As a woman studying and preparing to enter the workforce, it sometimes feels like running a marathon alongside men on the same track with the same goal. But here’s the catch: women start the race with weights attached to them. This is what the gender pay gap feels like—not just in the Philippines, but globally.

In the Philippines, this weighted race is very real. According to the Asian Development Bank, Filipino women earn only around 76 to 78 cents for every peso that men make. Think about it: for every 100 pesos John earns, Maria only gets around 76 pesos for doing the exact same job. As a woman enrolled in a male-dominated program, I’ve felt this extra “weight” too. Even though I know I’m working hard, there’s an underlying worry that I may have to prove myself more or that I might be undervalued later in my career.

This gap isn’t just a statistic—it reflects deep-rooted issues in how we value the work done by women. It’s a systemic issue. According to the Workplace Gender Equality Agency, one significant factor is both conscious and unconscious discrimination. Women are often overlooked for salary increases, promotions, and leadership positions because of ingrained biases and stereotypes about what they “can” or “should” do.

These stereotypes also lead to occupational segregation, where women are often directed toward fields like caregiving and education, which tend to be lower-paying, while men are encouraged to enter higher-paying fields like technology and engineering. This doesn’t just affect women individually—it impacts their families, communities, and the economy as a whole. Women end up with less savings, fewer investments, and greater financial insecurity, especially in retirement.

Ultimately, solving this issue requires more than individual effort—it demands systemic change. Policies and laws that enforce equal pay for equal work, support women in higher-paying fields, and encourage them to step into leadership roles can help remove the extra weight women carry in this race. Only then can we truly achieve a fair track and equal opportunities for everyone.

So let’s keep the conversation going, advocate for equal pay, and work together to create a future where everyone can reach their full potential, regardless of gender.

References:

<https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/31194/gender-equality-labor-market-philippines.pdf>

<https://www.wgea.gov.au/the-gender-pay-gap#:~:text=conscious%20and%20unconscious%20discrimination%20and,responsibilities%2C%20especially%20in%20senior%20roles>

# GAD Talk

Script:

(Engaging the Audience) Imagine this: you’re working side by side with a colleague, putting in the same hours, handling the same responsibilities, and delivering the same results. But when payday comes, you find out your colleague is earning significantly more than you—for the same work. This scenario isn’t hypothetical; it’s the reality for many women across the world, including here in the Philippines.

According to the Asian Development Bank, Filipino women earn only around 76 to 78 cents for every peso that men make. To put it simply, for every 100 pesos John makes, Maria—doing the exact same job—receives only around 76 pesos. As a woman entering a male-dominated field, I can’t ignore this disparity. It’s not just a statistic; it’s a reality that impacts us, shapes our futures, and limits our opportunities.

(Clear Explanation) This gap in earnings isn’t simply about the numbers on a paycheck. It reflects a deeper issue—how society values the work done by women. Research from the Workplace Gender Equality Agency reveals that one major factor behind this gap is both conscious and unconscious discrimination. Women are often overlooked for raises, promotions, and leadership positions due to lingering stereotypes and biases about what we “can” or “should” do.

(Evidence and Implementation) These biases don’t just affect salaries; they also push women into certain types of jobs. This phenomenon, known as occupational segregation, funnels women into fields like caregiving and education, which tend to offer lower pay, while men are encouraged to enter higher-paying fields like technology and engineering. This segregation not only affects women’s individual financial well-being but also has ripple effects on families, communities, and the entire economy. Women end up with fewer savings, limited investments, and, ultimately, greater financial insecurity, especially as they age.

Addressing this gap isn’t just a “women’s issue”; it’s an economic and societal imperative. Closing the gender pay gap could add billions to our economy. Imagine the impact if women were paid fairly and had equal opportunities to pursue high-paying fields. It would strengthen the entire nation’s financial health. But we need systemic solutions to achieve this. Policies enforcing equal pay for equal work, support for women in higher-paying fields, and efforts to encourage women into leadership roles can begin to level the playing field.

(Impact on Audience) So, why does this matter to everyone? Because when we ensure fair pay, we empower families, uplift communities, and create a more resilient economy. It’s about building a future where everyone, regardless of gender, has a fair shot at success.

Let’s keep the conversation going, advocate for policies that promote equal pay, and work together to create a society where hard work and talent are rewarded equally. Let’s envision a future where gender no longer defines our earnings, our roles, or our potential. Together, we can create a world where every person can reach their full potential without barriers, biases, or limits.