



# **ASEAN SOGIE CAUCUS**

**SOGIE INTERSECTIONS**  
*and*  
**RAINBOW COALITION**

A ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION ON LOCATING  
THE INTERSECTIONS OF LGBTIQ ISSUES

JUNE 10, 2015 AT THE LA BREZA HOTEL, QUEZON CITY



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Southeast Asia Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression Caucus, Inc.

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACSC	ASEAN Civil Society Conference
ADB	anti-discrimination bill
APTN	ASIA Pacific Transgender Network
ASC	ASEAN SOGIE Caucus
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CS	civil society
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
FSL	Filipino sign language
HR	human rights
HRT	hormonal replacement therapy
HRV	human rights violations
IGLHRC	International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission
IGLYO	International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer Youth and Student Organization
LGBTIQ	lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer
NHRI	national human rights institutions
NGO	non-governmental organization
OFW	overseas Filipino workers
SOGIE	sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression
SOGIE ADB	SOGIE Anti-Discrimination Bill
UDHA	Urban Development and Housing Act
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The objectives of the SOGIE roundtable discussion were to: 1) gain a deeper understanding of the academic concept of intersectionality and its operationability for LGBTIQ activism/work; 2) conduct dialogues and build alliances and coalitions with activists and CS actors outside the LGBTIQ movement working on such topics as child rights, rights of the elderly, persons with disabilities, migrant rights and others; and 3) develop preliminary ideas on how to apply the concept of intersectionality to inform LGBTIQ activism.

The key discussion points centered around the following themes: human rights and the feminist origins of the concept of intersectionality; intersectionality as a key analytical tool for understanding LGBTIQ people and their problems/issues; practical usage of the concept for broader civil society engagement with LGBTIQ and SOGIE issues, as well as expanding LGBTIQ activism beyond SOGIE issues; and the connection between SOGIE and other issues such as child rights, aging, migration, ethnicity, people with disabilities and poverty.

The key recommendations that have been identified were the following: applying intersectionality in the analysis of the multiple forms of discrimination that LGBTIQ people face and multiple perspectives of these forms of discrimination, either for the production of theoretical knowledge (i.e. research) or the creation of better development programs for LGBTIQ; and using the concept in creating, popularizing and advocating for laws that will protect LGBTIQ people.



# OPENING REMARKS AND KEYNOTE ADDRESS

By RYAN SILVERIO  
Regional Coordinator of ASEAN SOGIE Caucus (ASC)

Ryan gave the opening remarks. He introduced ASC, a regional organization composed of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ) activists from eight countries in Southeast Asia. ASC engages with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and



with civil society (CS) groups on human rights (HR) decisions and plans of action and also helps build a stronger LGBTIQ movement in the Southeast Asian region.

The purpose of the roundtable discussion on sexual orientation and gender identity and expression (SOGIE) intersections was to look at the intersectional ties of SOGIE with other forms of discrimination, marginalization and oppression. The idea to have a roundtable discussion on intersectionalities of SOGIE came about in May 2015 at the ASEAN Civil Society Conference (ACSC) through the narrative stories of ordinary LGBTIQs, which ASC was able to document. Ryan said, “During the ACSC, we had a dialogue with fellow LGBTIQ activists from our region. Atrans man activist who works as a domestic helper in Malaysia shared with us his experience of alienation with the unreceptive and unwelcoming attitudes of Malaysian culture towards transgender people. At the same time, his work as a domestic helper limits him from accessing hormones that he finds vital for living as a trans man.” Another story was that of a gay activist from Cambodia who said that while the recognition of LGBT rights is important, other issues such as poverty, access to livelihood and employment areas equally—or possibly even more—important and require much attention from LGBTIQ activists. These two and other stories motivated ASC to look at the multiple forms of discrimination that LGBTIQ communities in the region experience on a day-to-day basis, thus leading to the roundtable discussion on intersectionality of SOGIE.

The objectives of the workshop were to: 1) gain a deeper understanding of the academic concept of intersectionality and its operationability for LGBTIQ activism/work; 2) conduct dialogues and build alliance and coalition with activists and CS actors outside the LGBTIQ movement working on such as child rights, rights of the elderly, persons with disabilities, migrant rights and others; and 3) develop preliminary ideas on how to apply intersectionality to inform LGBTIQ activism/work.

A round of introductions by participants in the roundtable discussion followed the opening remarks.



# INTERSECTIONALITY: THE FEMINIST APPROACH

By MA. THERESA DE VELA  
Chairperson, Department of International Studies,  
Miriam College

Ma. Theresa “Tesa” De Vela, professor and long-time feminist activist, spoke on the concept of intersectionality from a human rights and feminist perspective. She conducted an exercise in which participants were asked to reflect on the question “What identity—not professional, but personal—are you carrying with you right now at the roundtable discussion?” The participants were asked to share their answers to the question to the person sitting next to them. After the exercise, in which she also participated, she said that she came to the roundtable discussion carrying several identities: as an academic trying to unpack the concept of intersectionality; as a member of the LGBTIQ community with a loving partner who also happens to be in academia and whose relationship is generally accepted in their work setting and by their families; and as a feminist activist who thinks the concept of intersectionality can be traced to feminist theories.



Theresa identified and explained the premises behind highlighting intersectionality in her presentation. These were:

1. How we think shapes/determines what we do and how we do things.
2. Collective action and social movements are powerful. Because ASC recognizes the power of collective action, the roundtable discussion focuses on the collective potential of marginalized groups.
3. Social reality is complex, dynamic and fluid.
4. While intersectionality is not new, ways for its effective application in the field of social activism and organizing are still being discovered. The participants of the roundtable discussion should be able to generate new ideas on how the concept can be effectively used for coalition building.
5. SOGIE refers to three discrete categories: sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression. Intersectionality is already being practiced when these discrete categories are merged.

The concept of intersectionality is valuable in several ways. It can serve as tool for analyzing how SOGIE is connected with marginalized people’s beliefs, identities, contexts and structures. It can also serve as a mechanism for understanding how intersections shape experiences of oppression and liberation. Finally, it can serve as a tool for human rights advocacy work because it adds dimension in understanding inequality/inequity between and among LGBTIQ people.

Theresa shared several definitions of the concept of intersectionality by feminists and activists, as well as images that convey intersectionality:

“...a particular way of understanding social location in terms of crisscross systems of oppression” (Collins, 2000).

“...analysis claiming that systems of race, social class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nation, and age form mutually constructing features of social organization which shape [Black women’s] experiences and, in turn, are shaped by [Black women]” (Collins, 2000).

“...a tool for analysis, advocacy and policy development that addresses multiple discriminations and helps us understand how different sets of identities impact access to rights and opportunities” (AWID, 2004).

“as a kind of ‘grand theory’, useful for understanding connections between individuals’ lived experiences, socially structured institutional arrangements, and collective political mobilizations” (Crenshaw, 1991).

Theresa then suggested several approaches in understanding intersectionality. The first is “anti-categorical/systemic model”, which she described as placing emphasis on the systemic problems that impinge upon different groups of people and identities. For instance, the denial of human rights of LGBTIQ people in one country can be related to the larger problem of religious fundamentalism in that particular country. Another example is the feminist movement in the Philippines, which started with the leftist movement and was borne out of the systemic class problems in the country.

The second approach is called “intra-categorical/inclusion-voice model”, which can be described as giving voice to the marginalized individuals within the marginalized groups. An example is giving voice to individuals with “butch” or “tomboy” identities who are more discriminated against compared to those with “lesbian” or “femme” identities. There is anecdotal evidence of butch and tomboys experiencing rape so they would ‘become women.’

Finally, the last approach is called “inter-categorical/relational process model”, which looks into different interrelated aspects of one’s life. For instance, how does sexual orientation and class shape the experiences of gay men? How does a middle-class gay man living with HIV experience life differently compared to a poor gay man living with HIV?

How does one apply an intersectional analysis of SOGIE? Which categories should be considered? How many can be handled in a practical way? How can their intersections be understood? Theresa provided four ways in answering these interrelated questions. The first is by defining identity in relation to others, such as “We are queer because they are straight. We are women because they are men. We are disabled because they are abled.” The second is by identifying symbolic representations, which means identifying norms, values, traditions and ideologies according to context, and how they are embedded in either the dominant ideology or the emerging alternative ideology. The third is by finding references to social structures, identifying institutions that are related to one’s identities and engaging with these institutions. Finally, by identifying denominating interrelations of central categories on three levels and identifying which among the categories is the most important. She mentioned research conducted on gay men, which found out that gay men value family over other things. If the rest of the world can reject them but their families accept them, they are well. Otherwise, if their families reject them, they have difficulty in finding acceptance anywhere else.



# SOGIE AND CHILD RIGHTS

By KLARISE ESTORNINOS  
Director, Adhikain Para Sa Karapatang Pambata,  
Ateneo Human Rights Center

Klarise Estorninos looked at the intersections of SOGIE and child rights. She started the presentation by laying out facts pertaining to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which the Philippines signed during the first year of its existence despite already having laws for children before the creation of the convention. She identified the four principles by which CS should abide whenever child rights are invoked: non-discrimination; respect for the views of children; the best interest of the child; and a child's right to survival and development. Klarise focused on the principle of non-discrimination and article two of the CRC:

States Parties shall respect and ensure the rights set forth in the present Convention to each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status.

In this principle, while SOGIE is not explicitly stated, it still covers SOGIE. While there are no binding international instruments that directly address SOGIE-based discrimination of children, the committee responsible for CRC has mentioned that children can be discriminated based on SOGIE in relation to accessing health services.

Although the CRC is one of the most widely ratified conventions, there are still about 80 countries—including some ASEAN member states—that criminally penalize children based on their SOGIE. Some of the most common forms of SOGIE-based discrimination occur in school and family settings. Klarise shared the story of a gay-identified intern at the Ateneo De Manila University. The intern was not out to his family but his religious parents found out about his sexuality when they discovered pornographic magazines in his bedroom. As a result, the parents had the intern exorcised by a Catholic priest, and the experience has had deep psychological effects on him, which has led him to contemplate committing suicide. Another story was that of corrective rape. Another gay-identified intern at the same university had his father and uncles take him to a sex establishment and ask a female prostitute to turn him into a man ("*Gawin mo yang lalake.*"). Klarise mentioned that the stories of the interns reflect studies that have found that LGBTIQ children are more susceptible to SOGIE-based hatred and violence.



A child does not only  
have the right to life  
but the right to a good life.  
—Klarise Estorninos

Klarise offered three suggestions to address the issue of SOGIE-based hatred and violence. One is to repeal discriminatory laws against LGBTIQ children. An example would be the stipulation in the family code where homosexuality is grounds for marital separation because it supposedly defies definition of a person with a good moral character. Another suggestion is to create laws that will engender an enabling environment for LGBTIQ children, since parents of LGBTIQ children are also often discriminated against. Finally, the state and communities need to enforce positive social norms that recognize and welcome diversity.

Klarise's reflection of the much touted perception of the Philippines as a gay-friendly country is that more work needs to be done to improve the situation for LGBTIQ children in the country. She concluded by echoing the statement made by the current United Nations (UN) Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, "Let me say this loud and clear: lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people are entitled to the same rights as everyone else. They, too, are born free and equal."



# SOGIE AND AGING

By AURA SEVILLA  
Advocacy Officer, Coalition of Services  
for the Elderly

Aura Sevilla started her presentation by informing the participants that while issues faced by elderly LGBTIQ people in general are not commonly discussed in the mainstream—and the lack of conventions for older people make it more difficult to achieve their rights—SOGIE does not stop at the age of 50. This means that SOGIE-based discrimination such as homophobia, transphobia and heterosexism continue to effect people in old age. In her presentation, Klarise distinguished the term old age from the term senior citizen, with the latter reflecting chronological age and the former constituting part of the life cycle.



The issues related to aging need attention. At the moment, seven percent of the world's population is over 60 years old. In the Philippines, close to seven percent of the total population are senior citizens, making the country two percent short of being considered an aging country. The total population of the elderly in the world is growing faster than the entire population, and life expectancies of older people are becoming longer with technology and modern medicine. The fertility rate is, however, decreasing. The implications of this is increased population, more older persons than babies being born, and a decrease in the number of people supporting older persons from 1:11 in 1975 to 1:6 by 2020. The implication for older LGBTIQs is that considering many LGBTIQs do not raise their own families, they are more at risk for loneliness and abandonment.

In terms of the right to work, a large percentage of older persons (39%) still work. Twenty-nine percent (29%) of these people rely on their earnings to live. Some of the most common occupations are in the fields of agriculture for men and skilled labor for women. For older LGBTIQs, the predominant occupation is hairdressing.

Regarding the right to social security, a majority of older people lack income security. In terms of right to health, 22% of elderly males and 24% of elderly females cannot meet their needed healthcare needs. In addition, despite social benefits such as senior-citizen discounts, financially-secure elderly people benefit more from these benefits than do poor elderly people.

The elderly often face verbal abuse, such as name calling, based on their age. LGBTIQs face extra vulnerability to verbal abuse. They suffer verbal abuses from their own families and cope with these abuses by leaving their fate to their religion.

In terms of the right to equality, Aura said that the term *ageism* has a negative connotation and is a form of negative stereotyping of persons based on age. For instance, older people are often associated with witchcraft.

In summary, the combination of ageism, homophobia, heterosexism and transphobia leads to the multi-faceted and aggravated discrimination of elderly LGBTIQs.

# SOGIE AND MIGRATION

By CLAIRE LUCZON

Associate of Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN) and Women and Gender Institute (WAGI) at Miriam College



Claire Luczon identified the reasons LGBTIQ people migrate: to be able to access marriage equality and to avoid SOGIE-based discrimination. She showed a video of the wedding of the first Filipino lesbian ever to receive a same-sex marriage fiancé visa from the United States Embassy in Manila. She also showed a video, produced by Immigration Equality, about different LGBTIQ people all over the world, seeking asylum in other countries and sharing their experiences.

Claire enumerated the various vulnerabilities of overseas Filipino workers (OFW) who are members of LGBTIQ communities. Some OFWs are physically and sexually abused and then blackmailed. Some of them are persecuted and punished because of their perceived SOGIE. For instance, some Filipino male workers in Saudi Arabia and other countries in the Middle East experience being labeled as illegal, which is punishable by lashing. Another example is the memorandum of the Embassy of Saudi Arabia to the Philippines, which requires recruiters to screen applicant's SOGIE or risk termination of accreditation. The Catholic institution's response was for OFWs to restrict employment in the Middle East, thus limiting the movements of LGBTIQ people.

LGBTIQ asylum seekers from and in the Philippines also experience discrimination and complex sets of problems because of their SOGIE. Article one of the 1951 UN convention on the rights of refugees defines an asylum seeker as:

A person who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.

LGBTIQ people can invoke this article in seeking asylum status, as they can be categorized as a particular social group. An anecdote from a participant illustrated this. A 17-year old female transgender person from Saudi Arabia attempted to escape the country and travel to New Zealand. She was stopped at the immigration department as she was underage and not accompanied by a guardian. She sought asylum in the Philippines. With the help of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the Philippine government recognized her as a refugee and gave her refugee status.

When you talk about intersectionality,  
you talk about the layers of discrimination.  
I'm a woman, I'm crazy, I'm an unmarried  
mother, I'm in a lesbian relationship,  
I'm ostracized by my church, so you know these  
are the layers that make it so hard for us to get  
to that goal of fulfilling our human rights.

—Claire Luczon

However, most LGBTIQ asylum seekers experience discrimination from governments. For instance, asylum seekers in the United Kingdom (UK) experience multiple forms of discrimination. They are often asked the demeaning question “Why do you choose to be homosexual when you know that it is illegal in your country?”

There are cases in which LGBTIQ people were forced to show their sex videos to government officials to prove their SOGIE. Some LGBTIQ asylum speakers experience the “discretion test” whereby they are let go by government officials once they can prove that they can be discrete. Claire mentioned a study in the United Kingdom in which 98% of the claims by LGBTIQ asylum seekers were about not being granted asylum. Claire concluded that LGBTIQ migrant people face multiple forms of discrimination based on their being LGBTIQ and being migrants.



## SOGIE AND ETHNICITY

By KRIZIA CONSOLACION  
Board Member, Association of Transgenders in  
the Philippines

Krizia Consolacion began her presentation by describing her multiply identities: as a board member of the Association of Transgender Philippines, an employee in the private sector in Southeast Asia; and as a member of the Bago, an ethnic minority in northern Luzon. Her presentation was a narration of her personal story as a transgender female belonging to the Bagon ethnic group, the discrimination she has experienced for having these two identities, the difficulties in merging these identities, and her advocacy work.

Krizia shared the difficulties she faced growing up:

Life in the province is not easy, most especially during the rainy season because our place is isolated because of the landslides or when the river overflows, and there is only one river that connects our town to other municipalities. With regard to our practices and beliefs, it's also hard if you're transgender because the Bago community is not pro-transgender. It doesn't support transgender people. When transgender people express themselves, the community will not back them up. The older people will tell them, 'That's not good. Kabunian is going to get angry.' Kabunian is the deity of our tribe.

She discovered her transgender identity when in first grade she would try on her sister's dresses and pretend they were evening gowns. She would wrap her head with a towel and imagine it to be long hair. She would act as if she was a contestant in a beauty pageant. While her parents were very supportive of her transgender behavior—which she thinks has helped her have a smooth male-to-female transition—the larger Bago community was not.

Krizia confessed that she was ambitious and wanted to succeed in life, so even when Bago territory had schools, she studied in town. There, she experienced multiple forms of discrimination: for being somebody from the uplands and for being a transgender. At school, she ran for president of the student council, and her opponent told her, "You are from the mountains, and you're gay, so why will we vote for you?" (*Taga third floor ka at bakla so why will we vote for you?*)

When she graduated from college she went back to her hometown and started community organizing with transgendered people. The organization became bigger and today it provides training and workshops on transgender issues, including sexual and reproductive health and rights, hormonal treatment and relationships. Krizia admits that while the organization has been able to educate a few transgender women, some still hold conservative attitudes towards gender and sexuality similar to the mindset of the older generation in the Bago community. She acknowledges that changing the mindset requires time.







Krizia enumerated the current problems faced by transgender people in her community: lack of education on SOGIE and LGBTIQ, lack of access to hormones, lack of support, lack of knowledge on how to combat human rights violence (HRV), and lack of confidence for those who cannot access hormonal replacement therapy (HRT). These problems do not stop her, and she plans to address these through the programs of the organization. In conclusion, she said that being a member of the transgender community is just one aspect of her identity and she is more than her transgender identity. Transgender women and men are part of the larger communities that also shape them as individuals.



# ISSUES/CONCERNS OF THE DEAF LGBTIQ COMMUNITY

By BIBO LEE PEREY  
President, Pinoy Deaf Rainbow



Bibo Lee Perey, President of Pinoy Deaf Rainbow and the newly elected secretary of the Philippine Federation of the Deaf, shared her personal story and the struggles she has undergone as a member of the LGBTIQ community and a person with disability—the “double burden”.

Bibo was born deaf and mute. Growing up deaf and mute in Tagaytay, a city outside Metro Manila, she was often taunted and ridiculed by relatives, neighbors, classmates and even teachers. She grew up hearing hurtful words such as “You are mute, you are a person without a tongue” (*Pipe ka, wala kang dila*). Her family also experienced discrimination and carried this burden while raising her. She recounted a public incident with her brother. The siblings were using public transportation and her brother was communicating with her through sign language. People inside the bus thought both of them were mute and began insulting them. Her brother heard all the hurtful words and ended up starting a fight with the other passengers.

Apart from the discrimination she faced for being deaf and mute, she was also discriminated for being gay. In school, classmates and teachers taunted her with painful words. Some teachers would say, “It’s so unfortunate that you’re gay because you’re intelligent.” (*Sayang ka matalino ka pa naman din kaso bakla ka*). Even when she excelled in school, her teachers bypassed her for the top honors because she was deaf, mute and gay.

She grew up knowing nothing about human rights and took the taunting, cursing and ridicule she suffered from other people as the normal course of life. She had other gay and deaf/mute friends and they provided support to each other.

She joined beauty contests and won several awards and titles. During one question-and-answer session, she was asked what she would do if she won. She responded that she would establish an organization for deaf and mute people. She won that beauty pageant, and three years later (in 2011) she fulfilled her plan by establishing Pinoy Deaf Rainbow. Starting with 50 members, it now has more than 200 members nationwide.

Bibo enumerated the human rights issues that deaf and mute LGBTIQ people experience: lack of recognition of Filipino sign language (FSL) as an official language; double discrimination for being deaf and mute and an LGBTIQ person; discrimination at work and in school; and accessibility.

FSL has not been recognized as an official language for deaf/mute people (unlike variations in other countries such as Japan, South Korea, Thailand, and in Europe). The LGBTIQ people have also invented a specific gay FSL, called *bekimon* (gay lingo), which they use with each other, providing privacy within deaf and mute LGBTIQ communities.

Double discrimination, which refers to being discriminated against for both LGBTIQ and deaf and mute identities, leads to low self-esteem, feelings of hopelessness and confusion. It is similar to being traumatized twice. Within the LGBTIQ community, there is also discrimination against deaf and mute LGBTIQ people. They are seldom invited to events, and when they are invited there are usually no interpreters provided.

Discrimination in the workplace is rampant. Companies often fail to provide interpreters. Many deaf and mute LGBTIQ people have undergraduate degrees but cannot find employment because they are discriminated against for being a person with a disability and a member of the LGBTIQ community. Bibo shared stories of companies discriminating people based on the above factors.

Accessibility refers to lack of access to support for people with disabilities. Bibo gave the example of watching television or a movie, which she cannot understand because there is no interpretation. Seminars and large meetings are also insensitive to the needs of deaf and mute people and usually do not provide interpreters, and such people are therefore left out of the discussions.

Bibo brought up the idea of creating opportunities for collaboration between deaf and mute LGBTIQ people and the larger LGBTIQ movement through the following: supporting LGBTIQ issues through rallies and other activities; participation in LGBTIQ seminars/workshops; and partnering for HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns.



# HOW THE LIVES OF FILIPINO LGBTIQs ARE AFFECTED BY SEXUALITY, POVERTY AND THE LAW

By MARY GYKNELL “GYKY” TAGENTE  
Advocacy Officer, GALANG Philippines



Mary Gyknell “Gyky” Tagente from the non-governmental organization (NGO) Galang Philippines posed the following questions to the participants:

- Why is it important to talk about SOGIE and poverty? (*Bakit importante na pag-usapan ang SOGIE at ang poverty?*)
- What percentage of the Philippine population is rich? What percentage is poor? (*Ilang porsyento sa Pilipinas ang mayaman at mahirap?*)

Gyky said, “*Mas marami ang mahirap, so mas maraming LGBT in general na mahirap, so mas maraming hindi nakaka pag voice out*” (Majority of the population is poor, which affects many people, including LGBTIQ people. These LGBTIQ people very seldom get the opportunity to speak out.)

Gyky presented the results of a research study that looked at the interconnections of poverty, gender, sexuality and SOGIE. The study revealed that institutions such as family and education have major influences on people’s well being. When these institutions discriminate against LGBTIQ people, the LGBTIQ people become insecure and lose their self-esteem. For instance, if bullying of LGBTIQ people is condoned in school settings—not only amongst students, but also between teachers and students—LGBTIQ students end up dropping out of school. This leads to low educational attainment, which in turn affects employment opportunities.

Gyky presented the two research reports that Galang and the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) have conducted. *The Policy Audit: Social Protection Policies and Urban Poor LBTs in the Philippines* (2013) examined the laws and policies, particularly social protection policies (i.e. Social Security System, Government Service Insurance System, PAGIBIG, Phil Health, Urban Development and Housing Act), and the Family Code. The Family Code guides all the institutions of social protection, so discrimination of LGBTIQ people in the Family Code will have negative consequences for these people. For instance, the role of Urban Development and Housing Act (UDHA), which helps homeless informal settlers, discriminates against LGBTIQs by prioritizing a family composed of a mother and a father. She shared a story of a couple that was compelled to move to another place where they felt more accepted.



The second research, *How LBTs Cope with Economic Disadvantage*, tackles how LGBTIQ people cope with the following: labor standards; workplace discrimination and migrant protection; economic contribution and status in the family; and financial independence and sexual freedom. She explained that coping with the economy involves hard work and creativity, or creative ways of self-employment (*malikhaing paggawa ng sariling trabaho*). Another coping mechanism is migration. Gyky shared the story of discrimination against a transgender graduate student who began a midwifery course. She tried to look for employment in another country but was rejected because of her gender expression.

In her conclusion, Gyky emphasized the importance of acceptance by the family and community. She mentioned that it is important to value the evidence-based advocacy in order to move forward. In addition, she advised everyone to visit [www.galangphilippines.org](http://www.galangphilippines.org) to view more reports and details about the organization. Lastly, she emphasized that LGBTIQ people should study cross-solidarity movements to know what actions other CS actors can take to help advocate for the rights of LGBTIQ people and to give them the space for their voices to be heard.



# REPORT: THEMES FROM THE ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

By RON DE VERA  
Board Member, ASEAN SOGIE Caucus

Ron, a member of ASC, gave his observations of the presentations. First, he pointed out that everyone is knowledgeable about human rights frameworks and that everyone knows the roles each one plays as a duty bearer and rights holder. Everyone uses the human rights framework to address intersectionality and discrimination. He provided steps to move forward after the roundtable discussion:

1. There should be laws to protect LGBTIQ people, and CS actors should advocate and lobby for these laws.
2. There needs to be awareness of the laws and of one's rights. "Just because we have the law, it does not mean everything will improve" (*Hindi dahil may batas ka na ay magbabago na ang buhay mo.*) Examples of awareness raising are educational and awareness campaigns. He then pointed out that we are safe when we speak with a group of people that shares the same experiences as we do, but when we move out of that sphere, we encounter different forms of discrimination.
3. We need to document evidence and stories.
4. ASC will conduct research on issues that tackle intersectionality. It is also important to translate research outputs into local languages so that it reaches a wider audience.



## CONCLUSIONS AND THE WAYS FORWARD

### “The Comprehensive Anti-Discrimination Bill: Sweet 16 and Counting”

By GING CRISTOBAL  
Project Coordinator, OutRight Action  
International



Ging, a member of ASC and International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (IGLHRC), interpreted intersectionality as having different socio-cultural-based identities. LGBTIQ people experience intersectional discrimination, or discrimination based not only on their gender and sexuality, but also on other aspects of their lives.

Utopic it may be but we  
all aspire to have a world  
where there are no more  
labels, just beauty.

—Ging Cristobal

The United Nations (UN) has adopted the term SOGIE to address different gender and sexuality-based identities and expressions. Sadly, it has been 16 years since the first anti-discrimination bill was filed in the Philippine Congress and yet the Philippines has yet to enact a set of laws that will protect the LGBTIQ communities.

There were two kinds of anti-discrimination bills in the 16<sup>th</sup> Philippine Congress: the SOGIE Anti-Discrimination Bill (SOGIE ADB) and the Comprehensive Anti-Discrimination Bill (Comprehensive ADB). Both of these bills have a framework of equality and intersectionality and focus on intersectional discrimination. For instance, the case of the Aruba Bar in the Philippines with a “no cross dressing” sign on its door demonstrates the exclusivist nature of Aruba and discrimination of not only transgender women, but also people with lower social statuses.

The Catholic Church has been the main opponent of the anti-discrimination bills, successfully lobbying the Congress and Senate. As a consequence, the hearings related to the bills are always delayed. Opponents reason that passing the bill will pave the way for same-sex marriage, even though the Comprehensive ADB is all-inclusive and does not focus only on LGBTIQ. Ging concluded by expressing how advocacy work on LGBTIQ issues and the anti-discrimination bills through multi-platform social media can help change the situation.

## Introduction to Being LGBT in Asia, Phase 2

By JENSEN BYRNE  
Programme Officer, UNDP



Jensen Byrne, who identifies as a transgender male, works for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and previously worked for the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer Youth and Student Organization (IGLYO) in Brussels. UNDP currently focuses on international human rights law. It is currently implementing “Being LGBT in Asia: Intersectionality and Development”, a program launched in 2013 that focuses on consultation, research and engagement with partners.

The aim of the program is to improve not just the human rights, but also the health, living conditions and the personal and mental wellbeing of LGBTIQ people. The program wants to learn from LGBTIQ people by listening to them and providing them with the space to amplify their voices. The program is the first UN program with a decent amount of funding to deal with SOGIE-based issues.

For Phase 1, the program has produced eight national reports (on Cambodia, China, Nepal, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam). The information from the reports is now being used for Phase 2, which has three objectives:

1. Increase capacity of LGBTIQ and civil society organizations to contribute to policy and advocacy;
2. Increase capacity of governments, judiciary, parliaments and national human rights institutes (NHRIs) to develop SOGIE-related protective laws and to urge people to repeal discriminatory laws;
3. Reduce stigma and discrimination and end harmful practices such as violence against LGBTIQ people.

Language doesn't take off  
if you have a small voice in the  
background, or if it doesn't leave  
this room. It needs to be something  
that we carry into our work.

—Jensen Byrne

UNDP plans to accomplish these through: supporting two regional partners, the ASC and the ASIA Pacific Transgender network (APTN), in developing and implementing regional- and country-level activities and consultations. UNDP is currently implementing the research of programmatic activities at the country and regional levels.

On the topic of intersectionality, Jensen said that UNDP strives to be inclusive, so it acknowledges how SOGIE-based discrimination against LGBTIQ people is embedded in larger socio-cultural contexts where discrimination is pervasive. For development to be effective, it has to be inclusive of other forms of oppression.

In conclusion, Jensen said, “Language doesn't take off if you have a small voice in the background, or if it doesn't leave this room. It needs to be something that we carry into our work. It's about making your voice so consistent and persistent that they can't ignore your life.”



## SYNTHESIS

Peter Jonas David, professor at Miriam College, closed the roundtable discussion. In his concluding remarks, he said, "Intersectionality, in its textbook form, comes off as negative. It talks about intersections between forms and systems of oppression."

However, with oppression comes liberation. He encouraged everyone to look at this concept more thoroughly.

Ryan then synthesized the discussions. According to him, while the idea of tackling intersectionality was initially exciting, it eventually became a daunting and overwhelming task, especially when one has to consider various socio-cultural and even eco-political issues that LGBTIQ people face.

Ryan summarized the key points that came out of the presentations and discussions. First is the use of intersectionality as an analytical tool in examining multiple forms of discrimination and/or oppression that LGBTIQ people face. Intersectionality can also be used as a method in coming up with recommendations for social change. It is thus vital for civil society to apply intersectionality in their analysis of the LGBTIQ people's problems, so that the analysis is reflexive of positionality and power. Very often, civil society actors are blinded by their class and positions. Second is that civil society should look to employ a multiple-level approach that starts at the individual level of experiences of discrimination. He said, "One person's experience of discrimination may not necessarily be the same as another's."

Ryan emphasized several challenges LGBTIQ people face. First is the lack of evidence-based approaches. CS actors need to look into narratives. Second is the lack of understanding of the interconnections of marginalized identities. Ryan said, "We need to unpack the identities that have been constructed and the symbolic representations of these identities: gay, migrant worker, person with disabilities, indigenous person, etc. What are the symbolic representations around them? How do norms affect these identities?" Third is the lack of work in addressing issues at various levels: community, nation, region and international. For instance, how is the

economy implicated in the realities of LGBTIQ people? How are globalization, colonialism and racism implicated in the struggles of LGBTIQ people? CS actors need to have a deeper understanding of the larger forces at play.

Intersectionality requires spreading the rainbow.

—Ryan Silverio

Ryan elaborated on the concept of intersectionality and stated that the terms require inclusion and meaningful consideration of various discourses when talking about SOGIE-based discrimination against LGBTIQ people. Inclusion refers to accepting different voices and acknowledging diverse languages.

Intersectionality also means "spreading the rainbow", which translates to CS actors employing SOGIE-based analysis in their work. By the same virtue, spreading the rainbow also translates to expanding an analysis of SOGIE-based discrimination to include other forms of discrimination, which LGBTIQ people also experience. From a practical perspective, intersectionality can allow the LGBTIQ movement and other movements to be connected through alliance building, information awareness raising and mainstreaming of CS groups' tactics, approaches and lenses. Finally, the concept of intersectionality can be further explored through the development of research and discussion/policy papers.



# APPENDICES

## Appendix 1 Roundtable discussion concept note and program “SOGIE Intersections and Rainbow Coalition Work”

A Roundtable Discussion on Locating the Intersections of LGBTIQ Issues

Organized by the  
ASEAN Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity  
and Expression Caucus (ASC)

In partnership with the Miriam College Department  
of International Studies (MC IS)  
10.00am – 5.00pm  
June 10, 2015

### Background

The concept of ‘intersectionality,’ which has been mainstreamed in human rights discourses, recognizes that persons face multiple and diverse forms of discrimination as a result of the interplay of a wide range of identities and affiliations. ‘Intersectionality,’ or intersectional discrimination, provides a nuanced understanding of how intersecting identities may aggravate a person’s marginalized social position. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ) persons face intersectional discrimination.

The experiences of discrimination amongst LGBTIQ persons are not solely a result of the maligning of their sexual orientation and gender identity and expression (SOGIE), but also as a result of the various social identities they perform—be it as a child, as somebody living in poverty, as someone belonging to an indigenous community, as an elderly person, as a person with a disability, as a migrant worker, etc., among many other conditions, situations and contexts, throughout one’s life.

Applying intersectionality in addressing the human rights situation of LGBTIQ persons confronts the complexities of our times and the imperative to go beyond affirmative actions and recognition. LGBTIQ coalitions, civil society groups, and social movements are called to forge solidarity and collaboration in identifying cross-cutting concerns towards shaping socially diverse and inclusive structures, cultures, and societies.

### Objectives

Generally, this activity aims to strengthen LGBTIQ coalition work. Specifically, it seeks to:

- Describe the multiple and intersecting layers of discrimination experienced by LGBTIQ persons;
- Identify opportunities of how SOGIE can be mainstreamed as an additional lens in the analysis and advocacy of diverse sectors and marginalized groups;
- Explore possibilities for cross-sectoral collaboration in addressing the human rights situation of LGBTIQ persons.



### Methodology

The activity is designed as a one-day meeting that entails a panel discussion, interactive exchanges and participatory small group discussions.

The participants will be diverse, including LGBTIQ activists and representatives from civil society organizations and social movements advocating different sectoral/thematic issues.

The proposed program is as follows:

TIME	SESSION
10:00 – 10:30 am	Registration
10:30 – 10:45	Welcome Remarks and Introduction of Participants
10:45 – 11:30	Understanding the Concept of 'Intersectionality' in Strengthening SOGIE as a Lens in Human Rights Advocacy Work
11:30 – 12:00 nn	Panel Discussion on the Multiple and Intersecting Forms of Discrimination Faced by LGBTIQ Persons SOGIE and Poverty SOGIE and Migration SOGIE and Labor SOGIE and Ethnicity SOGIE and Disability SOGIE and Child Rights SOGIE and Aging
12:00 – 1:00 pm	Fabulous Lunch
1:00 – 2:00	Continuation - Panel Discussion on the Multiple and Intersecting Forms of Discrimination Faced by LGBTIQ Persons
2:00 – 2:30	Coffee/Tea Break
2:30 – 3:30	Small group discussions – How Can We Apply Intersectionality in our Work?
3:30 – 4:00	Plenary Discussion – Harvesting Ideas
4:00 – 4:30	Orientation on the Comprehensive Anti-Discrimination Bill
4:30 – 5:00	Synthesis and Closing

## Appendix 2 List of speakers

Bibo Lee Perey	President, DEAF Rainbow Philippines
Claire Luczon	Associate, Women and Gender Institute (WAGI)/ Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN)
Ging Cristobal	Project Coordinator, OutRight Action International/IGLHRC
Mary Gyknell “Gyky” Tagente	Advocacy Officer, GALANG Philippines
Jensen Byrne	Programme Officer, UNDP
Ma. Theresa “Tesa” De Vela	Chairperson, International Studies Department, Miriam College
Klarise Estorninos	Director, AKKAP- Ateneo Human Rights Center
Krizia Consolacion	Board Member, Association of Transgender Persons in the Philippines
Peter Jonas David	Professor, Miriam College
Ron De Vera	Board Member, ASEAN SOGIE Caucus
Ryan Silverio	Regional Coordinator, ASEAN SOGIE Caucus
Ura Sevilla	Program Officer, Coalition for the Services of the Elderly



## Appendix 3

### List of participants

<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Aimee Rose Manda	Psychological Association of the Philippines
Alex Chartrand	University of the Philippines
Alyssa Lapuz	Miriam College
Aura Sevilla	Coalition of Services for the Elderly
Bibo Lee Perey	President, DEAF Rainbow Philippines
Ceejay Agbayani	LGBT Christian Church
Charmen Balana	Foundation for Media Alternatives
Christine Marty	CEDAW YOUTH
Claire Luczon	Associate, Women and Gender Institute (WAGI)/ Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN)
Danica Gonzales	Miriam College
Disney Aguila	Trans Deaf Philippines
Genevieve Gregorio	Leap of the Youth
Ging Cristobal	Project Coordinator, OutRight Action International/IGLHRC
Henry Perey II	Philippine Deaf Rainbow
Ice Linco	Philippine Human Rights Information Center
Ingrid Saplagio	GALANG PHILIPPINES
Jan Gabriel Castañeda	LGBT Special Interest Group – Psychological Association of the Philippines
Jap Paul Jann Ignacio	UP Babaylan / Task Force Pride
Jemuel Japson	Philippine Deaf Rainbow
Jensen Byrne	Programme Officer, United Nations Development Programme
John Tigno	Individual activist
JuschiePescante	Philippine Alliance of Human Rights Advocates
Kenjie Aman	Ateneo Human Rights Center
Klarise Estorninos	Director, AKKAP- Ateneo Human Rights Center
Krizia Consolacion	Board Member, Association of Transgender Persons in the Philippines
Ma. Theresa “Tesa” De Vela	Chairperson, International Studies Department, Miriam College
Marc Batac	Philwomen on ASEAN/ Initiatives for International Dialogue
Mariella Martin	Leap of the Youth
Mark Wallem	American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative
Mary Gyknell “Gyky” Tagente	Advocacy Officer, GALANG Philippines
May Baez	NGO Coalition for the Committee Rights of the Child
Mikee Inton	Society of Transsexual Women of the Philippines
Nica Dumlao	Foundation for Media Alternatives
Patrick Espino	Ang Ladlad
Peter Jonas David	Professor, Miriam College
RazelTorrecampo	US Embassy
Red Macaladlad	Task Force Pride
Ron De Vera	Board Member, ASEAN SOGIE Caucus
Ryan Silverio	Regional Coordinator, ASEAN SOGIE Caucus
Wilfredo II Mina	Psychological Association of the Philippines / University of the Philippines Manila
Xavier Bilon	UP Babaylan / Task Force Pride
Ura Sevilla	Program Officer, Coalition for the Services of the Elderly