

# Women and Public Leadership

**10.1 Political office continues to be the domain of men. The few women who have gained political positions have largely ridden on their family's coattails.**

Public leadership remains in the hands of men and the handful of women who have made it have done so mainly on the strength of their family's political power. With very few exceptions, most of these women have been trained and seasoned in the ways of traditional politics.

**10.2 Even as women's groups continue to campaign for greater participation in politics, the field remains resistant to the presence of females.**

While more women have been seeking political office, they have actually won only a few seats. In this year's election, only 10 women from Mindanao were voted into the House of Representatives. In total, there are four female governors (one less than the last term), three city mayors and 18 municipal mayors.

**10.3 Females form the bulk of the bureaucracy but they do not proportionately occupy top positions.**

Female employees make up the bulk of government personnel in Mindanao but women's participation in decision-making and the political process is marginal. Women generally occupy the second level career positions while men predominate in the first level and in elective positions.

# Women, Hope of Mindanao

Despite the dismal picture of the political and socio-economic picture of Mindanao, especially among the women the grassroots in Moro and Lumad communities, Mindanao is able to hope because women doggedly continue to face the challenges with spunk and relentless energy. Working at the level where they find themselves, they bring people together to innovate, to build, and to hope.

Many of them are found in communities that have suffered war. Many of them are there in villages wracked with hunger and illness. Some of them are found in the offices, schools, NGOs, and businesses where they have found some space for empowering themselves to do things in an efficient, honest, and effective way. A few of them - an only a few - have found a place at the table where decisions are made.

But they persevere.

And so we are all inspired to carry on.