

Making a Difference
Citizen's and their organisations and networks contributing to change
OWA PPA 2008-9: Case study 24

Title of Case Study:	Celebrating Excellence in Gender Equality and Good Governance The Bayi Citation Award
-----------------------------	--

1. PPA partner name	One World Action
2. Countries highlighted in case study	The Philippines

Celebrating Excellence in Gender Equality and Good Governance
The Bayi Citation Award
Institute for Politics and Governance, Philippines



The Bayi Citation is awarded to inspirational Filipino women in recognition of their achievements in promoting democracy and defending human rights.

This remarkable initiative was launched in 2005 by the Institute of Politics and Governance (IPG) and One World Action through its Programme Partnership Agreement with DFID. The Bayi Citation, given every other year, have now become a well established and high profile national event in the Filipino calendar, awarding and acknowledging excellence in good governance. The Bayi Citation, named after the Visayan term for esteemed women who hold important positions in society, is part of IPG's Urban Governance and Women's Political Leadership Programme.

What makes this award unique is its celebration of groundbreaking leadership and initiatives by women from all levels of the political spectrum - from community-based organisations and social movements, to local and national government, to the arts, media and academia. The awards provide an opportunity not just to celebrate women's achievements but to identify, promote and share innovative ideas and best practices which reinforce the linkages and accountability between national politicians and grassroots leaders.



Where women-leaders have demonstrated a capacity to not only win elections and govern, but govern well; or where their leadership has helped pave the way for improvements in their communities' lives, the Bayi Citation provides meaningful acknowledgement and recognition. The Citation highlights the struggle of women and men who, in the course of their daily lives, are able to push for changes in power relation. Their inspirational stories help us to understand the conditions under which successes occur and to share these elsewhere. The lessons from the Bayi Citation are translated and articulated into training modules, to further enhance women's confidence to enter and restructure the local centres of power in their communities

Jen Albano,

Director of IPG

April 2009 saw the third Bayi Citation Award given to 12 exceptional women at a prestigious ceremony at Club Filipino in Manila. Awardees included Fatima Cabanag - an urban poor leader and activist, Atty. Leila De Lima - Commissioner on Human Rights, Mayor of Marikina - Marides Fernando, Barangay Chairperson, Nida Cabrera and journalist Patricia Evagelista. Special awards were given to Juan Flavier, a male champion of reproductive health, a TV station who have produced programmes about violence against women and to Alvin Dizon for his work in organising citizen's to participate in local politics in Cebu.

Also present were women leaders and activists from Malaysia, Tamil Nadu, Delhi, Cambodia, Burma, Aceh, the UK and Germany, who had been participating in a regional dialogue on Women in Politics and Governance co-ordinated by IPG and One World Action. Following the ceremony they discussed the idea of launching a similar award for the Asia region.

The rich stories and experiences of the winners give us innovative strategies, knowledge and practices to inform our future work in developing transformatory, gender equal leadership. These pioneering experiences in gender budgeting, participatory development planning, improving pro-poor public services and enacting model legislation redefine the roles and rules of local and national government institutions and demonstrate that communities, people and leaders can transform patronage politics into an inclusive democracy of equality. Jen Albano, Director of IPG

The Bayi Citation Citation or 'Oscars of Good Governance' receive extensive media coverage and interest across the Philippines and continue to inspire women and men to become involved in politics and in the governance of their communities.

The acceptance speech of Sylvia Estrada-Claudio, MD, PhD - a leading feminist scholar and activist

Bayi Citation Award Ceremony - April 30, 2009

It was difficult to think about and write my acceptance speech. I do not know how to say that I think my award is less about me and more about the people I work with, while at the same time say that I am honoured to be a member of a select group of Bayi awardees whose individual achievements are impressive. I am feeling deeply validated and at the same time, feeling like a fraud for getting an award when I was simply doing my duty and having fun while I was at it.



Nonetheless, I believe that awards are given to call attention to persons and their work so that others may be inspired.

So let me try to raise the stakes by talking to you not just about the people I work with, but also about the happiness that comes with the work. In other words, working with the oppressed in poor communities is not just noble work, it is also as the young say, pretty cool.

Where I work, there are many people who do not ask for recognition for doing their duty to their community and country. They expect no praise for coming to work on time, treating the public with courtesy and accounting for every centavo that they spend. These things are not a big deal and we take them for granted.

In the organisations I work with, people earn enough to meet their family's basic needs because those of us who could earn more tend to share their salaries with those whose work is valued less. In other words, I have met so many people who understand that beyond a very minimal threshold, happiness does not increase in proportion to income.

In my work the poor among us have an equal voice. We think and laugh and sit together in long and short meetings hatching plans of affirmation and subversion. We are not unaware of the inequities between us, but we have forgiven each other for the moment while we are trying to end the problem.

In my world we refuse to be twisted and amputated to fit conceptions of what is good for women and girls. We allow our waistlines to expand as we please and raise or lower our hemlines with impunity. We also raise our eyes to look deeply into the eyes of our lovers, our children and our friends.

In my world women and girls are not ashamed to be smart. We study the world around us in order to change it and mould it closer to our visions. Medicine and math; cooking and contraceptives; disruption and democracy - all the things under the sun and beyond the sun are our areas of interest.

In my world we are rarely afraid when we are together. Together we have ended criminal control of water and electricity in poor communities, faced down abusive husbands and confronted our lack of self esteem and feelings of inadequacy.

In my world the pleasures of the body are welcomed with joy. We rejoice in our strength and revel in our sensuality. We eat and sleep without worry. We dance and sing with abandon. We make love or refuse to make love without guile or guilt. We also expect to bear just the number of children we choose. In other words, we are not afraid of our desires, our passions, our loves and our choices.

In my world we demand that justice triumphs in our intimate relationships and that caring thrives in our working ones.

In my world the atheist lives happily with the believer because when we allow ourselves to think and feel deeply we realise that we cannot really tell who are the heretics and who are not. In my world, we refuse allegiance to religious authorities that give no value to women's capacity to discern for themselves.

In my world, we stay in the Philippines because of the overwhelming poverty. We do so because in the face of iniquity, a simple act of decency is an act of heroism, a small act of compassion an act of renewal, and everyday we witness the tremendous productivity and creativity of the poor.

In my world we view the call for the universal enjoyment of human rights as a serious and achievable proposal.

And here is the really inspiring thing, this world really does exist. It has existed for a long, long time and will continue to do so. It exists as anything would - full of contradictions and human frailty. But it is there nonetheless. And it is neither small nor narrow nor exclusive. We must tell people about it lest the cynical, the overly-pragmatic and those who do not understand what they are missing succeed in hiding it from view.

Thank you, for this citation and the chance to tell you all about how lucky some of us are to be able to live our dreams now.

Background facts

- For more information about the Bayi Citation and IPG see www.ipg.org.ph
- IPG's programmes are anchored in the work of the Barangay-Bayan Governance Consortium, a network of around 100 local government officials, people's organisations and NGOs interested in participatory governance and in fully implementing the Local Government Code of 1991.
- The current President of the Philippines, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has been in power since 2001 and the next national elections will be held in 2010. Her presidency has been marred by allegations of corruption, abuse of presidential power and manipulation of the electoral system.
- One World Action has been working in the Philippines since 1989 - it also works with the Institute for Popular Democracy.