

EXTENT OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT (GAD) PROGRAM IN BINALONAN WATER DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

Gender and Development (GAD) is a concept that is participatory, violence-free, respectful of human rights, supportive of freedom of choice, and empowers human potential. This study aimed to assess the extent of implementation of the Gender and Development (GAD) program in Binalonan Water District (BIWAD) using a convergent parallel mixed-methods approach. The findings reveal that BIWAD demonstrates strengths in areas such as policy support, service accessibility for all genders, and compliance with GAD budgeting mandates. However, challenges persist, particularly in access to GAD training, employee participation in GAD initiatives, and perceived inequities in resource distribution. These insights indicate a need for enhanced training, better resource allocation, and improved collaboration to strengthen GAD implementation and promote an inclusive workplace culture.

Keyword: gender, development, concept, GAD, approach, people, culture

1. INTRODUCTION

The advocacy for equal rights between men and women is neither a modern concept nor a fleeting issue. It is a continuous struggle that spans decades. As emphasized by actress and activist Emma Watson in her memorable 2014 speech at the United Nations, “Both men and women should feel free to be sensitive; both men and women should feel free to be strong. It is time that we all see gender as a spectrum, not as two sets of opposing ideals.” Her statement boldly challenges the rigid norms of traditional gender expectations, which still infiltrate every part of our lives from the way we eat and sleep to how we interact, work, and connect with others. In today's world, nearly every action and interaction is influenced by assigned gender norms. These ingrained expectations shape what individuals are perceived to be capable of and influence their chances of succeeding. At its core, the issue revolves around one basic truth: everyone, regardless of gender, deserves the same opportunities in life.

This belief is particularly significant in developing countries, where survival is a daily challenge, and gender-based disparities are often more severe. Historically and within various religious frameworks, women have been treated unequally. Compared to men, they have been confined to inferior roles in conventional societal systems. Women have often been seen as suitable only for domestic duties, with formal education focused mainly on homemaking. Social conventions frequently depict women as passive, compliant, submissive, and restrained. Meanwhile, men are shown as dominant, assertive, authoritative, and able to assert control, especially over women (Melyn, 2022). These cultural stereotypes not only perpetuate gender hierarchies but also uphold systems that prioritize men's interests, preventing the equitable distribution of opportunities. For example, societal norms discouraging women from speaking up in public spaces hinder their participation in leadership and decision-making

roles (Helster, 2022). These limiting ideas have real-world implications, as confirmed by Horne (2020) who explain that such gendered thinking contributes to inequality, weakens social cohesion, and can trigger unrest and conflict. These perceptions impact daily social interactions and shape societal frameworks. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2020) adds that such biases influence family roles, partner expectations, and children's views about gender roles at home. By maintaining inequality and power imbalances, society restricts individual growth and collectively delays advancement toward a just and inclusive future.

On the other hand, UN Women (2020) recognized that progress has been made since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BDPfA), with activists and governments drawing upon the platform to enhance women's access to opportunities. Still, despite these advances, many global issues disproportionately impacting women and children remain unresolved. According to a recent UN Women (2023) report, the world still faces major obstacles to achieving gender equality by 2030. These challenges include the lack of women in leadership roles, economic inequality, gender bias in workplaces, unequal division of caregiving duties, harmful cultural traditions, limited access to healthcare and education, and widespread food insecurity. The report highlights the urgency of dedicated efforts and an estimated additional annual investment of USD 360 billion to close the gender gap. (Marcus, 2021)

A deeper investigation by researchers, practitioners, and gender advocates has focused on the causes of women's disadvantages in fragile and unequal environments. It also emphasized that addressing gender disparities is essential to building stable and peaceful societies. Harper et al. (2020) further reinforced that the relevance of gender equality remains crucial in the broader context of sustainable development. These insights affirm that tackling gender inequality is central to ensuring societal resilience and growth. UN Women's 2021 gender snapshot further underlined this connection by identifying gender equality as a critical factor for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The COVID-19 crisis intensified pre-existing gender inequalities, reinforcing the need for immediate and effective action. (Jayachandran, 2020)

Thus, women's active involvement is essential, as it allows them to fully contribute their capabilities to the country's economic growth. This beneficial impact was evidenced by women's increasing involvement in health, education, finance, and politics, as reported by the United Nations Population Fund (2018). A recent study by Dowie (2019) strengthens this point, revealing that promoting gender parity and empowering women economically could boost the global economy by a remarkable \$13 trillion by 2030. Gangwani also emphasized that businesses led by inclusive, gender-diverse teams tend to outperform others. Therefore, investing in enterprises that prioritize gender equality can be both morally sound and financially advantageous. This underscores the critical importance of gender inclusion not just as an ethical commitment but as a viable strategy for sustainable development and economic resilience.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (1979) stands out as the sole international treaty explicitly affirming women's reproductive rights and confronting the cultural and traditional norms that shape gender dynamics and family roles as root causes of global gender inequality (UN Women, 2020). CEDAW defines gender-based discrimination as "any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field." Essentially, CEDAW condemns all forms of systemic barriers that hinder women's advancement across social, political, and economic domains. Additionally, CEDAW is closely linked with the outcomes of the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing, China, in 1995. The resulting Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) champions equality, development, and peace for women everywhere, aiming to benefit humanity as a whole. National commitment to CEDAW and the BDPfA is vital to raising awareness and promoting gender sensitivity. These agreements require signatory states to adopt gender-focused laws, programs, and policies within their institutions. Moreover, they urge governments to enact legislation that protects and enhances women's rights and ensures they have equal footing in all aspects of life. (Sajjad et.al, 2020).

The 1987 Constitution of the Philippines clearly acknowledges the essential role of women in national development and guarantees gender equality. Article II, Section 14 proclaims, "The State recognizes the role of women in nation-building and shall ensure the fundamental equality of women and men." This constitutional

recognition has paved the way for the enactment of various laws that uphold women's rights, including Republic Act (RA) 7192, titled "An Act Promoting the Integration of Women as Full and Equal Partners of Men in Development and Nation Building," and RA 9710, known as "The Magna Carta of Women" (MCW).

RA 7192, passed in 1992, reflects the domestic commitment to the principles of CEDAW. It highlights the crucial role of women in national progress and calls for their involvement in areas traditionally dominated by men. This legislation requires that women have equal participation in government programs and initiatives across all levels, from barangays to major cities. Supporting this, Section 36 of RA 9710, or the Magna Carta of Women (2009), requires every government agency, department, bureau, office, state college and university, GOCC, LGU, and other instrumentalities to adopt gender mainstreaming. This global strategy ensures that gender equality is systematically integrated into all aspects of public sector planning and development efforts (Francisco, 2023)

Within the Philippine government system, this obligation is reinforced through Gender and Development (GAD) budget integration. Initiated under the 1995 General Appropriations Act (GAA), this policy, referred to as "The Women's Budget," requires that a minimum of five percent (5%) of every agency's total annual budget be allocated to GAD-related programs. Furthermore, the 2021 GAA (RA No. 11518), particularly Section 32, paragraph 2, reiterates this mandate, reinforcing the importance of financing gender initiatives. Monitoring efforts are jointly undertaken by the Local Water Utilities Administration (LWUA) and the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW), which oversee the submission of GAD Plans and Budgets (GPBs) and GAD Accomplishment Reports (ARs) by entities such as BIWAD. (Francisco, 2023)

To further institutionalize gender equality mechanisms, Section 37-C of the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of RA 9710 mandates that public institutions establish or enhance their Gender and Development Focal Point System (GFPS) or similar frameworks. In line with this, PCW issued Memorandum Circular No. 2015-03, dated May 19, 2015, which appointed LWUA as the lead evaluator of GAD Plans and Budgets for water districts, leveraging its oversight responsibilities over Local Water Districts (LWDs). As stated by Hayashi (2023), it adopted Board Resolution No. 5, s. 2021 formally establishing the structure of its GFPS. This system is designed to implement essential mechanisms to promote GAD in accordance with relevant policies and regulations. The BIWAD GFPS has since undertaken steps to support gender equality, ensuring the integration of GAD principles into planning, programming, and budgeting processes across the agency.

Faced with various institutional challenges, BIWAD took the opportunity to critically reassess its gender equality efforts. This research aimed to move beyond simple compliance and transform GAD initiatives into meaningful tools for fostering inclusivity. Through the identification and resolution of the issues explored in the study, BIWAD strives to build a professional environment that nurtures diversity and provides equitable opportunities for all staff members, regardless of gender.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design and Strategy

The researcher evaluated the level of Gender and Development (GAD) Program implementation at Binalonan Water District using a mixed-methods technique, more especially the convergent parallel method. According to Vebrianto (2020), this approach collected quantitative and qualitative data simultaneously and evaluated them independently. A Likert scale was used in the questionnaire section to gather quantitative data, which was subsequently statistically analysed. On the other hand, the open-ended survey questions yielded qualitative information. The researcher used the categorisation of the data into major themes after conducting a frequency analysis to ascertain the prevalence of each response. Thematic coding was used to analyse it in order to identify recurring themes and glean important insights. The effectiveness of the GAD program was thoroughly assessed by combining the findings from the two data sets.

2.2 Population and Locale of the Study

The Binalonan Water District (BIWAD) employed fifty-nine (59) people in a variety of positions as of April 2024. These were ten (10) job order personnel, twenty-eight (28) casual employees, sixteen (16) permanent employees, and five (5) members of the Board of Directors. The researcher used a comprehensive enumeration strategy to include all 59 employees in the survey process because of the comparatively small population. This inclusive approach recognised the important roles and experiences of the eight (8) GAD Focal Point System (GFPS) / GAD coordinators and made sure that everyone in the organisation was represented in the study.

The decision to employ a complete enumeration method, often referred to as a "census," aligned with the study's aim to gather insights from all 59 employees at BIWAD. As Thomas (2023) stated, this method was particularly relevant due to its distinct benefits in providing a clear and in-depth understanding of the entire population's perspectives, experiences, and contributions.

2.3 Data Gathering Tools

A self-designed questionnaire created in accordance with the Philippine Commission on Women's Gender Mainstreaming Evaluation Framework (GMEF) served as the survey instrument used in this investigation. This approach guarantees a thorough assessment of organisational gender mainstreaming initiatives. The Civil Service Commission's Program to Institutionalise Meritocracy and Excellence in Human Resource Management (PRIME-HRM) was integrated into the questionnaire in addition to the GMEF. Three Gender and Development (GAD) coordinators from different government departments validated and assessed the questionnaire. Ms. Laura Causin, GAD Coordinator of Rosales Water District; Ms. Rhea M. Agibuay, GAD Coordinator of Urdaneta City University; and Ms. Marjorie C. Ocampo, GAD Coordinator of Sta. Water District of Maria.

To enable respondents to express their choices, the questionnaire was designed using a 5-point Likert scale. Additionally, open-ended questions were included to allow for a more in-depth analysis of the participants' perspectives. Because of this inclusion, participants were able to express detailed viewpoints that went beyond the constraints of number responses. In terms of Policy, People, Enabling Mechanisms, and Programs, Activities, and Projects (PAPs), the questionnaire's items assessed the degree of Gender and Development (GAD) program implementation at Binalonan Water District (BIWAD).

2.4 Data Gathering Procedure

The data-gathering process began in seeking the requisite approval from BIWAD management. Following this, informed consent was obtained from all respondents before the questionnaires were distributed. The researcher offered personalized assistance through face-to-face question-and-answer sessions to cater to the needs of respondents who encountered difficulties with reading and writing. In addition, phone interviews were undertaken for those unavailable during the distribution period. After the respondents finished the surveys, the researcher carefully gathered and arranged the responses for statistical evaluation.

3. RESULTS

The data gathered to evaluate the extent of implementation of the Gender and Development (GAD) Program in Binalonan Water District (BIWAD) was organized and analyzed to respond to the statement of the problem articulated in earlier chapters. Findings derived from the analysis of gathered data are analyzed and presented in a tabular form with the corresponding interpretation.

3.1 Extent of Implementation of the Gender and Development (GAD) Program in Binalonan Water District (BIWAD) – People

Table 1 illustrates the extent to which the Gender and Development (GAD) Program is implemented in the Binalonan Water District (BIWAD) under the "People" category. The findings reveal that this area is assessed as "Slightly Implemented," with an Average Weighted Mean (AWM) of 2.49. This score suggests that while inclusion measures are in place, they are perceived as inadequately carried out. Respondents likely feel that although mechanisms exist, they lack sufficient awareness and engagement to drive GAD efforts effectively. Only one item

Table 1: Average Weighted Mean on the Extent of Implementation of GAD Program in BIWAD focusing on People

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
People		
a. Gender and Development Focal Point System (GFPS) members and employees attended sufficient and relevant trainings on GAD.	2.39	Slightly Implemented
b. Roles and responsibilities for GFPS members and employees are clearly defined.	2.58	Slightly Implemented
c. Learning and development opportunities and resources are fairly distributed to all employees, regardless of roles and gender.	2.39	Slightly Implemented
d. Employees are actively engaged in all activities related to GAD initiatives.	2.43	Slightly Implemented
e. Employees possess extensive awareness of the importance of GAD Programs, Activities, and Projects (PAPs) in BIWAD	2.64	Moderately Implemented
Average Weighted Mean	2.49	Slightly Implemented

was rated as "Moderately Implemented"; employee awareness of the significance of GAD Programs, Activities, and Projects (PAPs), receiving an AWM of 2.64. This implies that employees have a basic understanding of GAD's aims. The rest of the indicators received lower scores, categorized as "Slightly Implemented." The understanding of roles and responsibilities among GFPS members and personnel scored an AWM of 2.58, pointing to a need for clearer definitions to enhance accountability within BIWAD. The 2.43 AWM for employee participation indicates limited involvement in GAD activities and a need for more proactive strategies to boost engagement.

Salagubang (2021) underscores the necessity of an informed workforce for successful gender mainstreaming, as education enhances awareness and supports equality. Similarly, James et al. (2023) emphasized that insufficient access to GAD-related training hinders efforts to reduce gender gaps and promote inclusive practices. The overall "Slightly Implemented" rating reflects that BIWAD staff, regardless of gender, collectively face issues related to training access and resources, indicating unequal opportunities for professional growth.

3.2 Extent of Implementation of the GAD Program in BIWAD – Policy

Table 2 displays the extent to which the GAD program is carried out in relation to BIWAD's policies, resulting in an Average Weighted Mean (AWM) of 2.69 and a descriptive rating of "Moderately Implemented." This indicates that while gender-related policies exist, they are not uniformly applied, and there remains room for improvement to enhance their effectiveness. Septanaya (2023) explored gender mainstreaming in Indonesia's local governments, noting that even with implemented policies, substantial gender disparities remain. This implies that the presence of policies alone does not guarantee the attainment of gender equality.

Table 2: Average Weighted Mean on the Extent of Implementation of GAD Program in BIWAD focusing on Policy

Policy	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
a. Internal policies support GAD mandates and GAD planning and budgeting and are regularly reviewed to address prevailing gender inequalities.	3.23	Moderately Implemented
b. BIWAD provides support for those who have reported gender-related issues, including counseling and legal advice.	2.69	Moderately Implemented
c. BIWAD actively seeks employee feedback to ensure that policies and practices are fair and do not favor any particular group.	2.32	Slightly Implemented
d. BIWAD ensures that all decisions, including hiring and promotions, are based on merit and free from gender or other biases.	2.41	Slightly Implemented
e. GAD-related recognition programs and incentives are established to accommodate the additional workload GFPS members undertake.	2.78	Moderately Implemented
Average Weighted Mean	2.69	Moderately Implemented

The top-rated indicator, marked as "Moderately Implemented," was BIWAD's internal policies that support GAD mandates, including planning, budgeting, and routine policy reviews to address existing gender disparities, earning an AWM of 3.23. This implies that BIWAD has integrated gender responsiveness into its internal frameworks and regularly assesses these to ensure conformity with standards from oversight bodies. The next highest rating, also "Moderately Implemented" at 2.78, involved GAD-related recognition and incentive programs, indicating BIWAD's acknowledgment of the contributions made by Gender Focal Point System (GFPS) members. This aligns with findings by Hosli (2023), which state that reward and recognition systems greatly improve employee engagement and retention.

Another indicator showing "Moderately Implemented" was BIWAD's support for individuals reporting gender-based issues, with an AWM of 2.69. This suggests the presence of mechanisms like counseling and legal support for complainants, reflecting BIWAD's commitment to maintaining a safe and responsive workplace. However, two other indicators were rated "Slightly Implemented." These were ensuring merit-based, impartial hiring and promotions (2.41) and seeking employee feedback (2.32).

Supporting this is BIWAD's 2023 and 2024 GAD budget and planning documents, which revealed a common issue: insufficient participation from both men and women in GAD initiatives. Promoting employee feedback is vital to addressing this challenge, as feedback fosters inclusion and motivates greater involvement. Valuing input from employees boosts their dedication to shared goals, including gender-related programs. In an

increasingly competitive environment, organizations require engaged workers more than ever prompting more emphasis on participatory decision-making in modern workplaces (Greig, 2023)

3.3 Extent of Implementation of the GAD Program BIWAD – Enabling Mechanisms

Table 3 outlines the findings regarding the level of implementation of BIWAD's Gender and Development (GAD) program in terms of its enabling mechanisms, which achieved an Average Weighted Mean (AWM) of 2.93 and was rated as "Moderately Implemented." While BIWAD has established foundational structures for its GAD program, the overall evaluation suggests that there is still a need to enhance consistency and effectiveness in its implementation. The highest-rated indicator was the establishment or reconstitution of GAD mechanisms, which scored an "Implemented" rating with an AWM of 3.83. This highlights BIWAD's strong commitment to aligning its GAD initiatives with the Magna Carta of Women (MCW) and other pertinent legislation.

The next highest-rated area was the allocation and utilization of the GAD fund, which received an AWM of 3.24 and a "Moderately Implemented" rating. This reflects BIWAD's moderate efforts in ensuring financial support for GAD initiatives. Allocating at least 5% of the agency's total budget underscores an intention to back gender-responsive programs aimed at addressing or narrowing gender disparities. On the other hand, the indicator related to internal systems that encourage participation from all genders in the planning and decision-making aspects of the GAD program had an AWM of 2.40, which was rated as "Slightly Implemented." This suggests that BIWAD's framework for ensuring gender-inclusive participation in GAD-related governance remains limited and in need of further development.

The cross-departmental collaboration in GAD planning, budgeting, and benchmarking against industry best practices received the lowest rank of 2.27 AWM, described as "Slightly Implemented." This is also connected to

Table 3: Average Weighted Mean on the Extent of Implementation of GAD Program in BIWAD focusing on Enabling Mechanisms

Enabling Mechanisms	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
a. GFPS or similar GAD mechanisms are created/reconstituted in accordance with MCW and pertinent policies issued by oversight agencies.	3.83	Implemented
b. The GAD fund (at least 5%) from the corporate budget is adequately allocated and utilized for carrying out GAD initiatives.	3.24	Moderately Implemented
c. Cross-departmental cooperation in GAD planning, budgeting, and benchmarking against industry best practices is facilitated.	2.27	Slightly Implemented
d. Internal mechanisms encourage the participation of all genders from the formulation to the decision-making process of the GAD program.	2.40	Slightly Implemented
e. The organization ensures equal pay for equal work, regardless of gender.	2.93	Moderately Implemented
Average Weighted Mean	2.93	Moderately Implemented

prior findings on the absence of a holistic approach in the formulation up to the implementation of GAD efforts, as shown by earlier data. Notably, there is presently no documented evidence or reports indicating that BIWAD has participated in benchmarking initiatives or worked with other agencies about GAD activities, suggesting an absence of periodic inter-departmental or inter-agency collaboration. This lack of collaboration hampers the potential for

enhancing the GAD program, as effective gender mainstreaming relies heavily on shared knowledge, resources, and best practices (Domogen, 2022)

3.4 Extent of Implementation of the GAD Program BIWAD – Programs, Activities, and Projects (PAPs)

According to Table 4, all indicators have attained the same descriptive equivalent, with the Programs, Activities, and Projects (PAPs) of BIWAD on its GAD implementation having an average weighted mean of 3.16 and a descriptive equivalent of "Moderately Implemented." The fact that BIWAD received the maximum rating of 3.66 AWM, or "Implemented," indicates that it has taken steps to guarantee that its services are useful and accessible to people of all genders.

To alleviate poverty and inequality, as well as to advance the rights of all genders, it is essential to ensure that everyone has equitable access to public services. For instance, it has been shown that when services are accessible and responsive to the specific needs of all genders, it helps to break down barriers and supports their

Table 4: Average Weighted Mean on the Extent of Implementation of GAD Program in BIWAD focusing on Programs, Activities, and Projects (PAPs)

Programs, Activities, and Projects (PAPs)	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
a. BIWAD ensures that its services are accessible and beneficial to all genders.	3.66	Implemented
b. The organization observes international/national/local GAD-related events, e.g., VAWC and National Women's Month.	3.51	Implemented
c. Existing Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials are reviewed and revised to ensure gender-fair language and images are used.	3.22	Moderately Implemented
d. BIWAD uses feedback from clients to improve the implementation of PAPs.	2.64	Moderately Implemented
e. BIWAD provides mentorship and support programs to encourage all employees (regardless of gender) to take on roles in traditionally male-dominated functions.	2.76	Moderately Implemented
Average Weighted Mean	3.16	Moderately Implemented

empowerment.

The second highest rating, with an Average Weighted Mean (AWM) of 3.51 and classified as "Implemented," relates to BIWAD's active participation in international, national, and local GAD-related events. Engagement in these events supports compliance with government directives while also fostering a culture centered on advocacy and gender awareness. BIWAD's assessment of Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials earned an AWM of 3.22 and was rated as "Moderately Implemented," reflecting its initiative to incorporate gender-sensitive language and visuals. This approach is essential for shaping inclusive discourse and ensuring that Filipinos grasp and value the core principles of Gender and Development (GAD) (Salagubang & Abelgas, 2020). The adoption of inclusive language is evident in BIWAD's communications, including promotional content, official documents, and the citizen's charter.

Meanwhile, mentorship and support programs at BIWAD received an AWM of 2.76 and a "Moderately Implemented" rating, showing the organization's effort to promote gender equity by encouraging participation in roles traditionally dominated by men.

The indicator with the lowest AWM at 2.64, though still rated “Moderately Implemented,” involves using client feedback to improve Programs, Activities, and Projects (PAPs). Despite being the lowest-rated, it demonstrates BIWAD’s willingness to respond to public input. A client feedback form, required by the Civil Service Commission (CSC), has been deployed to gauge service satisfaction. However, existing research suggests that collecting feedback alone is inadequate; agencies must also adopt mechanisms to analyze and act on the feedback to genuinely enhance service quality.

For instance, the successful service delivery hinges on the genuine incorporation of client input into decision-making processes (Miller et.al, 2020) When feedback mechanisms are used primarily for compliance rather than as a tool for service improvement, organizations miss opportunities to adapt their services to meet the community's evolving needs. For BIWAD, its capacity to recognize trends and areas for improvement is restricted by the lack of proactive responses to client concerns. To enhance the delivery of quality frontline government services, client feedback should be utilized as a guide for improving service standards (Development Academy of the Philippines, 2022).

4. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were derived. The extent of the GAD program is characterized by a moderate level of implementation. BIWAD has implemented key elements of the GAD program at a level that employees generally find acceptable, especially in the following areas: establishment of internal policies that align with GAD mandates, policy support, service accessibility for all genders, regular observance of national and local gender-related events, and the allocation and utilization of GAD funds. Employees accepting gender-sensitive practices is less probable in the absence of feedback channels or decision-making participation opportunities. While the BIWAD has made initial progress, its compliance-driven approach lacks the genuine commitment necessary to cultivate a truly inclusive and diverse workforce.

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