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 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).

AML

*Bayanihan (pronounced [bajəˈnihaŋ]) refers to a spirit of communal unity or cooperative effort. Bayanihan is depicted in this mural by Filipino National Artist Carlos V. Francioso, 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.

“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 LB Ts to help or better themselves. Its initiatives include trainings, workshops, action researches, and the publication of popular education (PopEd) materials, such as Tatsulok Komiks.
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.

Where are you off to, Lara?
We're sick of living in constant fear. We got a little bit of money and found a new place.

Money?

We decided to sell our property. It's for the best.

What?

To whom?

HECK, YOU KNOW WHO, WHO ELSE WANTS IT THAT BADLY? WE'RE JUST THE FIRST OF MANY... IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF TIME...

THE UNSETTLING TURN OF EVENTS OCCUPIES PAMBOY'S HOUSEHOLD.

Everyone's talking about it, something really awful is going on.

It's true.

Mom, all kinds of awful things have been going on for some time now.

Come on in! Don't be shy!

THE CONVERSATION IS INTERRUPTED AS GLENDA ARRIVES WITH SOMEONE IN TOW.

Everyone, meet my friend, Joey!

Good evening...

She's on her way home but she needs to use the bathroom real quick.

I'm so embarrassed, I told you I could hold it in.

Holding it in wrecks havoc on your bladder.
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.
Glenda, people will condemn and persecute you, make you feel as if loving is a crime and that you’re less than human. We have to be brave to fight for our rights and those of our kind.

Pamboy is proud of her sister for coming out. But she knows that the road up ahead is going to be bumpy.

Meanwhile, the campaign to forcibly evict the residents goes in full swing. Berta is defiant as ever. If you’re smart, you’ll take our offer. If you’re smart, you’ll leave us alone! Run along now, we’ll never give up our right as residents for your pathetic offer!

That faggot has some nerve!

Unbeknownst to Berta, his defiance may actually cost him his life.

I hate faggots! We should teach him a lesson!
BERTA WALKS JINKY HOME.

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

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.

Berta!

He could be in trouble!
JINKY FINDS BERTA'S BATTERED BODY.

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

NO!! BERTA!!

THE GANG IS DEVASTATED. THEY COME TOGETHER TO CARE FOR 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 DRAMATIC 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?
In jail.

That's where he belongs!

And to think you would have suffered the same fate, Jack.

I've changed, Brad! Ask Jill!

How's the patient doing, Doc?

We're closely monitoring him. He's doing better today.

Pamboy and Melody were relieved to hear that Berta's doing better.

Despite the difficulties faced by our heroes, romance blooms between Glenda and Joey.

Are you sure? You don't think we're moving too fast?

I really hope Berta makes a full recovery.

We love each other so why wait?
GLENDA AND JOEY HAD NO IDEA THEY WERE BEING WATCHED.

Pamboy, isn't that Glenda?

GLENDA: Yep.

Are you sure?

Would I be holding hands with you if I weren't?

Uhm....

 Aren't you worried?

Why should I be? We talked about it. She knows what she's getting into.

I admit, I'm a little jealous.

She and Joey look so happy. They seem so sure about their feelings for each other.

Aren't you sure about my feelings for you?

How come?

I turned a guy down for you. I chose you.
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?

Aw, how sweet!

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

Not anymore
Say cheese!

Ate Melody, meet Joey.
Hello!
Hi there!
Nice to meet you!

Joey's joining the group.
Why?

You did say everyone was welcome to join us.

Sorry, but do you know what you're getting into?
I do. Lesbians must help each other defend and promote our rights. Who else would do it but us?

Pamboy, why are you being a jerk about this?
PAMBOY WAS THOROUGHLY IMPRESSED.

Well said!
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.

We should strive harder to help and protect each other in honor of Berta's memory.

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.

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.

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

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.

PAMBOY ARRIVES AT HER BOSS’ OFFICE STILL HOLDING A COPY OF “THE YOGYAKARTA PRINCIPLES.”

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

You said you wanted to see me. See?

CONTACT GALANG TO OBTAIN A COPY OF “THE YOGYAKARTA PRINCIPLES.”
PAMBOY IS TAKEN ABACK BY HER BOSS' QUESTION.

Who is the nursing student who often comes here to see you?

Sir?

Is Melody her name?

Why do you ask?

I had a visitor earlier. Claims to be a relative of Melody's.

HE RECOUNTS WHAT TRANSPRIED DURING THE STRANGER'S VISIT. PAMBOY IS DISTRAUGHT.

What is the nature of your relationship with Melody?

Partner?

We're in a relationship.

I have the right not to answer your question. But because I value honesty, Melody is my partner.

But you're both female!
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.

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

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.

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

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

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

Fire! Fire!

Everyone out!

Hurry!

Help!
THE SPIRIT OF "BAYANIHAN" COMES ALIVE ONCE MORE.

PAMBOY'S HOME BORE THE BRUNT OF THE CATASTROPHE.

Everyone, out now! We have to go!

Mom, I can't find my phone!

Don't risk your life for a phone!

Where's Pamboy?

Pamboy's at the store, salvaging whatever food she could find. Evacuees will go hungry and such provisions can go a long way.

Pamboy! Get out of there now!

Melody! What are you doing here!

Looking for you! We have to leave! It's too dangerous!
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.

We survived a tragedy and we have each other. We shall overcome.
THE GROUP IS TAKEN ABACK BY BRAD AND MILES’ SURPRISING NEWS.

We’re saying goodbye.

Where are you going?

We’re moving to the province.

We have a chance to start over and tend to Brad’s land.

It’s our land, Miles.

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.

OFF LIMITS TO THE PUBLIC

AZUNCION DEVELOPMENT CORP

OFF LIMITS TO THE PUBLIC

NO TRESPASSING

OFF LIMITS TO THE PUBLIC

UNITED AGAINST LANDGRABBING!

OUR RIGHTS ARE NOT FOR SALE!

RESPECT LESBIAN RIGHTS!

LESBIAN RIGHTS ARE HUMAN RIGHTS!

VIOLENCE AGAINST LESBIAN IS VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN!

LOVE IS A HUMAN RIGHT!

LESBIAN RIGHTS

LESBIAN POWER
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.

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.

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

In the last 10 years:

- 31 lesbian women have been murdered because of their sexuality
- More than 10 lesbians a week are raped or gang raped 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)
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
Published by GALANG Philippines, Inc.
Under the management and coordination of Anne Lim
Translation, editing, and layout by Armina Gracia T. Velarde

GALANG thanks its partners for their support in having Tatsulok Komiks published.

Astraea
LESBIAN FOUNDATION
FOR JUSTICE

Global Fund
for Women

Ma Baya
(she changes the world)

the fund
for global human rights

securing dignity and freedom for people worldwide

Email: galangphilippines@gmail.com
inquiry@galangphilippines.org
Facebook: GALANG Philippines
Website: www.galangphilippines.org
Telefax: +63 2 435 4103
Mobile: +63 927 293 3731
Address: Unit 312 Llanar Building, 77 Xavierville Avenue
corner B. Gonzales Street, Loyola Heights
Quezon City, Metro Manila 1108, Philippines

COPYRIGHT NOTICE
No part of this publication may be used, translated or reproduced in any form without first obtaining written permission from the publisher.