

Foreword

The reasons for publishing a special issue of the Philippine Journal of Social Development, were not immediately evident when I was asked to serve as its editor. Dean Rosalinda Pineda-Ofreneo had to explain to me that "social protection" had become quite relevant, perhaps even urgent. Thus, the issue would not only be timely, there would also be enough original materials worth publishing. I am happy to note that the opinion of the journal's editorial board has proven to be quite accurate.

Anyone taking even a cursory look into the literature will realize that "social protection" has many definitions. Furthermore, there are related terms such as "social insurance" and "social security". Different documents define terms differently, sometimes interchangeably. This, however, is not an indication of the lack of conceptual and programmatic clarity, as the article by Pineda-Ofreneo, et al. will show. The paper is enlightening because it makes definitions and program elements clear in the context of Philippine realities.

Social protection mechanisms are meant to address, among other things, the problem of poverty. Maria Victoria R. Raquiza's paper on poverty measurement calls our attention to the necessity of properly setting the baseline and the indicators of the problem. Her paper shows how academic researches can contribute to large scale programs. Poverty measurements are basic not just because we need correct measurements in order to conceptualize, plan or implement programs. They are also crucial to proper assessment and future planning. This may seem rather obvious, but as Raquiza's paper shows, political considerations are already at play when people measure. We may doom ourselves to failure at the outset, if we do not pay enough attention to these processes.

John Erwin Bañez and Rowena Ayque Laguilles discuss the government's conditional cash transfer (CCT) program, known as the, "Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program" or the "4P"s. Part of the reason that this volume is so relevant is that this program has been ramped up during the administration of Pres.

Benigno Aquino. It has become its main poverty alleviation program. CCT programs are in vogue in the development community and are being implemented in a number of countries in the developing world. These are endorsed and funded by major institutions like the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank. A critical look at the Philippine experience adds to the growing literature on CCTs. Given that a fair amount of development aid is going into CCTs worldwide, a global assessment will be inevitable. The Philippine experience must be taken into consideration in such an assessment.

The two papers in this volume take different approaches to examining the 4Ps program. On the one hand, Laguilles looks at the gendered terrain upon which the 4Ps are implemented. Such a view is necessary given, as she notes, that it is mothers who receive the cash transfer and who must fulfill the conditionalities of the program. Bañez on the other hand, looks at lost opportunities for participation and organizing of the beneficiaries. Both studies underscore the need to increase people's capacities and participation as the more effective means of poverty alleviation. Given that the government plans to end the 4P program eventually, their recommendations must be taken into consideration in order to achieve long term goals.

Leticia S. Tojos makes a similar call for strengthening community participation as a means of institutionalization and sustainability in an evolving and dynamic area of social protection, namely, disaster management. The Philippines is prone to natural disasters because of its geologic and geographic characteristics. This risk has increased because of the effects of global climate change. Added to this is the risk of human-made disasters, such as fires, in (especially poor) communities. Tojos combines both quantitative and qualitative analysis in order to make concrete recommendations to local government units that are specific to individual, household, block and community levels of intervention.

Teresita V. Barrameda also discusses how women can be helped during times of disaster by looking into how poor rural women survive on

their own. Her article is a reaffirmation of women's agency even in situations of great constraint. She goes on to show that disaster risk reduction and management must be built on what women already do and know about situations of crisis.

The final article of this journal rounds off the area of social protection nicely. Social protection measures and elements are not always about recent developments or new concepts. The protection of the rights of workers, a democratic and human rights struggle and achievement of centuries past, is still a main pillar of social protection programs. Leah Emily Miñoza looks at the difficult lives of contractual workers in the dormitories of the University of the Philippines in Diliman. Her findings remind us that social protection begins in our own institutions. Miñoza's paper proves yet again that using a gender lens improves the quality of the data gathered, sharpens the analysis of that data and makes recommendations more achievable even as these are better oriented towards the goals of equity.

As a member of an academe in the global South, I attempted to achieve a delicate balance in editing this issue. I am convinced that what is often given international recognition remains skewed towards the knowledges and methods of privileged populations. This is neither a wholesale condemnation of the international system of rating publications nor is it an excuse for the shoddy scholarship that comes from the academes of the South (as much as it does from the North). Rather, it is a balance I needed to find as I considered articles for publication that are relevant primarily to the Philippines. My judgment is informed by my own implication in the context that is relevant to the text. What I deemed scholarly spoke not just to my mind, but also to my heart. That heart has been shaped by a lifelong passion to see my own reality, the ground on which I walk, transformed towards social protection, social equity and social justice. I have used this standard as the bar by which I decided that which was scholarly. I doubt whether the contribution of these articles is relevant only to the Philippines. But even if it were so, I argue that the articles in this volume are still important works.

It is my hope that this issue adds to the argument that Philippine community developers and social workers make for shifting the parameters of knowledge valuation. If the quest for that which is universal is not to become a futile search for final meaning, then there is a need to increase our appreciation of that which is grounded and local.

Sylvia Estrada Claudio, MD, PhD
Editor