



2021 Annual Report

Solidarity in SRH Advocacy towards the
Better Normal



GM Bicol
for SRHR, Inc.

2021 ANNUAL REPORT



**GentleMEN Bicol for Sexual and
Reproductive Health and Rights, Inc.**

December 24, 2021

Daraga, Albay, Philippines

<https://www.gmbicol.org/>

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ABOUT THIS REPORT

Prepared by the Secretariat and the Executive Board through online and face-to-face meetings. In this report, GM considered the reached individuals through its CBS and community extension services, clients linked to care, and the number of education discussions conducted. Also included are advocacy activities GM initiated and has participated.

To the readers, please note that apart from the quantitative data retrieved from actual numbers of reached clients and activities conducted, this report also includes actual experiences of volunteers and testimonies of beneficiaries.

Lastly, GM accomplishments were achieved with the support of its donors, volunteers, and institutional partners from both the public and private sectors.

GM

2021

PRESIDENT'S WORDS



Moving forward amid the pandemic, GM Bicol continued to complement the government-led HIV initiatives. Recognizing the shift of our country's healthcare system to COVID-19 response, as a community-based organization, we did our best to fill in the gaps in the pandemic-impacted HIV programs and services: by bringing community-based HIV screening closer to the people and continued SRH and HIV advocacy.

Representing the entire GM Family, I am pleased to share our achievements this 2021. This year, we are able to achieve a vision the organization had since it started, which is to open a community center. With the help of a World Health Organization (WHO) project through the Family Planning Organization of the Philippines (FPOP) - Iloilo Chapter, GM Bicol was able to set up a community center in Daraga, Albay. This allowed GM to provide SHR and HIV education and HIV screening to more individuals. The project support we received from FPOP - Iloilo Chapter was implemented from March to September 2021.

Moving forward, GM Bicol is able to sustain its community center with project support from the AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF). This started in October 2021 which will allow the organization to continue its services being offered in the community center for another year.

The most important element of our 2021 success is our admirable volunteer members and partners from the private and public sectors... Dios Mabalos po!


Richard B. Hayag



IN THE FRONTLINE

I am Gerardo II S. Evan, A 4th year BS Radiologic Technology Student. I am the current Project Assistant of GentleMen Bicol under the Aids Healthcare Foundation (AHF) project. A trained Community Based HIV Screening Motivator, HIV Counselor, and a Peer-Educator/Trainer.

As a paramedical student and soon-to-be medical practitioner, I believe that working in a healthcare setting and being part of community development work has no difference at all. It serves the same purpose, it serves the same goal. It both aims to utilize the available resources to assist them in their health challenges as well as to utilize technology to provide them with the highest level of care.

Healthcare Setting and Community Developmental work, I believe - have little difference in approach to health promotion to address the contexts on which people live, work and play as the subject of inquiry and intervention to the needs and capacities of people in different settings. This increases the likelihood of success because it offers strategies to situate practice in its context. It

could be a basis of optimizing interventions for specific contextual contingencies, target crucial factors in the organizations context influencing behavior, and render settings that could influence intervention design and delivery.

Moreover, Community works - as what we are doing in GM Bicol, is faced with different challenges. Being caught unprepared with protective gears and supplies during the onset of the pandemic with the threat of being infected and infecting clients posed a big threat to the operations and service delivery of the organization. However, with our burning passion as members of the organization for the community and service, we were able to win over the challenges and turned it into one of the pillars of our strength, holding our commitment and dedication to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Advocacies.

The Pandemic, as well as the other challenges that the organization may face in the coming days, will not stop the organization from doing its promise to the community.

Gerardo II S. Evan
CBS Motivator

BISHOP JOEL BAILON LEADS LIVING ROSARY FOR WAD 2021



(Dec. 7, 2021) Most Reverend Bishop Joel Bailon shared that the concerns of HIV and AIDS amid the COVID-19 pandemic can be overcome as long as God is with us. He also said that HIV and AIDS is a concern of everyone and not solely of those people who live with HIV. Our Reverend Bishop also emphasized the need for a whole of community solidarity to address HIV as a social concern. "Support them, recognize their realities, and be with them to help them as one community of sons and daughters of God", he added.

full video: <https://www.facebook.com/gentlemenbicofficial2.0/videos/4909111259122540>

GM COMMUNITY CENTER NOW OPEN!



(March 1, 2021) With pride, GM opens its first community center in Daraga, Albay. With the support of FPOP Iloilo, the organization is able to start a small space to cater to Bicolanos in need of HIV screening and counseling.

With the continued support of the AIDS Healthcare Foundation, the community center continues to operate - providing a safe space for both walk-in clients and clients booking appointments online.

2021 EXCELLENCE AWARDS

The Annual GM Bicol Excellence Awards is the organization's means to express its appreciation and to recognize individuals, groups or organizations, and champions who greatly contributed to SRHR advocacy along the lines of advocacy work, training and education, service, and policy creation.

Thanks for your contributions: Hon. Baby Glenda Ong-Bongao, Mr. Rhondo C. Ricafort, Bb. Faith Madrilejos, Mr. Freddie Boral, and the Culion Foundation, Inc.

GM BRINGS HIV SCREENING TO PERSONS DEPRIVED OF LIBERTY



Within October of this year, in coordination with the Department of Health and Culion Foundation, Inc. the GM CBS team provided learning sessions and HIV screening to a number of persons deprived of liberty (PDL) in the Albay Provincial Jail and Sorsogon City Jail.

Based on the encounters of our volunteers with the PDLs, most of the risky behaviors noted are the use of prohibited drugs. There were a total of 39 PDLs screened in Albay, and 75 in Sorsogon City.

SUPPORT TO DUGUNIHAN INITIATIVE IN BRGY. BURAGWIS, LEGAZPI CITY



(September 28, 2021) Brgy. Buragwis in Legazpi City headed a bloodletting campaign with the Philippine Red Cross. GM supported the event by providing free and confidential HIV screening.

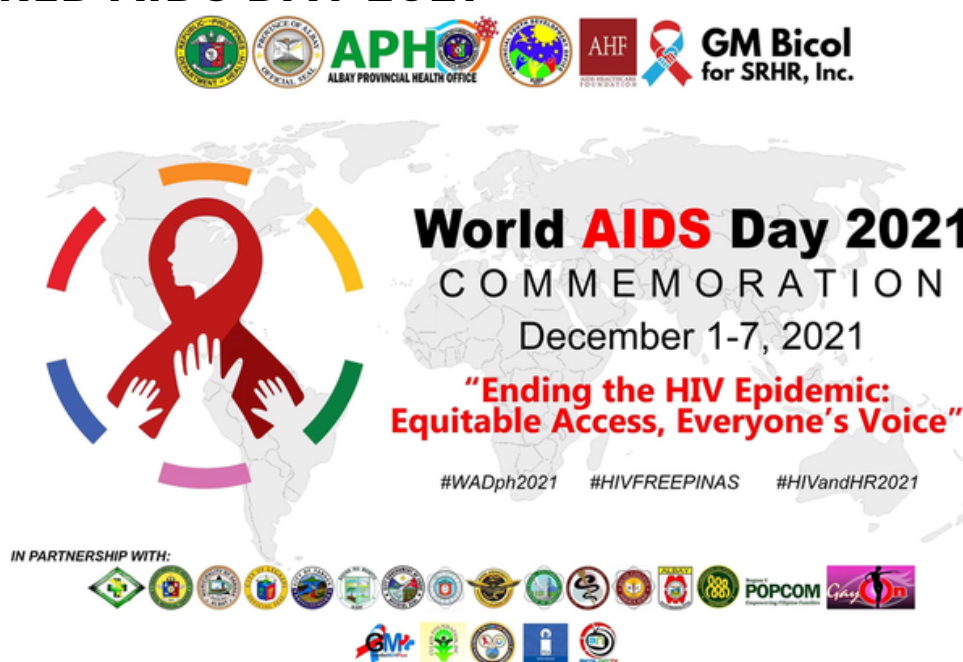
This initiative is a promising practice that can be replicated in other villages. It is a manifestation of the solidarity of both local government and private or community groups.

GM+ UPDATES

GM+ (GM Bicol Plus) is the support group for persons living with HIV (PLHIV) community organized by GM Bicol to provide safe spaces and a direct line to the organization's counselors and health workers, and networks. The GM+ is in its early phase of organizing the PLHIV community.

To date, GM+ has 57 members. At the moment, GM Bicol serves as a mother organization providing technical assistance to GM+, especially on matters like linking them to treatment hubs, linking them to legal and social assistance being provided by the government, and attending to some other concerns which GM can provide assistance with.

WORLD AIDS DAY 2021



World AIDS 2021 Celebration headed by GM Bicol was supported by various public and private institutions. With the theme "Ending the HIV Epidemic: Equitable Access, Everyone's Voice", the convergence of organization came together for a week-long series of activities from December 1 to 7, 2021.

Dr. Estela B. Zenit, OIC-PHO of the Province of Albay emphasized that HIV/AIDS shouldn't be put aside amid the COVID-19 pandemic, as it is an ongoing pandemic in itself. She called for the active participation of all sectors to work together to address HIV/AIDS.

Dr. John Ferchito Avelino, Assistant Regional Director of DOH-CHD V, said that it is a challenge for the Bicolano community to face HIV/AIDS. Nevertheless, the advocates continued to bring the torch to push forward sexual and reproductive health advocacy. Despite efforts, the stigma attached to HIV continued to be a hinder the implementation of proper and responsive actions against HIV. He also said that one way to fight the stigma and further advance HIV/AIDS discourse is that we need as one Bicolano community to uphold human rights, and reproductive health, and sexual health and rights.

The President of the Bicol University Medical Society (MEDSOC), Ms. Samantha Palomares, likewise shared a message of solidarity calling medical students and concerned citizens to continue fighting against HIV, advance education, and fight discrimination, and continue advocating for HIV/AIDS.

GM BICOL'S PROVERBIAL CROWN OF HOPE

Words from 2021 Excellence Awardee

I was crowned this year and this crown made my 2021 tremendously memorable for the simple reason that I have finally decided, though extremely apprehensive, to become active in Community Based Screening (CBS). I would describe this as, figuratively, dipping my hand into a mysterious body of water, only to realize its depth. My initial motivation was to comply with the training requirement of conducting CBS to 10 persons then, I went on and on and on and, in the long run, lost count of the CBS that I have conducted. Likewise, in the same year, I got to screen 13 PLHIVs in the course of my service to Gentlemen Bicol for SRHR. Quite a number for a CBS motivator who just recently re-trained and who just newly-ventured into this activity. Our President, Mr. Richard B. Hayag jokingly put it: "Nasa akin daw ngayon ang Korona". It was not like the Ms. Universe Crown that signifies prestige but, a crown that entails a huge and burdensome responsibility placed on my head.

Conducting CBS, I would say, is the most consuming task, but, the most fulfilling that I have done this year. The CBS process would demand excellence in the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains of learning. The CBS would demand accuracy and a wide body of knowledge about HIV/AIDS, imparted in a 30 to 40 minute-interaction with a client in an effort to equip key vulnerable populations with information that would protect them from harboring the disease and to address the stigma that affects PLHIVs. The CBS would necessitate emotional tools in an effort to instill hope to those who would need such. This part was anxiety-provoking for me because my inadequacy in this area would lead to devastating end-result. I hope that the client that comes in whole to the community center would still be whole after the CBS interaction. The psychomotor domain would involve the honing of a fine motor skill that would produce the least possible discomfort/pain to the client. That was and has always been my take on the CBS process.

The CBS process is and should be a two-way street. It was definitely designed to help the key vulnerable population, but, it would also require our genuine concern and active support to the people in the first-line of defense in the HIV/AIDS work- the CBS motivators. Good thing I have with me a pool of highly proficient people who would make things less difficult and less burdensome, people who would supplement personal weaknesses, and people who would replenish an adequate supply of hope for CBS motivators like myself.

Yes, it is hope- the ultimate expression of the success of our work in GM Bicol. Hope that produces optimism, kindness, creativity, harmony, concern, collaboration, participation, excellence, and boundless other possibilities. The invisible hopeful crown on my head is not forever mine to bear. My reign would end while the reign of the new bearer would begin. Perhaps, this challenge would be most apt: Do you have what it takes to wear the crown?

Freddie R. Boral, RN, RM

*2021 Excellence Award Recipient
CBS Motivator | GM Trustee*



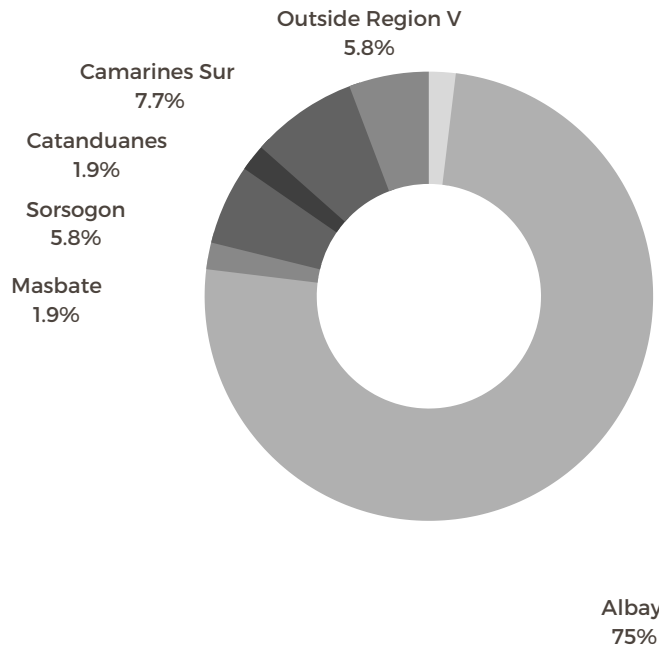
2021

ACCOMPLISHMENTS



MEMBERSHIP

As of December 20, 2021, GM has 52 members in the provinces of Albay (36), Camarines Sur (4), Sorsogon (3), Catanduanes (1), Masbate (1), Camarines Norte (1), and outside the Bicol Region (3).



COMMUNITY-BASED HIV SCREENING

This year, GM Bicol was able to reach 1,686 unique individuals who were screened for HIV and given HIV education and counseling. This is almost twelve times more compared to last year's CBS reached. The CBS activities which were conducted were done within GM's organizational capacity and mostly were supported by projects the organization has received within this year.

Out of 1,686, there were 35 clients who tested reactive. 91.42% were successfully linked to care. 3 out of 25 were lost to contact. Despite GM's efforts to link the other three to care, these clients are unresponsive. Our community center is still trying to reestablish contact with these 3 clients.

Most of our clients were reached through community extension activities, while a good number of clients were through dating app immersions, online bookings, and walk-in.

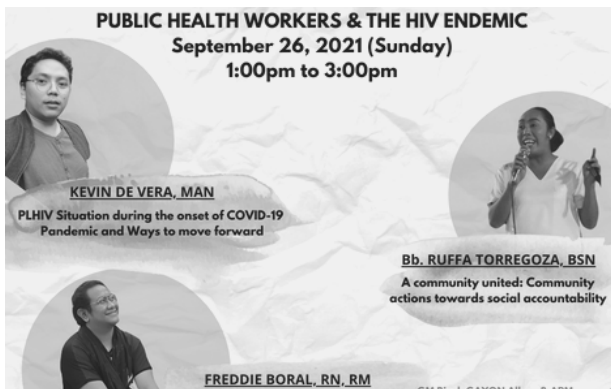
SALUDAMAYAN

*(a project supported by the Academy of Political Management (APM-FES)
in partnership with GAYON Albay, LGBT Organization Inc.*



9 COMMUNITY OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

The Saludamayan project allowed the team to conduct 9 community outreach activities which resulted to 163 reached unique individuals getting information about HIV/AIDS. It also enabled them to know their HIV status by subjecting themselves to voluntary HIV testing.



3 LEARNING SESSIONS

The initiative allowed GM to conduct one advocacy and communication training for PLHIVs, and two learning sessions on pressing public health (SRHR) related issues.

ENGAGEMENTS WITH YOUTH LEADERS

A total of 3 SK Federations were engaged in the initiative. This resulted in learning sessions with SKs and the conduct of HIV screening and counseling.

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION AND FPOP PROJECT

A World Health Organization (WHO) project through the Family Planning Organization of the Philippines (FPOP) Iloilo Chapter allowed GM Bicol to establish a Community Led Facility, which is now the GM Community Center located in Daraga, Albay.

This project aims to allow the community-led facility to be able to offer comprehensive integrated HIV and STI services in Daraga, Albay. Also, to help build the capacity of its staff and volunteers to provide HIV Services, and provide prevention education, testing, and linking to care services especially to young key populations (YKP).



Through this project, we are able to:

- set-up a startup community-led facility (its office furniture, clinic supplies, and physical structure)
- train 20 new CBS motivators (11 out of 20 are GM members)
- support two support staff (a project officer and a project nurse)
- support to the mobilization of CBS motivators during the conduct of community extension services and community-based screening
- development of publication materials (social media materials)
- development of the organization and clinical-setting Manual of Operations
- and, strengthened institutional partnerships with government partners (e.g. BRTTH HACT, BMC HACT, and DOH)

With the support of this project, a total of 802 unique individuals were screened for HIV and enabled them to know their HIV status.

SALUDAMAYAN - AHF PROJECT

SALUDAMAYAN: Sustained local advocacy and community participation in SRH and HIV service delivery in Bicol Region, is a project supported by AIDS Healthcare Foundation for one year which started last October 1, 2021.

This project aims to achieve the following goals:

- 1) prevent new HIV, STI, and TB infections;
- 2) increase awareness of HIV status;
- 3) provide access to quality HIV care;
- 4) provide leadership on community solutions to HIV



In the course of project implementation, GM Bicol is able to sustain its advocacy work and operations of the GM Community Center. It continued to provide SRH and HIV education to communities and provide HIV screening. With special attention to clients who test reactive during HIV screening, 100% of all reactive clients were linked to care.

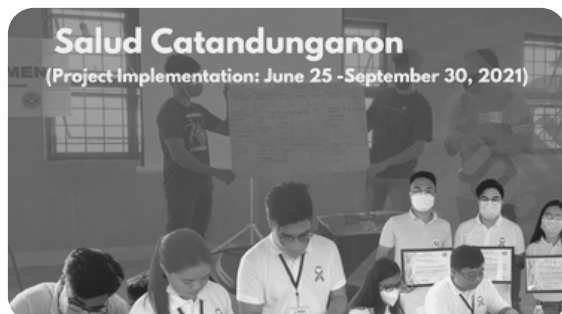
It supported 5 learning sessions during the WAD 2021 and enabled our volunteers to reach GIDAs and persons deprived of liberty to conduct CBS.



SALUD CATANDUNGANON

A Y-PEER PILIPINAS Supported Project

Sustained Local SRH Advocacy through Community Participation



This initiative is a capstone project by GM members who received scholarship support from Y-PEER Pilipinas to join a leadership course and project proposal making which chosen innovations will be funded by the Kabayanihan Challenge Fund.



Conduct of Peer Education Sessions with SKs



35 SK chairpersons trained in SRH Peer Education



6 Community-based screening conducted (6 villages)



Community-based screening conducted in SK learning sessions



Commitment of support from the Local Youth Development Office to support Youth-related and SK-led activities for SRH



LOCAL ADVOCACY EFFORTS

GM Bicol actively advocated for a safe and equitable society



This year, GM Bicol actively participated in public consultations and advocacy activities with other organizations to support the Albay provincial anti-discrimination bill.

GM currently seats as the head (President) of the United Pride of Albay, a network of LGBTQI+ groups and LGBTQI+ serving organizations.

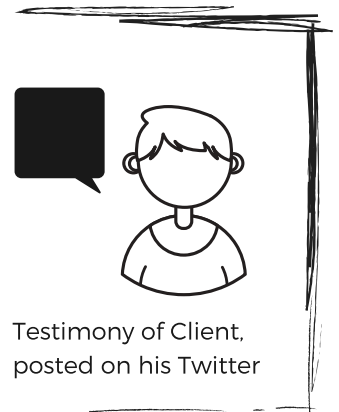
GM Bicol is a member of the technical working group in the drafting of the provincial anti-discrimination bill, which has passed the third reading last December 13, 2021, which is now known as "An Ordinance Prohibiting Discrimination On The Basis Of Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity And Expression In The Province Of Albay And Providing Penalties Therefor."

GM also provided technical support to gender and sexuality discussions and responded to request for resource speakers.

*"For those guys who want discreet testing
#GentlemanBicol is the place to go."*



For those guys who want
discreet testing.
[#GentlemanBicol](#) is the place to
go. Kahit hindi discreet naman
they cater. Here sila oh. Please
repost para more Bicolano/Alter



Testimony of Client,
posted on his Twitter

Local Advocacy Partners

- GAYON Albay LGBT Organization, Inc.
- Bicol LGBT Network
- Department of Health CHD Bicol
- Masbate Provincial Hospital- St. Aloysius Treatment Hub
- United Pride of Albay
- Albay PHO
- Albay PYDO
- Bicol Regional Training and Teaching Hospital
- Bicol Medical Center
- Daraga - Local AIDS Council
- DSDW Region V
- Social Hygiene Clinics

NATIONAL ADVOCACY EFFORTS

HIV National Summit



The HIV National Summit headed by Pilipinas Shell Foundation, Inc. and N+ Philippines, held last December 7 to 11, 2021 in Mandaluyong City, Metro Manila.

GM Bicol President, Richard Hayag together with different leaders from nonprofit organizations, community members, and civic organizations from different regions attended the said summit.

The summit intended to converge PLHIV organizations, and PLHIV serving groups to discuss concerns of the PLHIV communities with institutions at responsible for providing services and social protection to the PLHIV population. With the theme, "POSITIVELY STRONGER TOGETHER", the summit also aims to continue on building capacities, sustainability, and resilience in the time of COVID and beyond.

Other National Advocacy Highlights

- GM took part in national mobilizations such as the 2021 AIDS Candlelight Memorial, and 2021 International condom day.
- GM joined the Reproductive Health Advocacy Network (RHAN) and participates in the Youth Committee.

National Advocacy Partners

- AIDS Healthcare Foundation
- Family Planning Organization of the Philippines
- Health Action Information Network
- The Forum for Family Planning and Development
- Network to Stop AIDS Philippines
- Y-PEER Pilipinas
- Network Plus Philippines
- TLF Share

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GM Bicol
2022



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