

Facilitating LGBTQIA⁺ Inclusivity: Roadmap towards Sustainability

Ma. Felma Carlos-Tria, Leila R. Gano, Leny Dellosa *

Universidad De Manila, One Mehan Gardens, Manila, Philippines

*leilagano@yahoo.com

Abstract

The rights of the members of the LGBTQIA⁺ community in the Philippines are protected by laws and policies, but most of them still experience abuse, bullying, and discrimination due to lack of public awareness, inadequate and ineffective law enforcement. In the academe, some LGBTQIA⁺ students experienced the same, which curtailed their right to education. In alignment with the 2030 Sustainable Development Global Goals (SDGs) “leave no one behind” –inclusivity should be implemented in the educational system. However, mere policy implementation is not enough. Raising public awareness by giving substantive knowledge about the LGBTQIA⁺ in its breadth and depth is a key to addressing the key issues towards inclusivity. Once started up, roadmap to sustainability must be on the work. This research study explored the University's facilitation of LGBTQIA⁺ inclusivity in alignment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the formulated roadmap to sustainability.

Keywords: inclusivity, LGBTQIA+, sustainability, roadmap

Introduction

The United Nation General Assembly's adoption of Agenda 2030 outlined 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which is universal, transformative, and rights-based. The Agenda provides a comprehensive scheme for eliminating extreme poverty, *reducing inequality*, and protecting the planet. A key pillar of the SDGs is the promise to “leave no one behind” – promoting *Inclusivity*.



Figure 1: The 2030 Sustainable Development Global Goals

Source: <https://www.un-page.org>

From the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (Figure 1), an international issue on the scope of concerns is directed towards Gender Equality (Goal 5), and Sustainable Cities and Communities (Goal 11). A call on this is to cover empowerment of the marginalized sectors of society; women who are deprived of their basic rights, men who are abused, and the LGBTQIA⁺ community that

continues to face discrimination and hatred, which hinder their full potential as persons and human beings. To achieve the aims of SDG 5 and 11, the human rights and development needs of this marginalized group must be included in the effort to make, schools, cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.

At present, some (LGBTQI⁺) people continue to experience killings, violent attacks, torture, denial of rights to assembly, and expression, and systemic structural barriers to education, health-care, housing, and labor market participation based on their actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and/or sex characteristics.¹

In Serbia, male students displaying feminine traits are refused enrollment in primary school.² Policies excluding LGBT students in schools had a detrimental impact on their overall well-being³ and they are less likely to report high grades.⁴ This alarming global scenario is an alarming treatment of gender inequality.

In the Philippines, the rights of the members of the LGBTQIA⁺ are protected by laws and policies in eight different areas: Education, Health, Employment, Family Affairs, Religion, Community, Media, and Politics.⁵ However, in the area of Education, some LGBTQIA⁺ students experienced abuse and discrimination that curtailed their right to education.⁶ Philippine lawmakers and school administrators designed interventions to address the situation. In 2012, the Department of Education (DepEd) enacted a Child Protection Policy (CPP) designed to address bullying and discrimination in schools, including based on sexual orientation and gender identity. The Philippine Congress passed the Anti-Bullying Law of 2013 which enumerated sexual orientation and gender identity as prohibited grounds for bullying. These policies made sure that bullying and discrimination are unacceptable and should not be tolerated in educational institutions.

Manila Mayor, Isko Moreno signed Ordinance No. 8695 or Manila LGBTQI Protection Ordinance of 2020 which “protects the rights of lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgenders, queers and intersex (LGBTQI) in the city of Manila against any forms of discrimination solely based on sexual orientation, gender identity, expression.” Under the ordinance, it is prohibited to deny or limit access to an employee, promotion opportunities, transfer, training, *schooling*, and refuse employment, among others “*based on actual or perceived sexual orientation and gender identity and expression.*” The ordinance also penalizes those who physically or verbally harass or subject a person to involuntary confinement due to their gender identity and expression. It also bans organizing groups and activities that incite discrimination against a person's sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression. The fine for violators would be up to P3,000 or face imprisonment of up to one year.⁷

¹ <https://outrightinternational.org/>

² Dominik Koehler et al., *Discrimination against Sexual Minorities in Education and Housing: Evidence from Two Field Experiments in Serbia* (Washington, DC: The World Bank Group, 2018).

³ Russel, Stephen T; Fish, Jessica N. Mental Health in Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Youth. **Annual Review of Clinical Psychology** Vol. 12:465-487 (Volume publication date March 2016)

⁴ Hanson, Thomas; Zhang, Gary; Cerna, Rebeca; Stern, Alexis; and Austin, Gregory. Understanding the Experiences of LGBTQ Students in California. <https://www.wested.org/resources/lgbtq-students-in-california/> Accessed April 17, 2022

⁵ UNDP, USAID (2014). *Being LGBT in Asia: The Philippines Country Report*. Bangkok.

⁶ Thoreson, Ryan; Lee, Daniel. “Just Let Us Be”. *Discrimination Against LGBT Students in the Philippines*. <https://www.hrw.org/report/2017/06/21/just-let-us-be/discrimination-against-lgbt-students-philippines>

⁷ Manila To Penalize Anyone Who Discriminates Based On Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity. CNN Philippines. <https://www.cnnphilippines.com/news/2020/10/29/city-of-manila-ordinance-protection-of-lgbtqi-rights.html> October 29, 2020

However, these policies, while strong on paper, have not been adequately and effectively enforced. Many LGBTIA⁺ youth continue to experience adverse treatment such as bullying, discrimination, and harassment in school from peers, staff, security guards, and teachers, compounded by discriminatory school regulations and policies and a lack of information dissemination about LGBTQIA⁺.

It is an appropriate response for all institutions to establish a shared understanding of what it means to *leave no one behind*. Inclusivity must be facilitated by having clear policies or practices that will address the needs of LGBTQIA⁺ students.

However, implementing policies is not enough. Raising awareness by giving substantive knowledge about the LGBTQIA⁺ in its breadth and depth is a key to realizing the key issues in inclusivity. Once started up, formulation of a roadmap to sustainability must be on the work.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this research is grounded on the following: Inclusionary Practices Theory of Action proposed by the University of Washington Center for Educational Leadership (2014), House Bill No. 4982 or "An Act Prohibiting Discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity or Expression (SOGIE), and Ordinance No. 8695 or Manila LGBTQI Protection Ordinance of 2020 passed that protect the rights of LGBTQ+ community.

The Theory focuses on the wide variety of resources to support stakeholder partners with implementing inclusive learning environments. The theory pinpoints the specific activities, positive outputs and outcomes, content areas, and stakeholder partnerships—for sustainable change.

The principles that underpin the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, notably leaving no one behind and ensuring human rights for all, provide a powerful basis for the inclusion of LGBTI. The Declaration implicitly and explicitly notes in Paragraph 4: "that no one will be left behind and that Goals and targets will be met for all nations and peoples and all segments of society."

House Bill No. 4982 or "An Act Prohibiting Discrimination on the Basis of Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity or Expression (SOGIE) and Providing Penalties Therefore" is the first of its kind in the country. Other anti-discrimination bills have been filed in the past, but these were never SOGIE-specific, lumping the lesbian, gay, transgender, bisexual, and queer sector (LGBTQ++ sector) with others such as the differently-abled or the indigenous groups.

The SOGIE Equality Bill is meant to fulfill the rights outlined in the 1987 constitution, particularly the equal protection clause. It recognizes the LGBTQ++ as equals and ensures that their rights are protected since everyone is. The bill also acknowledges the Philippines' duties under international law, particularly the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. It thus recognizes the non-discrimination of the LGBTQ++ as both a national and international duty.

Purpose

The purpose of this research is to explore the University's facilitation of LGBTQIA⁺ Inclusivity as a response to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The study outlines the University's direction as a roadmap toward sustainability.

Research Questions

1. What are the issues and concerns shared by the respondents in the LGBTQIA⁺ Inclusivity facilitation:

1.1. “As a member of *LGBTQIA*⁺, what are the issues that you have encountered as a student while inside the university campus?”

1.2. “As a member of *LGBTQIA*⁺, what are the concerns that you want the university to address for you?”

2. What support are extended by the National and Local Government Units to help the UDM facilitate *LGBTQIA*⁺ Inclusivity as a response to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?

3. Based on the findings, what *LGBTQIA*⁺ Inclusivity framework can be created as a roadmap towards sustainability?

Literature Review

LGBTQIA⁺ Abuse and Discrimination Experiences

As documented in Human Rights Watch report, many secondary schools and universities imposed rigid gendered uniform and hair-length restrictions on students according to the sex they were assigned at birth. LGBT students even experienced public humiliation by having their long hair cut short in front of the whole class. Human Rights Watch also reported that even when students are formally permitted to wear the uniforms of their choice by administrators, school personnel can still harass or humiliate them in practice. This kind of discrimination infringes upon students' rights to education and freedom of expression and contravenes both domestic and international law – including the Philippine Constitution and Child Protection Policy, and treaties the Philippines has ratified, such as the Convention on the Right of the Child and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. Hence, there is a need for a comprehensive anti-discrimination bill that protects LGBT students in the Philippines.⁸ Similar to the present study, *LGBTQAI*⁺ students want to be acknowledged for their chosen gender identity and gender expressions as protected by the issued Manila City Ordinance.

SDGs and LGBTQIA⁺

The Preamble of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) states that in the next fifteen years, all human beings can fulfill their potential in dignity and equality and a healthy environment, realize the human rights of all, and achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.⁹ Overall, Agenda 2030 is focused on “*people, planet, prosperity, peace, and partnership*”, hence, the 193 member countries are mandated to include the LGBTI community in their development initiatives and policies.¹⁰

Policies on LGBTQIA⁺ Inclusivity

To cite one public school in the Philippines, following student reports of being harassed and discriminated against for their gender identity, the Board of Education Members of Saint Paul Public Schools (SPPS) passed in 2015 the Gender Inclusion Policy. The purpose of the Policy is to address and remove the inequities reported by some transgender and gender non-conforming students in SPPS. By establishing the Gender Inclusion Policy, Saint Paul Public Schools ensured that all students have equitable access to safe and comfortable programming, athletics, and facilities.¹¹

⁸ Lee, Daniel. End Gendered Uniform Restrictions for LGBT Students in Philippine Schools. Human Rights Watch. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/06/23/end-gendered-uniform-restrictions-lgbt-students-philippine-schools> June 23, 2017.

⁹ Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>

¹⁰ Scolaro, Brianna. LGBTI and the Sustainable Development Goals: Fostering Economic Well-Being. <https://lgbtq.hkspublications.org/2020/06/24/lgbti-and-the-sustainable-development-goals-fostering-economic-well-being/> June 24, 2020

¹¹ Saint Paul Public Schools. https://www.spps.org/cms/lib/MN01910242/Centricity/Domain/1254/gender_inclusion_policy_final_v3_17_15.pdf

The Department of Education (DepEd) in partnership with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) organized an event in November 2020 with the theme, "Inclusion and education: All means All". It was in this event that the "2020 Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report" was launched. The United Nations (UN) Resident Coordinator Gustavo Gonzalez cited the major progress achieved by the Philippine Government towards inclusive education in recent decades. One of the numerous examples highlighted in the report is the gender-responsive basic education policy created by DepEd, which has called for an end to discrimination based on gender, sexual orientation, and gender identity by defining ways for education administrators and school leaders, including improving curricula and teacher education programs with the content on bullying, discrimination, gender, sexuality, and human rights.¹²

Policies that promote the rights of LGBT people include the Civil Service Commission's (CSC) Office Memorandum 29-2010 which forbids discrimination against LGBT people who are applying for civil service examinations.¹³

The Civil Service Commission (CSC), as the primary human resource institution of the government, promotes gender equality in the bureaucracy. It is duty-bound to lead in ensuring gender responsiveness and equal opportunity in the workplace in the bureaucracy. To ensure that no applicant or employee is discriminated against, The Omnibus Rules on Appointments and Other Human Resource Action prohibits discriminatory practices in the implementation of the Agency Merit Selection Plan and Human Resource Merit Promotion and Selection Board.¹⁴

As regards, UDM's geographical location, Manila, the City Government signed City Ordinance No. 8695, or the Manila LGBTQIA⁺ Protection Ordinance of 2020 which aims to protect the rights of the LGBTQIA⁺ and penalize anyone who discriminates against another based on his sexual orientation and gender identity. The order aims to "guarantee full respect of the dignity of every individual and their human rights" by eliminating all forms of discrimination against the said community. Aside from physical, verbal, and written harassment towards the LGBTQIA⁺, it also listed down what other acts are considered to be discriminating against these people's rights. It covers possible issues on their employment; access to medical services, education, and facilities like theaters, malls, spas, and other accommodations; and application for any government-issued license or document.¹⁵

Methodology

Research Design

This study utilized the descriptive qualitative research design which gathered the views and experiences of UDM students belonging to the LGBTQIA⁺ community.

Source Of Data

The attendees of the "Public Orientation and Consultation on MCO 8695 (Manila LGBTQIA⁺ Protection Ordinance of 2020)" conducted by the Office of Student Affairs (OSA) and Gender and Development Office (GDO) last April 1 at UDM Library were considered respondents of this study. They were those students belonging to the LGBTQIA⁺ community of the Universidad

¹² UN Philippines Renews Call for Inclusive Education at Launch of New UNESCO Report. <https://philippines.un.org/en/102473-un-philippines-renews-call-inclusive-education-launch-new-unesco-report>

¹³ Ocampo, M.B. (2011). "Sex" In The Workplace: Approaches To Sexual Orientation And Gender Identity Discrimination In The Workplace Absent An Anti-Discrimination Law. *Philippine Law Journal*, Vol. 86, 190–232.

¹⁴ Montemayor, Ma. Teresa. CSC Promotes Gender Equality and social inclusion in Worksite. <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1079127>

¹⁵ Manila To Penalize Anyone Who Discriminates Based On Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity. *CNN Philippines*. <https://www.cnnphilippines.com/news/2020/10/29/city-of-manila-ordinance-protection-of-lgbtqi-rights.html> October 29, 2020

de Manila. The total number of actual LGBTQIA⁺ attendees in the forum was considered the absolute population for this study.

Instrumentation

Triangulation in the data gathering tool that was implemented can achieve the objective of the study. The following techniques were utilized: Focused Group Discussion (FGD), Survey Questionnaire, and Observation method.

1. Focused Group Discussion (FGD). In a public forum where orientation and consultation were held, a Focused Group Discussion (FGD) is the best applicable data gathering strategy. Discussion between University officials and LGBTQIA⁺ students happened where issues and concerns, plans of the University in compliance with the said ordinance that may affect the LGBTQIA⁺ students were tackled.

2. Survey Questionnaire. This was utilized and distributed to the LGBTQIA⁺ attendees. The questionnaire is composed of two (2) parts: A. Profile of Students; B. Issues and Concerns.

A. Profile of Students. It solicited information about the student's degree program, age, gender identity, and sexual orientation.

B. Issues and Concerns. This tried to determine the experiences that brought about issues and concerns of the students belonging to the LGBTQIA⁺ community.

3. Observation method. This is when the researcher took notes of the conduct and procedures of the discussion/consultation emphasizing the FGD climate and emotional tone of the activity.

Results and Discussion

The foregoing discussion will present the findings on the University's facilitation of LGBTQIA⁺ inclusivity in alignment with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The study outlines the University's roadmap toward sustainability of LGBTQIA⁺ inclusivity.

1. ISSUES AND CONCERNS OF THE UDM LGBTQIA⁺ COMMUNITY

1.1. Issues Of The UDM LGBTQIA⁺ Community

From the issues and concerns of LGBTQIA⁺, the following themes emerged: Inclusivity of LGBTQIA⁺ at UDM shall allow for a choice of gender identity and gender expression, Inclusivity of LGBTQIA⁺ at UDM is to recognize the inherent worth of everyone, Inclusivity of LGBTQIA⁺ at UDM is involvement and empowerment of everyone, and Inclusivity of LGBTQIA⁺ at UDM is to recognize the inherent dignity of everyone.

Emerging Theme 1:

Inclusivity of LGBTQIA⁺ at UDM shall allow for a choice of gender identity and gender expression

Gender identity is the person's internal sense of being a man, a woman, a third or some alternative gender, a combination of genders, or no gender. Everyone has a gender identity. A person's gender identity may not correspond with the sex assigned at birth. On the other hand, *gender expression* is a person's way of communicating masculinity or femininity (or both or neither) externally. This is express through physical appearance like clothing and hairstyles, mannerisms, ways of speaking, and behavioral patterns when interacting with others.

For LGBTQIA⁺ to feel inclusive, it would mean that everyone shall be allowed to define their own gender identity. They want to be recognized and treated as the gender they live in. They expressed this through physical appearance (including clothing and hairstyles), mannerisms, ways of

speaking, and behavioral patterns when interacting with others. The concerns shared by the LGBTQIA⁺ includes sporting preferred haircut while inside the UDM campus.

Response Category 1.1: Sporting long hair is not allowed inside the UDM campus.

The Student Manual indicates that male students are required to maintain clean-cut hair with no portion reaching below the eyebrows, a tip of the ear, or the nape area.

It is a common practice for schools in the Philippines to have strict hair-length restrictions for their students, particularly for boys.¹⁶ The concerns are evident in the responses of the LGBTQIA⁺ students:

“hindi kami allowed ng mahaba ang buhok”

“since we are not allowed to express our gender such as having long hair as our gender expression, I experience gender dysphoria and being mistreated because of how I look”

Response Category 1.2: UDM Student Manual has rules on a proper haircut.

The Student Manual University policies and regulations, and expected standards of student’s conduct. The main purpose of policies and regulations is to foster the mission of the University and to protect the well-being of the community.

The LGBTQIA⁺ shared that:

“the only concern is the Handbook because we feel that we are not part of the University because of haircut”.

I have issues with the Handbook because we feel that we are not part of the University because of haircut”.

“... As well as certain rules within the Student manual that are pretty discriminations such as the “proper haircut” for biologically born males. It is a hindrance towards our gender identity”.

Emerging Theme 2: Inclusivity of LGBTQIA⁺ at UDM is to recognize the inherent worth of everyone.

Inclusivity means recognition of everyone's inherent worth. Inherent worth refers to the internal sense of being good enough and worthy of love and belonging from others. Recognizing the potential of everyone as a human being influences motivation, a positive view of themselves maximizes one's potential, and be inspired to take on challenges. The concern of the respondents is that their capability is underestimated.

Response Category 2: LGBTQIA⁺ community capability is underestimated

Students' capabilities are typically reflected in their creativity, critical thinking, digital literacy, problem-solving, and adaptability. School-developed indicators of proficiency or capabilities through specific key indicators and observing students in action and evaluating what they can do. There should be a reliable assessment of skills and capabilities requires opportunities for application in different contexts. This concern is reflected in the following statements of LGBTQIA⁺

“Underestimate our capability”

“They also belittled as a member of LGBTQIA+”

“We are a weak set”

¹⁶ Just Let Us Be”, Human Rights Watch (2017). https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/report_pdf/philippineslgbt0617_web.pdf

Emerging Theme 3: Inclusivity of LGBTQIA⁺ at UDM is to provide exclusive comfort room for LGBTQIA⁺

One of the places where LGBTQIA⁺ people routinely experience harassment, mistreatment, and even violence is in public restrooms.

Senate President Vicente Sotto III has called for a reality check in setting up gender-neutral restrooms in establishments, arguing toilets are "biology-based". Sotto said that while he is "all for respecting rights," one should also consider women's supposed discomfort in sharing public restrooms with trans women.¹⁷

The lawmaker expressed reservations over the idea to put up a third toilet for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community, saying "Maybe, but [it is] difficult to do everywhere." The problem related to exclusive comfort rooms was also raised by the LGBTQIA⁺ students.

Response Category 3: There is no exclusive room for the LGBTQIA⁺

Different ideas arise on the issue of 3rd restroom. The following were comments given in the article of Adrian Stewart Co (2019), "Duterte favors 3rd restrooms for the LGBTQIA⁺."¹⁸

President Rodrigo Duterte's idea for lessening discrimination against LGBTQIA⁺ people is to put up "3rd restrooms" for them, Malacañang.

However, Panelo, later on, said that he would support restrooms "common to all," regardless of gender, which is the concept of a gender-neutral restroom. Diez had said that the establishment of 3rd restrooms could even boost discrimination against LGBTQIA⁺ persons.

A GMA News Online article quotes Diez as saying, "I am for equality and I think that producing a 3rd bathroom does not help in our fight against discrimination," Diez said.

This is students shared by the students:

"sana magkaroon ng comfort room for LGBTQIA⁺".

Emerging Theme 4: Inclusivity of LGBTQIA⁺ at UDM is the involvement and empowerment of everyone.

Inclusivity allows the involvement and empowerment of each member of the community. Each person is regarded as a unique human being and allowed to express their opinions on improving the efficiencies of the current activities. The LGBTQIA⁺ shared that they don't receive proper information dissemination.

Response Category 4: There is no proper information dissemination about LGBTQIA⁺ at UDM.

Proper information of dissemination would mean that information reaches everyone. Proper dissemination can also refer to a targeted distribution of information and intervention materials to a specific audience. Dissemination can be through a variety of channels, social contexts, and settings. The LGBTQIA⁺ claim lack of information dissemination in school about LGBTQIA⁺; thus they do not know their rights and privileges. This was shown in the common comments:

"The lack of actual information regarding the LGBTQIA⁺ youth."

Emerging Theme 5: Inclusivity of LGBTQIA⁺ at UDM is to recognize the inherent dignity of everyone.

¹⁷ Cervantes, Filane Mikee. Discomfort over sharing of restroom must be considered: solon. PNA. <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1078036> August 16, 2019

¹⁸ Co, Adrian Stewart. Duterte 'favors' 3rd Restroom for LGBTQ⁺. <https://www.panaynews.net/duterte-favors-3rd-restroom-for-lgbtq/> August 20, 2019

Inclusivity would mean recognition of one's inherent dignity. Operationally refers to the inherent dignity right of the *LGBTQIA*⁺ to be valued and respected for their own sake and to be treated ethically. Some of the actions that show a lack of self-respect are the following: Physical Bullying, Sexual Assault and Harassment, Verbal harassment, and Cyberbullying. The concern of the *LGBTQIA*⁺ pertains to bullying and discrimination.

Response Category 5: There is LGBTQIA⁺ bullying and discrimination

Bullying is often a habitual use of force, hurtful teasing, or threat, to abuse and aggressively intimidate a person. On the other hand, discrimination is the practice of unfairly treating a person differently from other people or groups of people. These two forms of disrespect endanger the safety, health, and education of the youth. This issue is ostensive in their responses as follows:

"We believe bullying is also considered discrimination!"

"As a member of the LGBTQIA⁺, the issues that I have encountered as a student while inside the university campus are about discriminating our looks, walk, and how we talk"

"Sir what we want is just good treatment"

(Sir, yung akin lang Sir, good treatment na lang po sa amin)"

"Attraction to male gender translates into insult"

"Verbal ridicule"

1.2. Concerns of the UDM LGBTQIA⁺ Community

On the *LGBTQIA*⁺ request for the University to be addressed, the following themes emerge: Allow the *LGBTQIA*⁺ community to express their gender identity, gender equality for the UDM *LGBTQIA*⁺ community.

Emerging Theme 1: Allow the LGBTQIA⁺ community to express their gender identity

While gender identity and gender expression can be related, they do not have to be. Gender identity is individuals' internal understanding of themselves as it relates to gender. Gender expression, on the other hand, is how individuals express their gender through clothing, demeanor, etc. Gender expression may be a way individuals play with external gender performance and explore roles, while gender identity is an interior sense of self.

The concern of the respondents is to allow the *LGBTQIA*⁺ community to wear long hair and their choice of uniform. This concern is more on gender expression, thus specific guidelines in necessary to address this situation.

The University incorporated in the UDM Student Manual 2021 special laws that address gender-inclusive institution. The following are the incorporated Special Laws:

PART VI –SPECIAL LAWS INCORPORATED INTO UDM STUDENT MANUAL AND UNIVERSITY POLICIES.

- Anti-Violence Against Women and their Children Act of 2004 (40B)
- Anti-Sexual Harassment Act of 1995 (40C)
- Special Protection of Children Against Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act (41D)
- Magna Carta for Disabled Persons (41E)
- Volunteer Act of 2007" (42F)
- National Environmental Awareness and Education Act of 2008

To show the University's concern for the students including the LGBTQIA⁺, the Udm's Guiding Principles and Core Values offer: Quality and Relevant Education, Academic Freedom, Ethical Standards, Empowerment, and People-Oriented (The UDM Students Manual 2021).

GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND CORE VALUES

Quality and Relevant Education. The university scholars and young professionals are our clients. They deserve quality and excellent education along with relevant training and experiences which Udm is committed to providing holistically.

Academic Freedom. In academic freedom, the rights of the faculty members is recognized, promoted, and supported to exercise the highest standard of academic freedom.

Ethical Standards. UDM Community adheres to the norms of conduct and professional ethics in its decisions and actions.

Empowerment. This means that every member of the student body are empowered with authority and autonomy in conducting student-related activities.

People-Oriented. Operationally refers to the priority given to LGBTQIA⁺ through accessible and quality education; thus, the university becomes an agent of change in nation-building.

Response Category 1: Allow the LGBTQIA⁺ community to wear long hair and their choice of uniform.

For the fluid implementation of the policies and guidelines, upon admission to UDM, the students are informed of the University policies. When the student is enrolled, the student binds himself/herself to recognize, accept and comply with the existing policies, rules, and regulations of the University. However, the University promotes a Gender-Inclusive environment following the set guidelines. Since the University and stakeholders follow this set of guidelines, the respondents disclosed that:

“to be allowed to wear long hair”

“wear the female uniform”

“my only concern is our haircut”

“we were not demanding from our concern but the only concern our wants is from our hair cut.”

“I want our school to recognize our gender identities and no longer require us to follow certain guidelines that limit the way we present ourselves”

“haircut”, “uniform”

Emerging Theme 2: Gender equality for the UDM LGBTQIA⁺ community

The University provides safe and equal protection for all students. The University presently embarked on a repositioning strategy to hew its original Mission and Vision of providing responsive education for all in the *City of Manila and the country gearing toward the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* of providing universal, transformative, and rights-based education.

The message of **President Ma. Felma Carlos-Tria** addressed the student's needs of all genders. In her message to the University's stakeholders and the community she said:

“President Tria express that as an educational institution, Universidad de Manila (UDM) focuses on what the students need within the halls of the University, in preparation for their entry not just into the city's and the country's workforce, but even in the international stage”.

“The University President endeavor to put emphasis and scrutiny into key performance indicators upon which the University’s academic standing could be readily measured”.

Response Category 2: To be treated as an equal member of the UDM community

Ordinance No. 8695 or Manila LGBTQI Protection Ordinance of 2020 "protects the rights of lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgenders, queers and intersex (LGBTQ) in the city of Manila against any forms of discrimination solely based on sexual orientation, gender identity, expression." Under the ordinance, "it is prohibited to deny or limit access to an employee, promotion opportunities, transfer, training, schooling, and refuse employment, among others "based on actual or perceived sexual orientation and gender identity and expression" (Inquirer, October 29, 2020). The issuance and implementation of the Ordinance are depicted in the following responses of the students:

“I, as a member of the LGBTQIA⁺, I want to raise concern to integrate the implementation of Manila Ordinance and give importance to every gender in our campus”

“to accept equality”

“need a good communication for all”

Emerging Theme 3: Orientation/Re-orientation of UDM community on LGBTQIA⁺ awareness

The University’s LGBTQIA⁺ awareness initiative through orientation and information dissemination as regards gender-inclusive endeavors were executed through the GAD Orientation, OSA Orientation. The conduct of re-orientation is on the roadmap to diffuse more information on LGBTQIA⁺ awareness.

The Institution directs teachers to include SOGI-related issues in academic activities and instruction. While SOGI is covered by certain courses, such as in Health courses, course teachers may discuss systemic issues around SOGI through literature, history, or current events. Thus, the teacher preference plays a huge role in how SOGI is addressed through academic instructions. The request of the respondents is to disseminate information dissemination on LGBTQIA⁺.

Response Category 3: Information dissemination to the UDM community about LGBTQIA⁺.

The concerns are currently addressed based on the UDM Student Manual policies and procedures with its special laws. In addition, Universidad de Manila Citizen's Charter, 2019 (1st Edition) offers guidelines on feedback and complaints mechanisms. The mechanism indicates how to send feedback, how feedback is processed, how to file complaints, and how complaints are processed.

The present paper documented the University’s Orientation for LGBTQIA⁺ and will be presented to the UDM community for information dissemination. This is a response to the following concerns of the students:

Proper information dissemination to policies that concerns the LGBTQIA⁺ to be disseminated

Not only to the teachers and guards but to the students as well.”

“Orientation and open forum with students.”

“Proper orientation of the implementors and how to deal with the students.”

2. Support extended by the National and Local Government Units to help the UDM facilitate LGBTQIA⁺ Inclusivity as a response to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The National Government's response to the issues was given through different laws enacted like: The anti-Violence Against Women and their Children Act of 2004, the Anti-Sexual Harassment Act of 1995, the Special Protection of Children Against Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act, and the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons (41E).

The Local Government released Ordinance No. 8695 or Manila LGBTQI Protection Ordinance of 2020 which "protects the rights of lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgenders, queers and intersex (LGBTQ) in the city of Manila against any forms of discrimination solely based on sexual orientation, gender identity, expression."

The Universidad de Manila (UDM) incorporated Special Laws in the UDM Student Manual 2021, provide gender-inclusive Guiding Principles and Core Values, and offer guidelines on feedback and complaints mechanism through Universidad de Manila Citizen's Charter, 2019 (1st Edition). A policy amendment/enhancement to the Student Manual 2021 was also formulated and is being implemented. The University's LGBTQIA⁺ awareness initiative through orientation and information dissemination as regards gender-inclusive endeavors were executed through the GAD Orientation, OSA Orientation. The conduct of re-orientation is on the roadmap to diffuse more information on LGBTQIA⁺ awareness.

3. LGBTQIA⁺ Inclusivity Framework As Roadmap Towards Sustainability

Based on findings, five (5) emerging themes on Issues, while three (3) emerging themes on Concerns need to be addressed.

In terms of Issues, the following themes were revealed: (1) Inclusivity of LGBTQIA⁺ at UDM shall allow for a choice of gender identity and gender expression, (2) Inclusivity of LGBTQIA⁺ at UDM is to recognize the inherent worth of everyone (3) Inclusivity of LGBTQIA⁺ at UDM is to provide exclusive comfort room for LGBTQIA⁺, (4) Inclusivity of LGBTQIA⁺ at UDM is involvement and empowerment of everyone, and (5) Inclusivity of LGBTQIA⁺ at UDM is to recognize the inherent dignity of everyone.

In terms of Concerns, the following themes were identified: (1) Allow the LGBTQIA⁺ community to express their gender identity, (2) Gender equality for the UDM LGBTQIA⁺ community, and (3) Orientation and Re-orientation of UDM on UDM on LGBTQIA⁺ awareness.

To facilitate LGBTQIA+ Inclusivity as a response to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), The Universidad de Manila Inclusivity Framework provides a roadmap toward a sustainable gender-equal - LGBTQIA⁺ inclusive institution.

In alignment with the Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the University initiated and implemented strategic plans that address the issues and concerns of the LGBTQIA⁺.

First, Udm Student Manual incorporated Special Laws related to LGBTQIA⁺ concerns and enhanced the policy based on the existing international, national, and local provisions.

Second, the University Awareness Orientations: GAD Orientation and OSA Orientation provided insights to the University on what and how to address concerns of the LGBTQIA⁺. The holding of re-orientation is being scheduled to reiterate gender equality in the University. This proves that the roadmap is in the works toward sustainability of LGBTQIA⁺ inclusivity.

Third, the University encouraged the formation of the LGBTQIA⁺ Student Organization through which students may exercise their right to freely associate in pursuit of a common academic goal. The organization is the forum for student's leadership development, learning, engagement, and fostering of shared interests.

The Inclusivity Framework provides the conceptual structure for how Universidad de Manila facilitates a roadmap for LGBTQIA⁺ Inclusivity sustainability.

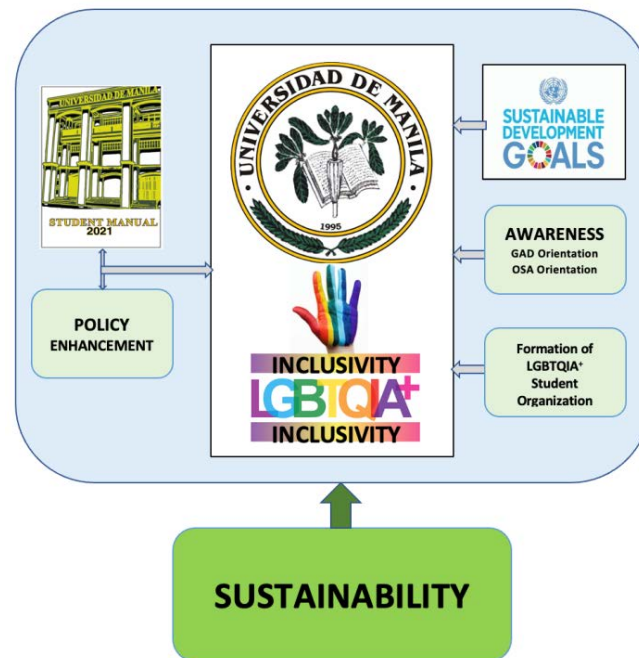


Figure 2. LGBTQIA⁺ Inclusivity Framework As Roadmap Towards Sustainability

Conclusion

This paper explored the University's facilitation of LGBTQIA⁺ Inclusivity as a response to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The study outlines the University's roadmap for sustainability. Drawing from the responses of the respondents, this research determined the issues and concerns of LGBTQIA⁺ students.

The results showed five (5) emerging themes on Issues, while three (3) emerging themes on Concerns that need to be addressed. In terms of Issues, the following themes were revealed: (1) Inclusivity of LGBTQIA⁺ at UDM shall allow for a choice of gender identity and gender expression, (2) Inclusivity of LGBTQIA⁺ at UDM is to recognize the inherent worth of everyone (3) Inclusivity of LGBTQIA⁺ at UDM is to provide exclusive comfort room for LGBTQIA⁺, (4) Inclusivity of LGBTQIA⁺ at UDM is involvement and empowerment of everyone, and (5) Inclusivity of LGBTQIA⁺ at UDM is to recognize the inherent dignity of everyone. In terms of Concerns, the following themes were identified: (1) Allow the LGBTQIA⁺ community to express their gender identity, (2) Gender equality for the UDM LGBTQIA⁺ community, and (3) Orientation and Re-orientation of UDM on UDM on LGBTQIA⁺ awareness.

This paper presents significant issues and concerns of the LGBTQIA⁺ community that leads to exerted responses from the different sectors: The National Government, Local Government Units, and The Universidad de Manila (UDM).

Based on the findings of the study, Udm's Inclusivity Framework is formulated as a roadmap toward sustainability of LGBTQIA⁺ inclusivity.

Recommendations

Based on the drawn conclusion, the following recommendations are formulated:

Commission on Higher Education (CHED). CHED can undertake a comprehensive review of Institutional compliance with the provisions of the Child Protection Policy and the Anti-Bullying Law.

Local Officials. Disseminate implementing rules and regulations to ensure that existing anti-discrimination ordinances are applied and enforced.

School Administrators. Sustain Re-Orientation and training to ensure that staff and other personnel can recognize and intervene in bullying and harassment when they witness it occurring or it is brought to their attention.

Teachers and Staff. Revisit existing gender sensitivity training modules and revised them in consultation with members of the LGBT community, to include SOGI-related concepts, LGB, and particularly transgender issues and concerns.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank Kosty R. Samson and Flordeliza Dela Cruz – Administrative Assistants at IGPS – for their significant contribution to this research, specifically in the gathering of information during the focused group discussion (FGD).

References

- Cervantes, Filane Mikee. (2019). Discomfort over sharing of restroom must be considered: solon. PNA. <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1078036>
- Co, Adrian Stewart. (2019) Duterte ‘favors’ 3rd Restroom for LGBTQ+. <https://www.panaynews.net/Duterte-favors-3rd-restroom-for-lgbtq/>
- Dominik Koehler et al. (2018). Discrimination against Sexual Minorities in Education and Housing: Evidence from Two Field Experiments in Serbia (Washington, DC: The World Bank Group)
- Dorey, Kit. (2022). The Sustainable Development Goals and LGBT Inclusion. Stonewall International. <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/system/files/sdg-guide.pdf>. Accessed April 17, 2022
- Eckes, Suzanne; Lewis, Maria. (2020). The Complex and Dynamic Legal Landscape of LGBT Student Rights
- Hanson, Thomas; Zhang, Gary; Cerna, Rebeca; Stern, Alexis; and Austin, Gregory. (2022). Understanding the Experiences of LGBTQ Students in California. <https://www.wested.org/resources/lgbtq-students-in-california/> Accessed April 17, 2022
- Just Let Us Be”, Human Rights Watch (2017). https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/report_pdf/philippineslgbt0617_web.pdf
- Lee, Daniel. (2017). End Gendered Uniform Restrictions for LGBT Students in Philippine Schools. Human Rights Watch. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/06/23/end-gendered-uniform-restrictions-lgbtstudents-philippine-schools>
- CNN Philippines. (2020). Manila To Penalize Anyone Who Discriminates Based On Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity. <https://www.cnnphilippines.com/news/2020/10/29/city-of-manila-ordinance-protection-of-lgbtqi-rights.html>
- Montemayor, Ma. Teresa. (2020) CSC Promotes Gender Equality and social inclusion in Worksite. <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1079127>
- Ocampo, M.B. (2011). “Sex” In The Workplace: Approaches To Sexual Orientation And Gender Identity Discrimination In The Workplace Absent An Anti-Discrimination Law. *Philippine Law Journal*, Vol. 86, 190–232.

- Russel, Stephen T; Fish, Jessica N. (2016). Mental Health in Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Youth. *Annual Review of Clinical Psychology* Vol. 12:465-487 (Volume publication date March 2016)
- Saint Paul Public Schools. https://www.spps.org/cms/lib/MN01910242/Centricity/Domain/1254/gender_inclusion_policy_final_v3_17_15.pdf Accessed April 2022
- Scolaro, Brianna. (2020). LGBTI and the Sustainable Development Goals: Fostering Economic Well-Being. <https://lgbtq.hkspublications.org/2020/06/24/lgbti-and-the-sustainable-development-goals-fostering-economic-well-being/>
- Thoreson, Ryan; Lee, Daniel. (2017). “Just Let Us Be”. Discrimination Against LGBT Students in the Philippines. <https://www.hrw.org/report/2017/06/21/just-let-us-be/discrimination-against-lgbtstudents-philippines>
- Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>
- UN Philippines Renews Call for Inclusive Education at Launch of New UNESCO Report. <https://philippines.un.org/en/102473-un-philippines-renews-call-inclusive-education-launch-new-unesco-report>. Accessed April 2022
- UNDP, USAID (2014). *Being LGBT in Asia: The Philippines Country Report*. Bangkok.
- UNDP, Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines (2018). *Legal Gender Recognition in the Philippines: A Legal and Policy Review*