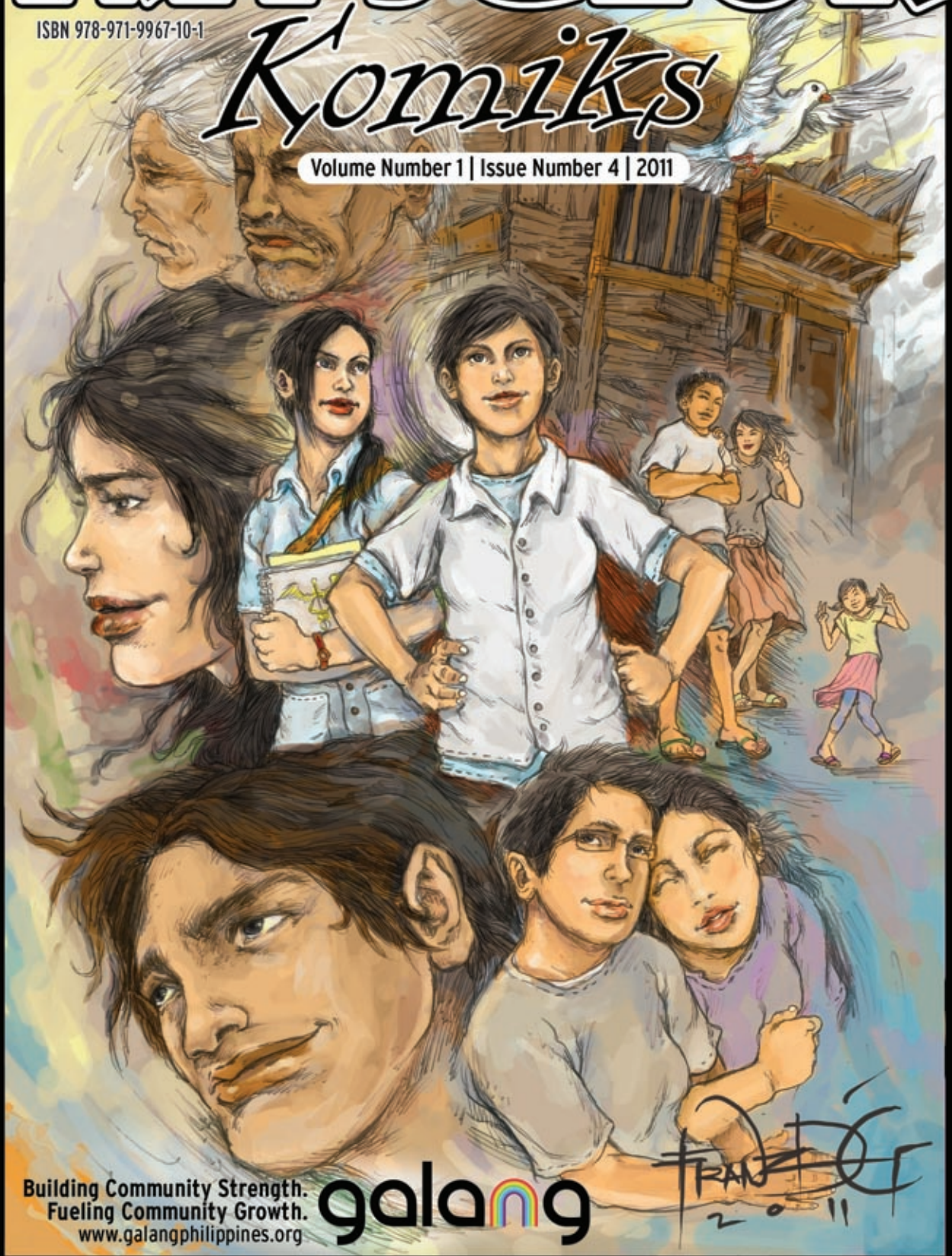


TATSULOK

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Building Community Strength.
Fueling Community Growth.
www.galangphilippines.org

galang

FRANZ
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A Community Project by GALANG Philippines, Inc.

"Respect Lesbian Rights!"

It has been said that it's easier for a person to show anger than fear; that's why when one's angry, it's very likely that the person is afraid of something. Violence against minorities like lesbians, bisexuals, and transgenders (LBTs) is deeply rooted in hatred of people who are considered "different" for their refusal to conform to rules and expectations set by society. Does this anger or hatred stem from fear, as well? What do people who hurt, abuse, persecute, and demean LBTs fear?

While "violence" is most commonly used to refer to physical harm, it can also be used in a broader sense to apply to violations of human rights, such as prevention of an individual or group from exercising recognized human freedoms or encroachment upon an individual's sovereignty over her own person. Violence has many forms aside from physical. Emotional, psychological, sexual, and economic abuses all fall under the definition of violence. The word homophobia on the other hand, is "society's unreasonable or prejudiced perception and unjust treatment of homosexuals or individuals who love people of the same sex."

In the communities that GALANG works with, there are innumerable cases of violence inflicted on poor LBTs which are clearly rooted in homophobia or lesbophobia. These acts of violence are often committed with the intention of "rehabilitating" LBTs. There are LBTs who are lashed and beaten, there are those who are banished and disowned by their parents or their children. There are also cases where lesbians are raped or sexually abused as a way of "curing" them of their homosexuality, as if people could be straightened like

hair! There are also numerous LBTs who are perfectly qualified for employment but are denied, reproached, and ridiculed at interviews, or otherwise dismissed by being told to expect phone calls the employers never intended to make.

If violence is rooted in anger, and if anger is born of fear, then what can society possibly fear from women like us who love other women? Why are people offended by two women who love each other? Does it adversely affect another person's quality of life if a lesbian decides to shave off her hair or wear non-feminine clothing?

It is perhaps natural for humans to fear what they don't understand. Many of us are raised believing that women must wear dresses and only men can climb trees. We were also taught and made to understand the concept of family as composed of one woman, one man, and their offspring. Because of these beliefs, many find it hard to accept that two women who are in love and deeply committed to each other can also form a family of their own.

We are all products of our experiences so we must try to understand even those who condemn and persecute us. But this does not mean that we should keep silent when we are assaulted, maltreated, attacked or abused. Any worthy endeavor begins with self-acceptance and self-respect. We cannot truly love others—partners, parents, siblings, friends, etc. -if we don't love ourselves. Once we learn to love and respect ourselves, we can begin fighting for our human rights! Always remember, "RESPECT LESBIAN RIGHTS!"

AML

"What is GALANG Philippines?"

Galang is the Filipino word for respect. The word signifies respect for human rights and human diversity, which lies at the core of GALANG Philippines' struggle for equality and justice.

GALANG Philippines is a lesbian-initiated, lesbian-run feminist human rights organization that works with urban poor lesbians, bisexual women, and trans men (LBTs) who struggle with the multiple oppressions of class, poverty, sex, gender identity/expression, and sexual orientation.

GALANG currently employs strategies aimed at building the capacities of urban poor LBTs to help or better themselves. Its initiatives include trainings, workshops, action researches, and the publication of popular education (PopEd) materials, such as *Tatsulok Komiks*.

THE ADVENTURES OF PAMBOY D'TOMBOY

Written by: Bonifacio P. Ilagan | Illustrated by: Franz Garcia | Translated & edited by: Armina Velarde

LAST ISSUE: PAMBOY AND MELODY FINALLY CONFESSED THEIR FEELINGS FOR EACH OTHER. WE FOUND OUT THAT BRAD'S RELATIVES WERE AFTER HER INHERITANCE. IN A FIT OF JEALOUSY, JACK BERATED HER PARTNER JILL. PAMBOY, JINKY, AND BERTA STEPPED IN TO HELP SAVE THEIR RELATIONSHIP. OF ALL THE CHALLENGES THE GANG HAS HAD TO DEAL WITH, ARE THEY READY FOR A PROBLEM AS BIG AS THIS ONE?

ONE DAY, HEAVILY ARMED STRANGERS SHOW UP BEARING TROUBLING NEWS FOR STA. ELENA.

I'm just a messenger.
I'm not here to argue.

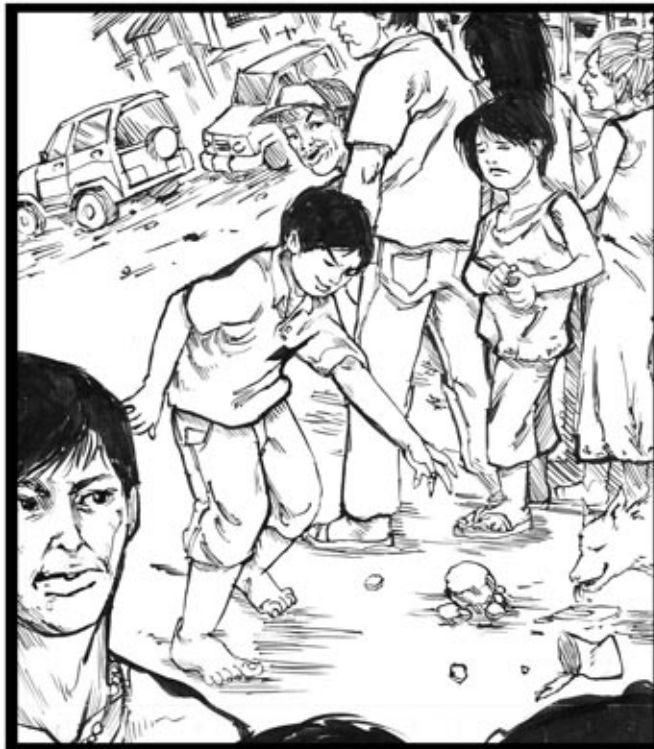
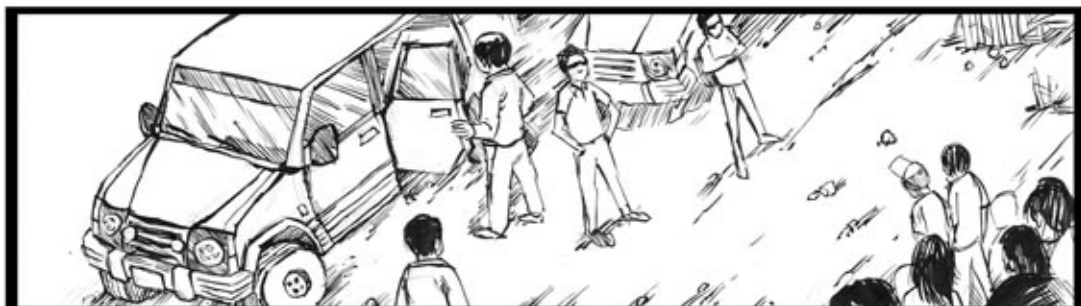
Does the mayor
know about this?

He does, and there's
nothing he can do
about it.

We've lived here for
over 50 years!







SINCE THAT DAY, DISTURBANCE AND VIOLENCE ERUPTED IN STA. ELENA. THE POLICE FORCE CONDUCTS DRUG RAIDS.

Hands up!

Everyone, out!

THEY DEMOLISH THE STALLS OF STREET VENDORS.

Streets are for vehicles!

We're only trying to make a living!

AT NIGHT, ROCKS RAIN ON THEIR FLIMSY TIN ROOFS.



THE RESIDENTS OF STA. ELENA NOW
LIVE IN PERIL AND SHEER TERROR.

They're terrorizing us so
we'll have no choice but to
leave.

Exactly!

Be home before dark
from now on, Glenda!

But my classes end at
7 pm on Tuesdays and
Thursdays.

Just be careful. It's
dangerous out there.

Me too! Over my
dead body!

I'm not leaving! I was
born here, my children's
children were born here!

Get off the streets! It's
late! Go home or we'll arrest
you for vagrancy!

6
*VAGRANCY - Abuse of the law on vagrancy is common and well-documented in the Philippines. Because the law is vague, law enforcers sometimes arrest persons merely on suspicion that they are about to engage in illegal activities.

ONE NIGHT, JINKY AND BERTA FIND THEMSELVES IN A PREDICAMENT.



TROUBLE FINDS MELODY AS WELL.

LET'S FIND OUT WHAT HAPPENED
TO THEM FROM JACK AND JILL....

Hello!

Anybody
home!

Pamboy!! Mommy Ida!!

TOK
Tok TOK
Tok
Tok TOK

Jinky and Berta-

And Melody!

Huh?!?

They need our
help!

They were picked up by men in
civilian clothes. Witnesses say
they were cops!

Oh my!

Why would they get arrested?

PAMBOY AND HER MOTHER WASTE NO TIME.

Mom, I'm coming too!

Absolutely not! Stay home, child!



DURING THE JEEPNEY RIDE, EVERYONE IS VISIBLY ON EDGE.



AT THE PRECINCT, THEY FIND MELODY AND HER PARENTS ALONG WITH TWO OTHER GIRLS AND THEIR FAMILIES.



He-He-He... Looks like this chick's a dyke lover.

What a waste! She sure is easy on the eyes!



THE COPS TRY TO COVER THEIR TRACKS BY GIVING THEM THE OLDEST EXCUSE IN THE BOOK: "THEY WERE JUST FOLLOWING ORDERS."

I told them that they committed human rights violations.

Right!

They conducted wrongful arrests and they must answer for it!

MOMMY IDA IS JUST AS OUTRAGED.

Where are Jinky and Berta?

Where are they?



MOMENTS LATER, STA. ELENA'S CHAIRMAN ARRIVES, LOOKING VERY DISTRAUGHT.



The nursing student and the two other girls can go home. But I will keep Jinky and Berta overnight for questioning.



MELODY AND TWO OTHER GIRLS ARE SENT HOME. PAMBOY, JILL, AND JACK DECIDE TO STAY TO KEEP JINKY AND BERTA COMPANY.



BERTA AND JINKY ARE IN TERRIBLE SHAPE.



You promise?

Yes!

Thank you... we appreciate your being here, but you should go home and get some rest.

We'll get a lawyer first thing in the morning.

Right! They'll be safe here.

BRAD AND MILES ARRIVE WITH BLANKETS
AND FOOD FOR JINKY AND BERTA.



THE FRIENDS LEAVE WITH HEAVY HEARTS.



ARE JINKY AND BERTA REALLY SAFE?



IT'S TRUE THAT THE POLICE BRUTALITY, WRONGFUL ARRESTS, AND ACTS OF
INTIMIDATION ARE ALL CONNECTED TO THE LAND DISPUTE. JINKY AND BERTA
HAPPENED TO BE IN THE WRONG PLACE AT THE WRONG TIME.





IN A NEARBY CELL, JINKY SUFFERS THE SAME FATE.

I hate dykes! Meet your worst nightmare! I am queen here, kneel before me, puny dyke!

Kneel!

Ouch! Let go of me!

Let's see what's really under there...

Let go, you beasts!

BERTA AND JINKY'S TORMENT CONTINUES UNTIL A GUARD ARRIVES.

Enough!

Come with me! You can spend the night in here instead.

Why is this happening? We didn't do anything wrong. How are we going to get out of here?

IN THE RELATIVE SAFETY
OF THE STOCK ROOM,
JINKY AND BERTA
FALL ASLEEP FROM
ANGUISH AND
EXHAUSTION.

ZzzZzzzzzz

ZzzZzzzzzz



EARLY THE NEXT MORNING, JINKY AND BERTA
NOTICE A COMMOTION.

These freaks have balls,
I give them that!

We need to get this
under control!



THE GANG HAS GATHERED A GROUP OF
CONCERNED CITIZENS TO MOUNT A
PROTEST ACTION AT THE PRECINCT.

Morning,
Chief!

We need to fix this fast!



EVEN WITHOUT A LAWYER, THE GROUP WAS DETERMINED TO HAVE THEIR DEMANDS MET. FEARING AN ESCALATION, THE POLICE RELEASE JINKY AND BERTA. LESSON: BE NOT AFRAID TO STAND UP FOR WHAT IS RIGHT.

They're free to go!

Consider yourselves lucky!

THE COPS PUT THEM THROUGH HELL, VIOLATED THEIR CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS, AND FAILED TO ACCORD THEM THE PROTECTION OF THE LAW, BUT FOR NOW, ALL THAT MATTERS IS THAT THEY'RE FREE.


THE PRESENCE OF MORE GAYS AND LESBIANS WITH THE GROUP IS OVERWHELMING.

It looks like the group's growing! Welcome, new recruits!

Yes, we're so happy you joined us.

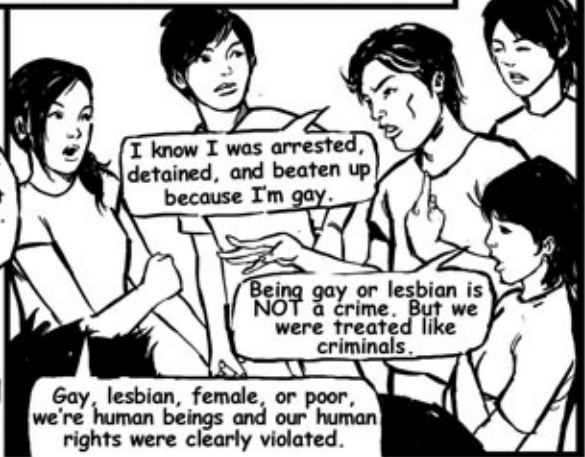
Who else would help us but our own kind, right?

AFTER SEVERAL DAYS, THE GROUP IS STILL REELING FROM THE INCIDENT. BERTA AND JINKY, HOWEVER, WILL REMAIN FOREVER SCARRED BY IT.



I discussed what happened with some friends at school. They agree that something needs to be done. We can't just stand around while they abuse us. We must do something. We have rights!

Something is bound to happen. It's just a matter of time.



I know I was arrested, detained, and beaten up because I'm gay.


Being gay or lesbian is NOT a crime. But we were treated like criminals.

Gay, lesbian, female, or poor, we're human beings and our human rights were clearly violated.




What are human rights again?

We had a discussion about it before, Brad, don't you remember?



I think we need a refresher course.




I agree. You guys might want to join a forum at my school.

On what?

On human rights.

Sorry, I can't seem to remember much of it.



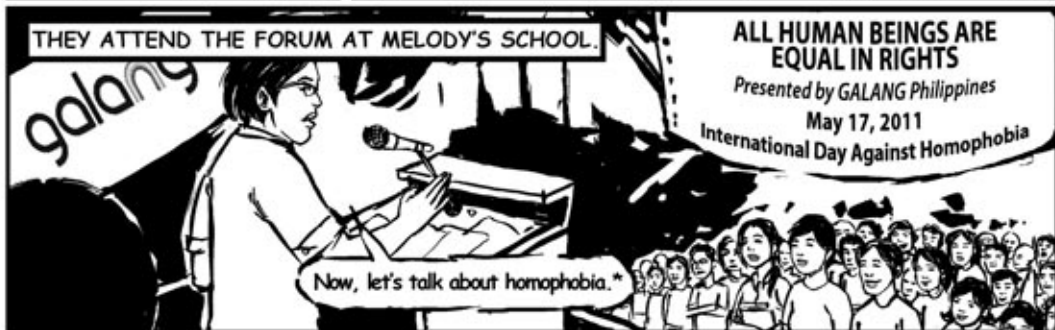
Let's go!

We're in!

*Please refer to the first issue for more information about human rights.



THE ADDITION OF NEW MEMBERS GIVES THE GANG A MUCH NEEDED MORALE BOOST.





THE WEDDING GOWNS IN THE DISPLAY WINDOW OF THE BRIDAL SHOP RAISED A LOT OF QUESTIONS FOR BOTH MELODY AND PAMBOY.



Same sex couples should be allowed by law to raise a family. That's our right as human beings. We should be able to live the way we want to live.

THEY'RE STILL TALKING ABOUT IT ON THE RIDE HOME.

We should talk about these issues in our group discussions. I want to be able to raise a family too.

I don't.

Really?

But I thought -

Not yet!

I'm too young. And I'm still in college.

PAMBOY AND MELODY ARE QUICKLY BECOMING INSEPARABLE. BEING IN A LOVE BUBBLE MOST OF THE TIME, THEY FAIL TO NOTICE A RECENT DEVELOPMENT IN STA. ELENA--SOME OF THEIR NEIGHBORS HAVE OPTED TO SELL THEIR HOMES FOR FEAR OF LOSING LIFE, LIMB, AND PROPERTY.

Watch out for the final issue of "The Adventures of Pamboy D'Tomboy!"

"What is the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia?"

Each year on March 17, the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia (IDAHO) is celebrated to commemorate the day the World Health Organization removed homosexuality from its list of mental disorders. It is a day of paying tribute to our collective struggle to uphold the human rights of sexual minorities like lesbians, bisexuals, and transgenders (LBTs). There are various ways IDAHO is celebrated all over the world, such as fielding petitions for policy change concerning sexual minorities, mounting public demonstrations, and holding other kinds of gatherings of individuals and groups that support equal rights for all.



IDAHO
International
Day Against
Homophobia
& Transphobia



"Can two women or two men get married in the Philippines?"

Despite the slow and gradual acceptance by other countries of sexual minorities like LBTs, the Philippines does not allow two people of the same sex to marry. Two women or two men may exchange vows or hold commitment ceremonies, which are merely symbolic and devoid of any legal import.

According to the Family Code of the Philippines, only a man and a woman are allowed to marry. The law remains silent on marriage or union between two women or two men, but in spite of this, lesbian and gay couples continue to love and live as families. The law does not offer any explanation or justification as to why it refuses to recognize families headed by homosexuals. The failure of the law and the State to guarantee equal rights to its citizens can definitely be attributed mainly to widespread homophobia in society.



Nirvana Galvez & Ruth Galvez,
California, 10 years together
www.avoteandavow.com

MELTING: I need to find a way to make you understand that I am with you and that my desires are not separate from yours. This thought inspired my body to find the means; later we gave it a name. We called it 'melting.'

Isabel Miller,
quoted by Monique Wittig
and Sande Zeig in
*Brouillon pour un dictionnaire
des amantes*



©magicmud / Hunter Vaughan

What is the importance of gay marriage? How does it play into the issue of violence against LBTs?

For many people, it is important to have the right to marry because marriage is often used to measure the value of a relationship. Most sexual minorities share the same sentiment—it is important to us that our families be regarded and treated as “normal” and “acceptable” by society. Legally recognized marriage also confers economic or financial privileges, such as lowered taxes, employer-sponsored spousal benefits, and joint insurance rates, etc.

The Philippine Constitution provides that the State values the dignity of every human being and guarantees full respect for human rights. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) clearly states that any individual, regardless of sex, has the right to marry and build a family. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) ensures the right of all women to marry and choose her mate. CEDAW prohibits discrimination against women in the matter of building a family.

Marriage equality is perhaps the strongest indication that a state upholds the equality of all persons regardless of sex, sexual orientation or gender identity (SOGI). As long as the law denies sexual minorities the right to marry and build a family, we will continue to be treated and regarded as “abnormal”, “immoral”, and be pressured and forced to “change” or “reform.” As long as legislators choose to promote the interest of the Roman Catholic hierarchy, LBTs will remain targets and victims of violence. As long as two lesbians are forbidden to marry each other in the Philippines, the government continues to violate its obligations under international treaties that form the foundation for promoting human rights.



Octogenarians Phyllis Lyon, left, and Del Martin, right, who have been together for 51 years, embrace after their marriage at the San Francisco City Hall in 2004. They were the first legally married same-sex couple in San Francisco.

Photo: Liz Mangelsdorf, The Chronicle / SF



BUILDING COMMUNITY STRENGTH. FUELING COMMUNITY GROWTH.

Tatsulok Komiks is GALANG's response to the need of urban poor lesbians, bisexuals, and transgenders (LBTs) for a popular or accessible medium of communication that can help broaden and deepen their understanding of their human rights. It is GALANG's fervent hope that readers do learn and grow in understanding, as well as glean positive life lessons from it, the most important of which is treating everyone with respect and recognizing that every human being is deserving of respect and equal rights.

Written by Bonifacio P. Ilagan | Illustrated by Franz Garcia

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