

# Tripping, Falling and Getting Back up again



The road to gender equality is the same for all- a staircase. The women, gays, lesbians and transgenders of the country have tripped and fallen on this staircase, but the chances of reaching the top is not impossible.

This is because the Filipinos are slowly accepting all genders, even though each gender must spend years and probably decades on one step before moving to a higher one. The women in the country are on their way to gaining full rights and recognition, while the lesbian, gay and transgenders are only one step behind.

It is visible that Filipino women are now being held with high regard. According to the World Economic Forum, the Philippines ranked ninth in the top 10 countries where women face the least discrimination, and was the only Asian country in the list. In addition, the Philippines is the country with the most women in senior management positions, proving that the country is now the home of talented and capable women. The likes of Cory Aquino, Miriam Santiago and other known women prove just that.

This is a result of movements that help in promoting these. Examples are the formation of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (Cedaw), the local Kalakasan organization, the Sidlak Gender Resource Center in Central Visayas as well as the passage of some laws.

These laws include the Anti-Violence against Women and their Children Act of 2004 and the passage of the Magna Carta of Women. Gender equality is now an official national policy. However, laws aren't enough. Just because corruption is illegal doesn't mean it will die out easily. The same is true with women empowerment. No matter how much we would like to believe that we are working on it, the implementation is more difficult that it sounds.

Patriarchy and misogyny will remain a strong idea in many households. Men will continue to engage in vices, leaving women with all the household work, but remaining in control. Women's contributions will still not be given full attention. Men will remain the leaders in political issues, and leave women to take on only supportive roles. For younger women, they will still be given less opportunities due to discriminatory religions beliefs, and tolerate abuse in word or action for their gender. They will still also be deprived on education and reproductive health just because they were sexually abused by family, friends or strangers. **(WATCH TO SEE REAL-LIFE STORIES <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I209AiaLago>)**

However, the Women Empowerment and Development Program is working on new ideas to eliminate these old conceptions of women. One is to work on capability building and productivity development, another is the micro-enterprise lending facility, one more is networking and last is the campaign for gender sensitivity. In order for women to show their capabilities, they need to be freed of the stereotyped roles they were labeled for in the early times by engaging activities that prove their worth.



More programs must be created and more resources must be dedicated to the improvement of gender equality in the country, especially now that laws have been passed allowing its promotion.

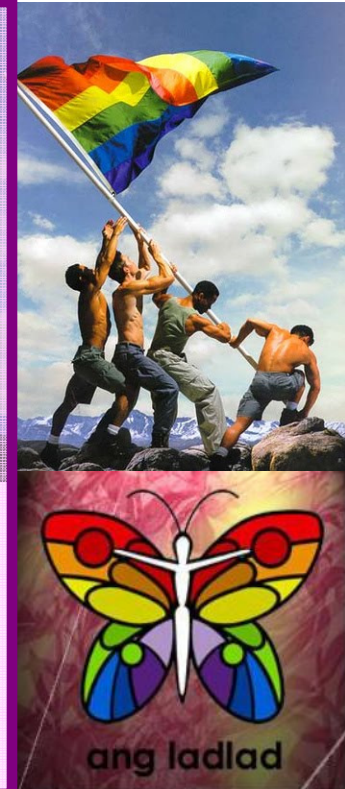
The same cannot be said, however, for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBTs) in the country. They still cannot get past the legal issues.

There are dozens of LGBT groups that have been proudly waving their flag. Among these include the UP Babaylan, ProGray, LAGABLAB, LeAP and Gorgeous and Young. They have been fighting for their rights in various venues like at the annual Manila Pride March, but always to the disapproval of many.

Although legislation supporting same-sex marriage in the Philippines has been introduced in the Philippine legislature several times, none have been passed. Their most recent movement is the proposal of the group, Ang Ladlad, to become an accredited group for the 2010 elections. They were declined in 2004 on the grounds that the organization does not formally represent a marginalized group and were declined this year due to immorality. **(SEE [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FJjsdXZLi\\_0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FJjsdXZLi_0) FOR THE NEWS CLIP)**

Would it take centuries for the LGBTs to be accepted in the community, just like it took centuries for women to be accepted? They will take it one step at a time. With their high heels on, they will fight for their rights.

Sooner or later, I am sure that they will be as accepted as women are today. The country might as well listen to them now, because gender equality is bound to happen, and all on the road to this will only get back up again every time they trip and fall.



### **SOURCES:**

BY: GERALDINE BANIQUED, Pasig City (NCR) English Online Writing HS

#### **1) Wikipedia**

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/LGBT\\_in\\_the\\_Philippines](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/LGBT_in_the_Philippines)

#### **2) Asia Pacific YMCA**

[http://www.asiapacificymca.org/mission/po/po\\_philippines.html](http://www.asiapacificymca.org/mission/po/po_philippines.html)

#### **3) National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women**

<http://www.ncrfw.gov.ph/>  
<http://www.ncrfw.gov.ph/index.php/statistics-on-filipino-women/14-factsheets-on-filipino-women>

#### **4) Inquirer.net**

<http://globalnation.inquirer.net/news/breakingnews/view/20091028-232703/Philippines-in-top-10-on-gender-equality--WEF>  
<http://opinion.inquirer.net/inquireropinion/talkofthetown/view/20090906-223768/Gender-equality-now-a-national-policy>  
<http://business.inquirer.net/money/breakingnews/view/20090314-194157/RP-has-most-women-business-execs>

#### **5) Google Images, Flickr**

(all images were taken from Google Images or from Flickr)