# INTEGRATING FEMINIST ETHICS IN GENERAL EDUCATION

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*In the Philippines, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) has mandated that an Ethics course be a part of the General Education Curricula. This move hopes to enable Filipino tertiary-level graduates to form sound ethical judgments through philosophical theories, thereby developing their intellectual competencies and civic capacities. Furthermore, they should be able to apply these judgments to personal, political, and societal issues. CHED's suggested Ethics syllabus outlines the philosophical foundations of morality, such as Aristotelian and Christian Virtue Ethics, Kantian Duty Ethics, Millian Utilitarianism, and Distributive Justice Theories. It does not, however, specify and mandate feminist ethics. We argue that if the Ethics course stays true to CHED's vision of being inclusive and contributing to improving Philippine society, it must integrate feminist ethics into its course content.*

*Keywords: curricula, ethics, feminist ethics, general education, the Philippines*

## INTRODUCTION

The Commission on Higher Education's (CHED) Memorandum Order (CMO) No. 20 series of 2013 required implementing general education courses that promote interdisciplinarity, employ innovative teaching methodologies, and develop holistic student learning. These recent reforms in Philippine higher education are based on the "ongoing paradigm shift to learning competency-based standards in Philippine higher education" (CHED 2013, 1) through the New General Education (GE) Program with "new" general education Core Courses. The GE program highlights the "various domains of knowledge and ways of comprehending social and natural realities" (CHED 2013, 1-2). It also aims to develop the students' "intellectual competencies such as critical, analytical, and creative thinking, and multiple forms of expression, and civic capacities demanded of membership in the community, country, and the world" (CHED 2013, 2). As part of the global community, CHED hopes Filipino students

recognize and respect the "fundamental humanity of all," respect and appreciate diversity, and care about "the problems that affect the world" (CHED 2013, 4).  To address these targeted graduate attributes, CHED mandates General Education Courses (GEC) to include the following core courses: Understanding the Self, Readings in Philippine History, The Contemporary World, Mathematics in the Modern World, Purposive Communication, Science, Technology and Society, and Ethics. These courses are envisioned to influence the paradigm shift in Philippine higher education.

As philosophy educators in higher education, we are interested in how CHED prescribes and designs its ethics course. Ethics deals with the principles of ethical behavior at the level of the person and society (CHED 2018, 1). CHED's suggested syllabus outlines three main elements of the moral experience: agents and their circumstances and contexts, the nature and basis of moral actions, and the philosophical foundations of morality. One of the primary learning outcomes of the course is for students to demonstrate the capacity to make sound ethical judgments about specific personal, political, and societal issues using the philosophical theories discussed in class. The course hopes to raise ethical questions and encourage student reflection, evaluation, and construction of case studies (CHED 2018, 1-2). Specifically, upon completing the course, students must be able to "understand and internalize the principles of ethical behavior in modern society at the level of the person, society, and in interaction with the environment and other shared resources" (CHED 2018, 1). The prescribed teaching methodology is the typical lecture-based approach, while the assessment types are the standard quizzes, exams, and group projects.

CHED's suggested Ethics syllabus outlines the philosophical foundations of morality, such as Aristotelian and Christian Virtue Ethics, Kantian Duty Ethics, Millian Utilitarianism, and Distributive Justice Theories. It also prescribes a section on globalization and pluralism and the role of religion in ethics. The syllabus, however, does not specify and mandate feminist ethics, whether as a branch of ethics or a way or approach to doing ethics. We find this quite ironic, considering that the goal of Philippine GE, with its paradigm shift in mind, is for students and graduates to reflect values of humanist orientation, or the "fundamental respect for others as human beings with intrinsic rights, cultural rootedness, an avocation to serve," and to "live meaningfully in a complex, rapidly changing and globalized world while engaging [in] their community and the nation's development issues and concerns" ( CHED 2013, 3).

Deliberately or unconsciously excluding feminist ethics is ignorance of the "social and natural realities" of a "rapidly changing and globalized world," along with the "nation's development issues and concerns " (CHED 2013, 3).Feminist ethics tackles the intersectional issues that women and marginalized groups face. Without touching on this approach to ethics, the curriculum neglects the challenges of pluralism and the realities of (oppressive) societies. It also misses the critical perspectives that feminist ethics may offer to ethics education in building communities and the civic capacities CHED aspires.

CHED (2013, 2) states that its standards are "minimum standards for the general education component of all degree programs" that apply "to private and public Higher Education Institutions in the country." We argue that if we wish to raise the "standards"

of the Ethics course, we must fully integrate feminist ethics into its course content. Integrating feminist ethics will allow students to "understand and internalize the principles of ethical behavior in modern society at the level of the person" and the complex and globalized society more holistically (CHED 2018, 1). Thus, staying true to CHED's vision of recognizing pluralism and contributing to improving Philippine society.

## ETHICS IN PHILIPPINE GENERAL EDUCATION

Ethics is a GEC required for all undergraduate students in higher education institutions in the Philippines. While Ethics is a major course in some philosophy programs worldwide, what is unique about CHED's emphasis is that it is a GEC. We attribute this policy to CHED's underscoring of the harnessing of students' personal and civic responsibilities, mainly the "capacity to reflect critically on shared concerns and think of innovative, creative solutions guided by ethical standards" and the "ability to reflect on moral norms/imperatives as they affect individuals and society"(CHED 2013).

Before the Ethics GE mandate in 2013, the last CMO (No. 59 Series of 1996) required two humanities courses, particularly art and philosophy. These courses aimed to teach students "how to reflect on the totality of human experience and to formulate for themselves a human perspective that integrates all branches of knowledge in a profound understanding of the individual as well as the society" (CHED 1996, 3) . This previous policy sought to prepare students for the "demands of the next millennium" and to see "the human being as an integral person living in both a national and global community" (CHED 1996, 1-2). The focus of the previous CMO was to prepare graduates for globalization and the information age - basically to become productive members of society (Alcala 1999, 125). The task of "cultivating and inculcating the moral" (Alcala 1999, 125) foundations have somehow been lost in the 1996 CMO implementation, as a local study suggests "the integration of ethics in professional courses" and the creation of a technical panel for the GE curriculum, specifically for philosophy and ethics in the humanities core subjects (Torres and Goingo 2011, 90).

Manuel Dy, Jr. (1994, 17), a former CHED Technical Committee on Philosophy member when Ethics was implemented as a GEC in 2013, wrote about the indispensability of a values-oriented education and how values and philosophy affect the curriculum and pedagogy. In his "Project of Filipino Ethics," Dy (1994, 19) implied that the issues of Philippine society can be ascribed to its citizens' lack of moral foundations. He even quotes former Senator Leticia Ramos Shahani: "At the bottom of our economic problems and political instability is the weakness and corruption of the moral foundations of our society" (Dy 1994, 19). Like Dy, former CHED Chair Patricia Licuanan (1994, 35) asserted that building a people and a nation requires a "moral recovery program," wherein we "change structures" and "change people." With the Philippines' dire political and economic landscape, we speculate that perhaps implementing Ethics as a GEC was seen as one of the "solutions" or "reform imperatives" (through reform in paradigm and mindset) to address the country's "graft

and corruption" and "lack of integrity in government" (Brillantes and Fernandez 2011, 55).

Such a strategy is not new, however. Singapore's citizenship education model implemented the teaching of ethics as early as the 1960s. The Singapore government explored ways to integrate Ethics into its school curriculum to enhance social cohesion and citizenship education. Civics and, later, Civics and Moral Education aimed to "create self-respecting individuals and good citizens" (Ponnusamy and Gopinathan 2013, 242). These courses were intended to address the "incipient moral crisis" due to increased urbanization, industrialization, and "deculturalization" (Ponnusamy and Gopinathan 2013, 243). Teaching Ethics, in particular, the integration of "ethical perspectives and specific moral rules" in the curriculum, is, after all, "part of any cultural and civic life" (Callahan 1980, 62).

The CHED-mandated Ethics syllabus is thus "framed and practiced" to highlight the value of its subject matter to the person and the Philippine society. To differentiate the course from other GECs, Ethics focuses on "the analysis of human experience linking it to elements of the ethical dimension" (CHED 2018). The Ethics syllabus, thus, strives to contextualize students' learning through an ethical foundation. To achieve this, the syllabus is divided into five parts: the introduction, the moral agent, the act, the principles behind ethical disposition frameworks, and the conclusion (CHED 2018). The introduction establishes vital concepts such as moral standards, moral dilemmas, and the foundations of morality. The second part includes culture in ethical behavior and the development and building of the moral agent. This section also examines the possibility of an Asian and Filipino understanding of moral behavior. The third section examines feelings and decision-making, reason and impartiality, and moral courage. Normative ethical theories like virtue ethics, Kantian ethics, utilitarianism, and the notions of justice and fairness are discussed in the fourth section. It is worth noting that "The principles of taxation and inclusive growth" is a prescribed topic for discussion in the fourth section under the socialist concept of distributive justice. The challenges of pluralism and fundamentalism and the search for universal values are dealt with in the final section. It also talks about the role of *Filinnials* or Filipino millennials and the role of religion in ethics (CHED 2018).

The CHED syllabus also suggests various teaching methodologies, materials, and assessments. It recommends traditional methods like lectures, group discussions, sharing, video viewing, and case study discussions. It also pushes for other more creative approaches, e.g., role-playing, graphics creation, drawing, and interviews with key informants about specific social issues. The prescribed teaching materials include handbooks, textbooks, news clips, case studies/stories, films, documentaries, cultural artifacts, YouTube videos, journal articles, biographies, and presentations/animations. The core assessment tools are the course requirements, quizzes, individual reflection papers, group case analysis, and a final oral or written exam.

As CHED sets minimum requirements towards quality higher education, the Ethics course as part of the GEC is supposed to enhance students' intellectual and civic capacities. It also emphasizes the holistic development of students through individuality, collective Filipino identity, and world communities amid globalization in the 21st century. Ethics should be taught to consider the intersections of the individual, nation, and world. GECs are the cornerstone of humanistic values,

analytical and problem-solving skills, ethical and social foresight, and lifelong learning in a fast-changing environment. Eventually, this holistic learning is expected to improve the Filipino quality of life (CHED 2018).

## FEMINIST ETHICS IN GLOBAL CURRICULA

With CHED's vision of holistic learning, however, we noticed a gap in the Ethics curriculum. In the conclusion section of the syllabus, we see "Globalization and Pluralism: New Challenges to Ethics." There are no specifications, however, on how to approach these apparent new challenges aside from the focus on "The religious response: The role of religion in ethics." We contend that feminist ethics (which is not explicitly mentioned in the syllabus) may play a role in "The Challenges of Pluralism and Fundamentalism." Feminist ethics highlights the diversity and differences in the experiences of individuals and their situations (through varying intersectional factors) and provides parameters for action concerning the oppression of the marginalized. Feminist ethics, thus, presents a pluralistic approach to ethical theory-making, in particular, theorizing about intersectional differences.Argentinian feminist philosopher Maria Lugones (1991, 43), in *On the Logic of Pluralist Feminism*, stresses the importance of the recognition of plurality in the "very structure of theory," for without plurality, theory "distorts" others in their complexity. To elaborate, Lugones (1991, 29–30) discusses "prescription" and its relationship to theorizing about difference. Regarding normative ethics, it is vital to ask questions about the problems of difference. For instance, who the prescriptions are for, the friendliness of the prescriptions to oneself, and why we need to correct prescriptions.

Feminist ethics, according to Claudia Card (1991, 6), can be classified into two kinds: first, as feminist reflection and appreciation of existing ethical theories through one's experience, and second, the "politically active experience of building new relationships in the world" and the engagement of new social practices in a sexist society. The first kind highlights personal experiences toward an ethics that "extends philosophical inquiry into areas not ordinarily public" (Card 1991, 6). The second kind emphasizes the need to recognize the role of oppression, whether sexist or otherwise, in capacities for moral reflection and judgment.

Feminist theorists and philosophers have integrated feminist ethics into Ethics or philosophy courses and programs. In a brief history of feminist ethics, Card (1991, 14) discusses the beginnings of feminist ethics in the US in the late 1970s to the early 1980s, wherein works with the said theme were classified under feminist theory or feminist politics. Over the years, however, through conferences and publications, "feminist ethics" has become an approach to doing ethics. Feminist ethics would be offered as an undergraduate course, with some courses titled *Feminist Ethics* or *Ethics from a Feminist Perspective*. Ethics, as a major subject in universities in the US, would also integrate feminist ethics and care ethics into syllabi. Sometimes, feminist ethics is tackled under Feminist Philosophy or Political Philosophy. In the Philippines, while philosophy programs or ethics courses may integrate feminist ethics, CHED does not mandate it as a minimum standard requirement for the Ethics GEC.

In other fields, studies have argued for the relevance of feminist ethics in various curricula. Examples include Margaret Farley's (1984, 361) proposal for mainstreaming feminist ethics in the Christian ethics and moral theology general curriculum. David Concepción and Juli Eflin (2009, 177) suggest ways of resolving conflicts in teaching feminist ethics and epistemology. Others, however, have pushed for the inclusion of feminist ethics as a framework for contextualizing applied ethics such as business ethics (Böhm et al. 2022, 835), machine ethics (Suchman 2017, 361), data ethics (Gray and Witt 2021), engineering ethics (Riley 2013), and of course, environmental ethics (King 1991, 75).

Feminist ethics has also been used to reconceptualize various types of education, such as multicultural education (Friedman 1995, 57), early childhood education (Langford 2020, 20; Raivio, Skaremyr, and Kuusisto 2022, 1), engineering education (Riley 2013, 191), and medical education (Campelia and Feinsinger 2020, 111). For instance, medical ethicists have suggested the inclusion of feminist ethics concepts in the medical school curriculum, particularly relationality, relational autonomy, and epistemic injustice (Campelia and Feinsinger 2020, 111). On the other hand, engineering ethicists have suggested using more feminist ethics traditions in their field of study, particularly the critiques of masculinist ethics, power and agency, justice and care, and others (Riley 2013, 191–93). In the United Kingdom, there has been a recommendation to include a feminist and anti-oppressive ethics module to contextualize traditional ethical theories within social work (Clifford and Burke 2005, 667). The goal of the move is to aid students in decision-making once they have engaged in actual social work.

## ARGUMENTS FOR FEMINIST ETHICS

With the educational reforms implemented by CHED, we can see that Philippine policy involves a vision of a balanced governmentality. Through reforms that target core competencies before disciplinal concentration in Senior High School and, moving forward, in higher education and learning, such curricular changes have become part of the country's history of education. At the crux of these shifts, however, (which CHED acknowledges) is the backdrop of multiculturalism and globalization. Thus, we see a range of GECs that seek to provide a holistic type of education that prepares students for their "membership in the community, country, and the world" (CHED 2013). Such contemporary education, especially with an emphasis on global communities and multiculturalism, cannot ignore  feminist ethics, according to Marilyn Friedman (1995). Tackling sex and gender as analytic categories in ethics reflects the feminist ethos of multiculturalism and, in the case of the Philippines, multi-ethnic orientation.

In other countries, feminist approaches to multiculturalism have been advanced for decades. Likewise, feminist ethics has been a part of the philosophy or ethics curriculum. With the mandate of ethics as a GEC, however, Philippine education policy has the chance to implement a more global and multicultural approach. With the "diminished emphasis on the study of non-Western literature" (Friedman 1995, 57), feminist ethics would accommodate diverse positions, norms, cultures, and ethos.

With CHED's syllabus' focus on more "traditional" male philosophers' ethical theories (i.e., Virtue ethics of Aristotle and St. Thomas, Immanuel Kant and rights theorists, Utilitarianism, and Distributive Justice), feminist ethics would allow students to learn how to "[critically examine] various cultural perspectives, including one's own, against agreed common principles" (Osler 2006, 103). Debating "canonical" ethical positions would be a good indicator of a thriving intellectual and caring community.

Such a critical skill set and competency is called "intercultural valuation" (Osler 2006, 104), wherein students are aware of the dynamism of power relations, habits, and practices that shape cultural values and orientations. Without an analysis of feminist frameworks in ethics, intersectional matters related to sex, gender, race, ethnicity, and class are not considered within the parameters of ethical dilemmas (Felicio and Pieniadz 1999). Applying a model of feminist ethics within a decision-making framework to common ethical dilemmas may prove to be a skill in itself. In the Foucauldian lexicon, the micro-dispositifs of education policy distribute power (Bailey 2013, 812). In this sense, sex (and gender) are an analytical category and a "precarious singularity" (Bailey 2013, 812; Deleuze 1992, 159), exposing the lines of abstractions, refractions, and derivations in and through the social reproduction of power.

In the Philippine context, sticking to "canonical" ethics texts denies the existence of other ethics texts and various social realities. Such curricular exclusions are "distortions" that "ignore the diversity among us" (Friedman 1995, 61). According to Friedman (1995, 61) the "deliberate ignorance of the intellectual foundations of government and culture in the societies in which we each live and struggle would disserve our educational credibility as well as our political aspirations." CHED's yearning for a holistic approach to ethics should address the "ongoing ethical dilemmas in the relevant context of the culture, and society" (Felicio and Pieniadz 1999, 54). If we were to look at some of the most pressing ethical dilemmas in the Philippines today, they may be sex or gender-related. In the past few years, for instance, there have been many public debates on the ethics of the so-called "anti-life bills" and laws that are allegedly "anti-family" or "anti-marriage." The Reproductive Health Law has been a constant topic of debate, alongside matters such as the use of contraceptives, abortion, divorce, and LGBTQI+ marriage (Biana and Domingo 2021). There has also been much discussion about artificial reproductive technology, in vitro fertilization, and surrogacy (Biana 2025).

Such ethical discourses cannot be separated from concepts of autonomy and women's, LGBTQI+'s, and other vulnerable groups' rights. As part of the gender mainstreaming project, a feminist ethics integration contributes to the curricular efficacy of CHED reforms. Curricular reforms must accommodate critical approaches to educational principles. Existing pedagogic models have been instrumental in reproducing old values (Friedman 1995, 56; Jong 2017, 4). These values target the vulnerable (including women) who have been culturally taught to have a "positive mental attitude to deal with forms of inequality" (Dabrowski 2021, 90). "Adopting gender as an analytical category" addresses "world politics" and invites us "to reflect on the same axes at the local level and from the everyday perspective" (Buscemi 2022, 204). Feminist ethics will promote gendered identities that dovetail with character types compliant with neo-conservative agendas. It also facilitates the visibility of these

identities and new subject positions in an ongoing contest between compliance and conscientious objection to various policies. These objections favor a more caring professional environment that considers "relationality, rights, and responsibility" (Blackmore 2019, 176). Such gender mainstreaming is also set against metric performance indicators, particularly the goal of achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5, or gender equality.

Feminist ethics has proved to be a "theoretical and conceptual resource" for "mapping, investigating, and comprehending" ethics and responsibility (Borgerson 2007, 477). Janet Borgerson explains, "feminist ethics calls attention to relationships, responsibility, and experience and their cultural, historical, and psychologic contexts." In discussions on safety and consent in institutional settings, for instance, students may gain a feminist ethical awareness that women's experiences are dominated by patriarchal systems and norms. Feminist ethics questions and poses "alternatives to traditional ontological and epistemological assumptions" (Borgerson 2007, 479). Furthermore, feminist ethical reflection "engages broad concerns of interest, motivating powerful and novel ways of thinking and providing diverse approaches to central issues" (Borgerson 2007, 479).

Now, suppose students are equipped with *only* the "canonical" normative theories in dealing with these authentic, ethical (gender-related) dilemmas. In that case, they may fail to acknowledge the issues dealt with by actual people in real communities (in this case, women and vulnerable groups) amid globalization in the 21st century, which CHED so aspires to be in tune with. By recognizing oppressive sexual politics, we may instigate a series of ethical investigations. These specific "ethical inquiries are essential on character, interpersonal relationships, emotional response, and choice" (Borgerson 2007, 482). Integrating feminist ethics is being sensitive to the repercussions in our education system, where hierarchical and patriarchal values are continually reproduced (Durrani and Halai 2020, 65).

## MORE THAN JUST CARE ETHICS

However, there is a misconception that feminist ethics is limited to care ethics per se (Friedman 1995, 57). In discussions of virtue ethics in the GEC, for instance, the ethics of care would be tackled as a critique of Utilitarianism and Aristotelian virtue ethics. Carol Gilligan and Nel Noddings' works would be referred to with an emphasis on "care" and caring, as well as the relationships between moral agents and patients. While we welcome the acknowledgment of Gilligan and Noddings' contributions to the theory-making of ethics, we fear it may not be enough.

Incidentally, Borgerson (2007, 278) argues that care ethics differ from feminist ethics. Feminist ethics supplies "care" with the fundamental attribution of" social reproduction." Such an attribute has been "directed to the care of others" and the "service and maintenance of the public world of production" throughout history (Youngs 2001, 22; Mountz et al. 2015, 1242). The significance of this connection between feminist ethics and care ethics, which attributes social reproduction with the temporality that "women's time" invests in sustaining the 'public world of production,' cannot be underestimated. Thus, the ethics of care that some feminists champion may

reinforce the 'hierarchical valuation of women's time' or a form of operationalizing gender valuation. Borgerson (2007, 485) claims that care ethics tends to be focused on the "one-sided concern with the well-being and development of others," which "demands prior assumption of female sacrifice made unproblematic by essentialist claims." Furthermore, by "remaining reflective upon potential sites of oppression and subordination," feminist ethics "informs care ethics' focus on relation differently" (Borgerson 2007, 485).

Since feminist ethics harp on feminist reflections with personal experience and new social practices, students are encouraged to engage with "embodied perspectives that recognize the relationality of networked participation" (Kumar and Forsythe 2021, 295). Moreso, feminist ethics also "bears witness to intersubjectivity—or the interrelatedness of subject positions" and develops "the capacity to manage actively the often discontinuous, overlapping or conflicting relations of power" (Borgerson 2007, 485). Thus, ethics is more than just something that is theorized; it is possibly a more concrete action wherein "moral conversations and negotiations" occur "among moral agents who are members of that specific community" (Kumar and Forsythe 2021, 295).

Feminist ethics is necessary in approaching public theory (Shields 2006, 418). Communities shall allow individuals to realize their full potential through political, social, and cultural participation. Feminist ethics may also hone critical perspectives in government reform movements (Shields 2006, 420). With gender occupying the formal and practical axes of curricular reforms, feminist ethics harmonizes the core competencies of curricular education reforms, specifically Ethics' contributions to considering the intersections between the individual, nation, and world.

## EDUCATION POLICIES AND FEMINIST ETHICS

Curricular reforms range from how power is mobilized, diffused, and strategically diffracted through the dispositifs of relations that power generates, "whether of discipline, sexuality, security, policy, etc." (Bailey 2013, 811). Education, however, has also generated a kind of 'surplus-enjoyment' arising from "policy technologies" designed to sustain "continuous improvement" (Clarke 2013, 236), structured according to performativity rigors. An egalitarian education policy is in line with the general terms of Education for All (EFA) and Millennium Development Goals (MDG), which, despite widespread criticisms, have led to "considerable gains in widening access to education" (Durrani and Halai 2020, 65). (Note that the K to 12 curriculum was implemented in 2012 in line with the 2015 MDG targets.) There are, however, some predicaments. In the Philippine implementation of the 2013 education reforms, most educators continue to "keep their silence on their situations and concerns" (Bongco and David 2020, 28). The curricular policy development is, thus, exposed "to the danger of ... the 'dialogue of the deaf'" or the "dialogue of the mute" (Fink 2004).

This predicament reflects the intrinsic design of a result-driven organizational structure that oversees these reforms. With the SDGs adopted in 2015, reform initiatives within educational structures would allow the flourishing of gendered

bodies and teachers in educating all as a social dispositif of care. In particular, with regard to Goal 4 of Quality Education, "to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all," feminist ethics can address the need to enable education technologies and democratization.

The proposal of integrating feminist ethics into the Ethics GEC is anchored on the need to address the continuing issue of gender disparity in education. Integrating feminist ethics in the tertiary education GE curriculum responds to the Gender and Development agenda of a "more relational theorization of gender and the removal of structural barriers to gender equality" (Durrani and Halai 2020, 69). Leveraging on feminist ethics sustains a negotiable arrangement with neoliberalism (while it is still a powerful global order) in terms of "communicative competence, courage, flexibility, risk-taking [and] the ability to sustain alliances and negotiation skills" (Marshall and Arnot 2008, 178).

Feminist ethics can provide lessons to sustain these complicated negotiations. Feminist ethos and practices can best respond to the possibility of creating a "learner citizen through the curriculum" (Marshall and Arnot 2008, 178). Moreover, this may ensure the training of citizens to "[uphold global human rights], or local and national rights and cultural values" (Marshal and Arnot 2008, 178). Above all, feminist ethics as a national curricular lever can strategically advance SDGs 4 and 5. These SDGs "cannot be achieved without substantive gender equality in education, and the attention to processes, outcomes, and contexts which it entails" (Peppin Vaughan 2016).

## FINAL THOUGHTS

Since the existing Ethics curriculum in the Philippines highlights the task of developing ethical behavior at the level of the person and society, it is imperative to integrate feminist ethics. Feminist ethics stresses the importance of relational thought, mutual recognition, and the "commitment to context and particularity" (Ganote and Longo 2015, 1070). As CHED prepares to adjust to impending changes in K-12 education, we see the integration of feminist ethics as timely, assuming Ethics remains a GEC. With the CHED prescription of mingling globalization and pluralism with teaching ethics, feminist ethics make marginalized identities and subject positions visible. It would also bring to the discussion the intersectional issues that many ethical dilemmas pose, particularly those that are sex- and gender-related in the Philippines. Furthermore, holistic student learning requires acknowledging others. Moral reasoning entails the recognition of pluralities and differences between people. Merely reflecting on "universal" moral standards will not suffice. Moral agents should not just be able to think hypothetically and dialogue critically (Ganote and Longo 2015, 1070) but also participate as actual moral agents in their communities. Thus, integration does not end in merely adding feminist ethics readings to the course content but operationalizing its critical lessons as well. Measuring these targeted outcomes is another challenge that may be discussed by CHED and Ethics educators in the future. In the meantime, we assert that if the Ethics course stays true to CHED's inclusive vision, thereby improving Philippine political society and engaging its citizens in civic responsibility, it must fully integrate feminist ethics into its course content.

## POSTSCRIPT

This research article was written in the last quarter of 2023 and revised in the first quarter of 2025. On May 28, 2025, DepEd proposed to remove Ethics as a GEC. This does not change our stand. Suppose an Ethics course (by any other name or form) stays true to DepEd's or CHED's vision of being inclusive and contributing to improving Philippine society or strengthening its curricular aims concerning gender. In that case, it must integrate feminist ethics into its course content alongside other courses.

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