

GALANG

PHILIPPINES

BUILDING COMMUNITY STRENGTH.
FUELING COMMUNITY GROWTH.

galang 
www.galangphilippines.org

2011



2011: A MILESTONE YEAR FOR GALANG

Since establishing GALANG as a non-stock, non-profit organization in 2008, we have considered ourselves to be part of three important movements at the local, national, regional, and global spheres – the LGBT/sexual rights movement, the women’s/feminist movement, and the broader social justice movement. And yet, all too often, our work with urban poor lesbians, bisexual women, and trans men (LBTs) has made us realize that GALANG is both at the center – the intersection – where these three movements meet, and at the fringes of each of these movements, all at the same time. In many ways, we have always felt that our struggle is situated at the margins of the margins of the margins.

“Humanist” activist allies ask why GALANG chooses to work on something as “bourgeois” as sexual rights when millions of Filipinos don’t have jobs or even have access to three square meals a day; but the truth is that poverty is an overwhelmingly female condition. Other feminists warn about the danger of working specifically with LBTs because it ostensibly focuses on difference rather than on sameness – we are, after all, all women. LGBT rights advocates would say that working on poverty is not “sexy” enough or that poverty should be a non-issue in the local sexual rights discourse, considering that poverty has almost always been a fact of life for many of our people; but we ask: why should a fact of life be invisibilized, rather than addressed?

Close to four years since we started this journey, we are happy and proud to say that our persistence and passion (easily mistaken for “obstinacy and sheer naiveté”) have finally started to bear fruit. In May 2011, GALANG celebrated the formation of the Lesbian Alliance Movement – Lakas ng Kababaihan para sa Karapatan (Strength of Women for their Rights), our first LBT people’s organization (LPO) partner in Quezon City. That, in addition to the positive changes we’ve observed among our many other grassroots partners, has inspired us to strive even harder to refine our model of evidence-based advocacy through LPO building. By starting where the people are, we have seen how many of our sisters struggle daily with and triumph over the multilayered oppression of urban poor LBTs in the Philippines – poverty, femaleness, refusal to adhere to imposed standards of femininity, and perceived sexual deviance, yet amazingly manage to bounce back and laugh at themselves at the end of each day! By documenting our own struggles as a young organization and having the privilege of bearing witness to the resiliency of Filipino LBTs, we have begun to expose the distorted image portrayed by mainstream media, of LGBT people as disproportionately affluent, which has been used as an excuse by forces that unreasonably block the passage of laws seeking to protect sexual minorities.

Indeed, 2011 was a year of many firsts for GALANG but this is just the beginning! In the next few pages, allow us to share with you these milestones as our way of saying THANK YOU, our friends, partners, and allies, for all the love and support that you have given us through the years. With your tireless support and encouragement, we can bravely say that there is no shame in working at the margins of the margins of the margins – this is where the most marginalized of our sisters need GALANG to be, and this is where we choose to be!

In Solidarity,
Anne Lim
Executive Director
GALANG Philippines, Inc.



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GLOBAL FUND FOR WOMEN VISITS BARANGAY PANSOL

Devi Leiper, Program Associate in the Asia/Oceania Program of the Global Fund for Women, visited the GALANG office to meet with GALANG staff on February 1, 2011. She also spent the day going around Barangay Pansol, meeting with GALANG's grassroots partners and their relatives, listening to their coming out stories and their daily struggles as urban poor lesbians. Since GALANG's organizing work is best appreciated when seen firsthand, GALANG customarily brings its partners to its areas of operations for them to experience for themselves the kind of work GALANG engages in to help improve the lives of Filipino LBTs.





TATSULOK KOMIKS DISCUSSES VAW, CELEBRATES PRIDE MONTH & INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

GALANG caps *Tatsulok's* 5-part maiden volume with its fifth issue where Pamboy D'Tomboy and her friends discuss coming out and violence against women (VAW). With this issue, the organization hopes to underscore the message that lesbians, bisexual women, and trans men (LBTs) are equally vulnerable to experience and must be protected against VAW. The third and fourth issues were also released this year as GALANG pays homage to Pride Month, International Women's Day, and International Day Against Homophobia (IDAHO).

Tatsulok has been distributed to GALANG's grassroots partners as well as to allied and partner organizations within and outside the Philippines. Reader response to *Tatsulok* especially among GALANG's local partners has been overwhelmingly positive. Browsing copies have been distributed to many university libraries in Metro Manila.



GALANG INVITED AS PRESENTOR AT ASEAN CIVIL SOCIETY CONFERENCE'S FIRST LGBTIQ WORKSHOP

Eight of ten Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) members, including the Philippines, were represented at the First LGBTIQ ASEAN Regional Meeting held on May 2, 2011 in Jakarta, Indonesia. The meeting was organized in preparation for the first ever LGBTIQ workshop at the ASEAN Civil Society Conference/ASEAN People's Forum. Both initiatives, organized by Arus Pelangi, a Jakarta-based LGBT group, brought together delegates from around the region including GALANG's Executive Director Anne Lim who was invited to present her paper entitled "Going Grassroots: The Role of Local Organizing in Philippine LGBT Rights Advocacy" at the ACSC/APF 2011's historical LGBTIQ workshop held at Ciputra Hotel, Jakarta. Aside from stressing the intersectionality of LGBT concerns among developing ASEAN countries, the paper sought to mainstream grassroots organizing as a strategy among ASEAN LGBT groups.

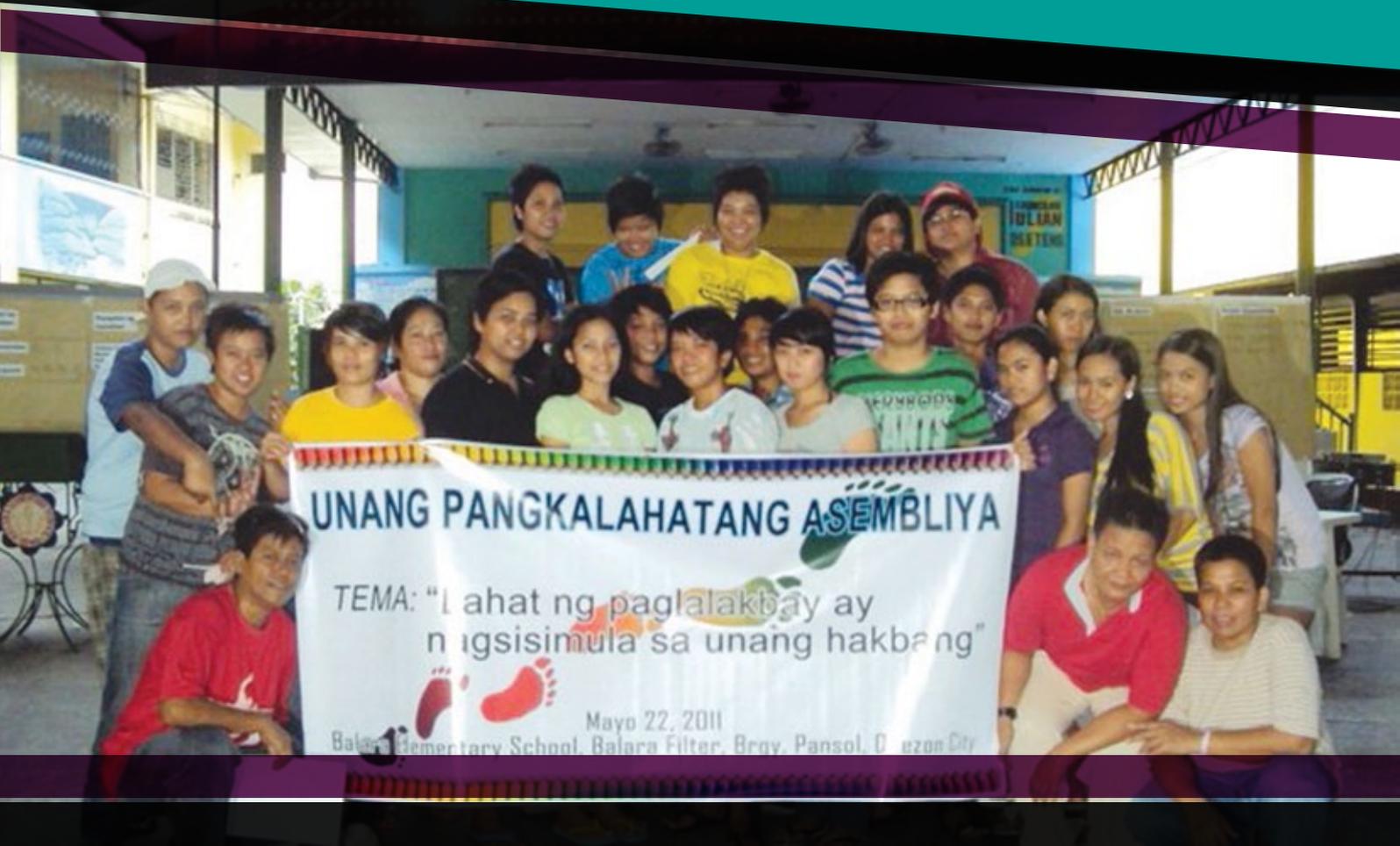
Anne was also invited to be part of a panel at the ACSC/APF 2011 child's rights workshop organized by Child's Rights Coalition Asia. In a presentation on "Protecting the Rights of LGBTIQ Children in the ASEAN", she sought to enlist the support of ASEAN child's rights advocates in protecting LGBTIQ children from bullying by making LGBTIQ children visible and by addressing heteronormativity in child's rights discourses.



LESBIAN ALLIANCE MOVEMENT IS BORN IN BARANGAY PANSOL

GALANG takes pride in helping a group of lesbians in Barangay Pansol formalize their organization and preparing them to manage it themselves through activities designed to develop the leadership potentials of the group's members. By April 2011, the group had finished formulating its Constitution and By-laws. It then formed seven committees: Education, Sports, Financial, Membership, Ethics, Health, and Livelihood.

During their General Assembly on May 22, 2011, lesbians from Barangay Pansol proudly read their Constitution and By-laws, shared their Vision, Mission, and Goals, and elected their first set of committee officers. It was indeed a day of celebration for the Lesbian Alliance Movement–Lakas ng Kababaihan para sa Karapatan (Strength of Women for their Rights), GALANG's first LBT people's organization (LPO) partner in Barangay Pansol. LAM's mission is twofold: to advocate for the formation and organization of lesbian groups for collective action to secure their rights, and to help them gain the respect of others. Eager to contribute what it can to their community, LAM has already filled its calendar with activities ranging from organizational concerns to various community projects.





MAMA CASH PARTNERS SWAP STORIES WITH PANSOL LESBIANS

The first and major activity of the Lesbian Alliance Movement–Lakas ng Kababaihan para sa Karapatan was welcoming partners like Mama Cash along with other Mama Cash grantees to their community. Mama Cash Voice, which has believed in GALANG from the very beginning, created a space for sharing stories of urban poor Filipino LBTs through its first ever Voice convening in the Philippines from May 25-28, 2011.

LAM members accompanied Mama Cash staff and Voice grantees from Egypt, Botswana, Sweden, Sierra Leone, Nepal, Uganda, Armenia, Paraguay, the Philippines, and Chile, around Barangay Pansol to enable them to see firsthand, the environment in which LAM members live, struggle, and survive. On May 31, 2011, Mama Cash interviewed two LAM members, focusing on their unique life experiences and how GALANG and being a LAM member helped them in their daily lives. Among those interviewed were Mjhay Bermudo and Jethro Cuarez who both willingly shared their stories with Mama Cash which helped shed light on the daily struggles of Filipino LBTs.

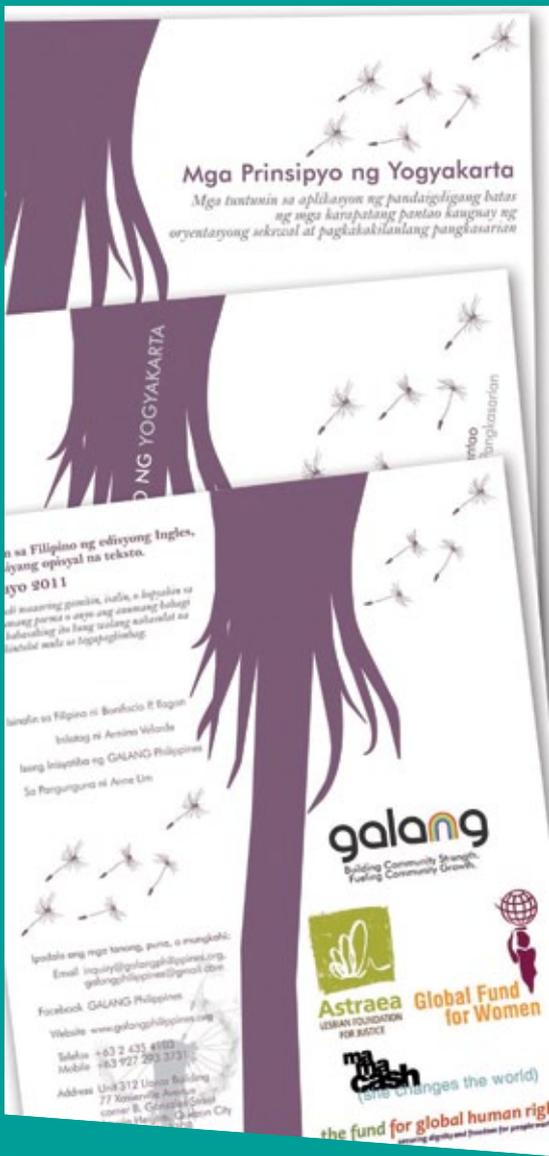


GALANG CELEBRATES FREEDOM, JUSTICE, & EQUALITY WITH PRIDE

The various activities leading up to and culminating in Pride Month are all proof that freedom, justice, and equality are not just slogans. GALANG staff were present in US Embassy Pride Activities, joining other LGBT activists for a forum on the struggle for LGBT equality and the history of the American LGBT movement held at the Sulo Hotel on May 27, 2011. The speaker for the forum was Christine Sun, Deputy Legal Director of the Southern Poverty Law Center and former Senior Counsel of the American Civil Liberties Union. GALANG's Executive Director was also graciously received as one of the guests of US Ambassador Harry Thomas, Jr. at a pride month testimonial dinner held at the Ambassador's Forbes Park residence on June 14, 2011. During the event, US President Barack Obama and Secretary of State Hilary Clinton delivered solidarity messages via video.

On the local front, GALANG staff joined the annual Baguio Pride March on June 26, 2011 at the People's Park. Members of the Baguio Pride Network along with several LGBT organizations came together to celebrate this year's theme: LIVE. LOVE. BE. JUSTICE TODAY, EQUALITY FOREVER. GALANG staff Gyknell Tangente read the organization's Pride March Statement which reads: "The underlying principle of a pride march is that we all deserve to be happy; that we will continue to struggle, live, love, and be until everyone is able to be comfortable with who and what they are, without fear of discrimination or shame--for justice today and towards equality forever."





YOGYAKARTA PRINCIPLES NOW IN FILIPINO

GALANG has released a Filipino translation of the Yogyakarta Principles, a universal guide to the application of international human rights law in relation to sexual orientation and gender identity, making it even more accessible to GALANG's partner communities in urban poor areas. Bonifacio P. Ilagan, writer of GALANG's popular *Tatsulok Komiks*, took on the task of translating the text, with layout by Armina T. Velarde. The Filipino translation, which has been distributed during educational discussions, is also available online at www.ypinaction.org along with other language translations. Browsing copies have likewise been distributed to university libraries in Metro Manila.





GALANG: MAKING THE CASE FOR SEXUALITY & POVERTY

The Ford Foundation invited GALANG to two conferences held in China in June 2011. The first was the Chinese Sexuality Researchers' Conference held in Beijing from June 21-23, 2011. GALANG's Executive Director Anne Lim gave a brief overview of her paper "GALANG: A Movement in the Making for the Rights of Poor LBTs in the Philippines" in a session moderated by Ford Beijing's Susie Jolly, co-author of *Development with a Body*.

The second conference was the 2011 International Association for Feminist Economics Conference held in Hangzhou from June 24-26, 2011. Anne presented her paper in full at a roundtable discussion on "Sexuality and the Economy" alongside esteemed scholars including M.V. Lee Badgett of the University of Massachusetts, Amherst who presented a study on the economic profile of LGBTs in America. Lee dispelled the myth of the pink dollar, with findings that heterosexual men were found to be richer than gay men or lesbian women, a finding which also seems to hold true in the Philippine context. GALANG's participation in both conferences has paved the way for possible international research collaborations responding to the need to popularize, study, and understand the intersectionality between sexuality and poverty.





LINKING SEXUALITY, VIOLENCE, & POVERTY IN IASSCS 2011

GALANG was represented at the eighth biennial meeting of the International Association for the Study of Sexuality, Culture and Society held in Madrid, Spain from July 6 to 9, 2011.

In line with the conference theme “Naming and Framing The Making of Sexual (In)Equality” GALANG’s Executive Director Anne Lim presented GALANG’s experience in documenting cases of violence against poor LBTs in the Philippines. Hoping to replicate its model in other communities of sexual minorities, GALANG continues documenting its strategies and gathering invaluable insights into the lives of urban poor LBT Filipinos.





BARANGAY CAPTAIN SWEARS IN LESBIAN ALLIANCE MOVEMENT OFFICERS

Officers of the Lesbian Alliance Movement–Lakas ng Kababaihan para sa Karapatan took oaths administered by Pansol Barangay Captain Dominic Flores in the presence of Kagawads Joven Laurora and Brainard Bautista on July 26, 2011. During the courtesy call, Barangay Captain Flores thanked LAM for paying respect to the barangay. Kagawad Laurora expressed that the formation of a lesbian organization could not have come at a better time, given the need to foster gender equality and uphold Pansol's 2009 Anti-Discrimination Ordinance. Kagawad Bautista, meanwhile, congratulated LAM for remaining vigilant in the struggle for equality and hoped for an increase in LAM membership. Barangay Pansol officials graciously continue to give LAM permission to use some of the facilities in the barangay hall for the organization's meetings and activities.

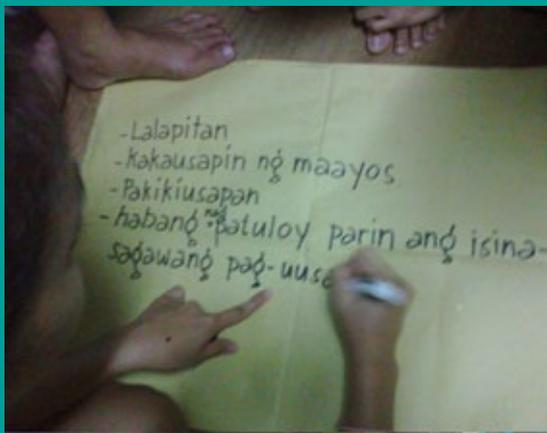


MAHARDHIKA WOMEN OF INDONESIA MEET LAM OFFICERS & GALANG STAFF

Members of Perempuan Mahardhika (Free Women) of Indonesia were welcomed by members of the Lesbian Alliance Movement–Lakas ng Kababaihan para sa Karapatan at the GALANG office on August 2, 2011. Perempuan Mahardhika was established in Jakarta in 2006. It organizes working women, women students, village or peasant women, and urban poor women.

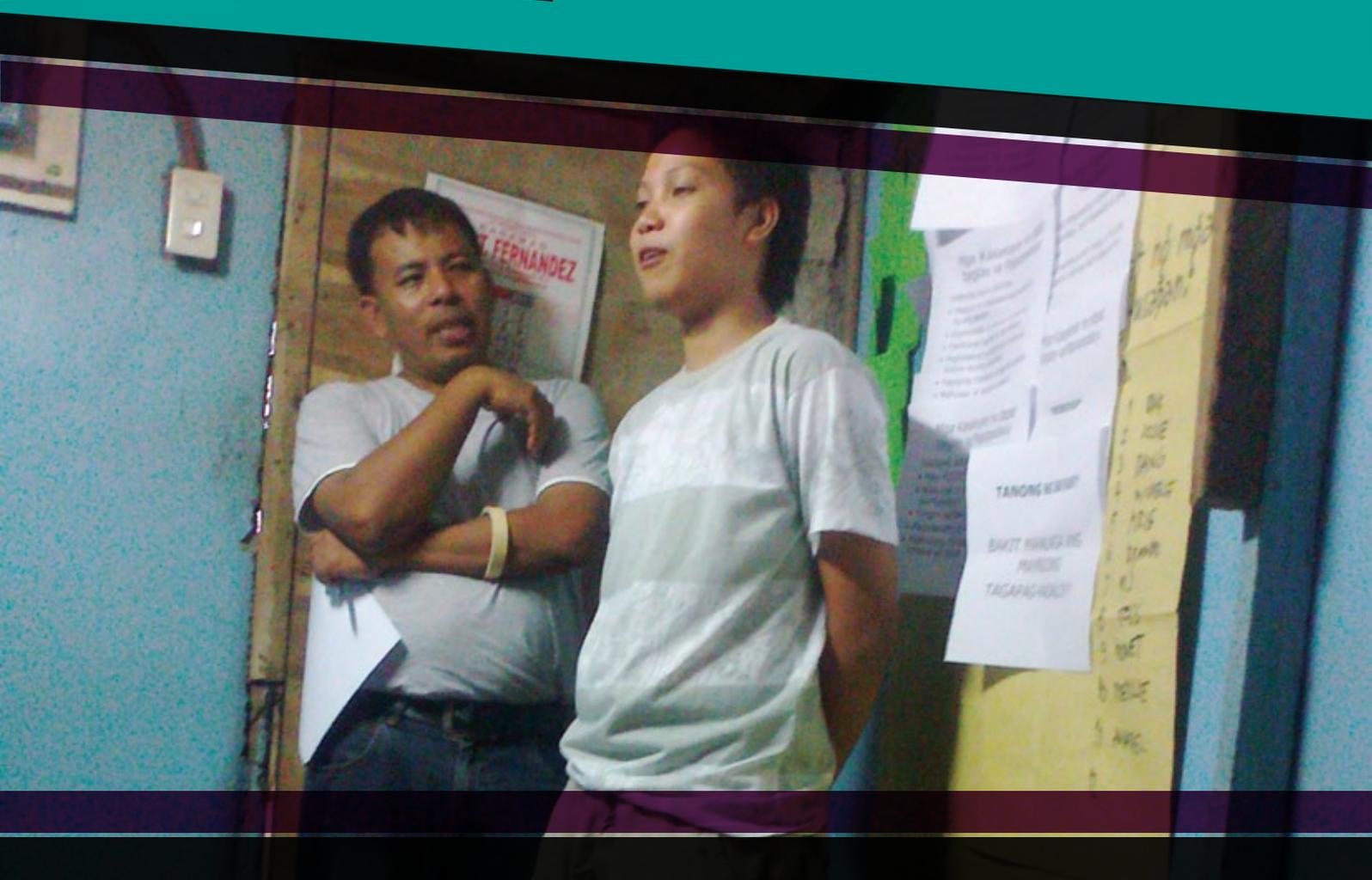
After GALANG's Executive Director Anne Lim spoke about the group's work of organizing Filipino grassroots LBTs, LAM members introduced themselves to the representatives from Mahardhika. They shared what it was like to form a lesbian organization in a Filipino urban poor setting and the challenges that they faced as lesbians in a conservative society. After an animated exchange, LAM members thanked their guests for taking the time to meet with them. The interaction gave LAM concrete ideas on how to improve their organization as well as a better appreciation of the need for solidarity among women across the region.





FACILITATION & NETWORKING TRAINING (BARANGAY PANSOL)

As part of their ongoing leadership skills development, twelve leaders of the Lesbian Alliance Movement–Lakas ng Kababaihan para sa Karapatan attended a Facilitation and Networking Training on August 14 and 28, 2011. The participants were given tips and suggestions on how to introduce their organization and how to effectively coordinate with groups within and outside the community. By teaching these skills, GALANG hopes to improve the self-confidence of its local LBT partners and slowly but surely equip them with the capacity to be effective grassroots advocates for LBT human rights.



GALANG & LAM ATTEND WOMENLEAD PARALEGAL TRAINING

GALANG staff Marianne Licuanan and Annabelle Ybanez of the Lesbian Alliance Movement–Lakas ng Kababaihan para sa Karapatan, were among the twenty participants selected by the Women’s Legal Education, Advocacy and Defense Foundation to attend a Paralegal Skills Training in Violence Against Women Litigation for Community Service Providers from August 15 to 19, 2011 at El Cielito Hotel, Makati City. The training focused on how to handle VAW cases in accordance with pertinent laws, along with the need for counseling in the light of trauma. Among others, participants were taught how to gather evidence for VAW cases, draft an application for a protection order under RA 9262 and a basic affidavit, file pleadings, and interview a VAW survivor. The skills will be put to good use in GALANG’s and LAM’s work in the communities that they operate in.





GALANG STAFF ATTEND TRAININGS & CONSULTATIONS ON HUMAN RIGHTS

GALANG staff attended the National Training on the ASEAN Human Rights Mechanism meant to help NGOs decide whether to engage the ASEAN on human rights issues, held from August 18 to 19, 2011 at Fersal Hotel in Quezon City. A suggestion that arose from the activity organized by Human Rights Defenders-Pilipinas was to keep the communication lines between government and NGOs open, especially on any plans regarding the ASEAN. GALANG was also represented in a regional training workshop organized by the Women's Legal and Human Rights Bureau entitled "Women's Rights in the ASEAN: Maximizing Human Rights Mechanism of the ASEAN" held on September 20 and 21, 2011 at the Imperial Palace Suites in Quezon City. The training was a workshop consultation on what issues CSOs need to focus on in engaging the ASEAN.

Both the Commission on Human Rights and the Presidential Human Rights Committee invited GALANG for consultation on the LGBT dimension of Human Rights. A roundtable discussion as well as a consultation on the Universal Periodic Review were respectively held on October 25, 2011 at Balay Kalinaw and on November 8, 2011 at the CHR, followed by the "*Ulat sa Taong Bayan*" held on December 8, 2011 where the CHR reported on the human rights situation in the Philippines and mapped out specific recommendations to address human rights concerns. On December 9, 2011, the PHRC invited different LGBT groups to their 11th National Human Rights Day with the theme "*LGBT Ngayon: Lalim ng Pag-unawa, Antas ng Pagtanggap.*" Different LGBT rights advocates including representatives from GALANG were asked to broaden the human rights perspective by sharing their insights on issues concerning the LGBT sector.



LAM'S COMMUNITY CLEAN-UP PROJECT

The Lesbian Alliance Movement–Lakas ng Kababaihan para sa Karapatan began Clean and Green activities within Kaingin 2 in Barangay Pansol on August 20, 2011. The barangay hall lent its support to the initiative by providing some cleaning materials. When some of their neighbors challenged them, asked who they were and why they were cleaning in the vicinity, LAM members confidently answered that they were a lesbian organization committed to improving the community as a whole and to doing their part in preventing the spread of dengue. Hence, through its initial Clean and Green activity, LAM was able to begin to introduce itself as a respected people's organization to friends and potential allies in their area.





LAM OFFICERS & GALANG STAFF SPEAK AT UNIVERSIDAD DE MANILA

GALANG staff joined officers of the Lesbian Alliance Movement–Lakas ng Kababaihan para sa Karapatan in giving a talk about their experiences as LBTs for the benefit of Social Work Students of the Universidad de Manila on September 1, 2011. The invitation was an opportunity for LAM officers Tess Gallo and Josie Cauyao to develop their leadership and public speaking skills as well as for GALANG to share its work on organizing urban poor LBTs.

GALANG often grants requests for interviews and/or resource persons to speak to university students in order to promote Sexuality as a Development issue.





JOB COACHING SEMINAR (BARANGAY PANSOL)

Ms. Melinda Tan of the University of the Philippines Diliman Department of Psychology conducted a Job Coaching Seminar for members of the Lesbian Alliance Movement–Lakas ng Kababaihan para sa Karapatan at the GALANG office on October 2, 2011. Through the seminar, the participants learned how to improve the way they present themselves during job interviews and which jobs are best suited for their personality. The skills they learned at the seminar encouraged LAM members to continue to improve themselves to have a better chance at finding gainful employment in these trying times.



LBT LEADERSHIP TRAINING SEMINAR (BARANGAY BAGBAG)

LBTs from the Urbano, Sauyo, and Marides groups in Barangay Bagbag attended the Leadership Training Seminar held on October 2 and 23, 2011 at the 3rd floor of the Bagbag Barangay Hall. Lectures revolved around the notion of leadership and what makes a good leader, the importance of facilitation and organizational management, and how the participants can use these concepts and skills in working towards their dreams and aspirations for their community. Among all the topics discussed, it was the Strategic Planning Matrix that made an impact on Bagbag LBTs. In discussing the Strategic Planning Matrix, Bagbag LBTs realized the huge opportunity they had in forming an organization, since there are many LBTs residing in Barangay Bagbag and its nearby areas.

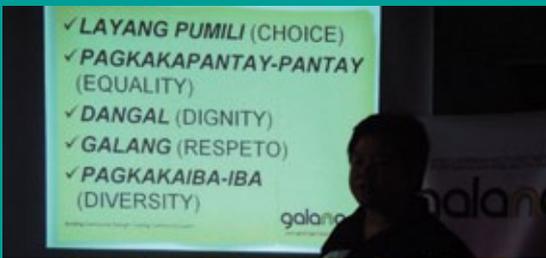




TRAINING ON EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY 1 (BARANGAY PANSOL)

The Lesbian Alliance Movement–Lakas ng Kababaihan para sa Karapatan was able to show how it continues to grow as an organization through various activities undertaken in the last quarter of 2011. Among these is the Training on Effective Advocacy held on November 15, 2011 aimed at enhancing the members' networking skills in order to help them deal with questions from media as well as people from other organizations and institutions. The learnings from the Advocacy Training were particularly put to good use when LAM debuted as a newly formed lesbian people's organization during its first Pride March in Manila on December 3, 2011.

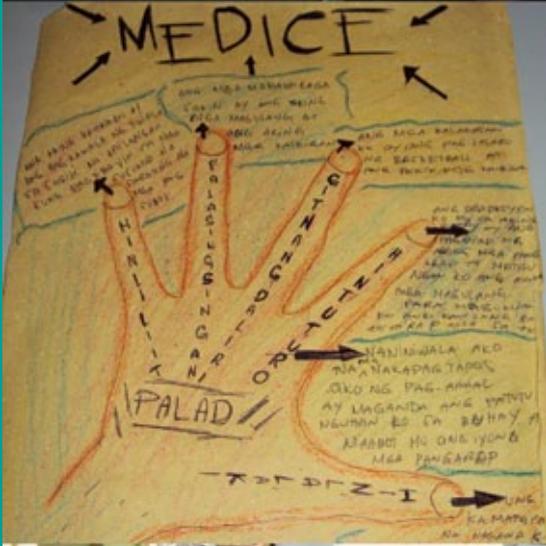




GENDER & SEXUALITY

TRAINING 1

(BARANGAY KRUS NA LIGAS / BOTOCAN)



An introductory Gender and Sexuality Training was conducted on October 23 and November 26, 2011 at the GALANG office. The activity was attended by LBTs from Barangay Krus na Ligas, Barangay Botocan, Village A of Barangay UP Campus, and Navotas. Facilitated by GALANG staff, the discussions were lively due to the participants' sharing of their experiences and fears, particularly surrounding the issue of rape. For most of them, this training served as their introduction to the issue of sex, gender, and sexuality, as well as their first time to learn that LBTs have human rights just like everybody else.



70 STRONG: GALANG & PARTNERS MARCH IN MANILA PRIDE 2011

A contingent of 70 GALANG officers and staff, members of its partner LBT people's organization (LPO), the Lesbian Alliance Movement–Lakas ng Kababaihan para sa Karapatan, and GALANG's other grassroots LBT partners marched as one during the annual Manila Pride March on December 3, 2011. It was the first time for LAM to march as a newly formed community-based LPO. LAM members expressed that one thing they liked about joining the Pride March was the fact that they were welcomed with warm applause by the crowd which included many comrades from the local LGBT activist movement, when their group was introduced as the Lesbian Alliance Movement.

Like LAM members, LBTs from Barangay Bagbag also held a series of meetings in November 2011 to plan and prepare for Manila Pride. Together, they decided on the messages that they wished to feature in their placards which they handmade with the help of friends from the community. On the day of the march in Malate, LBTs from Barangay Bagbag were very proud marching and holding up the placards they made. Lhyn, a marcher from Bagbag, reflected: "We attended the Pride March to show pride in who we are and to tell the world that we, too, have human rights. We did this despite the presence (during the march) of people and groups who were very mad at us or ashamed of people like us...."





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