

PRIMER - 8 P



**Access to Justice for the Poor Project**

*Kaalaman sa Hustisya,  
Kapangyarihan ng Masa*



August 2006

## Vision

We see the poor...

BEING empowered on their rights and responsibilities

HAVING knowledge of the justice systems and procedures and the courage and will to respond to community challenges and opportunities

DOING one's role in advocating for a just and humane society

## Mission

FOR THE POOR:

To render our efforts and services to help the poor be aware of their rights and responsibilities and be empowered to realize them and become advocates of a just community.

FOR THE EC:

To give our cohesive involvement and commitment in implementing the access to justice for the poor project and to ensure that resources are efficiently and effectively utilized.

FOR THE PARTNER AGENCIES:

To give our utmost and continued commitment and dedication in carrying out the project through convergence to uphold justice for the poor.

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### **What is the *Access to Justice for the Poor* project?**

It is an inter-agency project that builds and strengthens the capabilities of key players of our justice system to ultimately enable the poor, particularly women and children, to pursue justice in selected project areas.

The project shall be guided by core values such as COMPETENCE, INTEGRITY, FAMILY, RESPECT, HEALTH, TEAMWORK and FAIRNESS.

### **What are the project's objectives?**

1. Enable the poor in selected areas to pursue justice through increased knowledge about their basic rights and the judicial system
2. Create an enabling and supportive environment within the judiciary and law enforcement institutions
3. Provide an overall framework to ensure the rights of the poor, especially women and children

### **Where will *Access to Justice for the Poor Project* be implemented?**

The Project shall be implemented in five regions covering 36 municipalities. This includes:

Sultan Kudarat	- 4 municipalities
Capiz	- 11 municipalities
Lanao del Norte	- 12 municipalities
Oriental Mindoro	- 5 municipalities
Camarines Sur	- 4 municipalities

These areas, representative of the Philippine's three main island groups, are among the top 15 poorest provinces. They were also selected based on the presence of Municipal Circuit Trial Courts and Shari'a Courts (municipal/city and Shari'a) with judges or Public Attorney's Office lawyers.

### **Which agencies/entities are involved in the project?**

Funding for this project comes from the European Commission, with counterpart funds from the Philippine Government.

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) acts as the Project's Executing Authority. Partner agencies include:

Supreme Court of the Philippines (SC)  
Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG)  
Department of Justice (DOJ)  
Alternative Law Groups (ALG)

### **What are the project components?**

The project is divided into four components, and shall be implemented by the partner agencies:

#### *1. Institutionalization of the Decentralized Information Function of the Judiciary*

This component aims to decentralize the information system of the Judiciary, by training clerks of courts of municipal trial courts nationwide to become information officers. At the same time, this component will strengthen the strategic planning capacity of the Supreme Court's Office of the Court Administrator, as well as design and strengthen the feedback mechanism between the OCA and the Municipal Court Information Officer.

Lead agency: Supreme Court

Target groups Information officers and judges of  
approximately 100 Municipal courts  
Staff of the SC-Office of the Court  
Administrator.

#### *2. Community Development and Empowerment of Women and Children*

This component will train officials within the Barangay Judiciary System by establishing a network of trained paralegals, linked to the municipal information officer to ensure that the poor and vulnerable groups have access to relevant information developed based on their needs.

Lead agency: DILG-Local Government Academy  
Partner agency: Department of Social Welfare and  
Development

Target group: Lupong Tagamapayapa members in the selected barangays

Paralegals

Children

Women

Daycare workers who are already disseminating information about children's concerns.

3. *Institutional Development of Law Enforcement and the Department of Justice personnel*

This component shall update the national curricula of the Philippine National Police Academy and train active police officers at the municipal level to include subjects that tackle the role of the police as civil servants and protector of justice in the communities. Police shall be trained on communication, conflict resolution, gender sensitivity and the protection of children.

Lead agency: Department of Justice

Partner agency: DILG-Philippine Public Safety College

Target group: Active police officers at the municipal level

Philippine National Police Academy

Staff of the Supreme Court at the central, provincial and municipal levels

Staff of the DOJ to the central, provincial and municipal levels

4. *Legal Reform*

With the participation of stakeholders, this component shall ensure that members of Congress and its working committees amend laws on basic human rights and on the rights of women and children based on international conventions wherein the Philippines is one of the signatories.

Lead agency: Alternative Law Groups

Target group: Members of Congress and its working Committees

**What are the desired results of the project?**

1. The decentralized information, education and communication (IEC) system with special focus on the poor and vulnerable groups, particularly women and children, within the Judiciary is implemented and strengthened
2. The Supreme Court has adopted a training program to sensitize municipal court judges and court personnel in the project target areas on the Barangay Justice System (BJS) and the laws directly affecting the rights of the poor, especially women and children.
3. The Barangay Justice System in selected barangays is strengthened in accordance with the revised Katarungan Pambarangay Law
4. Legal Information Desks established in targeted barangays to function in Coordination with MCIOs
5. Poor and vulnerable groups (i.e. women and children) in the barangays know their rights and are aware of the legal procedures
6. Police officers in target areas are familiar with human rights issues, the BJS and related implementation procedures, are gender sensitive and are conducting their assignment accordingly.
7. Curricula of Police Training Institutions include adequate modules on human rights, the BJS and related implementation procedures, the rights of children, gender issues and the economic and social conditions of the poor
8. The Department of Justice has adopted a training program to sensitize DOJ personnel on the BJS and the laws directly affecting the rights of the poor, especially women and children
9. Existing laws and related implementation measures on women and children reviewed and advocacy to amend them conducted to make them in accordance with basic rights and international conventions signed by the Republic of the Philippines

The Access to Justice for the Poor Project is a  
joint effort of

**Department of Social Welfare and Development**  
**The Supreme Court**  
**Department of the Interior and Local Government**  
**Department of Justice**  
**Alternative Law Groups**

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