

**GREENPEACE**

# ORIGINS

June  
2025

**COURAGE TO LOVE.  
PRIDE FOR CLIMATE.**

PRIDE EDITION

## **ORIGINS** **Pride Edition**

ORIGINS is a magazine by Greenpeace Philippines that traces the roots of environmental action through the stories of communities leading the way.

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# GREENPEACE

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### **ON THE COVER**

A queer activist behind a rainbow flag during the Metro Manila Pride March: “Atin Ang Kulayaan” last June 2022 in Pasay City, Metro Manila. © Jilson Tiu / Greenpeace

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We want to hear from you. ORIGINS is shaped by the stories and voices of Filipinos. Help us make future issues even better by sharing your thoughts in this short survey: [act.gp/originsfeedback0625](https://act.gp/originsfeedback0625)





# PRIDE, POWER & THE PLANET

Climate change often arrives to us as data: rising sea levels, stronger typhoons, hotter days. But behind every statistic are lives, and behind every life is a layered story. The climate crisis, at its core, is not just a crisis of nature—it’s a crisis of justice. And like all injustices, it does not unfold equally.

For many, survival in the context of a climate crisis means grappling not only with typhoons or droughts, but with systems that fail to see them. Queer individuals, women, children, indigenous peoples—these are communities that have long navigated the margins. When disaster strikes, these identities don’t disappear; they become more visible, more vulnerable, and too often, more expendable in the eyes of response systems that either exclude them or were never built for them.

In this issue of the ORIGINS, we sit with these stories. We hear from LGBTQIA+ advocates who continue to bring boldness into climate activism. We meet a trans leader who, in the aftermath of disaster, was forced to abandon her lived name just to access basic aid. We follow the courage of a queer individual from a small town, daring to hold a fossil fuel giant accountable for the

destruction it has sown. We explore how people living with HIV are often invisible in climate resilience plans, even as their medical needs become more precarious during crises. We reflect on what allyship looks like in practice, especially when the risk of tokenism looms. And we discover how feminist perspectives can sharpen our understanding of power and inequality.

The fight for climate justice is not just about reducing carbon or planting trees. It’s also about reckoning with—and actively participating in—the dismantling of systems that treat some lives as more worthy than others. The queer and feminist movements show us how unjust power structures can be slowly, persistently challenged, not only through grand gestures but through the everyday act of showing up, living one’s truth, and making space for voices that refuse to be silenced.

Justice means refusing to flatten these stories into simple narratives of resilience. It means seeing the full spectrum of identities who continue to fight for a livable planet and standing with them.

Happy Pride!

In peace and pride,

*Nille*  
Eunille Santos



*Eunille Santos is a digital campaigner at Greenpeace Philippines, where he has been leading the organization’s Pride initiatives since 2022. He is currently pursuing a Master’s degree in Development Communication at the University of the Philippines Los Baños, with a focus on gender, culture, and communication studies. Eunille has joined different Pride Marches in the Philippines, Thailand, and Myanmar.*

*Cover Photo: For the third year, Greenpeace Philippines joined the Pride March with the call, “Earth For All,” at the Pride PH Festival 2024: Love Laban 2 Everyone, at the Quezon Memorial Circle in Quezon City. © Jilson Tiu / Greenpeace*

A rainbow above a wind farm in Pililia, Rizal. © Veejay Villafranca / Greenpeace



# COLORING THE CLIMATE MOVEMENT

*Greenpeace Philippines and Pride through the years*

By Johanna Fernandez

## CLIMATE JUSTICE IS QUEER JUSTICE (2022)

The climate crisis is a justice issue, and the fight for solutions must begin with those most affected. For years, and more so since the pandemic, Greenpeace Philippines has been calling on institutions to step up with coherent, inclusive plans for climate justice, and to center communities already leading the way with concrete and sustainable solutions.



© Jilson Tiu / Greenpeace

Joining the historic Pride March in Manila, alongside our colleagues at Greenpeace Thailand marching in Bangkok, was both a symbolic act of solidarity and a call for a better future—one where everyone is treated equally and can live in safety. It was also a powerful reminder that the climate crisis deepens the injustices already faced by the queer community, and that climate action must be inclusive of their voices and leadership.

Through our work with communities on the frontlines of the climate crisis, we have witnessed firsthand how marginalized groups, including members of the LGBTQIA+ community, are disproportionately affected. Greenpeace believes that climate change can only be addressed through a vibrant democracy where communities help shape policies and decisions, regardless of region, class, or gender. It was this belief that inspired us to stand with the LGBTQIA+ community and join the Pride March for the first time in 2022.



© Panumas Sanguanwong / Greenpeace



© Albert Lozada / Greenpeace



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## THERE IS NO PRIDE ON A DEAD PLANET (2023)

Greenpeace's continued support at Pride in 2023 reflected our deepening commitment to stand in solidarity with the LGBTQIA+ community, particularly in the call to pass the Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity and Expression (SOGIE) Equality bill. Through this act, we honored the queer community's long-standing fight for justice, dignity, and equality.

In the spirit of echoing the queer community's years of struggle, and echoing the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's assertion that climate justice demands "fairness and equity in the way people are treated," we affirmed a core belief that no one should be left behind when addressing the urgent issue of climate change.

## EARTH FOR ALL (2024)

In 2024, we called on corporations to move beyond performative gestures and take meaningful, sustained action in support of the queer community. Genuine solidarity means going beyond “rainbow marketing” and embedding human rights into the very fabric of corporate operations and policies. We also intensified our call for the government to put real accountability mechanisms in place, breaking this cycle of injustice manifesting as both systemic violence and devastating climate impacts.



## GREENPEACE PHILIPPINES ILOILO VOLUNTEERS FOR PRIDE AND CLIMATE JUSTICE (2024)

The newly formed local group of volunteers in Iloilo also joined the Pride event, highlighting Greenpeace’s growing effort to transcend geographic boundaries and extend our call beyond Metro Manila. The volunteers spoke about the intersections of climate justice and social justice, along with their local initiatives on environmental protection and human rights.



This call is grounded in Greenpeace’s values of justice, equity, diversity, inclusion, and safety (JEDIS) and reflects our intentional commitment to living out our theory of practice. More than just internal guidelines, they shape how we engage with movements, how we build alliances, and how we show up for communities as part of our broader commitment to climate justice that puts the voices of those most impacted at the center.



## COURAGE TO LOVE. PRIDE FOR CLIMATE. (2025)

This year, we march with deeper clarity about who we are and what we stand for. Pride is a reflection of our values, our lived truths, and our place in the struggle for a just and livable future. Greenpeace recognizes that LGBTQIA+ individuals are not only affected by the climate crisis; they are also leaders, organizers, artists, scientists, and defenders who have long shaped the fight for climate and social justice.

We march with greater intention in our collective identity, committed to courage in all its forms. We carry the stories and power of queer communities within and beyond Greenpeace: those who continue to challenge systems of oppression while reimagining a better world.

Pride is both protest and purpose, and it is in how we express love for people, for the planet, and for generations still to come. We take to the streets once again with a clear message: no pride in delay, no justice until polluters pay. Queer justice is climate justice. **—with inputs from John Mark Sagum**



*Johanna Carissa Fernandez is the Communications & Digital Manager at Greenpeace Southeast Asia–Philippines, where she leads strategic storytelling on climate justice, grounded in a crisis communications background. She is also a poet, with poems that have appeared in several international publications.*

*John Mark Sagum is a digital campaigner at Greenpeace Philippines. A former college instructor, his journey with the organization started as a volunteer, contributing to campaigns like the Water Patrol.*

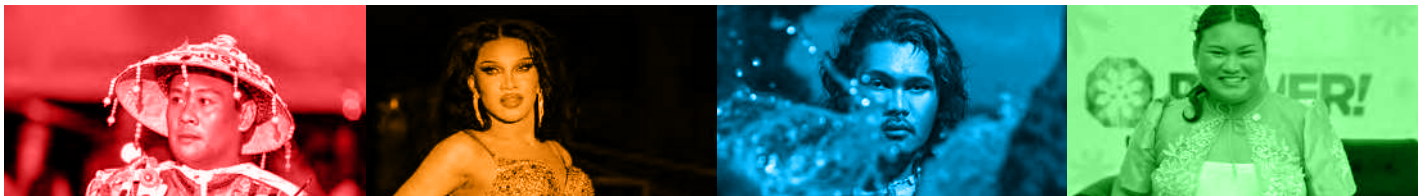
# SERVING CLIMATE JUSTICE WITH PRIDE

*Meet these brave and bold queer environmental advocates*

By Bill Bontigao

**They're loud. They're proud. And they're not here to play nice with climate polluters. While the world battles record heatwaves and extreme weather events, these queer environmental advocates are bringing color, courage, and community into the fight for the planet.**

**We caught up with some of today's boldest LGBTQIA+ environmental advocates to ask about what drives their work, the wins that fuel their fire, and how they stay fierce in a world that often tries to dim their shine.**



**Tony Abletes**

Salcedo, Eastern Samar  
Eastern Samar Youth for  
Climate Justice (ESY4CJ)  
Greenpeace Volunteer

**Ghillean Pranz Fegidero /  
Celestia**

Bacolod City, Negros Occidental  
Youth For Climate Hope -  
Philippines

**Lester Dellosa**

Legazpi City, Albay  
CICCADA

**Freda Dimaliwat**

Quezon, Nueva Ecija  
Sangguniang Kabataan  
Councilor



**Can you tell us about your advocacy?**

**Tony:** I'm advocating environmental and climate justice, and promoting fairness and equity in environmental policies and practices. We support grassroots movements and demand that companies prioritize people and the planet over profit.

**Celestia:** As a climate activist, our campaigns revolve around climate justice, fossil fuel phaseout, and a just transition to renewable energy through an intergenerational movement and a resistance built on intersectional approaches.

**Lester:** I am an activist and environmental storyteller. I started creating stories on the environment, particularly about the oceans, sustainable fashion, and communities, leading to the creation of CICCADA, an activism platform that bridges multiple sustainable development goals.

**Freda:** My advocacy is rooted in the intersection of environmental science, social justice, and queer liberation. As a transgender woman, I understand firsthand the importance of creating inclusive and equitable spaces, not just for people, but for the planet we all share. I worked with the integration of ethical scientific principles into community-led environmental initiatives.

**What inspired you to pursue your advocacy?**



**Tony:** Living in Eastern Samar is like living on the highway of storms and typhoons. We are always the first to be hit because of our geographic location. Seeing my family in a difficult situation and the communities suffering from trauma because of the extreme weather events are some of my reasons for pursuing my advocacy and understanding climate change's severity and urgency.

**Celestia:** I first learned about the environmental impacts of the excessive use of plastics when I was in high school. From then on, I dug deeper and learned more about the state of our planet. I then realized that plastics were only one part of the picture. Growing up in the Global South, I have seen how communities have been destroyed by the worsening climate impacts that are caused by fossil fuels. I continue to be in the climate fight because there is an imminent need to take action and there are lives at stake.

**Lester:** It's always the people. Working in the environment and seeing how it is less talked about, I was inspired to be a bridge between the environment and the people who work to champion it. It's not all the time that scientific data is shared in public, nor are experts able to localize data into communities. Thus I promised to myself that as long as there are people working for the environment, I will continue telling stories about their efforts to the world.

**Freda:** My journey as a transgender woman deeply informs my advocacy. I've personally experienced the challenges of navigating a world that often struggles with difference. This lived experience has made me aware of the interconnectedness of all forms of marginalization—whether it's the marginalization of a person based on their identity or the degradation of an ecosystem based on human exploitation.

 **What has been your proudest moment in your journey so far?**

**Tony:** One of my proudest moments has been sharing Super Typhoon Yolanda survivors' stories at the People's Museum of Climate Justice during the International Court of Justice Advisory Opinion (ICJAO) 2024 in The Hague. I'm also proud of building solidarity with fellow Global South advocates at the Climate Justice Camp in Tanzania. But most of all, it's seeing communities join the movement, like when we sent a demand letter to the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) holding corporations accountable.

**Celestia:** One of the things that I'm very proud of is that the people whom I've inspired to join the climate fight are now thriving, inspiring, and educating others as well. I believe that our

journey towards climate justice can't be done alone, and inspiring others to also be on the frontlines of climate campaigns are moments that everyone can be proud of.

**Lester:** My proudest moment is becoming Bicol's *sirena* (mermaid) maker. Since "*Sirena Sa Sayong*," an environmental campaign on ocean conservation that featured an angry mermaid, CICCADA has become a platform for *sirena* stories. We have published two *sirena* campaigns with two different coastal communities in Gubat, Sorsogon and in Legazpi, Albay.

**Freda:** One of my proudest moments was my initiative in our barangay, Doña Lucia, to create a Just Energy Transition Council—where we successfully educated and mobilized community members to organize with women, youth, farmers, and LGBTQIA+. Witnessing the collective ownership and enthusiasm of the community was incredibly rewarding.

**In a world that often tells queer people to "tone it down," how do you stay bold and grounded in your fight?**



**Tony:** We may differ in our beliefs, choices, and preferences, but we are no different when it comes to our rights as human beings—to live in safe spaces and be respected. We are not violent; we are talented, joyful people. I stay bold by remembering that my identity and dignity are not up for compromise—we will not "tone it down," and we will not be silenced. Instead, we will turn that pressure into strength and continue fighting for justice.

**Celestia:** In a society where we are constantly dehumanized, oppressed, and marginalized, the best thing that we can do is to do the complete opposite. Stay bold. Flaunt your identity. Disturb their comfort.

**Lester:** As a queer creative, I believe people who tell me to tone it down lack taste and are not brave enough to express themselves. The world comes with no filters, and I thrive in radiating energies that I know would help me bloom even more as an individual. Creatives need space and the freedom to express and create.

**Freda:** Staying bold and grounded, for me, is about radical authenticity. In a world that

often seeks to silence or diminish queer voices, my very existence as a transgender woman speaking out on these issues is an act of defiance and a statement of power. I refuse to “tone down” who I am, because my identity is inextricably linked to my passion for justice and sustainability. I rely heavily on my community—both my queer chosen family and my allies in environmental advocacy. These networks provide crucial support, validation, and a safe space to recharge. Knowing that I’m not alone in this fight is incredibly grounding.



**If you could give one message for the next generation of queer changemakers and climate leaders, what would it be?**

**Tony:** Keep pushing boundaries, challenge injustices, and advocate for a more inclusive, sustainable future. Your voices matter, your stories are crucial, and your leadership will shape a better world. Stay bold, stay resilient, and keep shining. Be *unkavogable forda* future.

**Celestia:** Continue being bold. Keep disrupting the comfortable, especially those who try to silence and erase our existence in this world. Always stay grounded with your values and remember that there is a community with you and for you. In this fight, we would often feel demoralized and defeated, but always look at the beauty of things. In this fight, it’s not just passion or drive that keeps us going. It’s hope.

**Lester:** The world needs everyone’s hand in our fight to forward climate justice, and queer changemakers are part of that. In our fight, we’ll meet people who’ll try to dim our shine. Never let them do that; instead, hand them a pair of glasses and shine ever brighter!

**Freda:** Be fiercely, unapologetically yourselves. Your unique perspectives, your lived experiences, and your diverse identities are not just valid—they are essential. The most powerful change comes from those who dare to be different and who bring their whole selves to the fight. Understand that climate justice is queer justice, and queer liberation is deeply intertwined with the health of our planet. Don’t silo these issues; recognize their profound interconnectedness. Keep fighting with love and courage.



*Bill Bontigao is a queer, passionate science educator, and dedicated climate justice activist from Tabaco City, Albay. He earned his Bachelor of Secondary Education Major in Science degree from Bicol University. Currently, he is a Community Outreach Associate Coordinator at Greenpeace Philippines.*

Greenpeace Philippines joined the Metro Manila Pride March last 2022 in Pasay City.  
© Jilson Tiu / Greenpeace



# JEAN FINDING JEAN FINDING



***In a country battered by typhoons, a trans woman holds onto her name.***

By Eunille Santos

## ***I didn't set out to find Jean.***

I was working on something else entirely, sifting through testimonies from the National Inquiry on Climate Change, a groundbreaking report by the Commission on Human Rights to establish accountability for the world's biggest climate polluters. It was the kind of reading that piles up slowly: technical data, grim forecasts, policy language, and the occasional gut-punch statistic.

Then I came across Arthur Golong's name. And then, Jean.

Her story wasn't loud or rhetorical. It was tender, almost matter-of-fact. She spoke about Super Typhoon Yolanda, not just about the winds that destroyed homes in Tacloban or the floodwaters that swallowed entire neighborhoods, but about what happened after. About how, in the middle of the chaos, when help finally arrived, she was told she didn't exist.

Relief workers were looking for "Arthur." Government forms asked for "Arthur." But by then, she had been living as Jean for years. To be considered as a house owner and head of the family, to have access to relief efforts and social services, she had to be Arthur.

To be helped, Jean had to become Arthur again.

"It was really hard. I started living as 'Jean' when I was 14, working in a salon. But when Yolanda happened, I couldn't use that name," Jean said in Tagalog in one of our interviews. "Relief workers were looking for 'Arthur,' my legal name. In our community, only my close friends knew me as Jean. To everyone else, I was still Arthur. So even though many were searching for me, they couldn't find me. Just to be included in the aid, I had to be Arthur."

And there it was. The bureaucratic violence of a storm, not made of rain or wind, but of systems that refuse to see you unless

you make yourself smaller, more convenient, and "straighter." This raises the need for proper legal support for gender-based equity, such as gender-based identification at birth.

## **Identity, vulnerability, and erasure**

I kept returning to the imagery of that moment. I imagined her—displaced, grieving, wandering on a muddy road—being asked to offer up a version of herself she had long since shed, just to receive aid.





From Manila's Kilometer Zero, Climate Walk participants crossed San Juanico Bridge to arrive in Tacloban—Ground Zero of Super Typhoon Yolanda—in commemoration of the first anniversary of its landfall in Eastern Visayas. The Climate Walk is a People's Walk for Climate Justice, co-organized by Greenpeace along with other climate advocacy groups and civil society organizations. The climate advocates are calling on developed countries and world leaders to commit to ambitious and binding targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, keeping the global average temperature rise below 1.5 degrees Celsius. © Roy Lagarde / Greenpeace

But this is not just about a name. “Jean” was never simply a nickname. Jean was a hard-won affirmation of self. Jean was the girl who stepped into a salon at fourteen and never looked back. She was the woman in the duster and the wide-brimmed hat, greeting a congressman who expected someone else. Jean was joy, defiance, and heroism.

But in the eyes of the state, Jean didn't count.

That's when I understood what vulnerability means in the context of the climate crisis. It's not just about proximity to rising seas or flimsy roofs. It's about the compounded precarity of living in a world that doesn't recognize who you are. It's about facing a super typhoon and a system that says, “not yet, not you, not like that.”

“That's when I learned what ‘vulnerable’ really means,” she told me. “LGBT people are the most vulnerable. People often say, ‘They'll be fine, gays are resourceful.’ But most of the time, we're the last in line. They say we don't have families, so we're not a priority.”

She continued, “During the 11 months we stayed at the temporary shelter, no one ever asked, ‘How many gays are here? How many lesbians? We have livelihood programs for them.’ What we went through during Yolanda wasn't that easy.”

### The storm after the storm

After Yolanda, Jean became Arthur again. She endured evacuation centers with binary bathrooms, where entering either space could mean exposure to ridicule or threat. “If I went into the men's bathroom, people would say, ‘Oh no, he might peek.’ But if I used the women's, they'd say, ‘Why are you here? You're not a woman,’” she shared.

In one of Jean's accounts, her friend was declined a fish cage—supposedly for livelihood—just because her friend was gay. On multiple occasions, the livelihood programs offered back then were limited—automatically assigned, even—to cisgender individuals. As for Jean, she signed up for carpentry and masonry trainings not because she wanted to, but because the livelihood programs weren't designed for a hairdresser. In a disaster context, where urgency narrows options, exclusion and inequality become even sharper. Choices are further limited, if not already made for you.

“I'm a hairdresser. But I trained in masonry and carpentry even though I'd never actually work as a carpenter,” she said. “I only did it to be able to avail the program. The 250 pesos per day was hard to pass up. You just had to go along with whatever was available.”

Still, Jean refused to vanish. She became a community leader; first informally, then by title. She organized resettlement efforts, liaised with local officials, and founded an organization serving her neighbors. Other villages began taking notice. “Now, many communities want LGBTQIA+ leaders. They’ve seen how well I can lead,” she said.

They saw what the system refused to.

But recognition shouldn’t come with a resume. Jean should not have had to prove her worth over and over just to be heard. “What if I weren’t the president?” she asked. “Maybe no one would be listening even now. They’d probably still be insulting me.”

Her story reminded me that climate change does not create injustice; rather, it exposes what is already there. The cracks widen during times of crisis, and those who fall through them are the ones who were never properly seen to begin with. The ones like Jean.

I often think about how we treat names in disaster response, the emphasis on legal identities, on signatures, on IDs. What happens to those whose names were chosen, not assigned? What happens to those whose truth isn’t on their birth certificate?

## No pride in delay

We call it disaster risk. But for people like Jean, the risk is not just the storm. It’s erasure.

There’s no pride in resilience if it requires invisibility. There’s no justice in survival if you must give up your identity to access it. And there’s no genuine climate action unless it sees—fully and unconditionally—those whose lives have long been pushed to the margins.

So yes, this is a climate story. But it is also a story about names. About a woman who lived through one of the world’s deadliest storms only to find herself erased at the moment she needed the world to see her most.

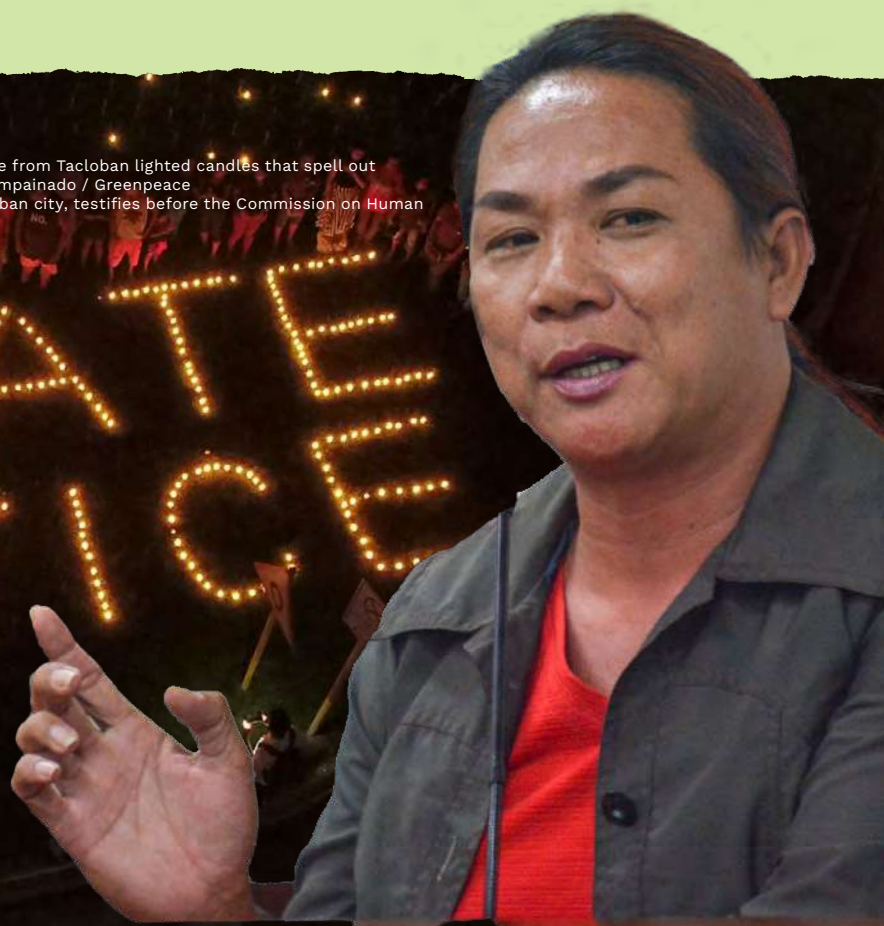
Finding Jean, for me, meant confronting the quiet ways people are made to disappear by paperwork, by policy, or by the indifference of systems that see difference as inconvenience.

But Jean was never lost. She was always there—in the lines of a testimony, in leadership shaped by storms, in the choice to keep showing up.

“Yolanda didn’t take me down,” she said. “Why would this?”

Jean never disappeared. The world just took too long to see her.

(L) On the eve of the third anniversary of Super Typhoon Yolanda, people from Tacloban lighted candles that spell out “Climate Justice” to commemorate the devastating landfall. © Enrico Empainado / Greenpeace  
(R) Yolanda survivor, Jean, a trans woman community leader from Tacloban city, testifies before the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) inquiry on climate change. © Roy Lagarde / Greenpeace



# WHEN BEING PALABAN ISN'T A CHOICE

By Maverick Flores

Frank Nicol Marba, a 30-year-old resident of the Dinagat Islands, has had a lot of labels attached to his name.

*Reklamador. Kagawad. Advocate. Queer.*

But if there's one label he can't own, it's the word *palaban*. And yet, if anyone deserved to be dubbed a fighter, it was him.

In 2024, Frank made a call few people have had to. He bravely stood as the sole Filipino plaintiff in a lawsuit against TotalEnergies' board of directors and main shareholders "for deliberately endangering the lives of others, involuntary manslaughter, neglecting to address a disaster, and damaging biodiversity."

He wound up in France and even had the opportunity to speak against the fossil fuel giant in court. Frank spoke in defense of 12 activist scientists being sued for their climate protest against a TotalEnergies Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) terminal.

Before his age even left the calendar, Frank has already lived a life worthy of being called *palaban*. But he still doesn't think so.

"I don't see myself as *palaban*, nor as an activist or an advocate... I define being *palaban* as a choice. But this wasn't my choice," he said in Tagalog. "It was an act of desperation."

Frank Nicol Marba, Super Typhoon Odette survivor and plaintiff in a landmark case against an international oil company. © Jilson Tiu / Greenpeace



Frank Nicol Marba, a teacher and public servant from storm-vulnerable Dinagat Islands, stands in front of the Eiffel Tower in Paris, France, while holding a placard highlighting the plight of climate-impacted communities such as those from the Philippines who experienced six consecutive typhoons in a month. © John Mark Sagum / Greenpeace

## 'It was like a movie.'

Frank has always been outspoken; a *reklamador* (complainer), he proudly said. He was particularly concerned about environmental issues, something he attributes to his upbringing.

“My parents, especially my grandmother, told me that something as simple as throwing plastic in the ocean contributes to pollution and destruction [of the environment],” he said. “That was really my motivation—since I was small, I have had that instinctive sense of right and wrong. I held on to that as I grew up.”

While he could point out climate-related problems in his community, young Frank had yet to make the connection between the climate disasters they were facing and the polluting corporations he now resists.

The year 2021, however, would be an eye-opener. The Dinagat Islands was one of the worst hit by Super Typhoon Odette, an event then-Governor Kaka Bag-ao said was “reminiscent, if not worse than, when [Super Typhoon] Yolanda hit the province.” When asked what he remembers most, Frank was at a loss for words.

“If there were anything worse than the word ‘devastated,’ that might be the correct way to describe the state our *barangay* was in,” he recalled. “It was like a movie—like an apocalyptic scene. Because there was nothing, as in, we’re flattened.”

Despite losing his home, Frank chose to stay and help his people get back up. He took part in Operation Tulong (Help), an initiative providing relief for his community.

He would go on to not just support his province’s recovery, but also seek justice for what he now knows caused their pain. And thereafter, conquer doubts about his ability to do so.

### ‘Kaya mo ba talaga?’

Frank never saw his queerness as a disadvantage. Rather, he sees himself as a free person, unburdened by the rigidity of gender norms—which is why, he said, he’s able to relate easily to anyone he talks to. In fact, he has channeled this skill into public office and is now an incumbent member of their *barangay* council.

Despite not seeing his own limits, it seemed others were skeptical. In fact, during one of the toughest times in his life, some people saw fit to question Frank’s capabilities.

In Odette’s aftermath, he faced doubts from government and army officials who responded to



In the aftermath of Super Typhoon Odette, youth from Barangay Coring in Dinagat Islands raise a banner calling for “Climate Justice Now” as part of a community photo activity. © Jilson Tiu / Greenpeace



The coastal community of Barangay Melgar unfurls a banner that reads “Make Climate Polluters Pay” in the town of Basilisa, Dinagat Islands, demanding accountability from climate polluters for the loss and damages they suffered from Super Typhoon Odette in December 2021—devastation they are still struggling to recover from. © Erwin Mascariñas / Greenpeace

the storm’s impact. Whenever he would discuss plans with them, he was repeatedly asked, “*Kaya mo ba talaga?*” (Can you really?)

“The discrimination was never straightforward, but it was implied by how they moved and reacted. I knew there was doubt,” Frank said, recalling that cisgender heterosexual leaders weren’t asked the same question. “So I had to prove myself, or at least, do the best I possibly could.”

Later events showed his community, and himself, how far he could go. Within a few years, standing with Greenpeace Philippines, Frank decided that he would represent his community in the first-ever criminal case filed against a carbon major—just 36 months removed from a post-apocalyptic nightmare, one he himself lived.

It was a David-and-Goliath situation, him going against a multi-billionaire company profiting off his community’s suffering.

The case was unfortunately thrown out, as no current French laws can convict TotalEnergies. But in his dismissal, the chief prosecutor handed David a slingshot, recognizing that “it is undisputed that any activity that emits greenhouse gases has a negative impact on global warming.”

For Frank, it’s still a win. The battle isn’t over, and Goliath’s despicable activities are now in public display. Moreover, he’s not alone.

“My community felt that they also went to France. The way they talked, the way they congratulated me, the way they said, ‘*Oy, oy, ganito-ganyan, pumunta ka,*’ (hey, hey, this and that, you went), it’s like they went with me,” he said.

*Maverick Flores is a former Greenpeace communications campaigner who is now volunteering for the organization. He shares Greenpeace’s advocacy for safe, renewable energy and social justice for frontline communities.*

More importantly, he said his community was now more aware that fossil fuel polluters’ destructive practices are contributing to their losses from climate impacts and that they must be held accountable.

“That was my immediate observation, because they were more interested to talk about it, to share ideas. Most of them were asking me for updates on the case. And many of the youth [in the Dinagat Islands] were encouraged to join climate talks, even at the school level.”

### ‘Your joy is radical.’

Frank may not see himself as a fighter—at least, not by choice—but he knows his own power.

“Being a queer person taught me to be resilient. Because it’s not easy to navigate [life as a queer person], not conforming to society’s norms. So I think that’s a positive thing, learning to be resilient,” he said.

He addressed fellow members of the LGBTQIA+ community who continue to struggle for queer justice, which he believes goes hand-in-hand with seeking climate justice. “Your identity is not your liability. Your joy is radical, and your fight is part of something bigger.”

He continued, “Don’t wait to be invited to the table. Build your own, and invite others with you. Because when you bring others with you, you’re shaking the ground beneath those destroying our planet.”



# LGBTQIA+ INDIVIDUALS AND PLHIV IN THE FACE OF CLIMATE DISASTERS

By Prince Sarmiento



Pride March participants at the 2025 Pride Festival in Quezon City. © Jilson Tiu / Greenpeace

In a country repeatedly struck by typhoons and floods, the Philippines has developed mechanisms for disaster risk reduction. However, national frameworks like Republic Act No. 10121, the Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010, remain inadequate in protecting marginalized groups—particularly LGBTQIA+ individuals and people living with HIV (PLHIV) (Republic Act No. 10121, 2010). Though there is some overlap between the two, each community has distinct needs, especially during climate-related disasters.

As a health and environmental advocate, I have seen firsthand how humanitarian responses often overlook these populations. Community organizers in disaster-affected areas report that LGBTQIA+ individuals and PLHIV face unique, unaddressed challenges. The United Nations Development Programme notes that disaster preparedness plans in the country frequently lack specific protections for LGBTQIA+ people. In a recent scoping review, researchers highlight how national climate frameworks often neglect the intersectionality of gender identity, health status, and vulnerability.

## Reframing climate justice

More than saving ecosystems or cutting emissions, climate justice is also about equity. It requires an understanding of how the climate crisis disproportionately affects those already marginalized. For LGBTQIA+ people and PLHIV, climate justice must include access to safe evacuation centers, uninterrupted healthcare, and meaningful participation in disaster planning and recovery.



Residents take shelter in a school-turned-evacuation center after floodwaters inundated their homes during Typhoon Ulysses in Marikina City, Metro Manila. The storm battered northern Philippines on November 12, bringing heavy rains, strong winds, widespread power outages, and leaving thousands homeless with significant damage to homes and businesses. © Basilio Sepe / Greenpeace



Life inside an evacuation center in Surigao City on the fifth day since Super Typhoon Odette struck. Residents remain in limbo, facing destroyed homes and dwindling supplies as they struggle to recover. © Jilson Tiu / Greenpeace

Disasters do not impact everyone equally. People with intersecting marginalized identities—such as gender nonconformity or chronic illness—face added barriers to safety and recovery. These challenges stem not only from the climate crisis but also from systemic exclusion that leaves certain communities invisible during crisis response.

This disconnect is particularly evident in emergency shelter and health service provision. While inclusive rhetoric exists in some policies, the reality on the ground often fails to reflect it.

### **Unsafe shelters and social exclusion**

Evacuation centers are usually structured along binary, heteronormative lines. Trans women, for example, are sometimes forced into male quarters, placing them at risk of harassment and emotional trauma. Same-sex couples may be separated or denied shared resources, while gender-nonconforming individuals face ridicule, exclusion, or even violence. These experiences can discourage LGBTQIA+ individuals from using official shelters at all.

Although Republic Act No. 10121 mandates inclusive disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM), the implementation rarely accounts for gender-diverse populations. Local governments must create more inclusive protocols, train response personnel in gender sensitivity, and involve LGBTQIA+ groups in decision-making. A truly safe space must offer safety without condition or compromise.

### **Interrupted health services**

PLHIV are particularly vulnerable when disasters interrupt their access to lifesaving antiretroviral therapy (ART). Power outages, impassable roads, and damaged health facilities can result in missed medication refills. After Super Typhoon Odette in 2021, PLHIV in Southern Leyte were unable to access ART for weeks, relying instead on informal peer networks to obtain medication.

In Cebu, community volunteers stepped up when treatment hubs became unreachable. Some clients who lost health records or identification cards feared stigma when trying to re-enter the system. Others chose to go without medication rather than risk being outed or discriminated against.

Transgender individuals also face disruptions to gender-affirming hormone therapy (GAHT). Though not immediately life-threatening, stopping GAHT can result in serious psychological distress, dysphoria, and physical side effects. These challenges are compounded when pharmacies run out of stock or when stigma prevents access to emergency support.

These situations show that resilience is not just about survival; it's about preserving health, identity, and dignity even amid crisis.

### **Community as first responders**

In the absence of institutional safeguards, LGBTQIA+ and PLHIV communities have developed their own mechanisms for survival. In coastal

barangays and informal settlements, LGBTQIA+ individuals mobilize soup kitchens, distribute hygiene kits, and provide psychosocial support. PLHIV case managers check in with clients through text or social media, even when they themselves are affected by the disaster.

During Odette's aftermath, some community leaders living with HIV created makeshift "health corners" in evacuation sites to quietly offer ART refills or re-link clients to care. These grassroots efforts are both a testament to resilience and, unfortunately, also a reflection of how formal systems continue to fail them.

While these networks are life-saving, they should not be the default. Government agencies and humanitarian actors must recognize and integrate these community-led innovations into mainstream DRRM strategies.

### **From Symbolic to Structural Inclusion**

Local government units (LGUs) need to include SOGIESC (Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristics) considerations in all phases of their disaster plans. Health offices should coordinate with LGBTQIA+ and sexual health service organizations to develop contingency protocols for treatment continuation and health data protection.

Agencies such as the Department of Health, Department of Social Welfare and Development, and National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council must treat LGBTQIA+



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individuals and PLHIV not only as beneficiaries but also as co-creators of policy. Their lived experiences provide insight into how services can become more inclusive.

Reliable, disaggregated data is essential for this transformation. Without statistics that capture the experiences of LGBTQIA+ individuals and PLHIV, these communities remain invisible in both disaster risk analysis and recovery efforts. Government agencies and academic institutions must collaborate to close this data gap, while ensuring the privacy and safety of respondents.

### **Beyond Pride Month**

True pride means protection, policy change, and inclusion—especially in times of crisis. Celebrations and social media campaigns must be matched with structural reforms. Climate change is not gender-neutral, and so disaster responses should not be, either.

As the climate crisis intensifies, we must ask: who is left behind? If we aim to build resilient communities, we must recognize and center those who are historically excluded. This includes LGBTQIA+ individuals and PLHIV, whose resilience is often overlooked but deeply ingrained in their everyday survival.

The road to inclusive climate resilience is long, but it must begin with visibility, respect, and a commitment to justice. Only when these voices are acknowledged can we move toward disaster preparedness that truly leaves no one behind.

# WHAT BEING A FEMINIST TAUGHT ME ABOUT STRUGGLES

By John Erwin “Win” Larosa

**May 2023.** I was a 24-year-old unemployed Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) graduate with work experience outside my field of study. As I tried to soothe myself from the sound of rain on our roof, a sound that still carried echoes of the trauma Typhoon Ulysses inflicted on me and my community, I found myself wanting more. I wanted to study again, to step out of biology’s shadow and learn something that would benefit both my community and myself as a lifelong learner. After a month of preparation, research, and discernment, I booked the next bus to Manila. Standing in the Student Records Office of the College of Social Work and Community Development, I faced a crossroads: Women and Development or Community Development? Years later, I would look back on what I chose and how it shaped me.

**June 2025.** Every time someone asks me to introduce myself, I say the same words: “You can call me Win. I am a feminist, activist, humanitarian, and volunteer.” Though easy to memorize and offering a snapshot of who I am, these words are something I’ve pondered for days and days and days. I am definitely an activist. I organize youth leaders and work with my community in Cagayan to respond to pressing issues. I am a humanitarian, having responded to my fellow Cagayanos’ needs during disasters and difficult times. I am a volunteer because I



love working *pro bono* for causes I believe in. But a feminist? Did it take collecting feminist books, watching female-gazed films, or supporting women’s rights in various avenues to call myself one? Definitely not, though I did all of that. What people usually don’t tell you about becoming a feminist is that it’s a lifelong journey.

## The heart of feminism

Feminism, as I’ve learned, isn’t only about dismantling patriarchy and its interconnected systems. It’s about care for others, regular reflection, continuous righting of wrongs, and the opportunity to listen closely and intentionally. Being a feminist taught me to care for others—to see where they’re coming from and understand how this connects to who we are as a society. Feminism helped me recognize that caring takes different forms and should be extended to everyone. Since then, I’ve viewed care in a new light. Care can be as simple as asking someone what they want to be called. Most importantly, I realized that stepping back when things become overwhelming is also an act of care.

Since I categorically branded myself as a feminist, I’ve found myself conscientizing and reflecting more often. At first, “conscientizing” sounded foreign to me until I learned that it means challenging your beliefs, ways, principles, and actions to examine how they might hurt, oppress, dominate, or exploit others. I understand now that every action I show the world carries weight. As a



serial overthinker, I thought it would be easy, but I was wrong. I had to break down my preconceived notions about society and my own psyche to undergo a metamorphosis—learning to think of others while thinking of myself.

### The interconnected web

The occupation of Gaza. Climate change. Loss of biodiversity. The impeachment trial. The continuous fight for gender equality, particularly for our trans brothers and sisters. The defense of Marihangin and Bugsuk against land grabbers. All of these are interconnected, and there are countless ways to understand them through different lenses. Feminism taught me to examine them through an intersectional lens. While some might find it overwhelming to grapple with all these issues—calling them horrifying or draining—I remind myself that feminist foremothers never imagined they would secure rights beyond suffrage. To hope is to resist, and to resist is to secure the future that rightfully belongs to all of us.

People often ask why they should be feminists. My answer: because gender, particularly being a woman or LGBTQIA+, multiplies our risk of being oppressed. Our institutions, laws, norms, and socially constructed biases consistently favor men. Take climate change alone: when disaster strikes, gender doesn't just add to the risk; it multiplies it. We need frameworks through which

we could offer sound arguments and options for women and members of the LGBTQIA+ community to be safe amidst the threats of sea level rise, global migration, and other climate impacts.

### The ongoing journey

My feminist journey has been tumultuous. It took a village to raise me into who I am today, and I've stumbled many times, failing to see the biases in my rearview mirror. But at the end of the day, a feminist acknowledges their mistakes and wrongs, then works to correct them—not with words, but with actions. It's challenging, but trust me, it's fulfilling. It feels like steel being continuously exposed to fire, strengthening and purging impurities.

It's easy to preach feminism. It's easy to watch and join women's causes or use gender-affirming pronouns. But changing oneself, one's heart? That's difficult. Feminism didn't just change my way of thinking—it opened my heart to listen and to speak from it. I hope you'll have the courage to let it change yours.

I feel pride in what feminism has done for me and what it might do in the future. While I look forward to that continued growth, you'll find me at the next book fair or thrift shop, searching for the next feminist book to add to my archive.

The journey continues.



*John Erwin Larosa, or Win, as they call her, is a feminist, activist, humanitarian, and volunteer. She founded with her friends their own NGO, the Cagayan Volunteers Initiative (CaVolun) in Cagayan province, where they respond during calamities and disasters. In 2020, through CaVolun, they were able to raise 3.1 million pesos in donations to lead the biggest relief and recovery operation that is youth-led and managed. Currently, she is an MA Women and Development student at the University of the Philippines Diliman, where she is a UP Presidential Scholar and Graduate Representative of the College of Social Work and Community Development Student Council.*



The evening festivities at the Metro Manila Pride March in June 2022 where Greenpeace Philippines joined with the call, “Queer Justice is Climate Justice.” © Jilson Tiu / Greenpeace

## ALLYSHIP IN AN AGE OF TOKENISM

By Jefferson Chua

The recent pulling of Pride Month funding from large corporations such as Pepsi, Meta, Boeing, and a host of other corporations—probably due to political pressure stemming from Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) crackdowns by the Trump administration—has understandably made Pride organizers in the USA anxious. At the same time, it may have also forced them to be creative with sourcing much-needed finances to celebrate Pride Month. This incident is a sobering reminder of the entanglements of corporate power with social issues, as well as the fickleness of corporate financing when faced with choosing between political patronage and allyship with the marginalized.

While the context is a bit different here in the Philippines, it made me ask a tangential but relevant question: what does it mean to be an ally in an age of tokenism?

As with probably any guy growing up in the Philippines, “*bakla*” (gay) was thrown about gratuitously as a kind of playful insult. Acting out effeminately or being too emotional was something that garnered the label, unsurprisingly, from mostly cisgender male friend groups and even in the family. As I grew up, however, “*bakla*” gradually morphed into a more insidious insult that somehow equated with a diminished sense of manhood. My propensity for tears and probably effeminate gestures, which I attributed then

to a female-dominated household, did lead to name-calling from friends, which I didn’t take too seriously. It was the subtle digs in the house that made me wonder if I was gay or not. I remember being cautioned for being too close to a priest during high school because “he might be gay.” It gradually led to this situation where the opinions of friends about my sexuality and gender identity were treated in jest, while those from my family were more serious. These seemed to tell me that I had to deal with my sexuality internally or privately, away from the prying eyes of the public.

I was able to deal with my internal questions about my own sexuality and gender identity, though somehow, the heteronormative standards persisted well into my adolescent years. It created an idealized version in my head of someone who can be comfortable with being called gay but was certain about my sexuality internally. I was starting to form an image of an ally: someone who was comfortable with his or her own sexuality, but also one who could stand in support of the LGBTQIA+ community. This tension between my self-image and people’s patriarchal expectations made it difficult for me to recognize that I had been internalizing thoughts and opinions deeply rooted in a vision of society—one determined to dictate what kinds of people are allowed to exist.

I hate to admit it, but proceeding to college, I unfortunately internalized some of that heteronormativity and externalized it in the form of jokes. I would tell my best friend that we were “closet homophobes” because we frequently joked around, despite being comfortable with gay friends, and that at least we had some form of self-awareness that our jokes were probably rooted in something mean. We treated it like a pass because we were fine being friends with gay people. By all accounts, I realized, it was tokenism: it was comfortable, and we didn’t get called out by our gay friends, and I specifically could wear my badge with pride that I am an ally.

But my conversion towards a more genuine form of allyship did not come as a singular event. Rather, it arrived in powerful waves of unlearning from the LGBTQIA+ community: the unexplainable anger I felt when Jennifer Laude was murdered by a US marine; bearing witness to Jean’s heartbreaking story of being dead-named just so she could get access to relief goods in Tacloban during Haiyan; getting frustrated at the frequent discriminatory machismo masquerading as courage even in very progressive civil society organizations; and getting mad at these corporations for their tokenism with their support for Pride initiatives. Being an ally didn’t only mean dealing with my own gender identity and sexuality and being comfortable with it; it meant confronting the evils of the external world—evils that I haven’t had the opportunity to experience but was made a witness to.

It wasn’t just the anger that slowly laid bare in front of me my own tokenism; it was also the gentle undulations of kindness and love that deconstructed what I thought being an ally was. It was in the *soju*-fueled tears while confiding to my gay colleague about loves that were lost; how a living ethic of care overflowed as my colleagues and I marched with other groups during a Pride March, with some of us responding with words of affection to religious bigots lined up along the street as they spewed out hate; and being a witness to how these Pride organizations like the Minnesota Twin Cities Pride, who have been denied funding by corporations, turned to grassroots crowdfunding, raising double what was promised them.

Perhaps that is what it means to be an ally: it is not just a matter of self-perception and self-image, and it is not just empathy towards the oppressed and publicly declaring your allyship; it is the often-difficult work of conversion, of confronting not only the evils of a heteronormative world but also my own complicity in that system.



Some of the crowd at the Metro Manila Pride March in Pasay last June 2022. © Jilson Tiu / Greenpeace

It might be the reason why it was so easy for corporations to backtrack on their funding and decline supporting SOGIESC initiatives—they’re simply not willing to do that internal work, much less confront powers that be at the risk of losing the privileges they enjoy. Call it rainbow-washing. The transition to more just and sustainable systems requires a hard, and oftentimes painful, honesty towards oneself and the courage to deconstruct old systems and rearrange values.

If there is one thing I have learned from my LGBTQIA+ friends, it’s that one never does the difficult introspective and external work alone, and it is impossible to change things alone simply because the process of learning and unlearning never ends. Being an ally will get tiring, and so will the weight of my own complicity, and the monumental work ahead will feel unbearable. But confronting these systems together not only makes them bearable, it also makes it feel courageous to do so.



*Jefferson Chua is currently a climate campaigner at Greenpeace Philippines working in the fields of climate litigation and climate policy. Previously, he has worked in the fields of heritage management and the academe. He’s also an advocate for active mobility.*

# SUPPORT THE POLLUTERS PAY PACT

Climate change makes life difficult for many Filipinos, especially the marginalized. When systems fail, it is the community that carries them forward to rebuild, organize, and protect.

The costs of the struggle must not be on the community, or the government, or the individual, alone, but on the oil and gas companies that contribute the most to the worsening storms and frequent disasters and the alarming heating of the planet.

The Polluters Pay Pact unites climate-impacted communities, concerned citizens, first responders, frontline officials, and humanitarian groups from all over the world to pressure governments to make polluters, not people, pay for the climate crisis. Join the multitudes asking the same question: When the climate crisis costs us our livelihoods, dignity, and safety, who pays?

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