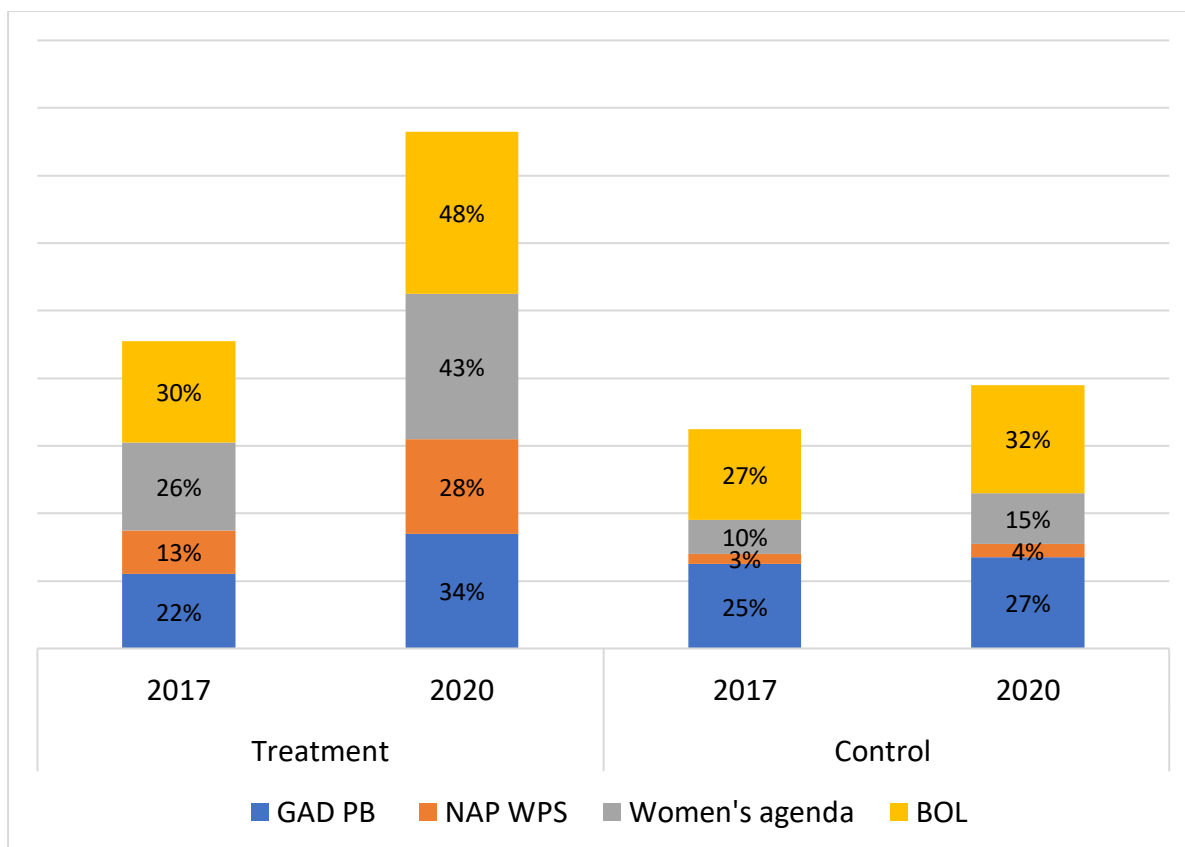


Figure 4. Women’s participation in lobbying activities

**Women gained commitments from duty bearers.** Project participants in Maguindanao and Basilan showed significant project outcome in terms of their ability to influence local and regional political processes with a WEI of .85 and .83, respectively, which were higher compared to 0.46 and 0.44 of non-project participants. Sulu also had high WEI in this aspect but not significant compared to that of non-project participants.

In Maguindanao, the persistent effort of women leaders in pushing for women’s issues and concerns gained commitments from the MLGUs of Guindulungan, Mamasapano and Datu Saudi Ampatuan (DSA) to include early and forced marriages and VAW in their programs. The latter also provided a venue for the Ummahat groups’ Women Friendly Space, an area within the municipal grounds where weekly sessions on women’s issues such as CEFM and VAWG were being held. In the BLGU of Madia, DSA, a tent was installed within the barangay hall premises where women leaders could conduct orientation on women’s issues during barangay council sessions. The BLGU also committed to include activities on early and forced marriages and VAW issues in their programs, and legislate an ordinance prohibiting underage migrant workers. Further actions on these issues are being monitored by the implementing partner.

In Basilan, the BLGU chairperson of Lower Banas in Lantawan claimed that through her engagement with the WELD Peace project and involvement in the meetings of women community partners, she learned about the rights of women and the the 5% GAD budget, and also became aware that the BOL is not only for Muslims but for Christians as well. With this knowledge, she now ensures that in her barangay, women are included in the planned projects and activities.

In Sulu, the partner BLGUs and MLGUs of Talipao and Hadji Panglima Tahil now include programs and projects for women in their efforts. The said MLGUs also utilized the 5% GAD budget for gender-related activities such as seminars on gender and development and activities held during women's month celebration. In the past, there was no conscious effort among LGUs to do such. With the WELD Peace partnership, the Barangay and Municipal Gender Focal system in the area was also enhanced with a gender focal person now assigned at the barangay level.

In Lanao del Sur, the BLGU of Buadi Arorao in Taraka municipality enacted an ordinance requiring the inclusion of the rights of a wife in Islamic teachings/sermons and the early prevention of health issues among young men and women in the education curriculum and livelihood trainings for women. The LGU of Ganassi also expressed commitment to support initiatives for women while the BLGU of Piagapo was planning to enact pro-women ordinances. Moreover, the PLGU of Lanao del Sur intends to focus on providing programs for PWDs. Efforts of these LGUs in relation to these commitments are being monitored by the implementing partner.

***Outcome 2: Women leaders able to shape social norms and mindsets within the BARMM with regard to women's issues and concerns, women's rights, and women's leadership.***

Survey results showed that Basilan and Maguindanao had significant outcomes in terms of shaping norms and mindsets with project participants having a WEI of 0.85 and 0.84, respectively, which were higher than the WEI of non-project participants at 0.68 and 0.62. For Lanao del Sur, there was no difference between the WEI of project and non-project participants at 0.69. Among the changes that were observed and shared by the project participants were the following:

***Changes in perspectives and actions among male LGU leaders and community members.*** In Basilan, the BLGU leaders of Pamucalin in Lantawan and Townsite of Maluso articulated their appreciation of women's rights during one of the WELD Peace consultations in these areas. They emphasized the importance of women leaders in community development processes. While the BLGU of Lower Banas in Lantawan showed support to women's empowerment by sending women to trainings outside of the province.

With the persistent community advocacy and lobbying of women on discouraging early and forced marriages brought about by the implementation of the Creating Spaces and ARCHES projects as well as WELD Peace, the men LGU leaders of Maguindanao have learned to acknowledge the negative impact of early and forced marriages, prompting them to craft an ordinance on the right age of marriage.

The active participation of Maguindanao women in the BOL advocacy and other activities initiated by UnYPhil-Women have made them confident and knowledgeable on community issues. With this development, women's participation is now recognized by the LGUs. Husbands of WELD Peace partner women have also become supportive of their wives. In the past, husbands were not concerned with their wives' whereabouts but

women partners now feel their support as they accompany their wives to trainings and seminars where they are able to listen to some of the sessions.

In Sulu, women participants shared that their husbands had become more responsible in sharing household responsibilities with them after they participated in WELD Peace activities. In Basilan, women participants claimed that their husband had become less likely to be jealous as they gradually understood the whereabouts and advocacies of their wives.

In Lanao del Sur, male LGU leaders now invite women in barangay activities while men in the community are now more appreciative of the importance of women empowerment as shown in their action in allowing their wives to participate in community activities. In the past, women claimed that husbands usually did not allow their wives to attend activities outside their homes. Project participants also noted that their husbands now share household responsibilities with them. Member of Parliament (MP) Hamid Barra of the BTA now raises women's issues with co-MPs and is encouraging the BTA to replicate sessions of AMDF in their programs including those that dwell on women's rights, empowerment and leadership in the context of Islam.

In the past, only men were consulted on barangay projects. With the women's active involvement in local government processes, they are now included in consultations. Women participants shared their feeling that their BLGU leaders have become more conscious in consulting them regarding future projects in their barangay. They cited aspecific instance where they were included in the house-to-house consultations for the planning and implementation of a water pump project in their area.

***LGUs allotted 5% of budget for GAD funds.*** During the conduct of GAD planning and budgeting in the partner barangay and municipal LGUs in Sulu, the LGUs learned that five percent (5%) of their total budget shall be utilized in activities supporting GAD plans and programs. Such realization prompted LGUs to allot 5% for GAD-related activities such as seminars on GAD and other activities held during the Women's Month celebration.

***Changes in mindsets and practices on issues affecting women.*** The changes illustrated below may not be solely attributed to the WELD Peace project. Note that the WELD Peace project participants were also the same partners of Oxfam's previous projects such as ARCHES and Creating Spaces. Hence, the following changes are also considered as part of the impacts of Oxfam's intervention in the areas for more than a decade.

**On early marriage.** In Maguindanao and North Cotabato, partner women have learned the negative impact of marrying at a very young age. In the past, most of them allowed early marriage for their children. Because of the series of trainings and awareness-raising activities on women's rights and empowerment in Islam, they are now discouraging early marriage. As shared by the Municipal Administrator of DSA, their municipality has seen a drop in instances of early marriages.



Likewise, in Lanao del Sur, the parents' lack of information on the impact of early marriage to children was a factor in making them allow and practice early marriage. With continuous trainings and activities to raise awareness on issues related to early, forced and arranged marriage, project participants have realized that these were misconceptions and had no basis in Islam. They also claimed that they had observed a decrease in incidence of early marriage in their own community.

In Basilan, the women/girls were allowed to marry early because of poverty and dependency on parents. Thus, "parental" marriage which means a fixed or arranged marriage where parents choose the groom/bride of their daughter/son is still being practiced. With their continued participation in WELD Peace and other projects of Oxfam, parents have become aware of the negative impact of early marriage.

**On gender-based violence.** As claimed by KII participants, many parents in Maguindanao and North Cotabato in the past were silent and did not know how to identify GBV. Because of the series of trainings of WELD Peace project on women's rights and empowerment in Islam, women and mothers have become increasingly aware of GBV.

In Basilan, women in the community had no idea about GBV before the WELD Peace project. Through the trainings on women and human rights, they acquired knowledge on the different issues and forms of violence against women and have become aware of the VAWC desk where cases of violence can be reported.

A BLGU leader in Taraka, Lanao del sur shared that she considered marital rape as new knowledge which she acquired from participation in the project. She confirmed that this was actually happening to Muslim wives. She shared this knowledge in a forum that and the participants started sharing their own experiences on the issue. As a response, she plans to hold safe space activities in her barangay where women can talk about this issue freely since that topic is commonly considered "taboo."

**On women's right to work and education.** In the past, women were not allowed to work and were not prioritized in being sent to school given the prevalent thinking that they would only be staying at home and taking care of their children. Now, women partners in Maguindanao are allowed to work to help the husbands in family finances while their daughters are allowed to attend school. Women are also now recognized as good leaders.

In Lanao, husbands have learned to acknowledge the importance of women having work to help the family financially. There are stay-at-home mothers who are also selling products online. Women have realized the importance of education, observing that women who have finished schooling are more empowered to speak up their minds.

Basilan and Sulu partners claimed that women were not allowed to work given the traditional view that their roles should focus on child rearing and household chores only. Now, many of them are working and earning to help the family with their husbands acknowledging their efforts.

**On women managing their own income.** In Islam, women are allowed to keep the earnings of their husbands but not to have their own income. As a result, most of the women have become dependent on their husbands.

In Maguindanao and North Cotabato, husbands now allow their wives to earn their own income to help provide for the family's needs. Wives are also allowed to decide on their earnings.

In Lanao del Sur, wives were dependent on and submissive to their husbands since they were not earning. With the trainings on women's rights and skills/livelihood, they have become more economically independent in finding ways to help put food on the table.

In Basilan, some women are not allowed to hold or manage money and finances especially if they are dependent on their husband. Stay-at-home mothers and wives are now empowered to manage the income of the household and share responsibilities with the husband.

**On women's consent to marry.** According to FGD respondents in Maguindanao and North Cotabato, parents traditionally decide on their children's marriage and a woman cannot choose her husband. Women were also not allowed to socialize or go on a date with men.

After participating in the WELD Peace activities, they said that they had become aware of the negative impact of deciding for their children's marriage and now respect the decision of their daughters on the matter of getting married.

As parents, Lanao del sur respondents said that they used to decide on the marriage of their female children whether they liked it or not. But because of the leadership and women empowerment activities of the WELD Peace project, they said that they now respect the decision of their children when it comes to marriage or choosing who to marry.

**On women as leaders.** In all project areas, women respondents claimed that there was a common notion in their community that women could not run for public office and hold higher positions because it was not allowed in Islam. Due to the awareness-raising activities and trainings on women's rights and empowerment, and women's participation in lobbying initiated by WELD Peace and similar projects, more women were observed to have assumed positions of responsibility in governance. There are women in the BTA while others have been appointed heads of different ministries. The Bangsamoro society and the men now

acknowledge the importance of women in nation-building. In Tawi-Tawi, women have become aware of the laws on women's rights and leadership and have learned to share their knowledge on the issue with other women in the community in order to correct misconceptions on these issues.

***Women engaged in media advocacies.*** WELD Peace activities have enhanced women's capacities to engage local media which, in turn, increased their ability to influence local norms on women's issues, rights and leadership, among others. Through the media campaign training conducted by WEAct, WELD peace partners have learned skills on how to field questions from the media, how to face the camera, how to be comfortable during actual or live interviews and how to conduct press conferences. Armed with these new skills, some women leaders have developed confidence in doing on-air interviews. Ms. Janin Balt, one of the active young women partners shared that she gained confidence and courage in facing media interviews after the training sessions, and was able to do an interview by CNN during a press conference on the BOL. She was also a guest in Salam Radio (under PTV) on the same topic. She leads Pilumbayan, a local organization based in Lanao del Sur which aims to empower young women in the Bangsamoro through awareness raising and knowledge sharing. The AMDF was also featured/interviewed on women's issues through Facebook Live in Usapang Every Woman, an online platform put up by a campaign initiated by a "coalition of individuals and organizations."

WELD Peace partners have also influenced media personnel's perspectives on Bangsamoro issues. In a conversation on the Bangsamoro women's experiences, the BOL and other Bangsamoro issues with media practitioners and WELD Peace partners, media participants learned the context and perspectives of the Bangsamoro direct from the women leaders themselves. The activity contributed to the deepening of media's understanding of the Bangsamoro issues especially among those who are not from Mindanao. "It is important that media understands the peace issues of Mindanao to be able to convey them to the public. It is also important that media people appreciate the value of working for peace and establishing the Bangsamoro region," shared Ms. Rina Jimenez David of the Philippine Daily Inquirer. She was one of the media practitioners engaged by WE Act 1325 in its BOL advocacy.

At the local level, three women partners from the IDP group in Maguindanao developed confidence in doing media interviews and were able to do so with media in Manila to talk about their plight as IDPs. They were also tapped by other NGOs as source of information about IDPs.

### 3.2 Measuring WELD Peace partners' empowerment through WEI

In determining the WELD Peace partners' empowerment using the contextualized WEI, the team calculated the WEI using all samples and performed various matching methods including nearest neighbor, radius matching, and kernel matching to allow a robust estimation of the average treatment effect on treated (ATET) (Annex F. WEI scores across various matching methods). ATET is an estimate of the idiosyncratic average treatment effect on the treated, which is the change in WEI score among those who participated in the WELD Peace project. The WEI score was significant at 1% across the three matching methods and the difference in WEI score between the treatment and control ranged from 0.05 to 0.07.

Overall, the survey results showed that WELD project partners had higher WEI at 0.73 compared to the non-project participants at 0.67 (Table 7). Significant difference in WEI results were recorded in the relational, followed by environmental and personal dimensions. This indicator suggests that WELD-Peace project had more impact in terms of the relational dimension.

**Table 7. Summary of WEI Results, by dimension**

Dimensions of change	WEI		Level of significance		
	Treatment (N=423)	Control (N=668)	a	b	c
<b>Personal dimension</b>	<b>0.73</b>	<b>0.69</b>	*	**	
<b>Relational dimension</b>	<b>0.73</b>	<b>0.63</b>	**	**	**
<b>Environmental dimension</b>	<b>0.74</b>	<b>0.67</b>		**	**
Women Empowerment Index	<b>0.73</b>	<b>0.67</b>	**	**	**

Legend: significant difference at 1%\*\* and 5%\* using <sup>a</sup>nearest neighbor matching, <sup>b</sup>radius matching, and <sup>c</sup>kernel matching. Women Empowerment Index is calculated using the following weights—personal (50%), relational (30%), and environmental (20%) and equal weights within dimension.

Among the specific indicators, the most significant difference was observed in “leadership and degrees of influencing groups.” However, there was no significant difference in terms of the indicator on “having equal say in household decision making.” They both had a score of 0.79 (Figure 5). Thus, with or without the WELD Peace project, Bangsamoro women already had relatively high level of participation in the household decision making.

Under the personal dimension, the highest index was observed in seeking knowledge followed by personal autonomy, self-confidence and leadership skills. In the knowledge indicator, a significant difference between WELD and non-WELD participants was observed (Figure 5).

In the relational dimension, the highest index was observed in “control over one’s own body” followed by “equal say in household decision making,” “recognition of women’s political role and leadership,” “leadership an degrees of influencing community groups,”

and “networking and alliance building.” A significant difference between WELD and non-WELD participants was noted in “leadership and degrees of influencing community groups.” This means that WELD Peace project had significant contribution in developing women’s leadership and their capability to influence groups.

Under environmental dimension, the highest index was observed in “safety and protection” followed by “accessing economic, livelihood support and SRH services,” “ability to shape norms and mindsets of community,” “level of support provided by groups to pursue own initiatives” and “ability to influence political processes at the local and regional levels.” A significant difference was observed in the “level of support provided by groups to pursue own initiatives.”

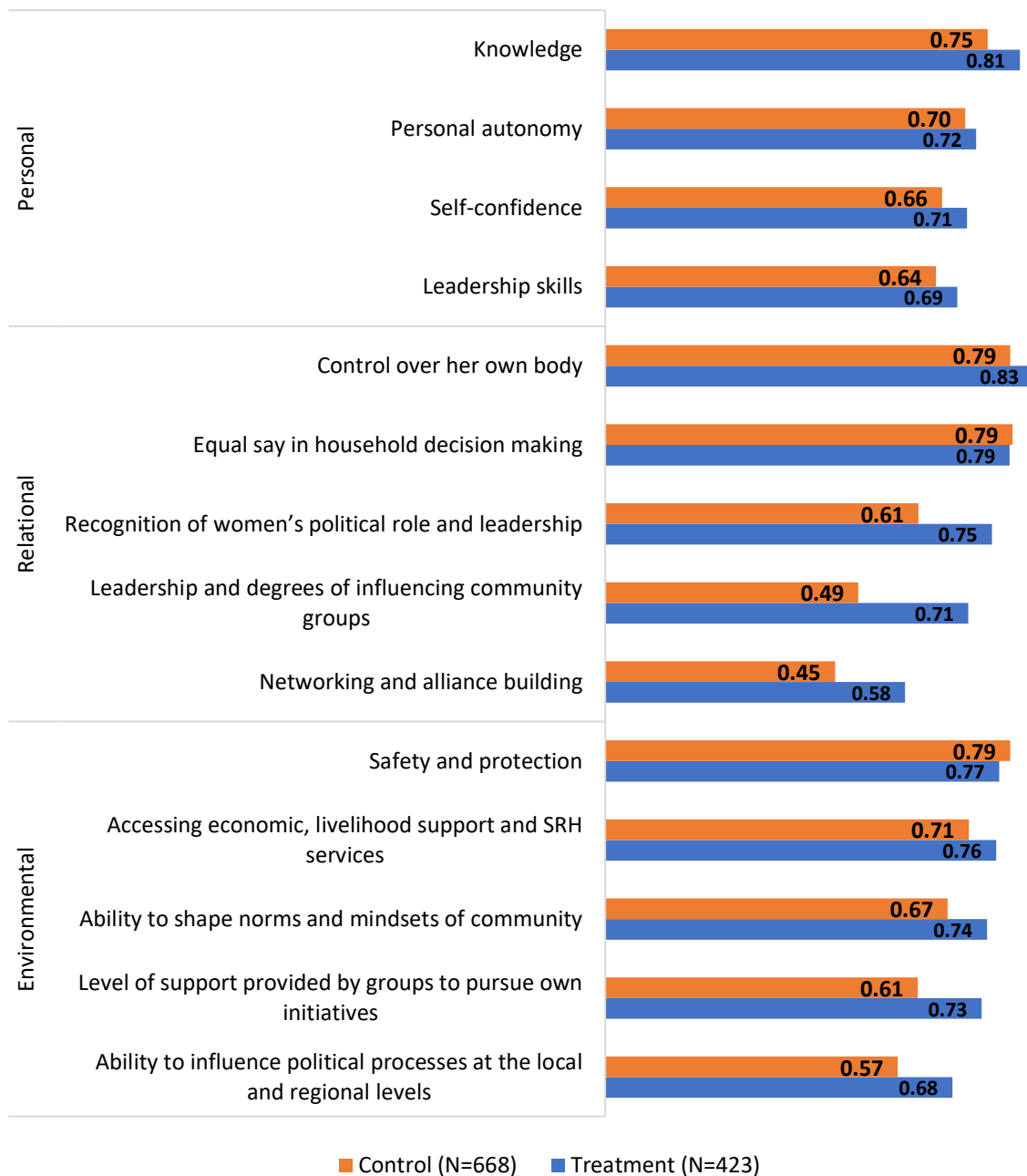


Figure 5. Performance of WEI indicators

In comparing WEI results across provinces, it was observed that Basilan had the highest WEI score for WELD project participants followed by Maguindanao, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, North Cotabato and Lanao del Sur (Figure 6). All of the WEI scores were significant except for North Cotabato. It is also important to note that in Sulu, the control group had higher WEI score compared to the treatment group. The reason for this performance was that the control group identified in Sulu was located in the city proper and had access to more resources; as a result, they were relatively more empowered. It should be noted that there was a limitation in data collection as the enumerators in Sulu had difficulty accessing control samples within the locality.

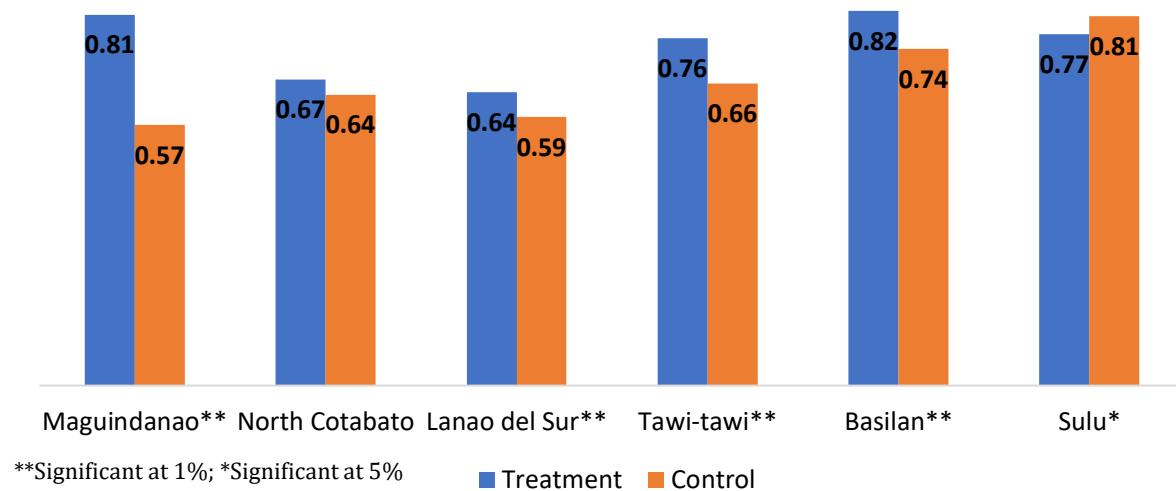


Figure 6. Comparison of WEI across provinces

The team then compared the **personal dimension** scores across provinces (Figure 7). It was observed that personal dimension had mixed results. The WELD participants had higher WEI scores across provinces except for Basilan and Sulu, where the non-WELD participants had higher WEI scores. The results were significant in all provinces except for North Cotabato.

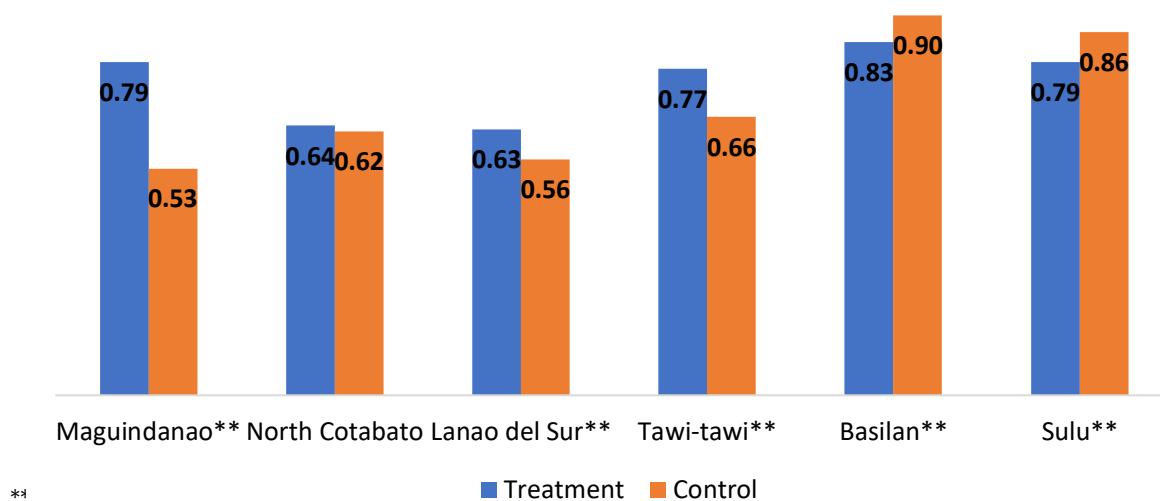


Figure 7. Comparison of personal dimension across provinces

Comparing the **relational dimension** scores across provinces, the team observed a more consistent result (Figure 8). WELD participants had higher WEI scores across provinces except for Sulu. There was also a high difference in WEI scores between WELD and non-WELD participants in Basilan.

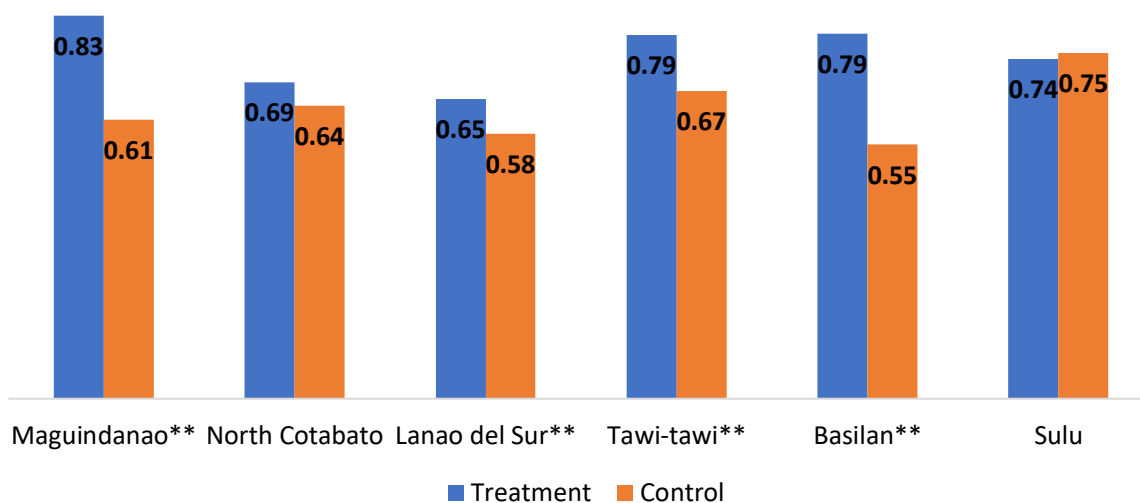
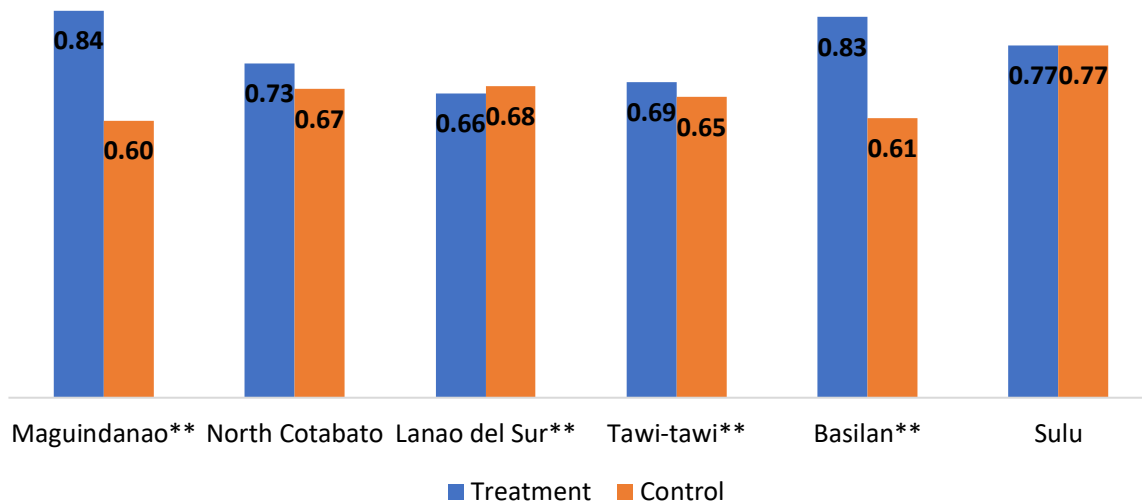


Figure 8. Comparison of relational dimension across provinces

Lastly, for **environmental dimension** scores across provinces, the team observed a mixed result (Figure 9). The WELD participants had higher WEI scores across provinces except for Lanao del Sur and Sulu. In Lanao del Sur, the non-WELD participants had a higher index compared to the treatment group. This may be attributed to the current conflict situation in the area where most of the WELD participants are located.

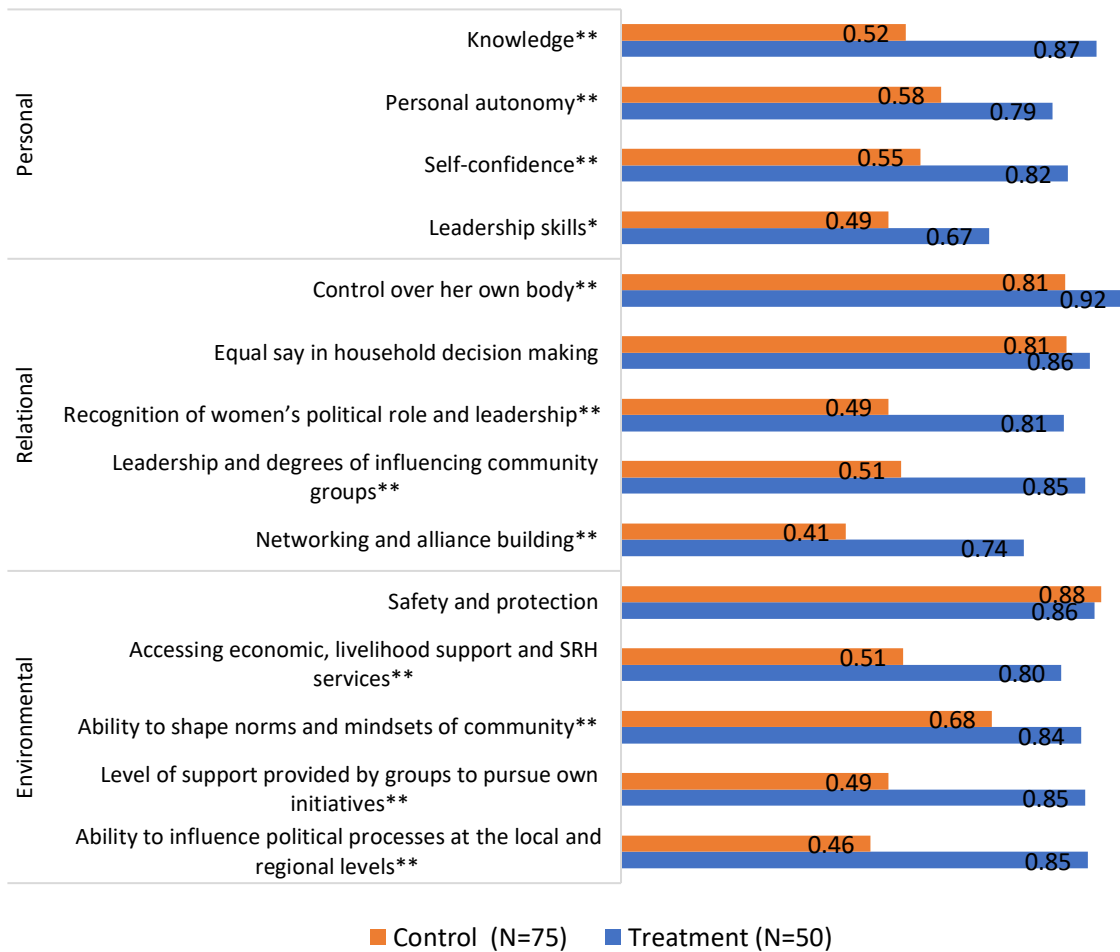


\*\*Significant at 1%; \*Significant at 5%

Figure 9. Comparison of environmental dimension across provinces

The team then compared the WEI scores within provinces. In **Maguindanao**, it was observed that all the personal indicators were significantly higher for WELD participants compared to the non-WELD participants (Figure 10). Despite the non-significance of personal dimension in the aggregate analysis, Maguindanaon women participants of WELD Peace project exhibited significant improvement in “knowledge,” “personal autonomy,” “self-confidence” and “leadership skills.” In terms of relational dimension, all the indicators were also significantly higher for WELD participants compared to non-WELD participants except for “equal say in household decision making.” With respect to environmental dimension, all of the indicators were also significantly higher for WELD participants compared to non-WELD participants except for “safety and protection.”

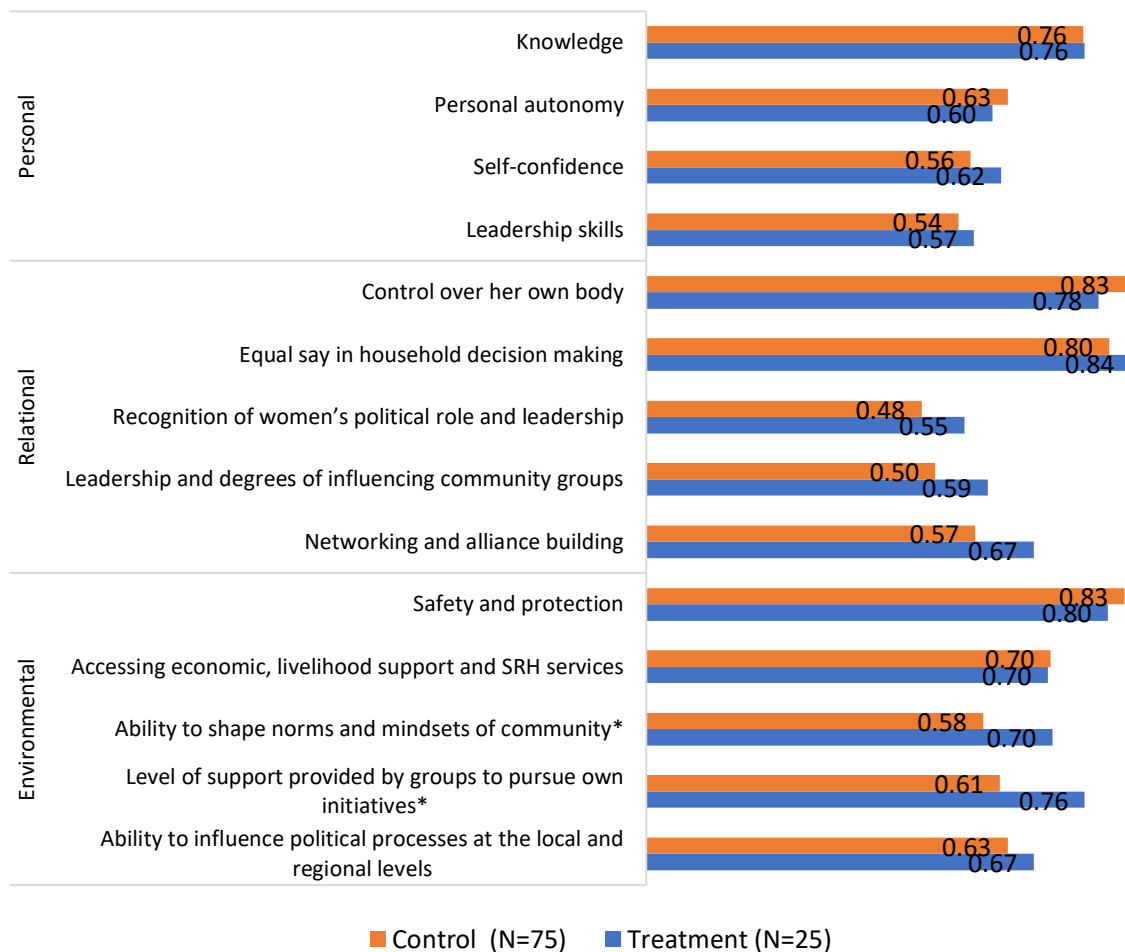




\*\*Significant at 1%; \*Significant at 5%

Figure 10. Comparison of WEI in Maguindanao

In **North Cotabato**, there was no significant difference between WELD participants and non-WELD participants except for two indicators in the environmental dimension (Figure 11). These indicators include “ability to shape norms and mindsets of community” and “level of support provided by groups to pursue own initiatives,” where WELD participants had higher WEI scores over non-WELD participants. Note that there were only 25 WELD participants in North Cotabato and this small sample size was one of the main limitations in testing for the significance between WELD participants and non-participants.



\*\*Significant at 1%; \*Significant at 5%

Figure 11. Comparison of WEI in North Cotabato

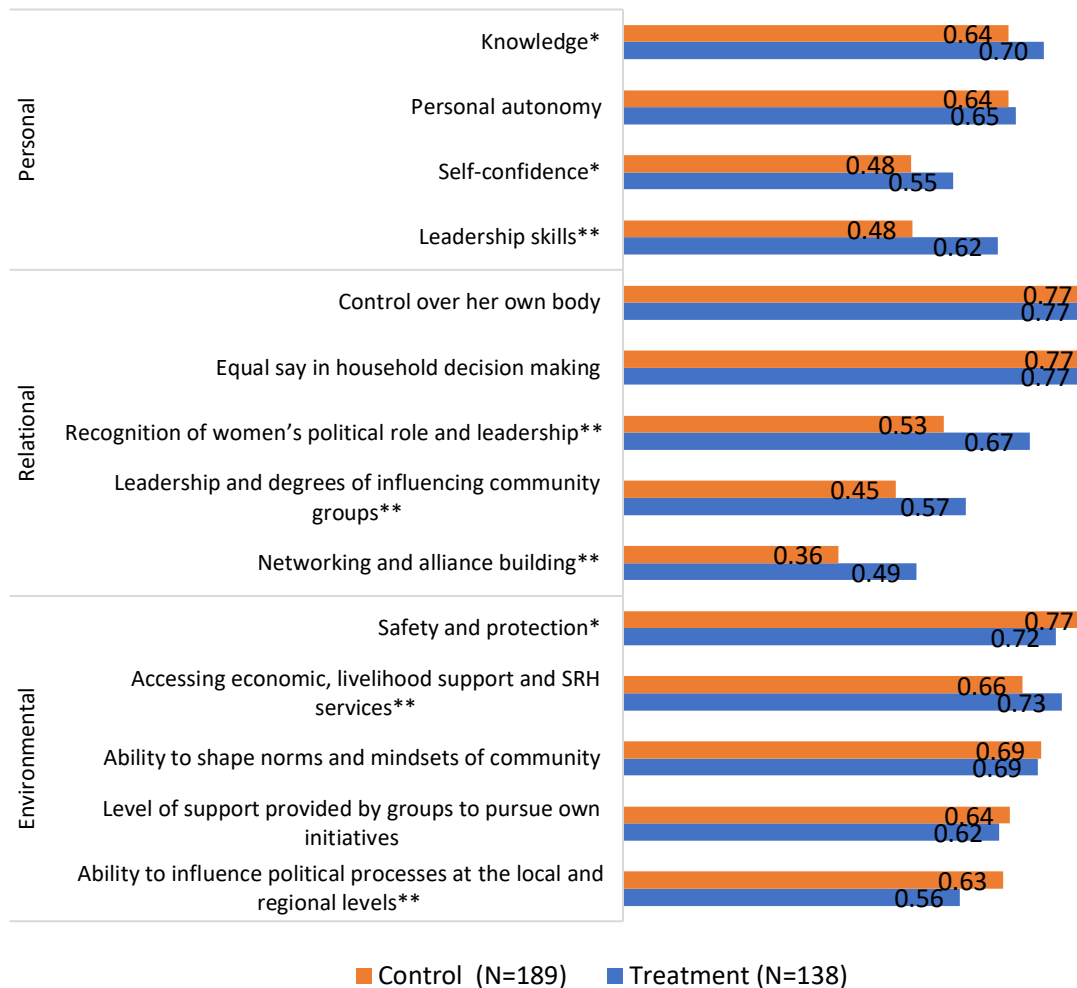
In **Lanao del Sur**, majority of the indicators in personal and relational dimensions were significantly higher for WELD participants compared to non-WELD participants; however, in environmental dimension, a mixed result was observed (Figure 12).

Under personal dimension, the team observed a significantly higher WEI index for WELD participants compared to non-WELD participants for all indicators except “personal autonomy.”

Under relational dimension, WELD participants also had a higher WEI score for the following indicators: recognition of women’s political role and leadership, leadership and degrees of influencing community groups, and networking and alliance building.

Under environmental dimension, three significant differences were observed between WELD and non- WELD participants. The former had higher WEI score compared to the latter in “accessing economic, livelihood support and SRH services.” In contrast, WELD participants had lower WEI index in “safety and protection” and “ability to influence political processes at the local and regional levels.” This finding suggests that at the environmental level, women in Lanao del Sur had mixed results in participating in WELD Peace project. In particular, **much is still needed in terms of intervention with**

**regards to safety and protection and political involvement.** Also, it should be noted that during the data gathering period, the peace and security situation in the area was unstable, which may have affected the participants' perception on the level of safety and protection.



\*\*Significant at 1%; \*Significant at 5%

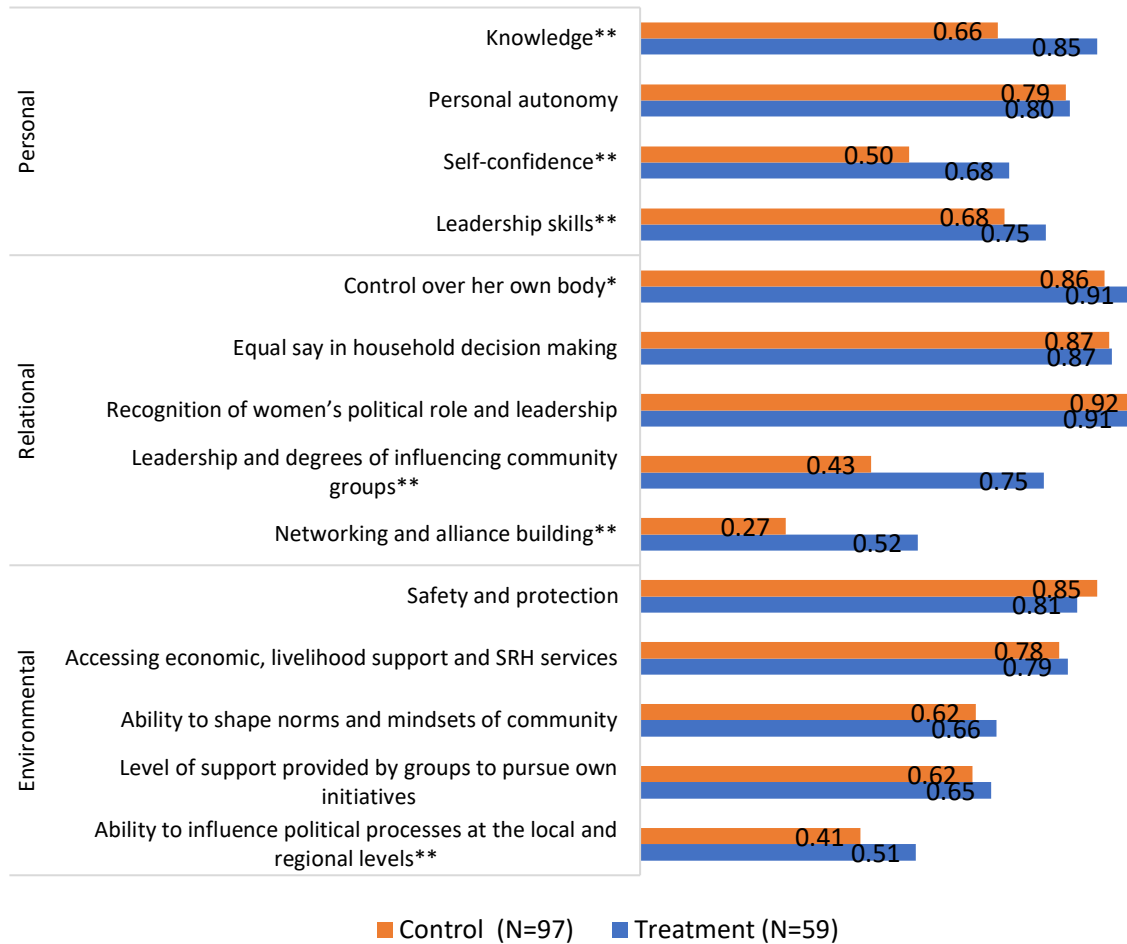
Figure 12. Comparison of WEI in Lanao del Sur

In **Tawi-Tawi**, majority of the indicators in personal and relational dimensions were also significantly higher for WELD participants compared to non-WELD participants, and one indicator in environmental dimension was significantly higher for WELD participants compared to non-WELD participants (Figure 13).

Under personal dimension, significantly higher WEI scores were observed among WELD participants compared to non-WELD participants in the following indicators: knowledge, self-confidence, and leadership skills.

Under relational dimension, WELD participants also had higher WEI scores compared to non-WELD participants in “leadership and degrees of influencing community groups” as well as “networking and alliance building.” It is important to note the wide differences between the two groups compared to the other indicators.

Under environmental dimension, there was no significant difference between WELD participants and non-WELD participants except in “ability to influence political processes at the local and regional levels,” which suggests that WELD participants had higher WEI score compared to non-WELD participants.



\*\*Significant at 1%; \*Significant at 5%

Figure 13. Comparison of WEI in Tawi-Tawi

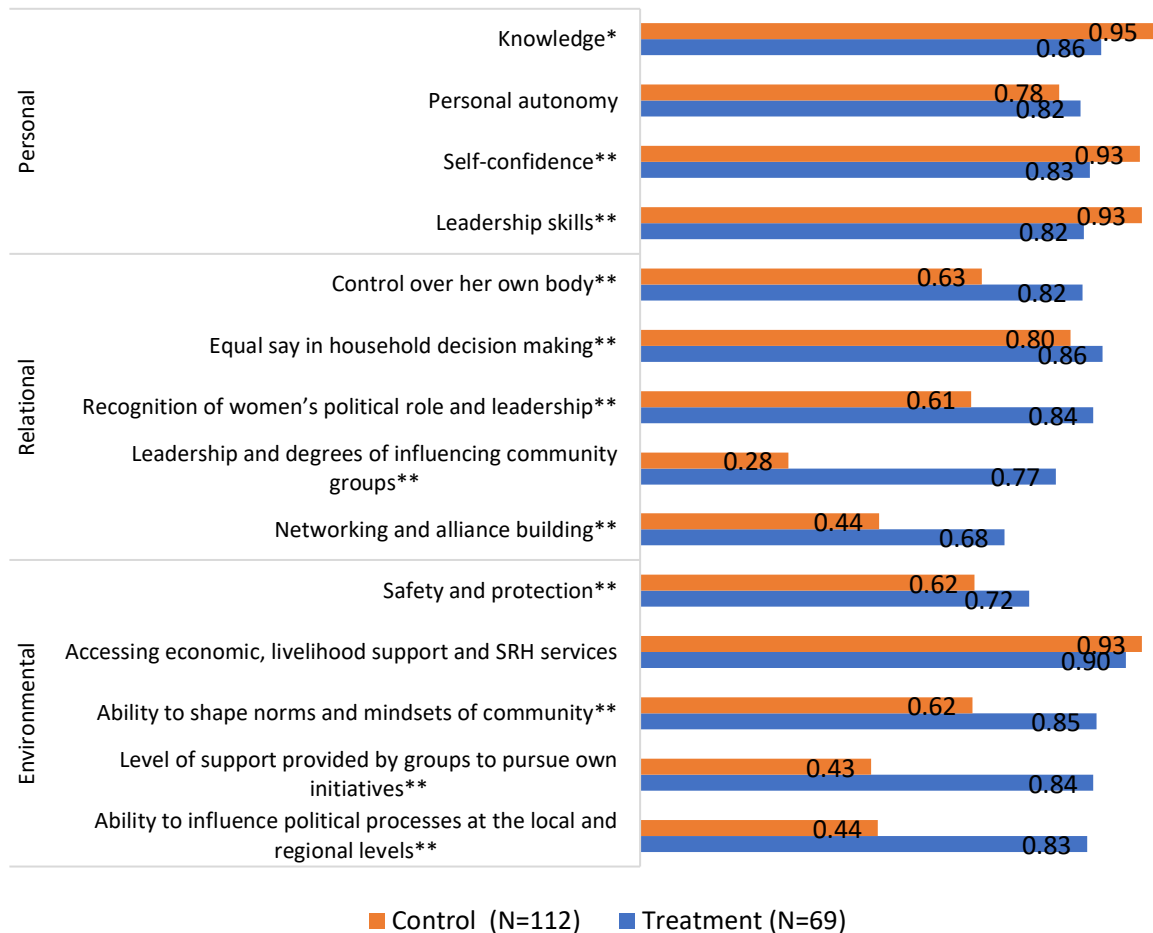
In **Basilan**, the team observed a mixed result when comparing the WELD participants and non-WELD participants, where the former had lower WEI scores for personal dimension but higher WEI scores for relational and environmental dimensions (Figure 14).

Under personal dimension, non-WELD participants had a higher WEI index compared to WELD participants in all indicators except “personal autonomy.”

Under relational dimension, all the indicators were significantly higher for WELD participants compared to non-WELD participants, and a wide gap was observed in “leadership and degrees of influencing community groups.”

Under environmental dimension, it was also observed that WELD participants had higher WEI scores compared to non-WELD participants in all indicators except in “accessing

economic, livelihood support and SRH services.” A wide gap was also noted in “level of support provided by groups to pursue own initiatives” and “ability to influence political processes at the local and regional levels.” Hence, while WELD participants had lower empowerment at the personal dimension, the project had significant impact on the participants in terms of relational and environmental dimensions.



\*\*Significant at 1%; \*Significant at 5%

Figure 14. Comparison of WEI in Basilan

In **Sulu**, the team detected a very minimal project impact in terms of women empowerment, where majority of the indicators revealed a lower WEI index for WELD participants compared to non-participants, except for one indicator (Figure 15).

Under personal dimension, non-WELD participants had higher WEI scores over WELD participants in all indicators except “knowledge.”

A mixed result was observed under relational dimension. WELD participants had higher WEI index for “recognition of women’s political role and leadership” compared to non-WELD participants. In contrast, the latter had higher WEI scores for “equal say in household decision making” and “network and alliance building.”

Under environmental dimension, non-WELD participants also had a higher WEI score for “safety and protection” compared to WELD participants. The results suggest that in terms of impact on women empowerment, the least project impact was observed among Sulu Bangsamoro women compared with other provinces where WELD Peace project was implemented.



\*\*Significant at 1%; \*Significant at 5%

Figure 15. Comparison of WEI in Sulu

### 3.3 Determinants of WEI

The team modelled the determinants of women empowerment using the WEI score as dependent variable and the province dummy, socio-demographic, ethno-linguistic, economic, community and political activities and WELD engagement as independent variables (Annex A. Variables used in the study). The model is significant at 1% level of significance. It was observed that relative to Maguindanao, which is used as base province, North Cotabato, Lanao del Sur and Tawi-Tawi had lower WEI scores.

In terms of socio-demographic factors, it was noted that educational attainment significantly influenced the WEI score at 1% level of significance. This means that highly educated Bangsamoro women were more empowered. When Bangsamoro women had an additional level of education (for example from elementary level to high school level), their empowerment index increased by 0.026. As shown in Annex G on the determinants of women empowerment index, education was a significant factor in the WEI (p-value < 0.01), and the coefficient was 0.026. The education variable was measured in terms of ordinal data (i.e., from 0-no formal education, 1-elementary school up to 5-Masters/Postgraduate).

In terms of economic factors, women who had other source of income and had higher contribution to household income were more empowered. This signifies the important role of economic contribution to empowerment. Annex G also shows that other source of income and proportion of income were both significant factors in explaining WEI (p-value < 0.01), and the coefficients were 0.019 and 0.056, respectively. The other source of income was measured as a binary variable (yes/ no) while the proportion of income was measured as ordinal data referring to the proportion of the women's income to total household income during the past 12 months ranked from 1-4 (1-less than 25%, 4- at least 75%). This implies that when Bangsamoro women had other source of income, their empowerment index increased by 0.019. Similarly, when Bangsamoro women contributed to household income, their WEI also increased by 0.026 for every ordinal rank increase in contribution to household income. Thus, Bangsamoro women who had other source of income and contributed more to the household income were more likely to be more empowered.

In terms of community and public activities, women who had higher community and public engagements in 2017 prior to the commencement of the WELD Peace project had higher empowerment index. This suggests that empowerment of women may be determined by their previous engagements in community and public events. It is shown in Annex G that community events, 2017 and public events, 2017 were both significant factors in explaining WEI (p-value < 0.01), and the coefficients were 0.037 and 0.064, respectively. Community and public events were measured as binary variables (yes/ no). This implies that Bangsamoro women who had participated in community and public events in 2017 (i.e., prior to the start of WELD Peace project) had higher WEI by 0.037 and 0.064, respectively. It means that these activities can improve women's empowerment, in general. Focusing on these activities in future women empowerment projects could be a worthwhile endeavour as empirical data suggest that it has an impact on the empowerment of women.

Finally, the team also identified the effect of the WELD Peace engagement. Participants identified themselves whether they were unaware (unaware of project and potential impacts), resistant (aware of project and potential impacts and resistant to change), neutral (aware of project yet neither supportive nor resistant), supportive (aware of project and impacts and supportive to change), and leading (aware of project and impacts and actively engaged in ensuring the project is a success). Relative to unaware participants, those who were neutral, supportive and leading had higher WEI scores and the score increased as the level of engagement to WELD Peace project improved. These differences were significant at 1% level of significance. Hence, the scores indicate that engagement of the WELD Peace project was one of the key indicators of women empowerment.

### **3.4 Political participation**

The membership of participants to political bodies and government across all WELD Peace project sites showed that they had significantly higher participation from barangay up to regional levels compared with the control group (Table 8).

The rate of participation was recorded highest at local body within barangay level (11%), barangay government (12%), political party (9%), and other governing bodies (8%) for treatment group compared with the control group (3%, 2%, 2%, and 4%, respectively). At the higher echelon of governance, however, the rate of participation decreased. In all cases, the WELD participants recorded higher level of membership except for the other governing bodies in 2017, which is not significant. This indicates that relative to 2017, WELD Peace had a significant impact in terms of increasing the membership of participants in other governing bodies in 2020.

Membership in political bodies and government was significant in both 2020 and 2017 levels except for membership in other governing bodies in 2017. This shows that although the WELD Peace project had a significant impact in terms of political membership, such trend had been observed even prior to the commencement of the project where the WELD participants had relatively higher membership rate compared with non-WELD participants. This high level of membership in political and government bodies can be associated with the projects implemented in the sites during that period, particularly the BASIC Start project, which is a precursor of the WELD PEACE project. This also implies that women empowerment projects can gain more impact in areas where there is continuity in such projects as the BASIC Start and WELD Peace projects, which were both implemented in the same areas.

It is important to note that the rate of membership in 2020 was higher compared with 2017 among WELD participants especially at the lower echelon (i.e., political party and barangay level) compared with non-WELD participants where there was no noticeable difference in membership rates.



**Table 8. Membership in political bodies and government in all project sites**

	Treatment	Control	p-value	
<b>Year: 2020</b>				
Political party	9%	2%	0.00	**
Local special body at barangay level	11%	3%	0.00	**
Barangay government	12%	2%	0.01	*
Local special body at municipal level	3%	0%	0.00	**
Municipal government	2%	0%	0.00	**
Local special body at provincial level	1%	0%	0.02	*
Provincial government	2%	0%	0.00	**
Regional government	1%	0%	0.03	*
Other governing bodies	8%	4%	0.01	*
<b>Year: 2017</b>				
Political party	7%	1%	0.00	**
Local special body at barangay level	5%	2%	0.00	**
Barangay government	8%	2%	0.00	**
Local special body at municipal level	1%	0%	0.01	*
Municipal government	3%	0%	0.00	**
Local special body at provincial level	1%	0%	0.01	*
Provincial government	1%	0%	0.03	*
Regional government	1%	0%	0.01	*
Other governing bodies	6%	4%	0.10	

Comparing the membership of the participants to political bodies and government between treatment and control groups in **Maguindanao**, the team noticed a significantly higher membership rates among WELD participants in terms of membership in political party (40%), local special body at barangay level (16%), and other governing bodies (34%) in 2020 compared to non-WELD participants (11%, 5%, and 9%, respectively).

In 2017, WELD participants also had a higher level of membership in the political party (28%) and other governing bodies (14%) compared to non-WELD participants (4% and 3%, respectively). This suggests that membership in local special body at the barangay level was not significantly different between WELD and non-WELD participants in 2017 but was significantly different between the two groups in 2020 when WELD participants had a higher membership rate. This may be attributed to the WELD Peace project outcomes implying positive benefits among project participants in terms of membership in local body at the barangay level.

**Table 9. Membership in political bodies and government in Maguindanao**

	Treatment	Control	p-value	
<b>Year: 2020</b>				
Political party	40%	11%	0.00	**
Local special body at barangay level	16%	5%	0.05	*
Barangay government	8%	5%	0.55	
Local special body at municipal level	2%	0%	0.22	
Municipal government	2%	0%	0.22	
Local special body at provincial level	2%	0%	0.22	
Provincial government	0%	0%		
Regional government	4%	0%	0.08	
Other governing bodies	34%	9%	0.00	**
<b>Year: 2017</b>				
Political party	28%	4%	0.00	**
Local special body at barangay level	4%	1%	0.34	
Barangay government	4%	1%	0.34	
Local special body at municipal level	2%	0%	0.22	
Municipal government	2%	0%	0.22	
Local special body at provincial level	2%	0%	0.22	
Provincial government	0%	0%		
Regional government	2%	0%		
Other governing bodies	14%	3%	0.02	*

In **North Cotabato**, WELD participants also recorded higher membership rates in political party (16%) and other governing body (68%) in 2020 compared with non-WELD participants (1% and 29%, respectively) (Table 10). In 2017, there was also a significant difference between WELD and non-WELD participants in terms of membership in political party (20%, 0%) and other governing body (64%, 29%). While there was a significant difference between WELD and non-WELD participants with the former having higher rates in 2020, the same situation was already observed in 2017.

**Table 10. Membership in political bodies and government in North Cotabato**

	Treatment	Control	p-value	
<b>Year: 2020</b>				
Political party	16%	1%	0.00	**
Local special body at barangay level	0%	9%	0.12	
Barangay government	0%	4%	0.31	
Local special body at municipal level	0%	0%		
Municipal government	0%	0%		
Local special body at provincial level	0%	0%		
Provincial government	0%	0%		
Regional government	0%	0%		
Other governing bodies	68%	29%	0.00	**
<b>Year: 2017</b>				
Political party	20%	0%	0.00	**
Local special body at barangay level	0%	8%	0.15	
Barangay government	0%	5%	0.24	
Local special body at municipal level	0%	0%		
Municipal government	0%	0%		
Local special body at provincial level	0%	0%		
Provincial government	0%	0%		
Regional government	0%	0%		
Other governing bodies	64%	29%	0.00	*

In **Lanao del Sur**, the team observed that WELD participants had higher membership rates at the barangay government (9%) and provincial government (4%) compared with non-WELD participants (2% and 1%, respectively) in 2020 (Table 11).

In 2017, there was also a significant difference between the treatment and control groups in terms of membership at the municipal government (3% and 0%, respectively) and provincial government (4% and 0%, respectively). This suggests that the WELD Peace project resulted in an increase in political membership at the barangay level in 2020 and this condition was not observed prior to the commencement of the project in 2017. In the case of municipal government membership, the 2017 condition was more favourable to WELD participants with a higher membership rate, but in 2020, there was no significant difference in the membership rate between the two groups. While a positive impact was observed at the barangay government level, there was a decline in membership observed at the municipal level among WELD participants.

**Table 11. Membership in political bodies and government in Lanao del Sur**

	Treatment	Control	p-value	
<b>Year: 2020</b>				
Political party	4%	1%	0.11	
Local special body at barangay level	4%	1%	0.11	
Barangay government	9%	2%	0.00	**
Local special body at municipal level	1%	0%	0.24	
Municipal government	0%	1%	0.39	
Local special body at provincial level	1%	0%	0.24	
Provincial government	4%	1%	0.04	*
Regional government	0%	0%		
Other governing bodies	0%	1%	0.39	
<b>Year: 2017</b>				
Political party	3%	2%	0.42	
Local special body at barangay level	5%	2%	0.14	
Barangay government	4%	3%	0.58	
Local special body at municipal level	1%	0%	0.24	
Municipal government	3%	0%	0.02	*
Local special body at provincial level	1%	1%	0.39	
Provincial government	4%	0%	0.00	**
Regional government	1%	0%	0.10	
Other governing bodies	0%	0%		

In **Tawi-Tawi**, WELD participants had higher membership rates in a local body at the barangay level (25%), barangay government (27%) and at the municipal level (5%) compared to non-WELD participants (2%, 5% and 0%, respectively) in 2020 (Table 12).

Looking at the 2017 political membership rates, a significant difference was noted between WELD and non-WELD participants in a local body at the barangay level (14% and 1%, respectively) and barangay government (15% and 2%, respectively). This suggests that prior to the start of the WELD Peace project in 2017, membership in a local body at the municipal level was not significantly different between WELD and non-WELD participants. Such condition improved in 2020 suggesting a higher membership rate for the treatment group compared to the control group.

**Table 12. Membership in political bodies and government in Tawi-Tawi**

	Treatment	Control	p-value	
<b>Year: 2020</b>				
Political party	2%	0%	0.20	
Local special body at barangay level	25%	2%	0.00	**
Barangay government	27%	5%	0.00	**
Local special body at municipal level	5%	0%	0.02	*
Municipal government	2%	0%	0.20	
Local special body at provincial level	5%	1%	0.12	
Provincial government	0%	0%		
Regional government	0%	0%		
Other governing bodies	0%	0%		
<b>Year: 2017</b>				
Political party	2%	0%	0.20	
Local special body at barangay level	14%	1%	0.00	**
Barangay government	15%	2%	0.00	**
Local special body at municipal level	3%	0%	0.07	
Municipal government	3%	0%	0.07	
Local special body at provincial level	2%	0%	0.20	
Provincial government	0%	1%	0.44	
Regional government	0%	0%		
Other governing bodies	0%	0%		

In **Basilan**, the team recognized the same trend in terms of political participation where WELD participants had higher membership rates in a local body at the barangay level (19%) as well as at the municipal level (7%) compared with the control group (3% and 1%, respectively) in 2020 (Table 13).

In 2017, prior to the commencement of the WELD Peace project, both WELD and non-WELD participants had no significant difference in terms of their political participation. This suggests that the improvement of political participation in 2020 in local bodies at the barangay and municipal levels was a positive contribution of the project as this condition was not observed prior to the start of the project.

**Table 13. Membership in political bodies and government in Basilan**

	<b>Treatment</b>	<b>Control</b>	<b>p-value</b>	
<b>Year: 2020</b>				
Political party	1%	1%	0.73	
Local special body at barangay level	19%	3%	0.00	**
Barangay government	3%	1%	0.31	
Local special body at municipal level	7%	1%	0.02	*
Municipal government	0%	0%		
Local special body at provincial level	3%	0%	0.07	
Provincial government	0%	0%		
Regional government	0%	0%		
Other governing bodies	0%	0%		
<b>Year: 2017</b>				
Political party	0%	1%	0.43	
Local special body at barangay level	1%	2%	0.86	
Barangay government	1%	2%	0.86	
Local special body at municipal level	0%	1%	0.43	
Municipal government	0%	0%		
Local special body at provincial level	0%	0%		
Provincial government	0%	0%		
Regional government	0%	0%		
Other governing bodies	0%	0%		

In **Sulu**, political participation at the lower echelon of governance of WELD participants was observed to be higher compared with non-WELD participants in 2020 (Table 14).

In particular, WELD participants registered higher membership participation rates compared with the control group with regards political party (6% and 0%, respectively), local body at barangay level (6% and 0%, respectively), barangay government (21% and 0%, respectively), local body at municipal level (5% and 0%, respectively), and at the municipal government level (7% and 0%, respectively). However, some of these differences in political participation between WELD and non-WELD participants existed even before the project started in 2017. In 2017, there was a significant difference in the participation rates of WELD and non-WELD participants with regards political party (9% and 0%, respectively), local body at barangay level (6% and 0%, respectively), barangay government (18% and 0%, respectively), and at the municipal government (5% and 0%, respectively).

Hence, the observed differences in political participation of WELD and non-WELD participants were already existing before the project's start except for the local body at the municipal level. The result suggests that the WELD Peace project improved the political participation of the treatment group compared with the control group particularly in the local body at the municipal level.

**Table 14. Membership in political bodies and government in Sulu**

	Treatment	Control	p-value	
<b>Year: 2020</b>				
Political party	6%	0%	0.01	**
Local special body at barangay level	6%	0%	0.01	**
Barangay government	21%	0%	0.00	**
Local special body at municipal level	5%	0%	0.01	*
Municipal government	7%	0%	0.00	**
Local special body at provincial level	1%	0%	0.23	
Provincial government	1%	0%	0.23	
Regional government	1%	0%	0.23	
Other governing bodies	1%	0%	0.23	
<b>Year: 2017</b>				
Political party	9%	0%	0.00	**
Local special body at barangay level	6%	0%	0.01	**
Barangay government	18%	0%	0.00	**
Local special body at municipal level	2%	0%	0.09	
Municipal government	5%	0%	0.01	*
Local special body at provincial level	1%	0%	0.23	
Provincial government	1%	0%	0.23	
Regional government	1%	0%	0.23	
Other governing bodies	1%	0%	0.23	

### 3.5 Public and advocacy events

An analysis of the involvement of WELD and non-WELD participants in public and advocacy events in all project sites in 2020 showed that the former had a higher participation rate in this category compared with the latter (Table 15).

The highest participation rate was during the BOL plebiscite, which reached 74% among WELD participants and 60% among non-WELD participants, registering the highest among all the advocacy events. There were also high participation rates among WELD participants compared with non-WELD participants in other public and advocacy events including BOL advocacy (48% and 32%, respectively), women’s agenda advocacy and lobbying (43% and 15%, respectively), public conference (42% and 17%, respectively), GAD PB (34% and 27%, respectively), National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (NAPWPS) (28% and 4%, respectively), demonstrations (19% and 11%, respectively), and media appearance (6% and 2%, respectively).

In 2017, prior to the start of the WELD Peace project, WELD participants recorded significantly higher participation rates in all activities except for the BOL advocacy and GAD PB advocacy and lobbying. This can be considered a clear positive outcome of the WELD Peace project in terms of BOL advocacy and GAD PB advocacy and lobbying.

**Table 15. Public and advocacy events in all project sites**

	Treatment	Control	p-value	
<b>Year: 2020</b>				
BOL plebiscite	74%	60%	0.00	**
BOL advocacy	48%	32%	0.00	**
Demonstrations	19%	11%	0.00	**
Public conference	42%	17%	0.00	**
Media appearance	6%	2%	0.00	**
GAD PB advocacy and lobbying	34%	27%	0.01	*
NAPWPS advocacy and lobbying	28%	4%	0.00	**
Women’s agenda advocacy and lobbying	43%	15%	0.00	**
<b>Year: 2017</b>				
BOL advocacy	30%	27%	0.38	
Demonstrations	11%	7%	0.04	*
Public conference	23%	11%	0.00	**
Media appearance	3%	1%	0.01	**
GAD PB advocacy and lobbying	22%	25%	0.28	
NAPWPS advocacy and lobbying	13%	3%	0.00	**
Women’s agenda advocacy and lobbying	26%	10%	0.00	**

At the provincial level, the team also compared the involvement of WELD and non-WELD participants in public and advocacy events in **Maguindanao** and the WELD participants registered higher participation rates in all public and advocacy events in 2020 (Table 16). The highest participation rate was during the BOL plebiscite among WELD participants



(88%) and non-WELD participants (55%), showing a significant difference. The other public and advocacy events that had significantly higher participation for WELD participants compared with non-WELD participants include: BOL advocacy (82% and 40%, respectively), public conference (66% and 23%, respectively), demonstration (64% and 31%, respectively), women’s agenda advocacy and lobbying (62% and 32%, respectively), GAD PB advocacy and lobbying (50% and 9%, respectively), media appearance (22% and 3%, respectively), and NAPWPS advocacy and lobbying (18% and 1%, respectively).

In 2017, the team observed a significant difference between WELD and non-WELD participants in all public and advocacy events in Maguindanao except for NAPWPS advocacy and lobbying. This suggests that while there was a significant difference in the participation rates of public and advocacy events in Maguindanao in 2020, the same condition was already observed in 2017 in all activities except for NAPWPS advocacy and lobbying. This implies that the WELD Peace project had a positive impact in terms of NAPWPS advocacy and lobbying participation in the treatment group.

**Table 16. Public and advocacy events in Maguindanao**

	Treatment	Control	p-value	
<b>Year: 2020</b>				
BOL plebiscite	88%	55%	0.00	**
BOL advocacy	82%	40%	0.00	**
Demonstrations	64%	31%	0.00	**
Public conference	66%	23%	0.00	**
Media appearance	22%	3%	0.00	**
GAD PB advocacy and lobbying	50%	9%	0.00	**
NAPWPS advocacy and lobbying	18%	1%	0.00	**
Women's agenda advocacy and lobbying	62%	32%	0.00	**
<b>Year: 2017</b>				
BOL advocacy	56%	21%	0.00	**
Demonstrations	42%	17%	0.00	**
Public conference	48%	16%	0.00	**
Media appearance	14%	0%	0.00	**
GAD PB advocacy and lobbying	32%	5%	0.00	**
NAPWPS advocacy and lobbying	4%	0%	0.08	
Women's agenda advocacy and lobbying	44%	15%	0.00	**

In **North Cotabato**, WELD and non-WELD participants recorded the same participation rates in public and advocacy events in 2020 except for BOL plebiscite and BOL advocacy (Table 17).

In terms of BOL plebiscite, 84% of WELD participants voted while only 31% of non-WELD participants did. Meanwhile, 76% of WELD participants joined the BOL advocacy events while 49% of non-WELD participants took part in the same activities, a significant difference. However, in 2017, there was already an observed difference in the participation of BOL advocacy between WELD and non-WELD participants (76% and

32%, respectively). Thus, this positive impact in favor of the treatment group for BOL advocacy participation was already an existing condition prior to the WELD Peace project implementation.

**Table 17. Public and advocacy events in North Cotabato**

	Treatment	Control	p-value	
<b>Year: 2020</b>				
BOL plebiscite	84%	31%	0.00	**
BOL advocacy	76%	49%	0.02	*
Demonstrations	28%	25%	0.79	
Public conference	64%	59%	0.64	
Media appearance	12%	3%	0.06	
GAD PB advocacy and lobbying	60%	53%	0.57	
NAPWPS advocacy and lobbying	28%	13%	0.09	
Women's agenda advocacy and lobbying	76%	61%	0.19	
<b>Year: 2017</b>				
BOL advocacy	76%	45%	0.01	**
Demonstrations	32%	25%	0.52	
Public conference	60%	57%	0.82	
Media appearance	4%	3%	0.74	
GAD PB advocacy and lobbying	52%	51%	0.91	
NAPWPS advocacy and lobbying	24%	13%	0.21	
Women's agenda advocacy and lobbying	68%	47%	0.07	

In **Lanao del Sur**, significantly higher participation rates in public and advocacy events among WELD and non-WELD participants were observed in 2020 for the following activities: BOL plebiscite (41% and 24%, respectively), BOL advocacy (33% and 15%, respectively), public conference (33% and 11%, respectively), NAPWPS advocacy (20% and 4%, respectively), and lobbying and women's agenda advocacy and lobbying (40% and 10%, respectively).

In 2017, however, WELD participants already had higher participation rates compared with non-WELD participants in the following activities: BOL advocacy (22% and 10%, respectively), public conference (22% and 4%, respectively), GAD PB advocacy and lobbying (18% and 8%, respectively), NAPWPS advocacy (19% and 2%, respectively) and lobbying, and women's agenda advocacy and lobbying (33% and 7%, respectively).

The results suggest that while there were higher participation rates among WELD participants in these activities, the same condition existed prior to the start of the WELD Peace project. Moreover, there was already a significantly higher participation rate among WELD participants for GAD PB advocacy and lobbying in 2017. In 2020, the two groups had no significant differences in participation rates

**Table 18. Public and advocacy events in Lanao del Sur**

	Treatment	Control	p-value	
<b>Year: 2020</b>				
BOL plebiscite	41%	24%	0.00	**
BOL advocacy	33%	15%	0.00	**
Demonstrations	8%	10%	0.63	
Public conference	33%	11%	0.00	**
Media appearance	1%	3%	0.20	
GAD PB advocacy and lobbying	13%	11%	0.49	
NAPWPS advocacy and lobbying	20%	4%	0.00	**
Women's agenda advocacy and lobbying	40%	10%	0.00	**
<b>Year: 2017</b>				
BOL advocacy	22%	10%	0.00	**
Demonstrations	4%	5%	0.48	
Public conference	22%	4%	0.00	**
Media appearance	1%	1%	0.76	
GAD PB advocacy and lobbying	18%	8%	0.01	**
NAPWPS advocacy and lobbying	19%	2%	0.00	**
Women's agenda advocacy and lobbying	33%	7%	0.00	**

In **Tawi-Tawi**, the WELD and non-WELD participants registered a significant difference in all public and advocacy events during 2020 except for the BOL plebiscite (Table 19).

WELD participants had higher participation rates in the following activities: BOL advocacy (42%), demonstration (14%), public conference (64%), media appearance (8%), GAD PB advocacy and lobbying (20%), NAP WPS advocacy and lobbying (20%) and women's agenda advocacy and lobbying (24%). On the other hand, the participation rates for non-WELD participants are 7%, 4%, 24%, 1%, 1%, 1% and 2%, respectively. In 2017, there was an observed significant difference between WELD and non-WELD participants in BOL advocacy (8% and 1%, respectively), public conference (12% and 1%, respectively) and GAD PB advocacy and lobbying (10% and 0%, respectively). This implies that the WELD Peace project had positive outcomes in terms of demonstration, media appearance, NAPWPS advocacy and lobbying, and women's agenda advocacy and lobbying.

**Table 19. Public and advocacy events in Tawi-Tawi**

	Treatment	Control	p-value	
<b>Year: 2020</b>				
BOL plebiscite	85%	74%	0.12	
BOL advocacy	42%	7%	0.00	**
Demonstrations	14%	4%	0.03	*
Public conference	64%	24%	0.00	**
Media appearance	8%	1%	0.02	*
GAD PB advocacy and lobbying	20%	1%	0.00	**
NAPWPS advocacy and lobbying	20%	1%	0.00	**
Women's agenda advocacy and lobbying	24%	2%	0.00	**
<b>Year: 2017</b>				
BOL advocacy	8%	1%	0.02	*
Demonstrations	3%	1%	0.30	
Public conference	12%	1%	0.00	**
Media appearance	5%	1%	0.12	
GAD PB advocacy and lobbying	10%	0%	0.00	**
NAPWPS advocacy and lobbying	3%	1%	0.30	
Women's agenda advocacy and lobbying	5%	1%	0.12	

In **Basilan**, WELD and non-WELD participants had a significant difference in their involvement in public and advocacy events in 2020 except in the BOL plebiscite, BOL advocacy and media appearance (Table 20).

WELD participants recorded higher participation rates compared with non- WELD participants in the following activities: demonstration (28%), public conference (32%), GAD PB advocacy and lobbying (88%), NAPWPS advocacy and lobbying (81%), and women's agenda advocacy and lobbying (64%).

Non-WELD participants, on the other hand, registered the following participation rates: 3%, 5%, 99%, 5% and 7%, respectively. Thus, there was a favorable outcome for WELD participants except in GAP PB advocacy and lobbying, where non-WELD participants had a higher participation rate compared with WELD participants.

However, in 2017, significant differences among WELD and non-WELD participants were noted in the following areas: BOL advocacy (57% and 100%, respectively), GAD PB advocacy and lobbying (36% and 97%, respectively), NAPWPS advocacy and lobbying (22% and 4%, respectively), and women's agenda advocacy and lobbying (17% and 6%, respectively). The result suggests that the WELD Peace project had a positive impact on demonstration and public conference attendance. Also, non-WELD participants in 2017 already had a significantly higher participation rate in BOL advocacy compared with WELD participants. However, the project was able to increase the participation rate of WELD participants in 2020. In terms of GAD PB advocacy and lobbying, non-WELD

participants already had a higher participation rate and the same trend was observed in 2020.

**Table 20. Public and advocacy events in Basilan**

	Treatment	Control	p-value	
<b>Year: 2020</b>				
BOL plebiscite	99%	100%	0.20	
BOL advocacy	100%	100%		
Demonstrations	28%	3%	0.00	**
Public conference	32%	5%	0.00	**
Media appearance	3%	3%	0.93	
GAD PB advocacy and lobbying	88%	99%	0.00	**
NAP WPS advocacy and lobbying	81%	5%	0.00	**
Women's agenda advocacy and lobbying	64%	7%	0.00	**
<b>Year: 2017</b>				
BOL advocacy	57%	100%	0.00	**
Demonstrations	7%	3%	0.15	
Public conference	7%	4%	0.43	
Media appearance	1%	2%	0.86	
GAD PB advocacy and lobbying	36%	97%	0.00	**
NAP WPS advocacy and lobbying	22%	4%	0.00	**
Women's agenda advocacy and lobbying	17%	6%	0.02	*

In **Sulu**, a significantly higher participation rate was observed among WELD participants compared with non-WELD participants in all activities except BOL plebiscite, demonstration and media appearance in 2020 (Table 21).

The participation rates of WELD participants were significantly higher compared with the control group in the following areas: BOL advocacy (5% and 0%, respectively), public conference (30% and 3%, respectively), GAD PB advocacy and lobbying (15% and 0%, respectively), NAPWPS advocacy and lobbying (7% and 0%, respectively), and women's agenda advocacy and lobbying (22% and 0%, respectively).

In 2017, a similar trend was observed in the same activities, namely: BOL advocacy (4% and 0%, respectively), public conference (22% and 4%, respectively), GAD PB advocacy and lobbying (10% and 0%, respectively), NAPWPS advocacy and lobbying (5% and 0%, respectively) and women's agenda advocacy and lobbying (12% and 0%, respectively). Thus, while there was a significantly higher participation rate among WELD participants in 2020 compared with non-WELD participants, this trend was already observed in 2017 before the WELD Peace project started.

**Table 21. Public and advocacy events in Sulu**

	Treatment	Control	p-value
<b>Year: 2020</b>			

BOL plebiscite	87%	93%	0.17	
BOL advocacy	5%	0%	0.01	*
Demonstrations	6%	4%	0.54	
Public conference	30%	3%	0.00	**
Media appearance	2%	0%	0.09	
GAD PB advocacy and lobbying	15%	0%	0.00	**
NAP WPS advocacy and lobbying	7%	0%	0.00	**
Women's agenda advocacy and lobbying	22%	0%	0.00	**
<b>Year: 2017</b>				
BOL advocacy	4%	0%	0.03	*
Demonstrations	5%	1%	0.07	
Public conference	22%	4%	0.00	**
Media appearance	1%	0%	0.23	
GAD PB advocacy and lobbying	10%	0%	0.00	**
NAP WPS advocacy and lobbying	5%	0%	0.01	*
Women's agenda advocacy and lobbying	12%	0%	0.00	**

## **4.0 Unintended or unplanned changes resulting from WELD Peace**

Based on the observation of WELD Peace women leaders in Maguindanao, Lanao del sur and Sulu, their husbands, who accompanied them often during the conduct of trainings and other WELD Peace activities, had become more responsible and aware of women's/wives' rights and had learned to share household responsibilities with their wives. In Basilan, women partners claimed that their husbands had become less likely to be jealous as they had gradually understood the advocacies of their wives.

Some active partners of WELD Peace have sustained their engagement with government as they were elected to public office and others continued engagement at the higher level of governance. In Lanao del Sur, an active WELD Peace partner was elected Sangguniang Kabataan chairwoman while another was appointed as secretary of the Mayor of Saguiaran. In Basilan, Ms. Honeylane Virtucio, an active partner of Tarbilang was elected barangay chairwoman in the 2018 elections. In TawiTawi, one of the WELD Peace partner organizations, the Noorus Salam National Women Council, shared that because of their engagement with WELD Peace, their organization was motivated to conduct an assessment of the needs of their community partners and identify possible target beneficiaries for future engagements.

Accordingly, their active participation in the WELD Peace activities has made other people become aware of their capabilities to lead and influence.

In Sulu, NGOs have started to get involved in barangay activities which gave women hope for more livelihood projects to come.

## **5.0 Inclusivity of WELD Peace implementation**

Partner organizations have engaged minority groups who were oftentimes left out. These included those representing persons with disability (PWDs), IPs, senior citizens and disadvantaged women.

In Lanao del Sur, the project engaged PWDs in a peace dialogue conducted at the Mindanao State University in Marawi City where they were able to present their issues such as their rights as PWDs. Their issues were noted by the Provincial GAD Office.

In Sulu, PWDs and IPs expressed their appreciation to Tarbilang for including them in the program as they felt that they were given due importance. IP participants in Sulu were a mix of Tausugs and Badjaos (around 10%). In the case of Maguindanao, however, PWDs could hardly participate because of limited mobility due to lack of wheelchairs in the area. IPs and senior citizens were included in the WELD Peace project.

Also in Sulu, Badjao women engaged by the project have manifested empowerment on making decisions on birthing issues. They articulated that it was their right to choose, not only their husband's, how many children they wanted. In addition, they were also more open to the idea of using contraceptives for birth spacing.

## **6.0 Adjustments in implementation due to COVID-19 pandemic**

Apart from including disadvantaged groups, WELD Peace was inclusive enough to adjust to changes in the context of the project areas. With the unexpected health crisis brought by the COVID-19 pandemic, the project partners allotted part of their funds for COVID-19 response. In Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi, the WELD Peace implementing partners distributed health kits to frontliners. In Cagayan de Oro and Cotabato City, the project shared Iftar packages containing food supplies to 120 disadvantaged and marginalized women (poor, divorced, solo parents, elderly, stranded, abandoned and the like) at the end of Ramadhan. Along with the distribution of Iftar packages, WE Act 1325 conducted a rapid survey on the experiences of women during the pandemic. The survey results discussed the immediate impact of the crisis on the women respondents at the personal and family levels, impacts on their livelihood and the community, problems and challenges women faced amidst the precautionary measures enforced by government, and the women's hopes in connection with government interventions. One of the outputs of the said efforts was a set of policy recommendations submitted by WEAct to Oxfam that could help inform future interventions.

## **7.0 Sustainability of WELD Peace and other related initiatives**

At the barangay and municipal levels, initially drafted and enacted laws, such as the ordinance on the inclusion of rights of married women in Islamic teachings and sessions with mothers and in BLGU's skills training for women in Barangay Baudi Arorao, Taraka, are expected to ensure continuity of the WELD Peace initiatives as these will become part of the LGU's programs. The commitment of Lanao del Sur PLGU to incorporate the HELPPPS women's agenda in the revision of the Provincial GAD Code is also a way for sustainability provided that AMDF will follow through on the said plans with the PLGU.

Proposed ordinances regarding underage migrant workers/domestic helpers and right age of marriage, which were not enacted in DSA due to changes in the local administration after the 2019 elections, are now being lobbied at the provincial GAD Office. These issues were initially brought up by women leaders during their participation in consultations on the Programs and Projects on Women Peace and Security (PAP WPS). Aside from the Provincial GAD office of Maguindanao, the BWC also attended the consultation. In said activity, BWC and the Maguindanao GAD office expressed their commitment to integrate the abovementioned agenda in their action plans.

The provision of a proper venue at the municipal grounds where women can have conversations on women's issues and concerns is expected to sustain women's activities given the sustained support of UnYPhil-Women.

In Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi, the participation of WELD women in BLGU's GAD PB, LSBs and other government structures is expected to sustain WELD Peace initiatives as women can now influence the BLGU plans and lobby inclusion of women's issues and concerns in BLGU programs. The formalization and registration of women's organizations in BARMM agencies such as the MOLE, MSSD, and CDA, among others, will



enable women’s sustained access to government social services particularly livelihood opportunities.

In terms of initiatives that will likely continue beyond the WELD Peace project time frame, UnYPhil has expressed hope in continuing its advocacy on women's rights and empowerment especially the less educated and those without income. The provision of trainings and livelihood opportunities to women is also part of the plan by linking women organizations to concerned government agencies. The organization will also do frequent visits and conversations with partner community women while starting to engage young women leaders in order to develop second liners. In Lanao del Sur, AMDF hopes to continue addressing the needs of partner women in the community. The commitment of AMDF to reach out to remote areas for women empowerment and their effort to hear the issues of women on the ground will remain. The organization will also continue supporting women in pushing for their issues and finding solutions as well. In the case of Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi, the Tarbilang will continue its immersion activities, ocular visits in partner communities and advocacy in empowering local women leaders to participate in the GAD code formulation or revisions. Education on political and economic empowerment among women will be pursue as this will strengthen the skills and confidence of women to actively participate in community development activities. At the national level, WEAct will sustain capacity-building of women to keep them updated with developments in the BARMM to ensure their participation in its processes. Gender-related activities for grassroots women will also be pursued.

## 8.0 Spaces for women’s involvement in BARMM governance

As the BARMM currently builds its structure, laws and policies, women partners have seen the following spaces for their involvement especially in influencing BARMM plans and policies and changing social norms and community mindsets:

**Table 22. Spaces for future engagement in BARMM governance**

<b>Spaces or structure/s to be involved/engaged</b>	<b>Purpose/s of engagement</b>	<b>Proposed lead organization/s</b>
Bangsamoro Women Commission/ MP Bainon Karon/ Ms. Helen Rojas	Follow through activities regarding lobbying of consolidated Women’s Agenda; access programs/projects for community women	WE Act & UnYPhil-Women
Office of MP Hamid Barra	Lobby support for the Women’s Agenda; access programs/projects for Lanao women	AMDF
Ministry of Social Services	Lobby support for women’s economic empowerment through its Sustainable Livelihood Program; assistance for women’s rights advocacy and IEC	Tarbilang Foundation, Inc.

<b>Spaces or structure/s to be involved/engaged</b>	<b>Purpose/s of engagement</b>	<b>Proposed lead organization/s</b>
Bangsamoro Transition Authority members based in project areas	Lobby Local Women's Agenda; support for women's economic empowerment and SRH services	All implementing partners
2022 BARMM elections	Build potential women champions who can run in public office; build constituency that will support women candidates	All implementing partners
Social media	Explore social media platforms as a medium for reporting women's issues especially during the COVID-19 pandemic	All implementing partners
Women heads of ministries	Access programs and projects for community women	WE Act & UnYPhil-Women
MP Melanio Ulama and MP Romeo Saliga	Lobby for IP women's issues and concerns (based on the local women's agenda)	UnYPhil-Women
Conversations of women at the community level	Sustain sessions of Ummahat, Bangsamoro widows and WELD groups	All implementing partners
MAFAR, MIPA, MOLE, MOST	Engage BARMM ministries to access support for women's economic empowerment	All implementing partners
Respective LGUs	Lobby support for the continuity of women's activities and awareness-raising activities on women's rights, GAD Code and other issues and concerns (based on the Local Women's Agenda)	All implementing partners
Maguindanao PAP-WPS	Follow-through activity in ensuring that lobbied women's agenda are reflected in plans and programs	UnYPhil-Women
Lanao Provincial GAD Office	Follow-through activity in ensuring that lobbied women's agenda are reflected in plans and programs	AMDF

MAFAR- Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Agrarian Reform

MIPA- Ministry of Indigenous Peoples Affairs

MOLE- Ministry of Labor and Employment

MOST- Ministry of Science and Technology

## 9.0 Complementation of WELD Peace and other Oxfam projects

Since Oxfam projects in the Bangsamoro areas such as Creating Spaces (CS), ARCHES (Improving Availability of Reproductive Health Services in ARMM) and WELD Peace have the same goal of empowering women in various aspects, the said projects often complement each other on the ground. In Maguindanao and North Cotabato, the advocacy agenda of Creating Spaces was integrated into the advocacy of WELD Peace. WELD Peace-trained women were invited as resource persons in ARCHES and CS sessions as well as in other non-Oxfam projects. Existing WELD Peace documents were used in other projects as reference materials.

In Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi, the Badjao women who were tapped as partners of the ARCHES project were also engaged in the WELD Peace project. In such a way, they would be more capacitated and eventually empowered on women's access and rights to information and services related to SRH as well as on leadership issues.

In Lanao del Sur, the implementing partner consolidated the SHE, CS and WELD Peace agenda when they lobbied before LGUs. The agenda of the three projects are now included in the programs of partner LGUs. As shared by AMDF, the SHE and CS projects are for agenda-building while the WELD Peace project serves as the vehicle in influencing duty bearers to take action on the agenda.

In line with national and regional advocacy efforts, the agenda of SHE, ARCHES and CS were incorporated into the Bangsamoro women's agenda which was consolidated and lobbied through the WELD Peace project. The said agenda has been presented to the BTA, BWC, UN Women and Mindanao PeaceWeavers.

## 10.0 Effective strategies and interventions in changing mindsets and social norms

Based on the experiences of Oxfam's implementing partners, the following were found to be the most effective strategies in terms of pushing policy reforms and in changing social norms on issues affecting women:

**Collaboration with LGUs.** Because they are duty bearers and institutions that are mandated to address the needs and development of the community, it will be helpful to engage the LGUs in the continuity of efforts and in expanding the scope of the WELD Peace project. While the project was limited to women's capacity-building for advocacy and leadership, partner LGUs have been responsive enough in providing for the other basic needs of partner women such as livelihood, continuous awareness raising sessions on women's rights, access to SRH services, among others. The LGUs have also put in place mechanisms for the sustainability of the efforts by legislating local laws and instituting programs and projects that will benefit women and/or address their needs and concerns.

**Creating visible constituency for the BOL.** Building the constituency for the Bangsamoro particularly in the NCR is important so that people from Luzon know and are made aware of the inclusivity of BOL, that it covers not only BM communities in the BARMM but also other sectors and places that support the BOL. Such effort will lead to a national constituency that supports the BOL. The series of mobilization activities, groundwork and networking of WEAct resulted in gaining support for the BOL from Moro as well as non-Moro constituents in Luzon.

**Engaging religious leaders.** Engaging religious leaders, being of the most influential actors in the community, in changing norms on SRH issues was helpful. The Friday sermons by partner religious leaders in Lanao del Sur were effective in advocating women's rights and SRH issues in relation to Islamic perspectives.

**Finding champions for women's advocacies.** Before the start of the project, implementing partners have scouted potential women leaders who could champion the women's agenda at the LGU, regional and national levels. Tapping personalities such as MP Karon, MP Jajurie, MP Barra, among others, were helpful in bridging the women's agenda from the ground to the Parliament. Identifying potential women leaders at the community level was also helpful especially when they joined government as some of them were elected and/or appointed to public positions. Women partners who are currently functioning as barangay chairperson, secretary and SK chairwoman are active in continuing the advocacy and in allocating funds for women's concerns.

**Conversations/listening sessions with community women.** Community-level discussions among women have helped the project determine the real issues or agenda of women on the ground. It also became a venue for women who have formed their groups to share their experiences and learn from one another. The conversations on the ground, such as that of the Ummahat, have also helped women learn about women's rights and other issues. Since the conversations were done on a regular basis, it helped in keeping women updated on issues in BARMM and other women's concerns.

**Engaging women leaders in lobbying activities.** The involvement of women leaders in lobbying for their agenda at the LGU levels and the BOL at the national level has helped build the confidence of women in articulating their issues and in influencing legislators as well. It also enabled women to directly interact with their local leaders and know their responses with regards to issues that the women raised.

## 11.0 Lessons women gained from participating in WELD Peace activities

These are some of the realizations and lessons learned by the stakeholders from participating in the WELD Peace project.

### ***On processes/strategies carried out by WELD Peace partners***

- Knowledge-sharing sessions among women in Maguindanao, Basilan and Tawi-Tawi was a way of empowering women in the community. It is where women learned about issues on women's rights and leadership and how to articulate them.
- Trainings and other capability-building activities are very important in boosting the self-confidence of women regardless of their educational attainment. Many of the women engaged had low educational attainment and yet this did not hinder them from leading other women in the community and in influencing the duty bearers.
- Solicit issues and concerns as well as possible solutions from every woman that participates in an activity in order to get a more comprehensive view of things and develop an inclusive perspective.
- It is very important to use the local language in communicating so that it is easier for women of the community to understand the message.
- In the identification of beneficiaries, it is important to exert effort in going down direct to the community and not simply rely on referrals.
- It is important to exert effort on increasing the awareness among authorities (municipal GAD focal persons, PNP and AFP) as they are the ones in the frontline of protecting women and in responding to their issues.

### ***On facilitating attitudes of women partners***

- It is important to be a good listener and be willing to learn.
- Women's willingness to listen and learn new knowledge should be maximized.
- Women should not hesitate to learn and participate in trainings and other activities, and not be afraid to speak out on issues concerning them.

### ***On gains from engaging in the WELD Peace project***

- Women are more empowered and capacitated to assert their rights when they are more united.
- With knowledge gained from the project, women are now socially conscious and aware of issues affecting them.
- Being tapped as a resource speaker, a woman can have her communication skills enhanced.
- Women empowerment is an eye opener among IP women. Sharing of knowledge through re-echo activities and giving updates through group chat helped in empowering community IP women.
- There is openness in discussing different Islamic points of view on the issues of women and finding a common ground where stakeholders can contribute (Lanao del Sur)
- Since the WELD Peace project engaged the community women, non-working mothers and stay at home housewives, it proves that finishing a degree and becoming a professional is not the sole way to empowering women. That women, if

given the capacity and opportunity to lead, they become empowered just like the active partners of WELD Peace project.

### ***On issues and concerns of women***

- Women's rights include the right of women to refuse sex with their husbands.
- It is important for women to find ways on how to ensure information sharing on the BARMM GAD Code, do research and understand it more, and share knowledge about it to fellow women.
- The LGUs must be transparent in terms of budget so that women would know what and how much services are allotted for women's concerns.
- There should be unity and support among women in pushing for the issues of women.
- Women's issues are diverse, varying even in essence depending on the context. Balancing interest of all sector of the youth, women and elderly is hard but it is doable. The government should provide the communities' needs by delivering social services due to the community.

## **12.0 Recommendations**

Based on the results of the results of the evaluation, the research team recommends the following action points:

**Exert more effort in improving project outcomes in Sulu area.** In terms of the project's impacts, the team observed a very minimal impact in Sulu with less significant difference in WEI between project participants and non-project participants (Figure 6). With this finding, it is recommended that Sulu exert more efforts in engaging women on leadership and other issues by following through with capability building activities and more engagement with LGUs.

**Conduct regular conversations with all project stakeholders.** In fully documenting the results/ outcomes of WELD Peace activities, it is recommended that implementing partners constantly conduct conversations with institutional partners (LGUs, government agencies and other organizations) in order to share experiences and insights on how partners were able to respond to the needs and issues lobbied by women's groups. A semi-annual or quarterly forum with all stakeholders may serve as a venue for sharing and documentation of efforts.

**Expand network and build new alliances.** Among the WEI indicators, networking and alliance-building had the lowest index at 0.45. In strengthening organized women's groups, it is recommended that the groups build alliances and network with other organizations outside their barangay or municipality. This will help expand women's reach in terms of advocating their issues and in addressing their needs. This will also aid in building the constituency that will support women champions in the 2022 BARMM elections. Expanding can also mean involvement in existing networks and alliances in their area, federating among themselves (e.g., all WELD groups in Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-

Tawi or the Ummahat of Maguindanao and North Cotabato constituting a network or federation) and linking groups to government agencies and other civil society organizations.

**Increase women's involvement in LSBs at the municipal, provincial and regional levels.** Women partners in all project areas have indicated membership in LSBs at different LGU levels except North Cotabato. In this area, project participants' engagement was more on political parties, but such engagement decreased from 28% in 2017 to 16% in 2020. Thus, there is a need to encourage women partners to involve themselves in LSBs for sustainability of their engagement with LGUs and to facilitate access to LGU programs and services. Survey results further showed that membership in political bodies across provinces was high at the barangay-level LSBs (11%) and very low at the regional and provincial levels (1%). Such situation has not changed since 2017. In the next phase of the project, implementers may start engaging the higher level of governance structure at the provincial and regional level special bodies in order to have a broader impact.

**Sustain and strengthen partnership with LGUs.** To continue lobbying for initially drafted ordinances, to document gains of implementation of enacted ordinance and to influence GAD plans and budget, women groups should continue engagement with the LGUs. In Maguindanao, the WELD Peace project should continue its lobbying efforts at the municipal level for the initially drafted ordinances on the right age of marriage and prohibition of minors (especially the women) to work abroad as domestic workers. In Lanao del Sur, the actual implementation and gains of the enacted ordinance on the inclusion of women's rights in Islamic teachings and skills training for women in Barangay Baudi Arorao, Tanaka, and the PLGU-GAD's actions in relation to PWD concerns should be monitored and documented. The other areas (Basilan, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi and North Cotabato) may also start engaging LGUs in the enactment of laws and creation of programs that will further women's empowerment and leadership in their areas. The Local Women's Agenda can inform the specific policies that women may push at the local level. In all project areas, partners have started engaging LGUs to influence GAD plans and budget. In Maguindanao, Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi, partners have started involving themselves in GAD planning and budgeting processes and have slowly reaped gains by accessing support for their activities from the GAD budget.

**Continue engagement with regional mechanisms such as BWC, MSSD and BTA.** To follow through agencies' actions on the lobbied women's agenda, women partners may include lobbying of their issues and concerns before BTA members who are based in their areas. At the BARMM level, implementing partners may also consolidate and engage the concerned ministries and BTA members in relation to the enactment of the BARMM GAD Code. In such effort, the BCW will need a number of warm bodies and organisations that will support the enactment of the Code.

**Formalize women's groups through accreditation/registration with the BLGU, MLGU, MOLE and/or CDA.** Various women's groups were formed out of the WELD Peace project such as the WELD groups in Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi, the Ummahat groups,

Bangsamoro Widows of Mujahideen, Sigay ng mga Babai and women community facilitators in Maguindanao, North Cotabato and Simuay, Sultan Kudarat, and women cooperatives and associations in Lanao del Sur. These groups have been recognized and accredited at the BLGU level. In order to access programs of government agencies, such groups must have a legal identity by registering at the MOLE, MSSD, MAFAR, among others. Accreditation of these groups must also be done at higher levels of governance (MLGU and PLGU).

**Organize women’s groups to complement women caucus in the BTA.** In pushing for women-related bills (e.g., creation of Bureau of Widows and Orphans, BARMM GAD Code), the BTA members will need support from the ground. With this consideration, there is a need to build a constituency by organizing women groups at the local level and consolidating them to support regional level policy advocacies.

**Lobby for more comprehensive and sustained economic empowerment programs at the LGU level.** The WELD Peace Project had no direct interventions in terms of economic empowerment of women although one of its expected outcomes was to capacitate women for them to engage duty bearers and assert their rights to basic social services, which include livelihood. As shared by implementing partners, much of the first phase of the project was focused on the massive advocacy campaign of the BOL and in lobbying for the women’s agenda with the LGUs. Economic empowerment seemed to be a secondary priority and as such, there is a need to emphasize on efforts to push the economic empowerment of women. This can be done by linking women organizations to LGUs’ and government agencies’ livelihood programs. Partners, who were also part of the BASIC START Bangsamoro project, said that they have availed of the seed fund for women’s livelihood, although it was not clear during conversations with partners if the said livelihood project has been sustained until the present.

**Continue advocacy on SRHR issues and services.** Since the WELD Peace project focuses more on women’s leadership, policy advocacy, institutional engagement and broader public norm influencing, the advocacy on SRHR issues tended to become a second priority. Hence, there is a need to continue raising awareness of SRHR among women of the community while pushing advocacies on women’s access to sexual and reproductive health services, child, early and forced marriage, teenage pregnancy, marital rape, and other forms of gender-based violence. To sustain such efforts, there is a need to push policies in relation to these issues at the LGU level.

**Further enhancement of women’s capacities.** Based on the overall WEI results, the personal level of empowerment scored lowest among the three dimensions of change. Hence, it is suggested that capacity-building of women continue especially in developing their skills in making decisions particularly on asserting family and RH matters at the household level as well as negotiation and conflict resolution, and leadership.



Furthermore, the capability-building activities for women may be anchored on the following WEI results:

**Maguindanao.** In all the indicators, project participants significantly exhibited higher WEI compared to non-WELD participants except for “equal say in household decision making” and “safety and protection.”

**Lanao del Sur.** Majority of the indicators were significantly higher among project participants compared to non-WELD participants except “personal autonomy,” “safety and protection” and “ability to influence political processes at the local and regional levels.” Among other project areas, Lanao del sur also scored lowest in WEI in terms of “leadership and degrees of influencing community groups,” “networking and alliance building,” control over one’s own body, level of support provided by groups to pursue own initiatives, and safety and protection.

**Sulu.** Project participants showed lower WEI in almost all of the indicators compared to non-WELD participants, although they had high WEI at 0.61 and above. Their lowest index was on “networking and alliance-building” and “equal say in household decision making.” Across project areas, Sulu also scored lowest in the following indicators: seeking knowledge, equal say in household decision making, and accessing economic and SRH support services.

**Basilan.** Project participants had lower WEI scores compared with non-WELD participants in the following indicators: seeking knowledge, self-confidence, leadership skills, and accessing economic, livelihood support and SRH services. Across provinces, Basilan also scored lowest in the safety and protection indicator.

**Tawi-Tawi.** The lowest WEI scores among project participants were recorded in “ability to influence political processes at the local and regional levels” and “networking and alliance building.” Tawi-Tawi also scored lowest in “influencing political processes at the local and regional levels.”

**North Cotabato.** The lowest WEI scores were recorded in “recognition of women’s political role and leadership” and “leadership skills.” Among the provinces, North Cotabato also scored lowest in the following indicators: leadership skills, personal autonomy and recognition of women’s political role and leadership.

Efforts towards addressing these challenges may depend on the context of the project area, the available resources and capability of both the implementing partners and the project partners/ beneficiaries. Among the suggested actions are capability-building activities towards enhancing women’s skills on networking and building alliances, increasing women’s confidence and courage in asserting one’s rights in terms of making decisions at home, more involvement in political processes.

**Thorough documentation of projects’ gains and challenges.** Due to various limitations in terms of access and/or availability of data, the evaluation team recommends that implementing partners further document the gains and challenges

experienced by women in managing the livelihood projects entrusted to them through the BASIC START Bangsamoro project as well as the livelihood projects of LGUs and government agencies that they have accessed.

**Engage more Bangsamoro women.** The econometric estimation suggests that engagement with WELD Peace project increases the WEI score of project participants. Compared to unaware participants, those who were neutral, supportive and leading had higher WEI scores and the score increased as the level of engagement to WELD Peace project improved. More effort is recommended in bringing more Bangsamoro women from unaware and resistant stage into neutral, supporting and leading stages in terms of women's participation in community and political activities as these engagements will further increase their empowerment index.

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