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Despite their geographical distance and cultural contexts, Colombia and the Philippines share a series of structural and socio-political challenges that define their contemporary trajectories. Both countries, marked by their colonial history, internal struggles and positioning in the global south, face common problems in critical areas such as natural disaster management, poverty, gender-based violence, women's political representation and human rights. However, responses to these challenges and resolution strategies are remarkably diverse, reflecting political structures, public policy implementation, and social context differences. This new issue of the journal *DiversidadEs* promotes intercultural dialogue between these two countries to promote joint work on solving these shared phenomena.

The first article by Pauline Dinise David, Giselle Vergara, Laura Sofia Jojhana Peña, Malaika Singh y Julia Camille Vencer, Andrés Gil, shows how Colombia and the Philippines face the constant threat of extreme weather events, such as tropical cyclones and earthquakes, which devastate populations. However, while both countries have developed disaster management and resilience frameworks, the approaches taken to mitigate impacts and foster recovery vary considerably. The need for a more inclusive and proactive response is a recurring theme in comparative studies on disaster management, highlighting the importance of community participation, the

integration of private and public actors, and the consideration of sociocultural factors in resilience strategies. In this regard, Colombia and the Philippines must continue to move towards disaster management models that focus on infrastructure and address the social and cultural dynamics that influence post-disaster response and recovery.

The second article, written by Erika Rose Lim; Esteban Ruiz Jiménez; Robert Ojeda Pérez; Hiromi Nakamura; Joshua Nierras; Masahiko Someda, discusses how the COVID-19 pandemic in Colombia and the Philippines has highlighted the social and economic gaps both countries are trying to overcome. Despite previous efforts to reduce poverty, the global health and economic crisis has exacerbated pre-existing inequalities, especially among the most vulnerable. Although well-intentioned, the poverty alleviation policies implemented in both countries have proven to be insufficient in the context of a protracted crisis. The comparative analysis reveals that, while government reforms and interventions have partially adapted to the new post-pandemic reality, there is still an urgent need for more sustainable policies adjusted to the changing realities of the global economy. In this regard, Colombia and the Philippines must redouble their efforts to create policies that are not only reactive but also aimed at long-term structural solutions.

In the third article, Rosalynn Mae Soper, Juan Camilo Fagua, Alpha Sophia Tinga, Chantrea Agosto, Raizen Serrano, Prudencio Timothy Cordeta & Eda Sofia Figueroa shows how violence against women continues to be one of the most severe and urgent problems in both nations. In the Philippines and Colombia, government efforts to combat gender-based violence have been a reactive rather than a preventive response, and women continue to face serious risks in a sociocultural environment that, in many cases, perpetuates gender inequalities. The lack of a systematic, coordinated and human rights-centred response is a recurring theme in comparative studies, which point to the need to address not only the violence itself but also the underlying factors, such as poverty, lack of education and the normalization of violence within deeply patriarchal social and political structures. Both countries need to strengthen their legal and support frameworks, implementing more preventive policies and ensuring that victims have access to the services and resources needed to emerge from violence.

The fourth article, written by Hannah Estelle Jeanne Gopez, Alyannah Catrina Maldia, Alexandra Carmeli Mendoza, Kamyll Migueyl Pla, Kaira Quizon, Paula Santos, points out that although Colombia and the Philippines have advanced gender parity in certain aspects of political and social life, female representation in decision-making is still insufficient. Despite

the achievements in terms of women's labour participation and public visibility, the low representation of women in positions of power, particularly in the legislative bodies of both countries, reflects the limitations of public policies aimed at gender equality. Institutional reforms and laws that promote women's participation in politics have yet to translate into a fundamental change in the power structure. Through comparative analysis, it becomes clear that both the Philippines and Colombia need to reform their political systems to ensure women's participation in elections and access to key decision-making positions that can influence policies that affect women and other vulnerable groups.

Laura Alejandra Rodríguez García, Jhomber Estiven Pira Ávila, Hyeeyun Kim, Galvan, Fatima Beatrice F., Danica Regine P. Encarnacion, Zelina Mari M. Mendoza, Julianna Victoria C. Torres, Karol V. Forero, in the fifth article of this issue, reflects on human rights in both countries. In Colombia, human rights violations stemming from internal armed conflict and political violence remain a lingering shadow. In contrast, in the Philippines, violations are deeply linked to repressive policies and impunity in cases of extrajudicial killings. Both countries face the difficult task of overcoming these legacies of violence through effective transitional justice mechanisms that can provide reparations to victims and strengthen democratic institutions. Justice must be reactive and involve a preventive

and structural approach that addresses the underlying causes of violations, such as inequality, discrimination and corruption.

Finally, the sixth article, by Royce Lyssah Malabonga, focuses on analyzing how the educational crisis exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed a significant digital divide in Colombia and the Philippines. Like many developing countries, both countries have had to quickly adapt their education systems to a hybrid or fully remote model. However, disparities in access to technology and internet connectivity have limited the ability of many students to continue their education. This situation highlights the urgent need for more significant investment in digital education infrastructure and policies ensuring equitable education access for all population sectors.

Shared Lessons and Common Challenges

This issue of DiversidadEs magazine invites us to think that, despite the geographical and cultural differences between Colombia and the Philippines, both countries face similar structural challenges that require innovative and collaborative solutions. Disaster management, the fight against poverty, the improvement of human rights and the promotion of gender equality are issues that require more inclusive, sustainable and effective public policies. Comparative studies between these two countries offer valuable lessons about lived experiences in the global south and provide a framework for designing policies that

can address the social, political, and economic complexities they share. Both countries must continue to learn from each other, adapting their strategies to face contemporary challenges more equitably and effectively.

Guest Editor: Suelen Castilblanco