

Councilor, General Santos City
Vice-Chairperson, Committee on Gender Equality, Women,
Family and Children's Welfare and Population

MS. SHANDEE THERESA O. LLIDO-PESTAÑO

A Public Servant for Women's Cause

“Health and safety in the workplace cannot be compromised. Women themselves have to realize that they have rights, needs and desires as men do... I will push for local legislation that will ensure that each man and woman feels important in the fishing sector”

**GENDER
CHAMPION**

**GENDER-RESPONSIVE
LEGISLATION EMPOWERS
WOMEN FISHERS**

“As a woman, a mother, a legislator, and a member of the committee on gender, I made it my personal advocacy to help those disadvantaged and the marginalized, the sectors who are in most need of protection here in General Santos...”, said Hon. Shandee Theresa O. Llido-Pestaño when she presented the initiatives and efforts made by the Sangguniang Panlungsod (SP) in relation to the empowerment and advancement of women's rights and gender equality in the city.

Ms. Pestaño was elected as City Councilor of General Santos City in 2013 and is currently on her last term of office after having been re-elected during the 2016 and 2019 elections. Until recently, she was the Chairperson of the Committee on Gender Equality, Women, Family and Children's Welfare, and Population, a position she held in the SP for five years.

At an early age, she realized that gender and economic inequality predominantly exist in society. Growing up, she personally knew women who had no or less opportunities to pursue higher education because of gender biases and lack of economic resources..These realities left an impact on her and she vowed to do the best that she can to alleviate women's struggles.

Now that she takes the role of being a government official, she highlights that the administration should be at the forefront in practicing inclusive governance where every sector has a voice in the making of plans and programs. She has authored/co-authored around 14 local ordinances that highlight and address the plight of men, women and/or children.

To localize the Solo Parents' Welfare Act 2000 (RA 8977), Ms. Pestaño authored the Solo Parent Ordinance of General Santos City which established Solo Parents Desks at the City Social Welfare and Development Office (CSWDO). These desks help extend comprehensive development and welfare programs for solo parents and their children.

Ms. Pestaño likewise lobbied for the creation of Barangay Anti-Violence Against Women and Children Desks through the enactment of the Gender and Development (GAD) Code. The local GAD ordinance provides legal basis for the creation of support services for victims of gender violence and their families so that they may cope with the traumas that they may have experienced. In 2017, there were 300 cases filed at the different barangay desks and the number dropped to 170 in 2018.

Another ordinance that Ms. Pestaño authored was the Anti-Discrimination Ordinance, a strategic entry-point for scholarships, health benefits, and livelihood assistance for women in the fisheries value chain and their respective families.

Ms. Pestaño resolves to collaborate with different committees in the SP to come up with programs and policies that will help women in the fisheries value chain. To be able to provide livelihood assistance, she plans to push for a strategy such that women will have assured slots for financing through the city's cooperative funds. Moreover, to spread and raise awareness about the plight of the women fishers, she will propose that the ongoing Mayor's Lecture Series shall include a topic on women empowerment in the fisheries sector.

Being a woman in a high government position is a recognition of women's capacity and reflects the breaking of the glass ceiling phenomenon, particularly in crafting quality legislations and in influencing policy directions. Ms. Pestaño defines what it means to be a public servant ---one who pours her heart into the work she's doing in order to provide a better future not only for women but for all of her constituents.



City Councilor Pestaño with other city councilors during the Mayor's Lecture Series held in General Santos City.



City Councilor Pestaño with centenarians in General Santos City.