

TATSULOK

Komiks

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galang

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

A Community Project by GALANG Philippines, Inc.

"The Spirit of Bayanihan* is Alive in Juan(a)'s Town"

In the months that we've been following the adventures of Pamboy D'Tomboy and the gang, so much has happened in Barangay Sta. Elena. Now that we come to the fifth issue of the first volume of Tatsulok Komiks, what lessons have we learned from the colorful lives of our heroes? Did any of the characters in the story reflect truths and revelations about ourselves?

Apart from the effort to address lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (LBT) rights, the sincere attempt to bring to life the experiences of the characters as residents of a typical urban poor community is also greatly evident in the first volume of Tatsulok Komiks. Many scenes and situations in the story illustrate the complex issues surrounding land ownership and housing, hazardous living conditions, harassment, and violence. The first volume also tried to show the many age-old problems in Philippine society, such as widespread poverty, unemployment, female oppression, and of course, discrimination and violence against sexual minorities.

If we grew up or live in a community very much like Sta. Elena, is there anything new that Tatsulok can teach us about our lives? Even without reading the comics, we know for sure what it's like to live in poverty: living from hand to mouth; sleeping hunger away; too poor to get sick; can't

get a job because of rampant nepotism and discrimination. The list goes on....

A lot of us surely found the first volume of Tatsulok Komiks entertaining but we hope that the message of preserving the spirit and tradition of bayanihan* despite the dire conditions we live in remains with us. We face countless ordeals in our daily lives that make us wonder whether life is really nothing but a never-ending struggle. It's possible that the only thing we can do is hold each other's hand, forget our personal interests once in a while, and be grateful that we have each other to depend on as we carve out a better future for ourselves, our loved ones, and the society we live in. Adopting a positive disposition, promoting solidarity by helping those in need, forging alliances, and organizing for the good of the majority will enable us to lift ourselves out of poverty and change our conditions as lesbians, bisexual women, and trans men (LBTs).



***Bayanihan** (pronounced [baɐiˈniːhan]) refers to a spirit of communal unity or cooperative effort. Bayanihan is depicted in this mural by Filipino National Artist Carlos V. Francisco, which perfectly illustrates the tradition of volunteerism in Philippine communities, where neighbors pitch in to help families relocate by transporting the homes on their backs using bamboo poles.

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.

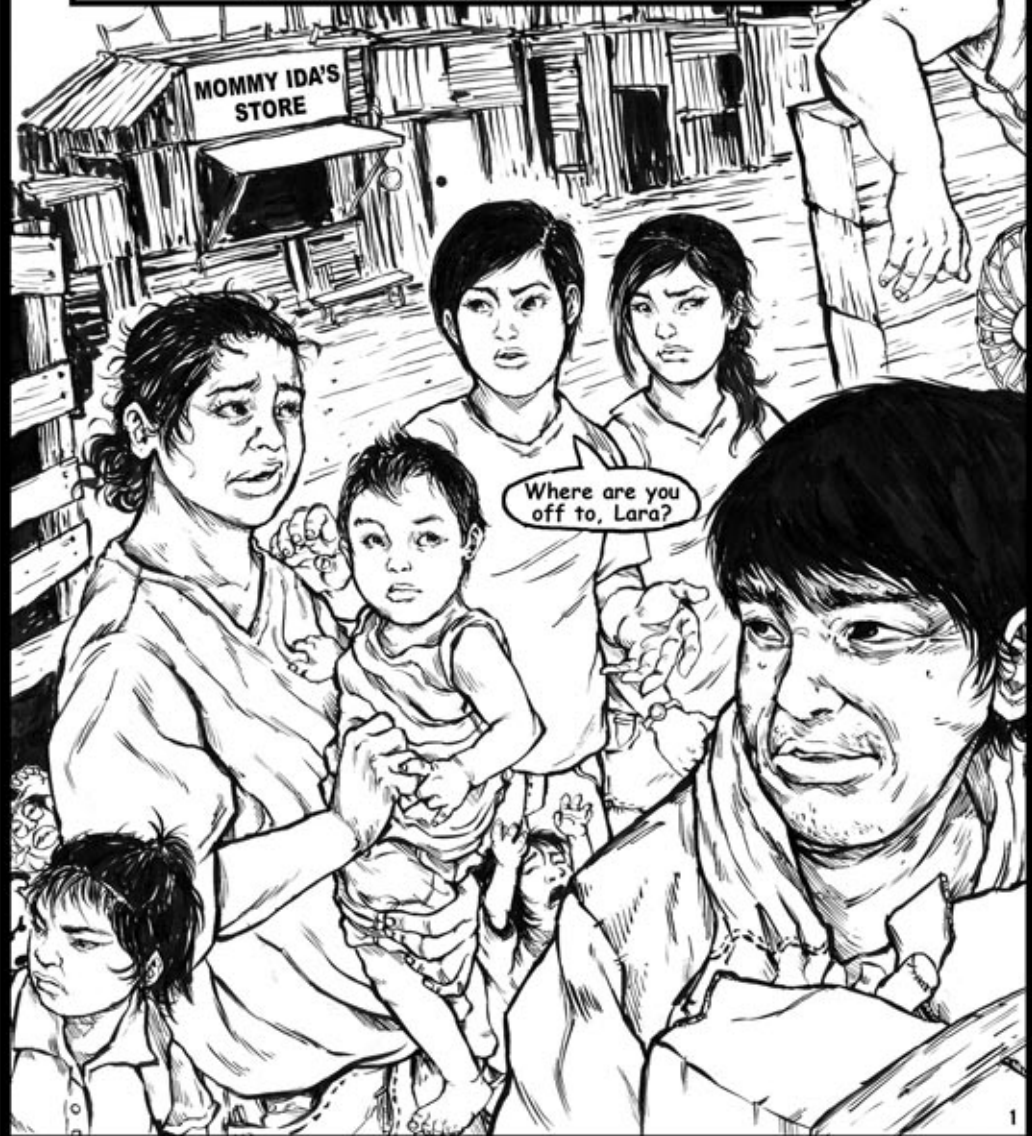
GALANG currently employs strategies aimed at building the capacities of urban poor LBTs to help or better themselves. Its initiatives include trainings, workshops, action researches, and the publication of popular education (PopEd) materials, such as Tatsulok Komiks.

THE ADVENTURES OF PAMBOY D'TOMBOY

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

Last Issue: THE CORPORATION THAT HAS LAID CLAIM TO STA. ELENA HAS BEEN TERRORIZING ITS RESIDENTS. CROOKED COPS DETAINED JINKY AND BERTA ON TRUMPED UP CHARGES, MELODY WAS PICKED UP AS WELL, BUT WAS IMMEDIATELY RELEASED. WHILE IN DETENTION, JINKY AND BERTA WERE VIOLENTLY ATTACKED BECAUSE OF THEIR SEXUALITY. THE GANG HELD A PROTEST ACTION CALLING FOR THEIR RELEASE, THEY WERE JOINED BY OTHER LESBIANS AND GAYS IN THE COMMUNITY. INSTEAD OF DIMINISHING THE GROUP'S RESOLVE, ADVERSITY HAS MADE THEM EVEN STRONGER.

A NEIGHBOR WHO'S IN THE PROCESS OF MOVING OUT GRABS PAMBOY AND MELODY'S ATTENTION.





JOEY HURRIEDLY LEAVES.
EVERYONE SEEMS
CURIOUS ABOUT GLENDA'S
NEW FRIEND, PAMBOY
MOST OF ALL.



AS SOON AS THEY WERE ALONE, PAMBOY
INTERROGATES HER BABY SISTER.



Glenda, is Joey
your girlfriend?

Cut the big
sister act, it
doesn't suit you.

I'm waiting for
an answer!

No...we're still in
the courting stage.
But I like her.

Courting stage...



Yes,
anything wrong
with that?



Are you sure this is
what you want?

Uhuh...



Now be honest, are you
doing this because of me?

Of course not! Answer
me this: is it wrong to
love someone of the
same sex?



Well, no. Melody and I are
both women. And there's nothing
wrong or unnatural about our
relationship.

That's exactly
what I mean.



BERTA WALKS JINKY HOME.

No big deal. I'm headed this way, anyway.

Thanks for seeing me home, Bertal. It's really sweet of you.

I was just trying to imagine how it would feel to have a girlfriend walk me home.

Well, until you find that lucky girl, dream on! See you, lover!

Ha-ha-ha! Yuck!

UNAWARE OF THE DANGER THAT LURKS BEFORE HIM, BERTA CONTINUES ON HIS WAY HOME.

BACK HOME, JINKY SUDDENLY FEELS UNEASY. HER FRIEND INSTANTLY COMES TO MIND.

Bertal

He could be in trouble!

JINKY FINDS BERTA'S
BATTERED BODY.

ALERTED BY JINKY'S TERRIFIED SCREAMS,
THE NEIGHBORS RUSH TO HELP.

THE GANG IS DEVASTATED.
THEY COME TOGETHER TO
CARE FOR BERTA.

Berta!

No!!!
Berta!!!

EVERYONE KNOWS THE PEOPLE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE VICIOUS ASSAULT ON BERTA.

This is unacceptable!

All we do is hold meetings isn't there anything else we can do to protect our community? They're killing us off now!

We've filed our petition in court, in City Hall, and with Congressman Natividad.

Petitions are useless! We should put up barricades!

THE RESIDENTS AGREE THAT PUTTING UP BARRICADES IS TOO DRASTIC AND RADICAL. THEY TRY TO COME UP WITH MORE IDEAS.

MEANWHILE, BERTA HAS BEEN IN THE HOSPITAL FOR DAYS. TODAY HAPPENS TO BE HIS BIRTHDAY.




That poor woman, I heard from the nurses that her husband did that to her.


Where's the bastard now?








My baby sister's all grown up.
I think it's official, they're a couple.
Look how sweet they are.




Aw, we're sweet too!




People are
staring.

Let them! I love you
and I'll shout it
from the rooftops!



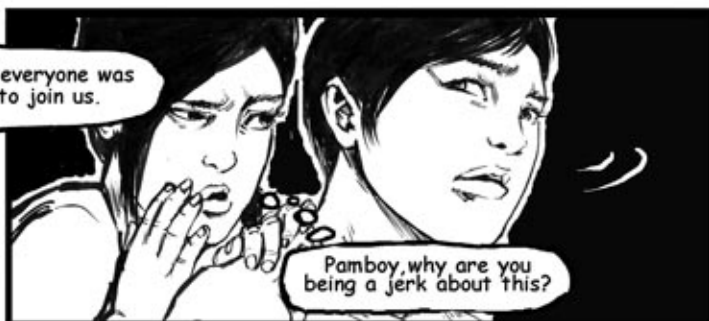
Do you doubt my
love for you?

Not
anymore.



Aw, how sweet!

You got a camera,
Glenda? Take our
picture please?



A COMMOTION BREAKS OUT. DOCTORS AND NURSES
ON BREAK RUSH TO RESPOND TO AN EMERGENCY.



BERTA WENT INTO CARDIAC ARREST.



THE DOCTORS AND NURSES COULD NOT SAVE HIM.

THE FRIENDS ALL MAKE A VOW TO STRENGTHEN THE GROUP.



AFTER BERTA'S BURIAL, PAMBOY AND THE GANG STRENGTHEN THEIR EFFORTS TO EDUCATE THEMSELVES ON HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES.



THEY VOLUNTEER TO GATHER SIGNATURES FOR THE PETITION TO SAVE THE RESIDENTS OF STA. ELENA FROM EVICTION.



BUT THE EXODUS CONTINUES FOR FAMILIES WHO HAVE LOST HOPE.



MEANWHILE, A STRANGER APPEARS AT PAMBOY'S OFFICE DEMANDING AN AUDIENCE WITH PAMBOY'S BOSS.

Consider your company's reputation. Her presence could cause a scandal.

Pamboy has been with us a long time and she is an excellent employee.

But she's a dyke! That makes her immoral. She's dating a relative of mine. A reputable company such as yours shouldn't employ the likes of her.

Her personal affairs are no concern of mine.

It can hurt your company when people learn you're protecting a dyke.

THE STRANGER'S VISIT LEAVES PAMBOY'S BOSS IN A BELEAGUERED STATE.

PAMBOY USUALLY SPENDS HER LUNCH BREAKS DISCUSSING IMPORTANT ISSUES WITH HER CO-WORKERS

TODAY, PAMBOY DISCUSSES "THE YOGYAKARTA PRINCIPLES," WHICH ADDRESS HUMAN RIGHTS.

Pamboy, the boss wants to see you in his office after lunch.

PAMBOY ARRIVES AT HER BOSS' OFFICE STILL HOLDING A COPY OF "THE YOGYAKARTA PRINCIPLES."

You said you wanted to see me, Sir?

Please have a seat.

*CONTACT GALANG TO OBTAIN A COPY OF "THE YOGYAKARTA PRINCIPLES."

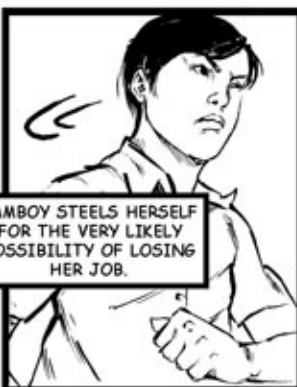




With due respect,
I don't see how this is
relevant to my work
performance.



Your performance has been
exemplary. But Melody's relatives
are threatening to start a ruckus.
I don't want the office to get
involved in a controversy.



PAMBOY STEELS HERSELF
FOR THE VERY LIKELY
POSSIBILITY OF LOSING
HER JOB.

PAMBOY LEAVES BEHIND HER COPY OF "THE YOGYAKARTA PRINCIPLES." HER BOSS HESITANTLY LEAFS THROUGH IT.



PAMBOY GOES HOME FEELING COMPLETELY DEJECTED. BUT SHE IS
DETERMINED TO FIGHT IF SHE GETS TERMINATED FOR BEING A LESBIAN.



STRUGGLING WITH IMPENDING EVICTION AND TERMINATION, PAMBOY WONDERS IF THERE REALLY IS LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL.



IT'S APPARENT THAT STA. ELENA SHARES PAMBOY'S SENSE OF HOPELESSNESS AND FOREBODING.



THE FIRE SPREADS QUICKLY, CONSUMING EVERYTHING IN ITS PATH. IN POOR NEIGHBORHOODS LIKE STA. ELENA, HOUSES ARE PRACTICALLY MADE OF TINDER.



Hurry!

EARLY MORNING, A FIRE BREAKS OUT IN AN ABANDONED HOUSE ADJOINING PAMBOY'S.



Fire! Fire!

Everyone out!

Help!

THE SPIRIT OF "BAYANIHAN" COMES ALIVE ONCE MORE.



PAMBOY'S HOME BORE THE BRUNT OF THE CATASTROPHE.



PAMBOY'S AT THE STORE,
SALVAGING WHATEVER FOOD
SHE COULD FIND. EVACUEES
WILL GO HUNGRY AND SUCH
PROVISIONS CAN GO A
LONG WAY.





Melody really loves you,
she's willing to risk her
life for you.



IN A MATTER OF MINUTES, PAMBOY'S HOUSE AND THE REST OF THE HOUSES IN THE VICINITY ARE COMPLETELY GUTTED.



THE FIREFIGHTERS FINALLY ARRIVE.




AMIDST THE ANGUISH AND GRIEF, GLENDA IS
RELIEVED TO FIND THAT JOEY IS SAFE.

I'm so sorry I wasn't
able to help.


It's okay.




JACK AND JILL'S HOME WAS NOT SPARED. ALL THEY WERE ABLE TO SAVE WERE SOME CLOTHES.




We've lost everything we ever worked for. Jack! Everything!



We have each other, that's all that matters! Come, our neighbors need help!



INSTEAD OF WALLOWING IN GRIEF, JACK AND JILL DO WHAT THEY CAN TO HELP THEIR NEIGHBORS.



THE COMMUNITY DEMONSTRATES THE TRUE MEANING OF "BAYANIHAN." THE FIRE IS EXTINGUISHED AND PARTS OF STA. ELENA ARE SAVED.

A FEW INJURIES, BUT THANKFULLY NO CASUALTIES. MOST OF THE VICTIMS SEEK REFUGE IN A NEARBY PLAYGROUND, INCLUDING PAMBOY'S FAMILY, JINKY, JACK, JILL, BRAD, AND MILES.



MELODY AND JOEY SOON JOIN THEM, BEARING FOOD AND CLOTHES.



THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GROUP ARRIVE SOON AFTER WITH MORE RELIEF GOODS.



AFTER A FEW DAYS, THE GROUP HOLDS A MEETING. PAMBOY PRESIDES.



THE GROUP IS TAKEN ABACK BY BRAD AND MILES' SURPRISING NEWS.



THEY'RE SAD TO SEE THEIR FRIENDS GO, BUT THEY SEND THEM OFF WITH LOVE AND WELL WISHES.



SOME DAYS AFTER, A GROUP
OF ARMED MEN FENCE IN
THE GUTTED AREAS OF
THE COMMUNITY.

THERE'S NOTHING THE
RESIDENTS CAN DO BUT
WATCH AND WAIT.

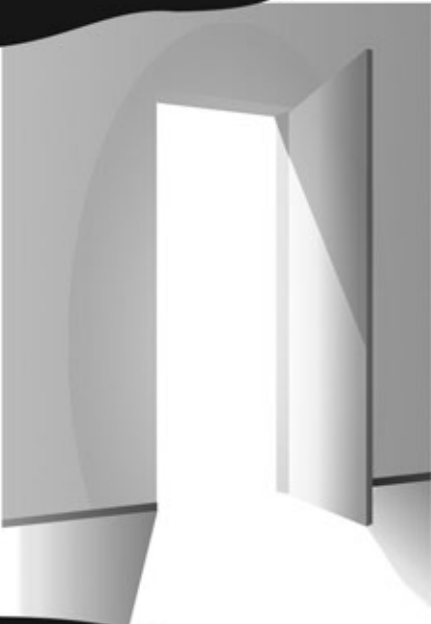


AS SOON AS THE
MERCENARIES LEAVE,
OUR HEROES GET BUSY.





WHEREVER THEIR ADVENTURES TAKE OUR VALIANT HEROES, FOR AS LONG AS THEY REMAIN STRONG AND UNITED IN THEIR PURSUIT OF JUSTICE AND EQUALITY, THEY WILL EMERGE TRIUMPHANT FROM THE ASHES OF THE PAST, AND LET RISE A NEW ORDER.



“What Does ‘Coming Out of the Closet’ Mean?”

“Coming out of the closet” refers to the process of accepting and affirming one’s identity and usually applies to sexual minorities like lesbians, gays, bisexuals or transgenders (LGBTs). The popular expression figuratively describes the psychological process LGBTs go through in their journey towards self-acceptance.

“Must All Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, and Transgenders Come out?”

Although coming out helps to promote human rights because embracing your identity allows you to freely participate and contribute to the LGBT/sexual rights discourse, no one should be forced or pressured to come out. Coming out is a personal decision. It is the person’s prerogative to choose to whom, when, where, and under which circumstances to come out. Some experience great relief by coming out but there are also those who suffer rejection and persecution as a result of coming out.

"What is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women?"

Women activists from South America and other parts of the world have been observing November 25 as a day against violence since 1981. The date commemorates the brutal assassination in 1960 of the Mirabal sisters who were political activists in the Dominican Republic. In 1999, 79 member states at the United Nations General Assembly designated November 25 as the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women (VAW).



Violence against women and girls is a problem of pandemic proportions. According to the UN General Assembly, at least one out of every three women around the world has been beaten, coerced into sex or otherwise abused in her lifetime with the abuser usually someone known to her.

Governments, branches of the United Nations, and other organizations are encouraged to organize activities on this day to raise public awareness of the problem of violence against women. Violence Against Women or VAW refers broadly to action, speech or behavior that causes physical, sexual or psychological harm on women.

"Does Violence Against Lesbians Qualify as Violence Against Women?"

Yes, it does. The Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act of 2004 provides that VAWC refers to any act or a series of acts committed by any person against a woman who is his wife, former wife, or against a woman with whom the person has or had a sexual or dating relationship, or with whom he has a common child, or against her child whether legitimate or illegitimate, which result in or is likely to result in physical, sexual, psychological harm or suffering, or economic abuse.



Eudy Simelane, a South African football star and lesbian activist, was raped, beaten and then stabbed to death.

Thus, it is possible for a lesbian to suffer violence at the hands of a current or former spouse, boyfriend, sexual and romantic partner, or her mother's spouse or intimate partner who may or may not be the lesbian's own father. The most common forms of violence are rape, battery, intimidation, assault, harassment, and forced prostitution.

In the last 10 years:

- 31 lesbian women have been murdered because of their sexuality
- More than 10 lesbians a week are raped or gangraped in Cape Town alone
- 150 women are raped every day in South Africa
- For every 25 men accused of rape in South Africa, 24 walk free

Source: Hate crimes: the rise of "corrective" rape in South Africa (actionaid.org)



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.

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