

# Cora

transgender man, 66, person with disability, Quezon City,  
currently employed as part-time security guard

**My disability is not an  
obstacle to face life  
challenges because I  
have the ability to live.**



## **Growing Up Trans And With A Disability**

We were 13 siblings and I am the ninth. My parents worked as caretakers in a public cemetery. I learned that I am transgender in my teens when I had a crush on one of my female classmates in high school. I was a tomboy and would get scolded at home. My father got angry if I was wearing a dress. My mother hit me if I was wearing pants. My relatives viewed me as odd.

When I was young, I was stricken with polio which caused one of my legs to become short. In school, I experienced bullying because of my disability. My classmates would tear up my test paper, trip me, and cause me to fall. I ended up in fights at school. At home, my brothers would beat me for fighting in school.

I only finished high school. I was not able to go to college because my parents could not afford to send all 13 of us to college.



## Work Life

When some of my friends told me that I should take a secretarial course with them, I said no. I really wanted to be a mechanic. When I informed my parents that I wanted to be a mechanic, they said that I would risk being hurt since I had limited mobility due to my disability.

At age 32, I started earning a living by collecting bets for community-based gambling. I also peddled vegetables, fruits, clothes and household items. I used my earnings to pay for the expenses of my nephews and nieces.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, it was difficult to travel and earn a living because of the lockdowns. Eventually, I was employed as a village security guard for 1000 pesos per month (about 20 US dollars at current exchange rate). I am still working as a guard to the present.

## Intimate Relationships

At age 36, I had a relationship with a woman. My family did not approve and my father and siblings threw me out of the house. My partner and I separated in 1997.



## Reflections On Growing Older

My job as a security guard does not provide enough income and I find it difficult to find other means of income as a transgender man with a disability and an ageing body. I do not have enough money to pay for my basic needs, not even to buy food. At times, I eat only one meal a day. I struggle to pay my electricity and water bills and the cost of transportation to go to the clinic for medical check-ups. Sometimes, I do odd jobs for the barangay and get paid 300 pesos.

I also experience financial discrimination as an older transgender man. For instance, during the height of COVID-19, when monetary aid was distributed by the government, I never received any financial aid or social pension as a person with a disability or as a senior citizen.

All my life, while earning a living as a bet collector, I could not save for myself because I contributed to the daily needs of my nephews and nieces. In hindsight, I should have ensured that I have savings.

