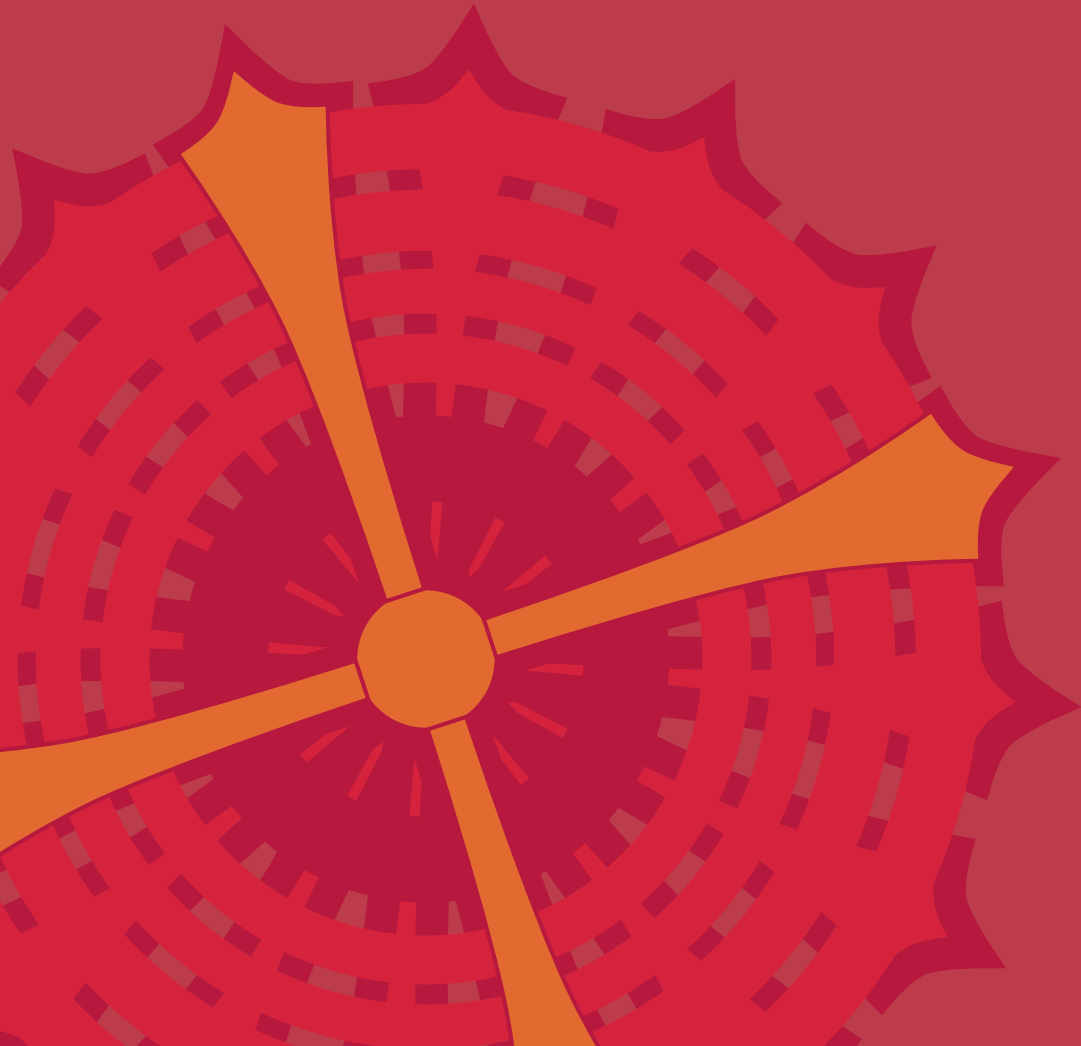
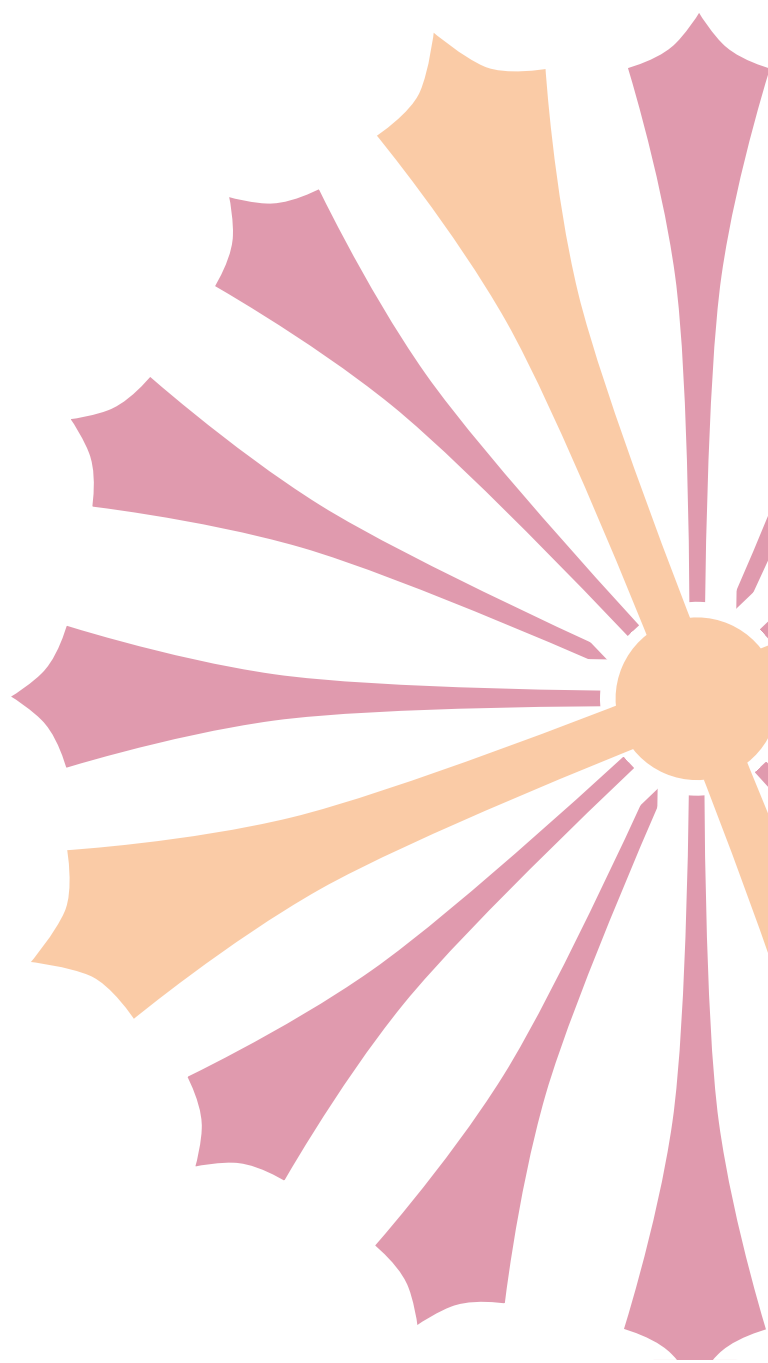


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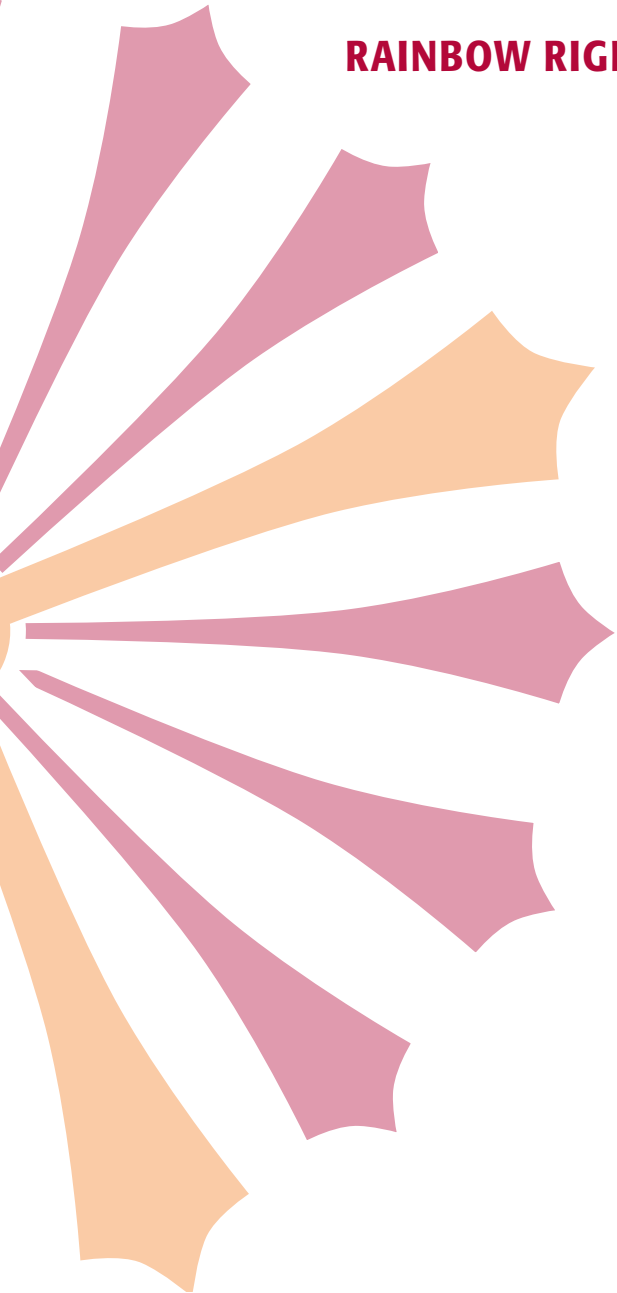




KWENTONG BEBOT

Lived Experiences of Lesbians, Bisexual
and Transgender Women in the Philippines

RAINBOW RIGHTS PROJECT



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Photo: Courtesy of Ang LadLad



INTRODUCTION

The International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (IGLHRC) implemented a five-country research and documentation project on violence and discrimination against LBT people.¹ IGLHRC worked with the Rainbow Rights Project, the country team for the Philippines. This report offers preliminary insights based on the available research into how cultural contexts influence state policy towards LBT women.

1 The four other countries (and country-specific organizations) involved in this project are: Japan (Gay Japan News); Malaysia (KRYSS); Sri Lanka (Women's Support Group); and Pakistan (O).

There is an oft-repeated belief among people outside of the Philippines² that the country enjoys a high level of acceptance of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people, a conclusion that University of the Philippines Professor, Neil Garcia, says is “sadly misinformed.”³

A study⁴ analyzing data from the 2002 Young Adults Fertility and Sexuality Survey (YAFS3), which involved around 19,000 young adults aged 15-27, suggests an explanation for the impression that being LGBT is accepted in the Philippines. According to the YAFS3 study, more than half of the respondents expressed “homosexual acceptance” but only 13.5% approved of both the person and the homosexual acts, meaning more than half agreed that people had the right to be homosexual even if most of them disapproved of people having same sex relations. This seemingly contradictory finding of the YAFS3 may be explained by the fact that although the majority of Filipinos are baptized Roman Catholics, and while the Vatican itself does not condone the social acceptance of homosexuality and same-sex relationships,⁵ there is a more tolerant attitude towards and a greater level of acceptance of LGBT people among Filipino families and within local-level government institutions.

In addition, the State does not gather such data, which results in LGBT human rights issues being excluded in policy-making. This was borne out by our research where the lesbians, bisexual women and transgender (LBT) women⁶ we interviewed

2 “LGBT Culture in the Philippines,” Wikipedia, accessed on February 16, 2013, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/LGBT_culture_in_the_Philippines.

3 Neil Garcia, “Male Homosexuality in the Philippines: a short history,” International Institute for Asian Studies Newsletter, accessed on February 16, 2013, http://www.ias.nl/nl/35/IIAS_NL35_13.pdf,

4 Christian Joy Cruz and Russel Brian Mallari, “Revisiting Social Acceptance of Homosexuality Among Filipino Youth: Some Theoretical and Methodological Implications,” *Philippine Population Review* (2007): 46, 67-68.

5 “Homosexuality,” Catholic Answers website, accessed February 13, 2013, <http://www.catholic.com/tracts/homosexuality>.

6 Transgender men were not part of the Philippines study. See

testified to a significant level of institutional invisibility and devaluation. They reported that their attempts to lodge complaints and seek redress for violence and discrimination have often been hindered by a lack of understanding and acceptance among authorities, particularly at the lower end of the justice system, (such as law enforcers) which also reflects the lack of available substantive data on levels of discrimination and violence based on sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression.

INTERVIEWEE DEMOGRAPHICS

The Rainbow Rights Project Philippines conducted data-gathering interviews with LBT women from March 2011 to February 2012. As well as taking into account ethical considerations, a key component of data collection was ensuring both balanced demographic representation of LBT women and geographical representation from the three main island groups in the Philippines: Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao.

The majority of the 59 interviews involved transgender women (58%), followed by lesbians (29%) and bisexual women (9%). Easy access to the network of transgender women combined with their receptiveness to the call for interviews led to more transgender women being interviewed. A maximum number of interviews per group were not set, which might have affected the final distribution of the interviews. The small proportion of interviews with bisexual women can perhaps be attributed to them being less visible in the Philippines. In relation to geographic representation, 59% of the LBT individuals interviewed came from Luzon, 34% from the Visayas, and 7% from Mindanao, the latter having less representation due to geographic and financial constraints.

Three interviews were excluded from the overall LBT pool – one with a transgender male, one with a person who identified as male, and an interview conducted with a group of three lesbians. These interviews did not comply with the parameters of our study. In addition, the Philippines country team did not want to offend the sensibilities of transgender males, hence the interview with the transgender man was conducted but not included in the analysis of data from the pool of women-identified respondents. A group interview conducted with three lesbians from Mindanao was subsequently not included in this report. Interviews were also held with a range of relevant stakeholders in order to identify

1. Service level and interventions for LBT women
2. Prevalent attitudes and knowledge level on relevant LBT women's issues
3. Existing laws and policies related to sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression.

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LOCATIONS OF LBT INDIVIDUALS INTERVIEWED



explanation in demographics section of this chapter.

A balanced approach was taken in these interviews to ensure a fair representation of stakeholders from different sectors, including civil society, government agencies, and medical and health providers from throughout the three island groups. More than 25% of the 46 stakeholder interviews involved representatives from civil society, which included LGBT organizations, women groups, human rights NGOs and reproductive health advocates; 15% involved State sector representatives, including those from the legislative branch, national government agencies, human rights organizations and the state university. Medical and health providers comprised almost 20% of the stakeholders interviewed and included psychiatrists, doctors, nurses and guidance counselors. About 39% of the stakeholders interviewed were drawn from a miscellaneous group that included educators, religious leaders, employers and people working in the media.

COUNTRY CONTEXT

The Philippines is a vibrant and culturally diverse archipelago comprised of 7,107 islands that are home to 92 million people with more than 170 languages. The nation derives its names from King Philip II of Spain, having been declared a Spanish colony – “Las Islas Filipinas” – in the mid-16th century. Spanish rule lasted for 333 years until Filipinos waged a revolution for national independence in 1898. The United States colonized the islands during the Spanish-American War and after a war between the new native government and the US.

In 1935, the US granted the Philippines the status of self-governing commonwealth, which stood for seven years until 1942 during the Second World War when the nation fell under Japanese control. The US granted the Philippines full independence in 1946.

As a multiparty, constitutional republic, the Philippines became a model of democracy in Asia, experiencing a relatively peaceful transition through successive presidents. In 1965 Ferdinand Marcos was elected President and served two constitutionally

mandated terms in office. In 1972, barred from seeking a third term, he declared martial law and enacted a new constitution that enabled him to stay in power indefinitely, heralding the dawn of an era of political persecutions, repression and myriad human rights violations. In the People Power Revolution of 1986, civil resistance to his rule succeeded in ousting him from power.

A second People Power Revolution in 2001 replaced President Joseph Estrada with his Vice-President, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. Her nine years in office was dogged by claims of graft, corruption and human rights violations. In 2011 she was charged with crimes, including electoral sabotage, for which she still awaits trial at the time of writing. Current President Benigno Aquino III came to power in 2010 with a campaign pledge of upholding of human rights. However, to date, the impunity of security forces persists, as do extrajudicial killings, torture and abuse by security forces, disappearances, warrantless arrests, violence against women, the abuse and sexual exploitation of children, child labor and trafficking in persons.⁷ Discrimination, violence and hate crimes targeting LGBT people are widely reported, and are exacerbated by the absence of relevant legal protections and means of redress.⁸

The Philippines has both signed and ratified⁹ a number of United Nations (UN) human rights covenants, treaties and optional protocols, many of which have been integrated into national and municipal laws. These conventions include the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of

7 “2011 Human Rights reports: Philippines,” US Department of State, accessed February 12, 2012, <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/2011/eap/186301.htm>.

8 “The Status of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Rights in the Philippines Submission to the Human Rights Council for Universal Periodic Review 13th Session,” Rainbow Rights Project Inc. and Philippine LGBT Hate Crime Watch, accessed February 12, 2013, http://lib.ohchr.org/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/session13/PH/JS1_UPR_PHL_S13_2012_JointSubmission1_E.pdf.

9 “Report Status by Country,” UN Treaty Body Database, accessed October 30, 2012, <http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/NewhvVAILSPRByCountry?OpenView>.

Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).¹⁰ The government has established institutions to deal with human rights, and is claiming to base its programming, budgeting, and planning on human rights.¹¹

However, civil society organizations (CSOs) maintain that while the State is diligently submitting glowing reports to international bodies on the Philippines' compliance with human rights standards, it is actively covering up the persistence of human rights violations.¹² The government boasts of a robust structural framework of human rights mechanisms, including¹³ monitoring and complaints mechanisms, inter-agency task forces, engagement with civil society via human rights desks, and the implementation of preventive policies in response to the reports of human rights violations filed during the administration of President Arroyo.¹⁴ However, CSOs have noted that this is merely window dressing and that the government does not provide adequate human rights protections.¹⁵ Several factors complicate the general human rights situation in the Philippines.

The State is waging a counter-insurgency war against the Maoist New People's Army and armed

fundamentalist groups.¹⁶ **These military operations form the backdrop to many human rights violations against legal organizations perceived to be fronts for armed opposition movements.**¹⁷ Economic policies favor substantial investments in mining, biofuel farms, and real estate, thereby contributing to forced dispossession of land and extrajudicial killings particularly in rural areas.¹⁸

The pervasive and repressive religious environment and Roman Catholic majority in the Philippines ... often disenfranchises already vulnerable sectors of the population, including LGBT people.

In 2012 the reported death toll of environmental activists totaled 15.¹⁹ Gender equality is enshrined in the Constitution and forms the basis of legislation and national development plans.²⁰ The Philippines scores relatively high on global gender equality indices and ranks eighth overall in the World Economic Forum's 2012 Global Gender Gap Report, which posits the Philippines as the leading country for gender equality in the Asia region.²¹ However, such indices mask the persistence of discrimination and inequality that women in the Philippines continue to suffer in most aspects of their lives.

10 "Magna Carta of Women – a victory for women's human rights advocates," CEDAW in Action – Southeast Asia, accessed October 30, 2012, http://cedaw-seasia.org/philippines_action_MagnaCarta.html.

11 Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines website, accessed October 30, 2012, http://www.chr.gov.ph/MAIN%20PAGES/about%20hr/advisories/pdf_files/abthr036.pdf

12 "Less killings, but government not doing enough – Karapatan," The PCIJ Blog (blog), <http://pcij.org/blog/2007/12/10/less-killings-but-government-not-doing-enough-karapatan>.

13 List of Philippines UN human rights body communications, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights website, accessed October 30, 2012, <http://tb.ohchr.org/default.aspx?country=ph>.

14 "Human Rights in the Philippines: Government Response," Hurights Osaka, October 2012, <http://www.hurights.or.jp/archives/focus/section2/2010/03/human-rights-in-the-philippines-government-response.html#note03>.

15 "Ramento Project for Rights Defenders," Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights website, accessed on October 30, 2012, http://lib.ohchr.org/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/session13/PH/RPRD_UPR_PHL_S13_2012_RamentoProjectforRightsDefenders_E.pdf.

16 "World Report 2012: Philippines," Human Rights Watch, accessed February 13, 2013, <http://www.hrw.org/world-report-2012/world-report-2012-philippines>.

17 "Scared Silent," Human Rights Watch, June 28, 2007, accessed on October 30, 2012, <http://www.hrw.org/node/10922/section/2>.

18 "Groups blame Xstrata-SMI: 'Their blood are in your hands!'" Philippine Alliance of Human Rights Advocates website, October 25, 2012, accessed October 30, 2012, <http://www.philippinehumanrights.org/news/statements/236-groups-blame-xstrata-smi-their-blood-are-in-your-hands>.

19 RV Olea, "Philippines: Farmers, anti-mining activists killed before Human Rights Day," 2012, accessed February 13, 2013, <http://climate-connections.org/2012/12/10/farmers-anti-mining-activists-killed-before-human-rights-day/>.

20 "The Philippines," UN Women, accessed February 13, 2013, <http://www.unwomen-eseasia.org/docs/factsheets/07%20PHILIPPINES%20factsheet.pdf>.

21 "The Global Gender Gap Report," World Economic Forum, 2012, accessed February 13 2013, <http://www.weforum.org/reports/global-gender-gap-report-2012>.

According to the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, (UN Women) violence against women in the Philippines is high, attributed to deeply entrenched patriarchal attitudes and power imbalances within the family. The International Labor Organization reports that most women in the Philippines remain marginalized and disadvantaged in relation to employment.²² The Philippines is also a source country for trafficking in persons, with women subjected to sex trafficking, forced labor and involuntary servitude.²³

Although a professed secular state, the pervasive and repressive religious environment and Roman Catholic majority in the Philippines continue to hinder the progressive advancement of women's rights and negatively compound women's struggles in the country. Laws tend to closely adhere to a socially conservative agenda that mirrors Vatican policy, which often disenfranchises already vulnerable sectors of the population, including LGBT people. This is reflected in the current lack of legislation providing protection on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. The Philippines is one of only two countries left in the world that does not allow divorce.²⁴

Consensual homosexual relations, homosexuality, and transgenderism are not illegal in the Philippines.²⁵ However, major government agencies, such as the military and public schools, are yet to formally articulate specific affirmative policies. For instance, gay men are allowed to serve in the military and teach in schools, on the condition

that they act “manly,” do not cross dress, and do not discuss homosexuality.²⁶ Transgender male-to-female (MTF) women are required to be in male clothing during duty hours. No public statement is made about lesbian women in military service or training who prefer male clothing.

STATE ACTIONS

In 2013 the [Philippines] government did not join discussions on and chose to abstain from voting in support of a UN declaration calling for an end to extrajudicial killings based on sexual orientation.

A sampling of recent events illustrates the Philippine State's uneven approach to the rights of LBT women. For the past 20 years, citizens have generally been free to organize groups and events aimed at discussing, defending, and promoting LGBT rights with little fear of repression or restrictions from the state. Cases of marked discrimination are rare at the state level but they can be controversial. The political party *Ang Laddad* – a party comprised of and working for LGBT people formed in 2003 (then known as *AngLunduyan*) – was initially disqualified by the Philippine Commission on Elections (COMELEC) in 2010 on the basis of moral grounds. At that time, a commissioner labeled LGBT people as “immoral.” COMELEC issued a statement in which it said that if accredited, the party would become a threat to youth, and would contravene the religious teachings of the Catholic church.²⁷

However, in a landmark decision that same year, the Supreme Court reversed the decision and allowed the party to contest elections. The decision was handed down amid a surge of support from the public and from the human rights community

22 “Gender Equality in the Philippines,” International Labor Organization, accessed February 13, 2013, http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---ilo-manila/documents/publication/wcms_173283.pdf.

23 “The Philippines,” UN Women, accessed February 13, 2013, <http://www.unwomen-eseasia.org/docs/factsheets/07%20PHILIPPINES%20factsheet.pdf>.

24 C Derichs and A Fleschenberg, eds., *Religious Fundamentalisms and Their Gendered Impacts* (2010), 25-26, accessed February 13, 2013, <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/iez/07061.pdf>.

25 “Philippines Country Survey,” International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association, accessed October 30, 2012, <http://ilga.org/ilga/en/countries/PHILIPPINES/Law>.

26 “Philippine Military Academy says gays and lesbians are welcome, but cross-dressing isn't,” The Feed, July 11, 2012, accessed October 30, 2012, <http://www.spot.ph/newsfeatures/51485/pma-bans-cross-dressing-for-gay-and-lesbian-cadets>.

27 PK Pascual, “Laddad, Nine Years of Fighting for LGBT Rights,” accessed February 13, 2013, <http://laddadpartylist.blogspot.com/search/label/Laddad%20general>.

on the issue of equal protection under the law.²⁸ In 2012, the Supreme Court launched a pilot program to train trial judges on SOGIE (sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression) issues,²⁹ employing leaders from local LGBT legal-advocacy organizations. The long-term effect of this training in producing favorable changes in the judicial treatment of SOGIE issues will, however, not be evident for the next few years.

At present, neither pro-gay nor anti-gay political camps have been able to have their respective agendas formalized in government policy. The proposed Anti-Racial, Ethnic and Anti-Religious Discrimination Act of 2011 has yet to be passed, with some senators objecting to the inclusion of sexual orientation and gender identity in the bill.³⁰ Anti-gay advocates, on the other hand, have to date been unsuccessful in legislating against same-sex marriage, and indeed have generated little widespread attention when picketing gay Pride events.³¹

The state's negligence in upholding the human rights of and providing protections for LGBT people is reflected in the passive stance that the Philippines has adopted on SOGIE issues in the United Nations. Despite pressure from civil society activists within the Philippines, in 2013 the government did not join discussions on and

chose to abstain from voting in support of a UN declaration calling for an end to extrajudicial killings based on sexual orientation.³² Previously the Philippines also abstained from voting on a landmark resolution in the UN Human Rights Council in 2011 that affirmed the universality of human rights, condemned violence and discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, and requested the High Commissioner for Human Rights to prepare a global study on violence and discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. To date, President Aquino has not made a definitive policy declaration on SOGIE-related rights, instead making token references to LGBT people, such as in a media interview conducted during an official state visit to Washington, DC in 2011 in which he stated that adults "should be able to do whatever you want as long as you don't harm anybody else."³³

While negligence characterizes national-level response to SOGIE-related issues, some state agencies and local-level governments have implemented policies aimed at formalizing protections for LGBT people. The Philippine Commission for Human Rights (CHR), the nation's independent human rights institution, and its counterpart in the presidential palace, the Presidential Human Rights Committee (PHRC), have undertaken a range of projects in collaboration with LGBT CSOs with the aim of mainstreaming human rights for LGBT people within the broader human rights agenda. Local anti-discrimination ordinances are now in place in Quezon City, Cebu City and Davao City, and will soon be enacted in Bacolod City. In addition, the Civil Service Commission issued a memo on the inclusion of SOGIE in government eligibility examination requirements.

28 SC Jay Rempillo, "Ang Ladlad is Qualified Party-List Candidate" (April 2010), accessed October 29, 2012, <http://sc.judiciary.gov.ph/publications/benchmark/2010/04/041003.php> (page discontinued)

29 "Gov't institutes for judges to develop LGBT knowledge," *Outrage*, accessed February 13, 2013, <http://outragemag.com/online/govt-institute-for-judges-to-develop-lgbt-knowledge/>.

30 IAR Silverio, "Anti-discrimination bill faces rough sailing in Senate," *Bulatlat.com*, 2012, accessed February 13, 2013, <http://bulatlat.com/main/2012/08/30/anti-discrimination-bill-faces-rough-sailing-in-senate/>.

31 Laurindo Garcia, "Manila beams with pride, despite debut of anti-gay protesters," *Fridae*, December 8, 2008, accessed October 29, 2012, <http://www.fridae.asia/newsfeatures/2008/12/08/2168.manila-beams-with-pride-despite-debut-of-anti-gay-protesters>.

32 Zamboanga Journal, "Defend gay rights in UN statement, PROGAY tells Manila," *Zamboanga Journal*, accessed February 13, 2013, <http://zamboangajournal.blogspot.com/2011/02/defend-gay-rights-in-un-statement.html>.

33 "PNoy sympathizes on gay rights, not gay adoption," *Agence France-Presse*, September 21, 2011, accessed October 29, 2012, <http://www.abs-cbnnews.com/nation/09/21/11/pnoy-sympathizes-gay-rights-not-gay-adoption>.

JELAY

31-year-old Jelay (pseudonym) was born a biological male in Zamboanga del Norte, a province in the southern Philippines. Her parents are from Iloilo in the Visayas. She did not finish her Bachelor of Science in Architecture degree and now works on a commission basis as a beautician in a salon.

She became aware of her identity as a woman when she was in the Second Grade – the same time that she started to make friends exclusively with girls. She also started to have boy crushes at that time. She always joined dances and liked rifling through her mother's clothes when she was away. One time she was caught wearing her mother's dress and her parents scolded her. She started gaining her parents' acceptance when she did well in school and began to get on the school honor roll. When she was growing up, her siblings accepted her for who she was.

Jelay was born Catholic but recently converted to the Baptist religion. As a Catholic, she had no problems when she wore feminine clothes, but when she became a Baptist they made her change her way of dressing. She confronted the church pastor and told him she could not do it because this was the way she was. From then on the pastor allowed her to dress according to her preferred gender and be who she really was in church. Jelay believes that in the eyes of God, we are all equal.

Growing up, Jelay was always taunted for being bakla or bayot (effeminate) by random people on the streets, both males or females and kids and adults alike. When she went to get a police clearance, the police laughed at her and said she had "no use in society" because she was bakla. Six men physically assaulted her when she tried to defend a friend who was being harassed and cursed. She was stripped and beaten, but despite being outnumbered, she put up a good fight. She suffered facial injuries and broken ribs. The six men were arrested and detained by village officers. Jelay tried to file

a legal complaint against them but decided to withdraw the case because the village officers were mishandling the procedures.

Her sexual "awakening" happened when she was in second grade, when she was about eight years old. On the night it happened, her 20-year-old uncle carried her into his room and forcefully asked her to suck his penis because he said she was bakla. She had no idea about such things at that time. He forced himself on her; she was helpless and he was stronger than her. She was crying when her mother came home, there was blood splattered all over. Jelay was lying there with her anus torn and with some internal organs extruding. She was taken to the hospital and received stitches for her wounds. She also had to undergo a medico-legal examination. She heard her mother, uncle and his wife arguing. She heard them say that she was bakla and that she had probably flirted and asked for this to happen. She felt undignified after this.

Jelay's case was brought to court. There were two court hearings. They asked her to take the witness stand and tell the court the details about what happened. At just eight years of age, she was frightened and nervous. She could hear some people blaming her; they said she was bakla and that she had flirted with her uncle and provided the motive for him to force himself upon her. Even the judge questioned her integrity. Because of her age, her lawyer was able to defend her successfully. Her uncle was found guilty and was imprisoned.

For Jelay, the past often comes back to haunt her. She believes that sometimes a person cannot move on in the present without the past.

MANIFESTATIONS OF VIOLENCE

Throughout our interviews we found reports of a range of violence including physical, verbal and emotional violence.

Physical Violence

Most of those interviewed said family members within a nuclear family unit, predominantly male members of family or clan, including fathers, brothers, uncles and stepfathers, had inflicted most of the physical violence. Most incidents of violence occurred immediately after a person voluntarily disclosed her sexual orientation and/or gender identity, was “outed,” (a person’s sexual orientation or gender identity is revealed without the person’s knowledge or permission), or was suspected of being non-heteronormative. Heteronormative refers to the notion that there are only two genders, male or female, and that the only kind of attraction is heterosexual, which is between people of the opposite sex, i.e., between those who were assigned male and those who were assigned female sex at birth. Anyone who lives outside these parameters is considered non-heteronormative.

Many of the respondents reported being raped within their families ... [and] sexually abused by uncles during childhood and in pre-pubescence.

Vanessa, a transgender woman, recalled growing up in Dumaguete and being bullied and roughed up by her brothers. She said:

My friends dragged me to a dance party ... I managed to borrow a dress and wig. Then my friend suddenly warned me that my brother saw me. [My brother] boxed me, my wig fell, I ran away.

Some transgender women said that their mothers, aunts or other female relatives, upon learning of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity/

expression, had subjected them to violence. Madeline, a transgender woman, said:

I was four ... that was the time I remember that I’m really different because my mom slapped me when I wore her bra.

According to many respondents, perpetrators often used violence as punishment for their sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. Kel, a lesbian, said:

My uncle, he asked me directly like, ‘Are you a tomboy acting like that?’ I answered, ‘Yeah.’ He slapped me, so he said, ‘Why, why so?’ ... He said, ‘Have you had a boyfriend?’ And I said, ‘Yeah.’ ‘So why a girl?’ And I said, ‘I don’t know.’

In some instances, heterosexual males with whom victims shared a public space, such as on a street curb or at a dance party, inflicted violence in what were largely crimes of opportunity, often committing assault when their victims were vulnerable. This form of violence generally took the form of punching, slapping and the use of blunt objects.

Transgender woman Alyssa and another transgender woman were on the street, walking when a man crossed their path and said: “You transsexual/ homosexual people are bad!” The man then hit Alyssa on the back of her head, and the pair fled in fear. Agnes, a 26-year-old lesbian, was also threatened with violence by a stranger. She was in a taxi with her girlfriend when:

... out of the blue, I have no idea whether this male person is crazy or what. The guy pointed a laser light, the red one, at us. It was very painful, particularly on the eyes ... he was standing outside the taxi on the side of the road. ... Then he made a sign like this ... like he will cut off your head.

Several interviewees reported being subjected to violence that involved the use of firearms or other weapons. Transgender woman Vanessa from Dumaguete encountered bullies who felt offended seeing her in a dress. She said:

He beat me up and cut my hair while insulting me... I was almost gunned down... I managed to push my attackers, and I ran away naked. I ran in a zigzag so I dodged the bullets.

A number of the LBT respondents recalled incidences of violence in which the perpetrators, while not directly referring to their sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, appeared to exhibit bias as a motivation for their attacks. Lei, a transgender woman said:

... the security guard [at the clinic] was discourteous... You're not supposed to do that, I said. And he reacted, 'Is that so?' Pak! He ... hit [me] with the nightstick... They want me to use another line (a line for men), but I'm a woman, so what's your problem? I had an appointment there, and he blocked my way... He was violent.

Predominantly male members of family or clan ... had inflicted most of the physical violence ... perpetrators often used violence as punishment for [non-conforming] sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.

Many attacks were sudden and unanticipated, which left victims ill-prepared to defend themselves. Jason, a transgender woman, said that he became used to being singled out and attacked:

When people get drunk, they goad the *bakla*³⁴ with insults, then people start a brawl. So we band together and fight. In the end, the bakla lose to the guys. Without warning, they would slap a bakla. That starts the brawl.

34 Bakla is a Tagalog word that conflates a wide spectrum of SOGIE concepts that include male homosexuality, MTF transgenderism, and transvestism. Bayot is its equivalent in the Visayas and Mindanao island groups. Refer to Terminology section for further explanation.

Verbal and Emotional Violence

Respondents reported that emotional violence largely came from family members, significant others or ex-partners, co-workers, and strangers. This form of violence primarily involved criticism or rejection of actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression or the choice of partner. Respondents said that they were taunted or ordered to change their sexuality or gender expression, for instance, by modifying their manner of clothing and demeanor.

Stef, a transgender respondent:

My father asked, 'Why do you look this way?' My hair is long, my eyebrows plucked. I was in pink again. 'Can't you be more masculine?' He said even if bakla, he'd want me to be more discreet. I could have shorter hair... It's so sad my own father does not accept me although he says, 'I love you, you are my child.' But I still do not feel the acceptance.

Grace, a lesbian respondent:

My mother said, 'If I ever learned that you have a relationship with a lesbian, I will kill you.'

Sometimes, family members communicated their discomfort about having LBT children through innuendos and jokes. Other times, the hostility was overtly expressed. For transgender women Alyssa and Magdalena, the insults heaped upon them were explicit and shaming in front of family or guests. Alyssa recalled:

... then [my father] will say to me, 'You went out last night again, you just suck cock, like that.' I think it is very painful that he will say that in front of the family, 'You like, you just want to suck cock outside.'

Magdalena said:

I was playing with my nephew... I was

tickling him, he was laughing and enjoying and [my mother] told me that that kind of action ‘tickling a baby boy and you are gay; that’s a form of molestation, child molestation.’ So I really felt bad, I cried.

Angel, 42, provided an example of verbal and emotional violence that was accompanied by a violent physical act. After telling her family that she was a lesbian, her brother took out a gun and shot their pet dog, saying, “Ako, naglagot ako sa imo [I am mad at you]. I might be able to kill you.” Verbal violence, which often contains a directive to change behavior or dress, also serves to remind LBT women of a female’s place in society. May Rhoda, a transgender woman, analyzed her boyfriend’s frequent verbal abuse:

When he gets mad, he always tells me, ‘Don’t feel confident that you are moneyed; you’re just a bayot [gay/transgender person]’... That I’m so underestimated that I’m really, really small. It pisses me off. If I am ‘just a bayot’, why did he still chase after me?

Traditionally, families do not disown Filipino LBT children because nuclear families need to remain intact as an economically functioning unit. However, Pol, a transgender woman, lamented that she was forced to leave home after her father caught her flirting with some men in her native Bacolod City:

I left everything behind in Manila just for you guys and this is how you repay me? You’re kicking me out?... I lived in boarding houses; I’ve never been kicked out [by them] but here, within my own family, my father kicks me out. So I was really, really hurt.

Many of the LBT women interviewed for this research also reported experiencing verbal and emotional violence outside of the home. Brigitte, a transgender sex worker, recalled a saleswoman addressing her as “Sir.” “That’s an insult. Oh my

God, look at my boobs, so huge, and you’re going to call me sir?” Brigitte recalled. Most of the emotional and verbal violence that respondents experienced took the form of sexually loaded taunts, catcalls, whistles, the playing of music offensive to transgender women, gestures, visual signs and insults posted online from either strangers, neighbors, acquaintances and employees of public establishments. The content of the verbal attacks consisted mostly of thinly veiled invitations for sex, putdowns laden with stereotypes, and threats of injury or sexual assault.

Rain’s sister, a makeup artist who accepted Rain’s transgenderism, proudly uploaded videos of Rain’s cosmetic transformations. Instead of praise, online commentators posted such remarks as “Oh, so this a trans/gay” after they realized she was a transgender woman. Rain found those comments to be “offensive and insensitive.”

Violence in the Name of Religion

Only a small number of the LBT women we interviewed said that they considered religion a critical factor for their emotional, psychological or social development. Those who considered faith to be important in their lives said they felt violated by homophobic or transphobic church doctrine, or they blamed religious tenets for promoting oppression within their families.

Sheena, a bisexual woman:

I think what happened was a result of my parents being constantly bombarded by advice from their ... church. Before [they started going to church], they were not like that. It seemed that they knew [my sexual orientation] and they were letting me be; but with that pressure from the church, they became strict with me.

Other respondents coped by either quietly conforming to the rules of their church or by leaving the church altogether. Kaycee, a transgender woman, said:

I was born Catholic, my father reminded me... when I told him I am a woman, he said, 'No, you're not, you're born male, you have to be man, you're a boy' ... I said I am not in between, I am a woman... That's why I changed my religion ... [to what] I call paganism or pagan.

Some respondents like transwoman Vanessa had an opposite reaction to religious pressure:

Religion doesn't influence me on being a transgender. Religion did not have an effect on me. I just believe in God.



Photo: Courtesy of Rainbow Rights Project

Violence in Schools

Warranting special attention are the human rights violations taking place against LBT students in schools, where institutional rules, policies, and practices effectively create a climate of exclusion and facilitate instances of violence and abuse. Official academic activities often provide the cover for violations.

Cindy, a 27-year-old transgender woman recalled how an ROTC (Reserve Officers' Training Corps) superior officer picked on her and her fellow female transgender ROTC cadets:

... the officer, he was super angry because

the bayots³⁵ won't march at all ... they think we are only slacking off. But we weren't relaxing at all because we waxed the floor... sell soda drinks, carrying soda cases... we really got two punches that time, which is not right ... our bodies were still so thin that time.

Respondents said emotional violence from fellow students was commonplace. Transgender respondent Vanessa recalled being taunted by her classmates in high school:

I walked in the corridors just not to be seen by the students. Once you walk [along an open pathway or outside] the building, they taunt you: 'Bakla! Bayot!'

Sexual Violence

Many of the respondents reported being raped within their families. Most of the victims were transgender women who were sexually abused by uncles during childhood and in pre-pubescence. Pol, transgender respondent:

So I was raped... [when I was in the] 5th Grade, 6th Grade... I was scared of my uncle; he was a drug addict... [It] might destroy the family... I live with him now... It's hard to explain... he just laid beside me then... he took my hand, and that's it... I'm still ashamed...Ashamed for him... It's because he did it to me, his nephew.

Many transgender women only become aware later in life that what they experienced as children is sexual violence. Mae, a 24-year-old transgender woman, surmised that she must have exhibited signals that the perpetrators perceived as license to molest her. She said:

I think I was 10 years old, 11. Actually, not just with my uncle but with some

35 Bayot is the Visayan language word for bakla. See Glossary section for further explanation.

of my neighbors... But I did not resist... because ... they know that maybe I was transgender/effeminate, so they will just [unfinished phrase] ...

Transgender woman Jelay said:

He [my uncle] lifted me bodily into the room. He said, 'You're a *bakla* so you suck my penis.' Of course, at that time [I was in second grade], I had no idea about those things. Then he told me to just suck it...[He raped me and] my anus was torn, some organs came out of the wound, and it was stitched later.

Several respondents said they had considered suicide in the immediate aftermath of verbal abuse, which often represented the culmination of years of mistreatment.

At the time, only cisgendered women could be legally considered rape victims, but a case was filed nonetheless against Jelay's uncle. During the court hearing, both the local community and the judge were alleged to have commented on the presumed role Jelay's own identity as a transgender girl played in the assault. According to Jelay:

When my mother came home [after the attack], I had a lot of blood here [indicating his buttocks], and ... my mother and my uncle and his wife [argued, saying], 'She is a *bakla* she probably flirted and asked for it.' It was brought to court because I was a minor that time, and [my uncle] was sent to prison until now...

There was a hearing, and of course people from both sides came [to court]. His side of the family, they were saying things like, 'Because she's *bakla*, maybe she flirted with the guy.' ... The judge questioned me; he thought maybe I was showing motives for the guy ... Then

our lawyer asked how can I show motive when I was so young and didn't know much about those things... I think we had two hearings.

Anne, a bisexual woman, said her former male partner used physical and sexual assault as a means of denigrating her sexual orientation:

[It happened] a few times. I denied it because it is one of the justifications he had in beating me, so I totally denied it after. But he wouldn't believe me [referring to her sexual orientation]. He even humiliated me also because of that... Because I think he found it intimidating, that's what he said anyway. "What can you find in those women?"

Many people in the transgender community advise against working in typecast occupations, suggesting instead that transgender people take up corporate work or enter political office to avoid discrimination and abuse. However, one transgender woman who worked as a village official found that her position offered her no protection from a colleague's sexual advances.

Lei, transgender respondent:

... we were talking, then he said, 'You are very ... Kap³⁶ ... Your hands are a bit unbecoming. We're just going to look at your [breasts] ...' I've heard from other *kagawads* (village officers) who are with me that he brags that he was able to mash my breasts.

Transgender women in our research also reported being subject to physical and sexual violence at the hands of strangers or acquaintances, which included unwanted touching of the body, forced sexual acts, humiliation and the inflicting of pain.

36 Kap is a colloquial honorary title, the abbreviated form of capitan de barangay (village captain).

Candy, transgender respondent:

Men who hang out at [street] corners, they touch me. They ask me while doing that, ‘Do I have a vagina yet?’ I tell them, ‘None yet, just wait and we’ll get there.’

Svetlana, transgender respondent:

There was this guy [from out of nowhere] forcing me to have sex with him. I told him I can’t, I made all the excuses – No, no, no, am so tired, I have boyfriend. Suddenly I told him, [I] am sick, I have STD ... he grab me somewhere in the dark, push me, like do something about it, do something very sexual like... I was able to escape.

Madelene is a transgender rape survivor, and was able to put her abuse in a social context, lamenting the fact that she was considered a slave, a toy, the recipient of punishment, a worthless sex object, a used object, a nothing:

My hands were tied behind my back and I was stripped of my clothes. Good thing I was able to escape... it was just ‘attempted’ [rape], I mean... like you’re a sex slave; [a] play toy. It is tolerable men to have sex with a transgender because [the perpetrator is] still a man and it is [the transgender women’s] punishment because he’s making himself a woman. Punishment ... look, you’re dressed like a woman so I’ll have sex with you ... It is like we’re just being used because we do not have worth. You’re a sexual object. You are used, and after that you are nothing.

MANIFESTATIONS OF DISCRIMINATION

Discrimination in Schools

Some teachers appeared to impose their own personal values and used institutional rules to suppress people’s gender expression, including giving students lower grades than they deserved.

Lesbian respondent Kel:

... she [my high school teacher] said ... I should behave accordingly and not like the way I’m behaving now... I had some crushes, too; she didn’t like it... that’s why she’s involving my grades.

Many of the LBT women interviewed said they felt pressured to alter their preferred gender expression while at school and while wearing school uniforms. They reported that some officials explicitly sought to change their behavior. Transgender woman, Madelene, said:

You get to talk with the disciplinarian. They act like, ‘Why are you being disciplined?’ [I said] because of what I wore, sir. ‘What are you wearing?’ Women’s clothes. ‘Why are you wearing a woman’s clothes? You’re a man. Don’t you know that it is a sin... because you are born as a man? God never made man as a woman.’ They really let you feel guilty so that you revert back to be like that.

One school tasked health workers with determining the sexual orientation and gender identity of particular students who had been singled out for attention. Stef, transgender respondent said:

... they [counselors] were trying to rehabilitate us. ... I think it was Grade 6 ... All of us, gays in the whole batch...



We were sent to the guidance counselor. Slowly we were asked about how we feel. Were we girls? Boys? Who do we idolize? What do we do? Do we think it was proper? ... [Our] parents were summoned and told that their son is gay.

Discrimination in the Workplace

LBT women also face discrimination when applying for jobs, and are often denied employment despite being better educated and having either equal or better qualifications than other applicants. They are either told upfront the reasons for their being unsuccessful or are left to speculate on the reasons for being denied a job.

Del, transgender respondent:

It's like when I applied at that company, which was a call center; they told me, 'Sorry, we don't take cross-dressers.' So I was hurt, because it's like, I came all this way for nothing.

Cindy, transgender respondent:

I immediately applied... my resume was returned [with a note that] said, 'Can you just think this over first if you are really for this job?'

Discrimination in Healthcare and Service Institutions

The transgender women interviewed for our study reported being pointedly ignored when they sought health care. Some were refused service and referrals, largely on the basis of religious bias. After being punched in the face following a petty quarrel, Princess, a transgender woman, went to the hospital, accompanied by a friend, to seek medical care and was ignored. She said:

...they [health workers] were laughing at us; [there was] blood all over my face, [but] they just ignored us. No one in the hospital approached us. But if they see a straight guy and girl, they will immediately assist them, but if they see an injured trans, they will just ignore you.

Health-care workers passed judgment on transgender women even if the women simply accompanied someone else to a medical facility or volunteered to donate blood. Transgender woman Seanel recalled helping her mother visit her doctor:

I said, good evening, Doc. He looks shocked that I have a big voice ... 'What are you?' ... he keeps on asking me, 'Why are you like that?' In the first place, we went there for my mom, [he was not supposed] to criticize or interrogate me for what I am... 'Why are you like that? Do your mom and dad allow you to be like that?'

Some lesbian respondents recalled being forced to undergo psychiatric analysis without prior consent during their childhood or following a domestic dispute. Robyn, a lesbian, attempted suicide when she was fifteen after a failed relationship. Her mother took her on a trip to Manila without telling her the purpose:

I didn't know I was to meet the doctor, so for me it was like I was betrayed... Only later did I learn I was to meet [the doctor, and she] wasn't that helpful [She said:] 'Why did you attempt suicide? Was it because of a guy? Because of a girl?' ... She said, 'You can't accept that you are a tomboy,' that was her choice of word. That time it felt very big, not for someone young like me.

ANGEL

Angel (pseudonym) is 42 years old and identifies as a lesbian, or in her local language, a dong. She was born in Davao City while her parents are from Leyte and Samar in the Visayas. She completed a BS Agriculture degree and worked as a government employee for four years before venturing into business. Her entrepreneurial spirit led her to open an Internet cafe and bar. She also rented out videoke [karaoke] machines when they were a popular fad.

Angel began having crushes on girls while in high school, but she kept denying these feelings. She suppressed her feelings for a long time because she disliked the idea of becoming a lesbian. Her fear of being taunted kept her from telling her close lesbian friend about her feelings. Instead she sought refuge in God, with whom she shared her innermost feelings. At that time, she prayed hard not to be a lesbian. When she was in college, Angel started opening up to other people about her attraction to girls, but she remained guarded and kept it from her family. She was masculine in character and was not open to her family about her same-sex relations because of their Catholic background; her mother and siblings were active in church. When she was younger, she hated wearing skirts. Her mother and sister usually dragged her to the department store and bought her skirts and feminine clothes, even though she did not wear any of them.

At the age of 24, having waited until she was old enough, she fully accepted her own identity as a dong and entered into a relationship with a woman. She did not have any plans to live with a woman at that point, at least not until her family learned about the relationship.

She was 32 years old when her family discovered her relationship. It was both a happy and sad event – happy because it liberated her but sad because her family was angry with her. They rejected the relationship and

became very angry with her, particularly her sister and brother. Her sister accused her of being immoral and of not wanting her children (Angel's nephews and nieces) to witness her immorality. Her brother said that he might kill her. At the height of his rejection, he took out a gun and shot their pet dog. Angel was forced to run away without a single peso in her pocket and live with her girlfriend and girlfriend's family. She did not want to leave her family because they were important to her but these circumstances led her to start a life of her own with her girlfriend. Angel worked at different odd jobs to survive and to supplement the income from their small sari-sari [mom-and-pop] store. She began a family of her own, and together with her partner raised a daughter.

Angel continues to go through the demands of everyday life as a dong. Her masculine appearance means she often encounters banter in female toilets or quizzical looks when she accesses health-care services. She is taunted for being a butch dong. But for her, the most difficult part is her family's rejection. She finds it difficult when it is her family who is her adversary. She has spent the past eight years striving to show her family that she can make it on her own without asking for their help. She acknowledges that she is not immoral; she still prays and considers herself a child of God no matter what.

Recently, Angel broke up with her live-in partner and now lives alone. Her daughter is now under the care of her aunt. For a long time her brother tried to initiate dialogue with her, but Angel rejected his efforts until recently. Now reconciliation with her family has begun. She looks forward to a liberated, happy and empowered life ahead.

Restricted Access to Public Facilities

Many of the LBT women we interviewed recalled being physically barred from entering a public space or being compelled to leave after they had entered. This was particularly evident in relation to transgender women being denied access to women's areas in gender-segregated washrooms and trains with special carriages designated for females and parents with young children. Svetlana, transgender respondent:

Well, one time I was not allowed to stay in the female section in the LRT (Light Railway Transit) ... also in public toilets, sometimes I do get a lot like, 'You go to the male area.'

In order to avoid humiliation, some of the transgender women interviewed said they would try to gain access to toilets when no one was looking, use gender-neutral toilets or simply avoid using public toilets altogether. Mae, transgender respondent, said:

I had a dialogue with the HR [human resources] manager. He told me that ... there are other female employees that are not comfortable [with me using the women's room] and [they] would complain about ... transgender female in the female lounge.

State Discrimination

Most of the transgender women we interviewed had experienced harassment and discrimination when they applied for passports and other documents for international travel. The offenders were usually processing officers at Department of Foreign Affairs offices.

Transgender woman Madelene:

I was already hungry because I was there as early as 6am, or maybe 5am. Then,

when you reach the end of your queue, they would delay you because you're a woman, but when they see your gender, male... [they say] 'Oh, it's really necessary, ma'am, because we have a memorandum... that transgenders should look like men in their passport photo.'

Police officers and members of the military were also responsible for harassing, bullying and ridiculing transgender women. In some instances, respondents said they were arbitrarily detained, and asked or ordered to provide sexual favors. They said desk officers often neglected or taunted them. Alyssa, a transgender respondent, said

... when I go to government agencies, I could feel sometimes the government employee ... will make fun of you... I can see them laughing in front of me... Kind of weird you're in the government, you should be acting like a good person serving the public, but instead you're making fun of the people.

IMPACT OF VIOLENCE AND DISCRIMINATION

The LBT women interviewed for this research project said their experiences with discrimination and violence had psychological consequences, including sadness, clinical depression, fear of rejection, fear of relationships, self-doubt, self-blame and resignation. Some respondents also reported anger, paranoia, aggressiveness towards themselves and their partners, and a heightened sense of combativeness.

Kel, lesbian respondent:

It's like, 'Why is it like this? Why is this happening to me? Why do I have to go through all of these? Am I being punished?'

Svetlana, transgender woman:

I learn to be more careful ... paranoid

about things, and oftentimes I get more prejudgment. Sometimes I prefer to stay home rather than go out.

Several respondents said they had considered suicide in the immediate aftermath of verbal abuse, which often represented the culmination of years of mistreatment. Stef, a 24-year-old transgender woman, said:

My mom scolded me again that time, I don't know about what, but it is connected with my being gay. I kept on crying on the stairs. I got a knife and attempted to cut my wrist.

Vanessa, a 61-year-old transgender woman, said the violence she had faced at home had led her to drop out of school early. She said her lack of education had seriously impacted her ability to be financially independent later in life:

I didn't finish my studies because I was battered by my brothers. They didn't want me to be transgender/effeminate gay.

Grace, a 21-year-old lesbian graphic artist, said that repeated attacks by co-workers had impacted her performance at work:

It's like I have moments that I would just stare off, I couldn't work. It's like I keep on questioning, 'Is my drawing alright?' They [co-workers] really damaged my confidence as an artist. So it was not just about the workplace anymore, it was on a personal level.

One respondent said she vowed to overcome adversity and use her experiences with workplace discrimination to fight for equality for other LBT people. Rain, a transgender woman who works as a recruitment officer in a call center said:

As recruitment personnel myself, I always make sure that I am sensitive. I uphold equality and think about what I do because I know that I can do better compared to the HR personnel [who discriminated against me] before.

COPING METHODS AND LBT RESILIENCE

Community support was often lacking or absent for LBT women. Law enforcement also failed to intervene when there was violence.

Anne, a bisexual woman was in a physically abusive marriage for a year:

I remember there was a time and he [my husband] was beating me ... I could see the neighbors outside. Can you imagine neighbors and police outside? And nobody would get in. The police said they could not interfere because it was a domestic problem. So they were outside but they wouldn't help.

Jason, a 21-year-old transgender woman, felt it was preferable not to rely on people from outside the LBT community in overcoming discrimination:

Maybe it can help, but in my opinion we should fight our own battles and not depend on others.

Many LBT people we interviewed said they relied on inner fortitude and support from friends to cope. Some respondents said they received their first tangible support and advice from school guidance counselors or class advisers. Grace, a lesbian graphic artist, said that one of her teachers had recommended that she not come out to her parents until much later in life:

A teacher advised me; she said, 'Don't tell them yet because you'll never know what your parents are going to do. You are still studying. Take my advice,' she said. "You tell them once you have a job of your own and you're living on your own."

Krizia, a lesbian, said she provided support to another gay friend who was experiencing violence:

I tell him that it's alright, that he's still

young, that he'll still have more relationships than he expected.

For some LBT respondents, banding together proved an effective strategy, particularly when negotiating discriminatory policies. Transgender woman Stef said a united front had enabled her and her transgender peers to reach an agreement with school authorities on a mutually acceptable policy on hair length. She said:

We asked the dean if we could compromise since we've worn our hair long for sometime already ...there was an agreement that when we go to school, we have to tie our hair so it won't show.

Broader mobilization has also proven effective. One transgender woman, Svetlana, used the Internet to raise awareness about a series of unexplained drive-by shootings targeting the transgender community and reach out to LGBT rights groups for support. She posted a note on her Facebook wall about the pellet-gun shootings victimizing her friends. 'It spread all over LGBT groups in the country and they did do something about it,' she said.³⁷

Others said they were actively working to change both attitudes and policy. Mae, a transgender respondent, went to the human resources manager at her workplace and raised the issue of toilet access for transgender employees. "So what he [the manager] did, he converted the handicapped CR [comfort room/toilet], the one that is for handicapped people," she said.

LBT women working in government agencies and NGOs generally have a working knowledge of the laws and policies mandating state agencies and NGOs to protect LBT people from discrimination. However, it appeared from our interviews that this knowledge was not passed along to the general LBT community. The majority of respondents

had no knowledge of which institutions they could approach to make a formal complaint of discrimination. Some respondents learned this information later in life, often years after their initial experiences with discrimination. Only a small number of the LBT women interviewed believed there was strength in numbers and looked ahead to how they might best support those most marginalized in their community, such as older LBT persons. Charlie, a transgender respondent, said:

I'm planning for old gays because here I have old gay friends and I have some old bisexual friends here, and you know some of them are abandoned by their family, so in my little way I am trying to help them.

NGOs that provide support for LBT women have emerged in recent years, inspiring the younger generation to consider careers in service provision, in particular counseling, where they transform their personal experiences into support for others. Madalene, a transgender respondent, said:

We're not that trained to give counsel, but... we are support for counseling ... we give good advice ... [F]or me, most of the concerns of the counselor is with the [gender] transition. So what they always ask is, 'Is this healthy? ...Is this hormones? ...Is this good?' We just base it on our experience.

Some respondents also reported that they had successfully coordinated with government agencies to bring about positive change. Pol, a transgender woman based in Bacolod City, said she had contacted the government official responsible for gender and development. "She was the previous chairperson for gender and development. She authored a manual on protecting LGBTs from discrimination," Pol said.

Despite the prevalence of discrimination and violence, some of the LBT women we interviewed reported having positive life experiences, at times with support from unexpected sources and in surprising situations. Agnes a 26-year-old lesbian, recalled driving around one

37 "Pellet Gun Attacks and Hate Crimes," *God Antifornicator*, accessed February 13, 2013, <http://antifornicator.com/pellet-gun-attacks-and-hate-crimes>.



Photo: Still from "Courage Unfolds" video, IGLHRC, 2011

day with her high school group, three girls who were devout Christians:

Then we were in a car, I told Ruth... I am bothered since it's considered a sin... Her response was really, really unexpected. She said, 'You know our God is a just God. He will not punish you or send you to hell because you're a lesbian. He or she will judge you depending on what you did with your life. So don't worry.'

Two transgender women said they were lucky to have grown up in supportive environments. Randy, a transgender respondent, said:

Where I come from, people liked me. I was this jolly kid that everyone liked. Some were even pointing out that they wanted to have a child somewhat like

me. Because, you know, back there I was the only effeminate child in the neighborhood. I think they were envious seeing a child who liked dancing and singing in town fiestas.

Sugarli, transgender respondent:

[Discrimination] never happened because our principal is very supportive and they find me very productive because I always help, especially those, in programs in school.

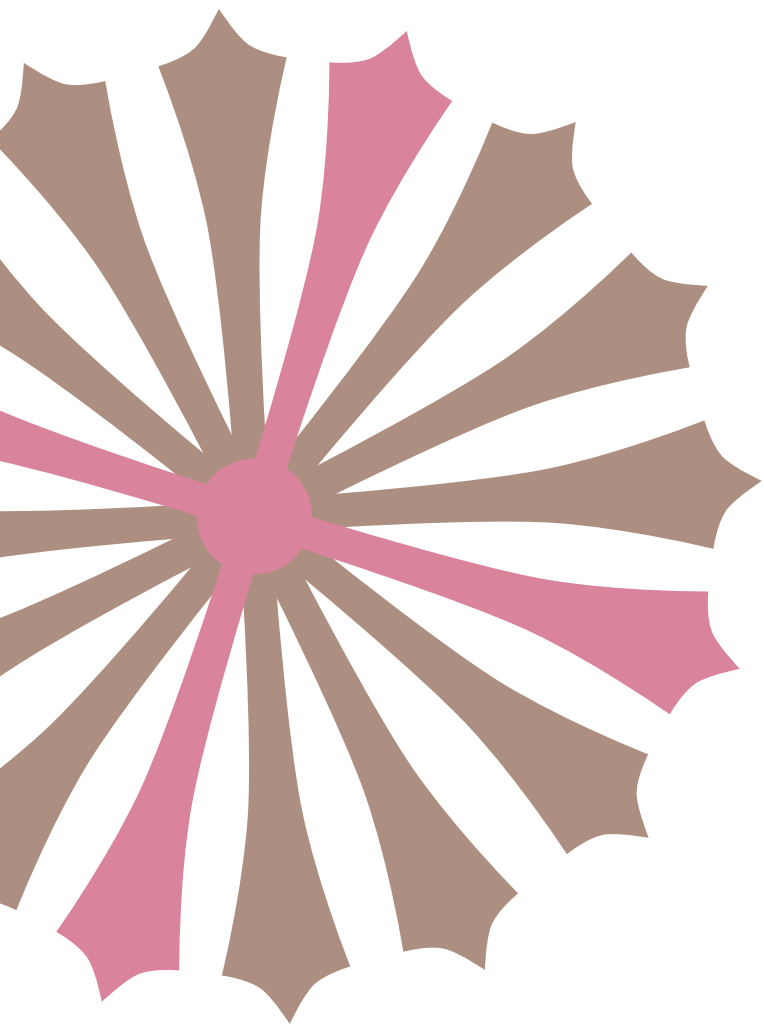
Raycee, a transgender woman who works as a freelance researcher, had a positive experience with the Department of Foreign Affairs:

I went to the DFA to renew my passport, and then a certain man interviewed me,

asked what do I want to put [as] my gender. He typed female, and then I corrected him, that can you please put male instead so that I would not have [a] problem when I go out the country. I felt very happy because he put female in my passport as my gender - that's so nice.

Many respondents said that they had been unaffected by the taunts directed at them and were able to rise above feelings of negativity. Raycee, a transgender respondent, said:

When I was younger, they [people in general] sometimes call me bakla, but then I don't really mind them, because after all they are not the one who put food on my table. Why should I mind them? It doesn't make me a lesser person if they told me that, and I don't mind them at all.



PHILIPPINES LAWS AND LBT PEOPLE

The Philippines was under Spanish rule for more than three centuries, during which time Spanish laws were enacted, including the criminalization of “sodomy.” According to one historical account, the ruling Spanish Royal Audencia in 1599 issued an ordinance targeting Chinese traders who were deemed to have introduced “sodomy” among the male and female indigenous Filipinos of Manila. Under the ordinance, “sodomy” was punishable by burning at the stake and confiscation of property.³⁸

In 1822, when the Napoleonic Code was adopted in Spain, the colonial government adhered to the legislative changes made under the new and more liberal regime, which remained in place after the conservatives regained power.³⁹ Indeed, in modern times, the word “sodomy” only reappeared in Philippine law in 1995, when sodomy was listed as one of a number of prohibited acts or “elements” related to the initiation rites of fraternities under an anti-hazing law (RA 8049).⁴⁰ Outside of the crime of hazing, sodomy is not criminalized.

Following Spain's ceding of the Philippines to the United States in 1898, a Revised Penal Code (RPC) was passed by the Philippine Assembly in 1932. It did not criminalize same-sex activities, homosexuality or transgenderism. However, certain provisions described in detail in the following paragraphs have been the basis for the State to target LGBT people. One of the provisions of the **RPC is Article 202 which defines vagrancy as:**

38 Ambeth Ocampo, “Sodomy in old laws and dictionaries,” *Philippine Daily Inquirer* (November 10, 2010), accessed October 28, 2012, <http://opinion.inquirer.net/inquireropinion/columns/view/20101110-302397/Sodomy-in-old-laws-and-dictionaries>.

39 Douglas Sanders, “377 and the Unnatural Afterlife of British Colonialism in Asia,” *Asian Journal of Comparative Law*, (Vol. 4, Issue 1, Article, 7, 2009), 22.

40 Republic Act No. 8049 [Anti-Hazing Law], *Philippine Laws, Statute and Codes*, Chan Robles Virtual Law Library, accessed October 28, 2012, <http://www.chanrobles.com/antihazinglaw.htm>.

1. “Any person having no apparent means of subsistence, who has the physical ability to work and who neglects to apply himself or herself to some lawful calling”;
2. “Any person found loitering about public or semi-public buildings or places or trampling or wandering about the country or the streets without visible means of support”;
3. “Any idle or dissolute person who ledges in houses of ill fame; ruffians or pimps and those who habitually associate with prostitutes,” and
4. “Any person who, not being included in the provisions of other articles of this Code, shall be found loitering in any inhabited or uninhabited place belonging to another without any lawful or justifiable purpose”.⁴¹

Article 202 also defines “prostitutes” as “women who, for money or profit, habitually indulge in sexual intercourse or lascivious conduct.”⁴² This Article is often used as basis for the arrest of gay men and transgender women for vagrancy. However, despite the frequency of arrests made on this basis nationwide,⁴³ to our knowledge few formal complaints were lodged, next to no investigations were undertaken, and no convictions were made. It would therefore appear that the arrests were acts of harassment rather than an enforcement of the law. In 2012, Congress repealed the vagrancy portion of the law but retained the criminalization of prostitution for women only.⁴⁴ It is hence too soon to

41 An Act Revising the Penal Code and Other Penal Laws, The Revised Penal Code of the Philippines, accessed February 15, 2013, http://www.un.org/Depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDFFILES/PHL_revised_penal_code.pdf.

42 *An Act Revising the Penal Code and Other Penal Laws, The Revised Penal Code of the Philippines*, accessed February 15, 2013, viewed February 15 2013, http://www.un.org/Depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDFFILES/PHL_revised_penal_code.pdf.

43 Christopher Mendoza, “BSTPO Collars five lady boys and two commercial sex workers,” *Boracay Sun Newspaper*, 2012, accessed October 29, 2012. <http://boracaylive.com/news/bstpo-collars-five-lady-boys>.

44 Republic Act No. 10158 (An Act Decriminalizing Vagrancy, Amending for this Purpose Article 202 of Act No. 3815, as

determine the impact this is having on gay men and transgender people.

Articles 336 (acts of lasciviousness) and **Article 340 (corruption of minors)** of the RPC have been the provisions most frequently used as a pretext to arrest, detain, charge, convict and sentence transgender women and bakla who have been found guilty of having sexual contact with a male. After rape was redefined in 1997 to include acts of sexual assault against men, RA 8353 or the Anti-Rape Law⁴⁵ became the preferred tool used against bakla, and transgender women, who under Philippine law are still considered male.

Article 200 defines a **grave scandal** as one committed by “any person who shall offend against decency or good customs by any highly scandalous conduct not expressly falling within any other article of this Code.”⁴⁶ This vaguely defined provision is also used as basis for conducting raids of bars and saunas frequented by gay males.

Article 201 under the “**Offenses Against Decency and Good Customs**” provision which prohibits “immoral doctrines, obscene publications and exhibitions and indecent shows”⁴⁷ is used as a pretext to conduct searches of leisure establishments for the presence of pornographic material or proof of stripping or theatrical displays of sexual intercourse.⁴⁸

amended, otherwise known as the Revised Penal Code), Republic of the Philippines, Congress of the Philippines, July 25, 2011, accessed October 28, 2012, <http://www.gov.ph/2012/03/27/republic-act-no-10158>.

45 Republic Act No. 8353 [The Anti-Rape Law of 1997], *Philippine Laws, Statute and Codes*, Chan Robles Virtual Law Library, accessed October 29, 2012, <http://www.chanrobles.com/republicactno8353.htm>.

46 An Act Revising the Penal Code and Other Penal Laws, The Revised Penal Code of the Philippines, accessed February 15, 2013, http://www.un.org/Depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDFFILES/PHL_revised_penal_code.pdf.

47 An Act Revising the Penal Code and Other Penal Laws, The Revised Penal Code of the Philippines, accessed February 15, 2013, http://www.un.org/Depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDFFILES/PHL_revised_penal_code.pdf.

48 “Human Rights Violations on the Basis of Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Homosexuality in the Philippines, A Coalition Report,”

Under “**Crimes Against Liberty, Article 267** on “**Kidnapping And Serious Illegal Detention**”⁴⁹ has been used to charge lesbians and transgender men with abduction and kidnapping, which generally occurs when the parents of daughters who have eloped with their lesbian or male transgender partners call on police to threaten the couple and attempt to force them to separate.

The Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003 defines trafficking of persons as including the exploitation or prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation. This law has been used to justify surprise searches of establishments frequented by transgender women and bakla in order to obtain evidence of transactional sex, which is punishable by law. However, it would appear that the raids are designed to harass and extort patrons and staff, who are subsequently arrested on charges related to trafficking, then invariably released with no formal charges against them.⁵⁰

Legal Protections for LBT People

While there is no national anti-discrimination law that provides protection for LGBT people on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, there are some cities that have enacted or are in the process of enacting local ordinances for that purpose. Among the local governments that have enacted local ordinances are Cebu City on October 17, 2012, and Davao City on December 12, 2012.⁵¹ In 2002,

Quezon City passed an ordinance protecting LGBT people from discrimination in the workplace.

The Family Code of the Philippines (Executive Order No. 209, July 6, 1987) defines marriage as a union between a man and a woman; hence marriage is not legally permissible between two men or two women.⁵² Additionally, bills have been proposed to allow marriages only for “natural-born” men and women to prevent transgender people from marrying their partners.^{53,54} In any event, there is no law covering gender recognition that would allow transgender people to change their legal documents to reflect the gender with which they identify.

Transgender and lesbian students also find it difficult to assert their right to gender expression in the choice of either the male or female school uniforms worn at both public and private schools. The schools rely on the Education Act of 1982 to determine internal policies governing student behavior, irrespective of the discriminatory nature of some of those policies.⁵⁵

International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (IGLHRC), October 2012, accessed October 29, 2012, http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrc/docs/ngos/IGLHRC_Philippines_HRC106.pdf.

- 49 An Act Revising the Penal Code and Other Penal Laws, The Revised Penal Code of the Philippines, accessed February 15, 2013, http://www.un.org/Depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDFFILES/PHL_revised_penal_code.pdf.
- 50 Oscar Atadero, “Opening communication lines with fingers crossed,” *Outrage Magazine*, July 27, 2012, accessed October 25, 2012, <http://outragemag.com/online/opening-communication-lines-with-fingers-crossed>.
- 51 Paolo Romero, “Gays, lesbians press for passage of anti-discrimination law,” *Philippine Star*, May 17, 2011, accessed October 25, 2012, <http://www.philstar.com/Article>.

[aspx?articleId=686831&publicationSubCategoryId=](http://www.sunstar.com.ph/breaking-news/2012/10/18/passage-cebus-anti-discrimination-law-lauded-248601), “Passage of Cebu’s anti-discrimination law lauded, Sun Star, October 18, 2012, accessed February 16, 2013, <http://www.sunstar.com.ph/breaking-news/2012/10/18/passage-cebus-anti-discrimination-law-lauded-248601>.

- 52 Amita Legaspi, “Palace on same-sex marriage: Up to Congress,” *Philippine Headline News Online*, May 11, 2012, accessed October 25, 2012, <http://www.newsflash.org/2004/02/hl/hl111803.htm>.
- 53 “Philippines: Defend Transgender Rights,” International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (IGLHRC), August 30, 2001, accessed October 30, 2012, <http://www.iglhrc.org/cgi-bin/iowa/article/takeaction/resourcecenter/724.html>.
- 54 Philippines: Proposed Marriage Legislation In Senate Discriminates Against Homosexuals And Transgenders,” International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (IGLHRC), February 10, 1999, accessed October 30, 2012, <http://www.iglhrc.org/cgi-bin/iowa/article/takeaction/partners/142.html>.
- 55 Batas Pambansa Bilang 232 [Education Act of 1982], *Philippine Laws, Statute and Codes*. Chan Robles Virtual Law Library, accessed October 30, 2012, <http://www.chanrobles.com/bataspambansabilang232.htm>.

Stakeholder Responses

In consideration of the legal landscape for LBT people in the Philippines, we asked representatives from state agencies to respond to the violence and discrimination that LBT people are facing.

The executive director of the Presidential Human Rights Committee (PHRC) signaled that proactive steps were being taken: “Right now we are taking certain steps to present to the President that there are pressing human rights issues in the LGBT community. That is why we are engaging many CSOs ... to touch base and get to know [their] demands and concerns; that is, to identify the affirmative action that must be done for them.” The PHRC is in charge of ensuring proper implementation of UN human rights conventions by the three branches of government. At the time the interview was conducted, the PHRC had conducted several meetings with LGBT advocacy groups.⁵⁶

Representatives from other executive agencies who we interviewed for this study, such as the National Commission for Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), the Population Institute (PI), and the Philippine Commission for Women (PCW) did not elaborate programmatic steps towards addressing SOGIE-related issues, but said their programs were open to everyone, regardless of SOGIE. All three echoed the view that domestic violence laws could cover LBT people. The PCW and NCIP said agency directives were decided on a top-down basis, and that the organizational culture allowed for only very gradual change. The PI conducts minimal policy work and has no service programs that could impact the welfare of LBT people.

Two other stakeholder respondents were elected legislators – one from local government and one from national government. The first, a member of the Cebu Provincial Board, had filed a local anti-discrimination ordinance as an action to support

the welfare of people with disabilities, with the aim of making them “productive members of community.” While championing the rights of LGBT people, this stakeholder had a minimal understanding of sexual orientation and gender identity and the concerns of LBT women, which highlights the need for more engagement with LBT CSOs.

The other stakeholder respondent, a Congressman from the House of Representatives with a strong human rights background, had filed an anti-discrimination bill that he felt, in retrospect, was insufficient. He said, “There will be a need for a more comprehensive and a more all-encompassing bill like the CEDAW [Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women) or the framework of the CEDAW, for LGBTs.”

He also said that the executive branch had more powers than the legislative branch to address SOGIE [sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression] rights. A representative from the Philippines Commission on Human Rights, who served as its ombudsman and capacity-builder, signaled the agency’s readiness to go beyond available laws, and apply all UN instruments, such as the CEDAW and the Yogyakarta Principles,⁵⁷ in order to hold the government accountable to its human rights obligations to LBT people.

While many of these initiatives are outwardly positive, there are to date no specific government-agency service provisions that address the gender-specific needs of LGBT people. When asked if agency offices have specific programs in place or targeted orientation for LGBT clients, the government-agency representatives interviewed for this study uniformly said that LGBT people could avail themselves of all their general programs and that no one was discriminated against in service provision. This assertion was contradicted by our research.

56 Samar News, “Malacañang hosts historic LGBT rights confab,” *Samar News*, December 12, 2011, accessed February 13, 2013, <http://www.samarnews.com/news2011/dec/b421.htm>.

57 Yogyakarta Principles are a set of international principles relating to sexual orientation and gender identity. See more at <http://www.yogyakartaprinciples.org/>.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to overcome the human rights violations taking place against LBT women in the Philippines, as highlighted in this report, the Rainbow Rights Project recommends the following actions:

GOVERNMENT

The Philippines Congress must:

- Institute a multi-level and nationally supported policy of non-discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression.

The Executive Office of government must:

- Declare a national policy on sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and gender recognition.
- Convene interdepartmental conferences focusing on state policy and ensure inclusion of LBT issues in the official policies and annual planning of national agencies, including: the Departments of Health, Labor, Foreign Affairs, Education, National Defense, Justice and Interior and Local Government; the Philippine Commission on Women; and the Offices of the President.

The Executive Office must:

- Set up pilot structures within state mechanisms to provide resource support for victims and survivors, by: establishing LBT women's community centers; and restructuring existing State mechanisms to accommodate LBT women, such as the establishment of a women's and children's desk within the Philippine National Police and domestic violence desks at public hospitals.

The Legislature must:

- Amend legislation for women to explicitly include sexual orientation, gender identity and expression as well as review and repeal all legislation that discriminates against LBT people. For example, the anti-trafficking and vagrancy laws and laws that limit marriage to different-sex couples should be reviewed and repealed.

The Judiciary must:

- Review Supreme Court jurisprudence to address unequal rulings.

CIVIL SOCIETY

The National Commission on Human Rights must:

- Improve monitoring human rights violations taking place against LBT women;
- Submit and disseminate official reports; and
- Investigate and present its findings on the incidence of violence against LBT women to government and intergovernmental agencies.

The donor community and funding institutions must:

- Provide resources to establish training and counseling programs for LBT women;
- Fund meetings and conferences that address issues facing LBT women;

- Provide assistance and resources for volunteer groups and NGOs that are already providing legal, medical and counseling services for LBT women; and
- Support more research to better understand the situation of LBT women.

Human rights organizations in the Philippines must:

- Establish links with different advocacy groups, including those advocating for LBT rights;
- Identify and build the capacity of LBT organizations at the grassroots level to strengthen their advocacy for LBT people;
- Organize targeted anti-violence campaigns around sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression; and promote services sensitive to the needs of LBT women, specifically health-care support.

APPENDIX A: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

“**Bakla**” is the most used and most memorable term to denote Philippine queer identity in recent recorded history. *Bakla* denotes the hybrid classification that covers and conflates gender identity and sexual orientation. It is also frequently used as an epithet in political and social discourse to evoke the concepts of cowardice, flightiness, shallowness, incompleteness or conflicting ideas. Other slang terms that are largely similar to *bakla* include the following: *Badaf* (contraction of “*babaedapat*” or “should have been a girl,” and later became *Bading*); *Sward*; *Syoke*; and Third Sex. In the Visayas, the equivalents are *Bayot* (Cebuano for “Woman with a Penis”) and *Agi* (Hiligaynon). There are other terms that became popular and later disappeared or became rarely used: *Talyada*, *Sirena*, *Darna*, *Myla*.

Filipino is the prevalent language used in the Philippines aside from English. Filipino is based largely on the Tagalog language with many borrowed terms from Spanish and English. Many of the respondents in this research used Tagalog-based Filipino and English in Luzon, Cebuano, and *Hiligaynon* in the Visayas while a small number were conducted Cebuano and in minority languages such as *Tausug* in Mindanao.

Gender Expression comprises the set of external characteristics and behaviors one projects in portraying one’s gender identity, which includes dress, mannerisms, speech patterns, physical characteristics, and other acts. Gender expression may or may not conform to norms and stereotypes (Rose, 2003).

Gender Identity is the inner conceptual sense of self as “man”, “woman” or other, as divorced from issues like gender expression, sexual orientation, or physiological sex. It is a subtle and abstract, but extremely powerful, sense of who you *are*, in terms of gender, independent of how you dress, behave, what your interests are, who you’re attracted to, etc. (Reed, n.d.)

LGBT is the acronym for Lesbians, Gays, Bisexual and Transgenders. This term is used to represent non-heteronormative individuals and is slowly gaining ground because of the increasing frequency of activist discourse in mass media.

Sexual Orientation refers to a person’s capacity for profound emotional, affectional and sexual attraction to, and intimate and sexual relations with, individuals of a different gender or the same gender or more than one gender. (Yogyakarta Principles)

Media, politicians and the general public predominantly use **Third Sex** when they refer to

LGBT, which is a source of frustration among modern activists. Despite monumental efforts expended by both activists and LGBT citizens in advocating for the urgent disuse of the term, the average *bakla* on the street would proclaim his/her proud membership of the Third Sex in pageants, TV appearances, and Facebook posts.

Tomboy is the historically predominant term produced by Philippine culture to describe what the public sees as masculine women and also, but less often, to describe women who identify as lesbians. In some ways, the development of the tomboy concept shares similar linguistic meanings and developments as the term *bakla*. Tomboy tends to conflate and hybridize the identities of butch lesbians, FTM transsexuals, and heterosexual women who act butch. Because the idea of feminine lesbians did not have traction in the Filipino psyche in the 20th century, they probably were not included in the tomboy classification unless one's orientation was disclosed to the public. Other terms are *tibo*, *tiboli*, *tibam*, *pars*, soft butch, and hard butch for the butch lesbians and *mars*, femme, and lipstick lesbians for the femme lesbians.

Transpinay means a female human being of Philippine descent who was given a male sex assignment at birth. The Society of Transsexual Women of the Philippines (STRAP) launched the term during the 2008 Manila Pride March. It is a combination of the words transsexual, someone whose gender identity is directly opposite of his/her sex assignment at birth, and *Pinay*, the local term for Filipina, a girl/woman from the Philippines.

APPENDIX B: METHODOLOGY

The Rainbow Rights Project, the project leader in the Philippines, created a country team composed of advocates and researchers sympathetic to the plight of lesbian, bisexual and transgender (LBT) women.

Members of the country team attended the first Asia Activist Institute, convened by IGLHRC from April 13-17, 2010 in Antipolo City, Philippines. The Institute was convened with the primary goal of building the capacity of activists from five Asian countries (Japan, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and the Philippines) to document violence against LBT women. It was during this institute that the objectives and methodology for this project were developed and the definition of violence, discrimination, identity and behavior were operationalized.

The country team, together with members of partner organizations, participated in a human rights documentation workshop on November 6, 2010 at the West Trade Center, Quezon City, Philippines, in preparation for this three-year nationwide documentation project. Professors Beatriz Torre and Eric Julian Manalastas of the Department of Psychology at the University of the Philippines facilitated the workshop, which included a discussion about data collection instruments and protocol. Mock interviews were also conducted to familiarize participants with data collection instruments and processes.

The country team partnered with four LBT organizations in the gathering of data collection from March 2011 to February 2012. Information was gathered from non-heteronormative women who had experienced discrimination and violence. The data-collection protocol included strict compliance with ethical considerations. The country team ensured that the target groups (lesbians, bisexual women and transgender women) and the three main island groups in the country (Luzon,

Visayas and Mindanao) were all represented. The majority of the LBT interviews involved transgender women (58%); about 29% involved lesbians and 9% bisexual women (see Table 1).

TABLE 1: DISTRIBUTION OF INTERVIEWS BY GROUP

GROUP	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE
Bisexual Women	5	8.5
Lesbians	17	28.8
Transgender Women	34	57.6
Others	3	5.1
Total	59	100.0

There was easy access to the network of transgender women, who were receptive to the call for interviews, which led to a greater proportion of transgender women being interviewed. The maximum number of interviews per group was also not set, which might have affected the final distribution of the interviews by group. The small representation of bisexual women interviewed can perhaps be attributed to them having less visibility in the country.

A significant proportion of the interviews were from Luzon (59%), about one-third was from the Visayas (34%), and about 7% were from Mindanao (see Table 2).

TABLE 2: DISTRIBUTION OF INTERVIEWS BY MAJOR ISLAND GROUPS

ISLAND	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Luzon	35	59.3
Visayas	20	33.9
Mindanao	4	6.8
Total	59	100.0

Geographic and financial constraints contributed to the lesser representation of Mindanao. The other interviews not included in the analysis were from Mindanao. Three LBT interviewees were categorized as “Others,” which included a transgender man, a lesbian group interview with three people from Mindanao, and a person who identified as male, all of which

were eventually not included in the analysis. These interviews breached research protocol, which said interviews should be conducted with only individual interviewees and with respondents who identified as women. The country team did not want to offend the sensibilities of transgender males; hence the interview with the transgender man was conducted but not included in the analysis of data from the pool of women-identified respondents. The LBT interviews were recorded and transcribed, and interviews conducted in local languages were translated into English.

Data collection on non-heteronormative women was conducted in tandem with the data collection on various stakeholders. Information from stakeholders was gathered to document the services and interventions they provide for LBT women, as well as their knowledge of, and attitudes towards, LBT women. It was also aimed at collecting information on the existing laws and policies on sexual orientation and gender identity/expression. Similar to the data collection on LBT women, part of the data collection protocol for stakeholders was to ensure representation from different types of stakeholders (including, but not limited to, civil society organizations, state sector representatives and medical/health providers) and from the three main island groups in the country (Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao).

More than a quarter (25%) of the 46 stakeholder interviews involved representatives from Coos, which included LGBT organizations, women’s groups, human rights NGOs and reproductive health advocates, 15% involved state sector representatives, including those from the legislative branch, national government agencies, human rights organizations and the state university. Medical and health providers comprised almost one-fifth (20%) of those interviewed and included psychiatrists, doctors, nurses and guidance counselors. A group of miscellaneous stakeholders (39%) included educators, religious leaders, employers and people working in the media (see Table 3). All interviews were recorded, transcribed and translated into English when required.

TABLE 3: DISTRIBUTION OF INTERVIEWS BY TYPE OF STAKEHOLDER

STAKEHOLDERS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Civil Society Organizations	12	26.1
State Sector Representatives	7	15.2
Medical/ Health Providers	9	19.6
Miscellaneous (e.g. educators, religious leaders, employers and media workers)	18	39.1
Total	46	100.0

Secondary data was also gathered from different libraries, resource centers and the Internet, and included news clippings, press releases, books and magazines. Secondary information on the experiences of LBT women, laws on sexual orientation and gender identity, available services and interventions and pro and anti-LBT women activities were used to provide context and to enrich the analysis.

The country team formed a seven -member group responsible for the processing and analysis of the collected data. This team took part in an online training on the processing of the LBT women interviews, which was conducted by representatives from IGLHRC and consultants from Strength in Numbers (SiNGC) on March 12, 2012. The training provided capacity building for the qualitative coding of data (including the creation of transcript summaries, the collection of common themes, and the definition of key qualitative terms and concepts). Common themes for the Philippine data were collected from the available transcripts and sent to IGLHRC for consolidation.

A total of 46 transcripts were sent to IGLHRC and SiNGC for data processing. Atlas.ti software was used to process the transcripts (see Table 4). Six interviews (three lesbians and three transgender women) were not processed because the data was not translated. The country team decided to exclude seven interviews that did not adhere to the data-collection protocol. The answers of respondents from four interviews were deemed to have been heavily influenced by the interviewers and other people who were present. As stated earlier, three interviews were either not from LBT women or were not one-on-one interviews.

Two members of the country team took part in an online training on the processing and analysis of data related to stakeholder interviews on April 26, 2012. The training was held to equip the team with the necessary skills to undertake stakeholder data analysis. A total of 46 stakeholder interviews (see Table 3) were processed and included in the analysis.

Lastly, members of the country team participated in the 2nd Asia Activist Institute, convened by IGLHRC on June 1-3, 2012, at Antipolo City, Philippines. Activists from Japan, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Philippines attended the Institute. The Institute provided an orientation on the coded data and demonstrated different data analysis techniques in preparation for the report-writing phase of the project.

TABLE 4: FREQUENCY OF INTERVIEWS BY DATA PROCESSING STATUS AND GROUP

GROUPS	PROCESSED	NOT PROCESSED	NOT INCLUDED	TOTAL
Bisexual Women	5	0	0	5
Lesbian	10	3	4	17
Transgender Women	31	3	0	34
Others	0	0	3	3
Total	46	6	7	59