

LEADING WITH PURPOSE: STORY OF MIKEE PAYURAN-GONDA

Keeping the Door Open

For Mikee, being a woman is not a limitation. It is the very foundation of her leadership. Her story is one of resilience, strength, and an unwavering belief that women belong in every decision-making space.

She encourages future women leaders to enter leadership spaces, participate fully, and speak up—because representation is not just about presence, but about voice.

Because Mikee refused to walk away, the next woman who enters that council room may not have to be the only one.

“As women leaders, let’s not allow ourselves to be sidelined. We should join in, take part, and speak up, because we believe that women can lead.”

MIKEE PAYURAN-GONDA'S STORY



Keeping the Door Open

Mikee's leadership is rooted in her identity as a woman. She does not treat womanhood as a limitation to overcome but as the very foundation of her public service. Her resilience in the face of exclusion has become a model for other women considering leadership roles.

She encourages future women leaders to enter the spaces where decisions are made—to participate, to speak up, and to refuse to be sidelined. For Mikee, representation is not symbolic; it is transformative.

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Because Mikee refused to leave, the council table in Balagtas will never again be without a woman's voice. And the next woman who walks into that room will know: she is not alone.



The Angat Bayi Fellowship

Mikee Payuran-Gonda is one of the women leaders featured in the Angat Bayi Women Local Humanitarian Leadership Fellowship, an initiative of BAYI Inc. The fellowship supports women in local governance and humanitarian leadership across the Philippines, building their capacity to lead in complex and often male-dominated environments.

Through the fellowship, women leaders like Mikee gain access to peer networks, mentorship, and platforms that amplify their advocacy for inclusive governance and disaster preparedness at the local level.



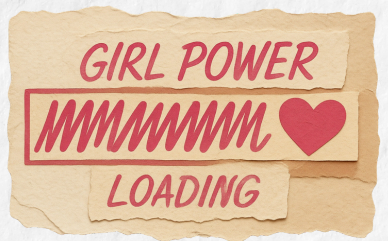
SHIFT Asia: Advancing Women's Local Humanitarian Leadership

SHIFT Asia is a collective initiative advancing women's local humanitarian leadership across Asia. It works to ensure that women are not only present in humanitarian decision-making but are recognized as leaders driving community resilience and transformation.

By connecting women leaders across Bangladesh, Indonesia, Myanmar, and the Philippines, SHIFT Asia builds solidarity and shared learning across diverse contexts.

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Women's Leadership in Local Governance

Mikee's story reflects a broader movement of women stepping into leadership roles in local government across the Philippines. Despite systemic barriers, women leaders are proving that inclusive governance leads to stronger, more resilient communities. The Angat Bayi Fellowship and SHIFT Asia provide critical support systems that help women navigate these challenges and create lasting change.

When women lead, communities thrive. When women stay at the table, the next generation of leaders knows they belong there too.



**"THE FACT THAT THERE ARE NO WOMEN
IN THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL BECAME
MY MOTIVATION. I DIDN'T WANT TO
LEAVE THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL WITH
NO FEMALE REPRESENTATION."**

A Legacy of Presence

Mikee Payuran-Gonda's refusal to leave the Municipal Council of Balagtas is more than a personal choice—it is an act of leadership that opens doors for every woman who follows. Her story reminds us that representation matters, that presence is power, and that one woman's courage can reshape an entire institution.

As Vice Mayor, Mikee continues to champion women's participation in governance, proving daily that women can and must lead.

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About SHIFT Asia

SHIFT Asia (Supporting Humanitarian Initiatives for Transformation in Asia) is an initiative that advances women's local humanitarian leadership and drives gender-transformative change across Asia, working specifically in Bangladesh, Indonesia, Myanmar, and the Philippines.