

7TH ILGA ASIA CONFERENCE

REPORT



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Asian Region of the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA)

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7TH ILGA ASIA CONFERENCE
UNITED FOR LOVE
4-8 DECEMBER 2018
PHNOM PENH CAMBODIA
Conference Report



7TH ILGA ASIA
UNITED FOR
DECEMBER 13, 2017 - 15







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LETTER FROM ILGA
ASIA EXECUTIVE
BOARD

Dear members, friends and colleagues,

The 7th ILGA Asia Regional Conference successfully concluded on the 8th of December 2017. The ILGA Asia Executive Board is pleased to send to you the Conference Report to review all the activities that took place.

During the 5-day conference, ILGA Asia and the host organization Rainbow Community Kampuchea welcomed 281 participants and 41 member organizations from 35 countries in Asia and beyond to participate in numerous heated discussions, social gatherings and to ignite the spirit of the Asian LGBTI community.

With limited resources, we were able to bring in 74 persons through our scholarship program: 10 of whom self-identified as intersex, 23 identified as lesbian, bisexual and queer woman (trans and cis), 20 identified as trans, and 20 identified as gay, bisexual and queer man (trans and cis); 27 of whom were under the age of 30. We wanted to ensure that the conference reflected the diversity of our communities in Asia, and we were glad that most people we talked to at the conference could feel such diversity in the atmosphere. The presence of all other participants would not have been made possible without the generous support from our partners in the region and around the world, and the personal contribution from individual LGBTI activists.

For the first time ever, ILGA Asia hosted a bisexual pre-conference, an interfaith pre-conference, and a youth caucus. Within 5 days, the Asian LGBTI community has produced strong recommendations and concrete actions that have been approved by all of the members present and will be shown in this report. ILGA Asia and all of our members are committed to follow up and execute these ideas until we meet again. More importantly, we were extremely happy to see that the conference, a space where we could freely and safely be ourselves, share our tears and laughs, had remained so and continued to exist, despite challenges and unfortunate incidents in the past. We were so proud of the moment when our community was storming the congested streets of Phnom Penh and waving high the rainbow flags on the tuk-tuk, posing our best positions in front of the Cambodian monumental landmarks.

We want to thank all of our members, friends and colleagues for your presence and active engagement at the conference; thank our donors and sponsors for providing us the financial mean to create this safe space for the Asian LGBTI community. Finally, we thank RoCK and all the volunteers for hosting the conference. We hope to see you again at the 8th Asian conference in Seoul, South Korea in 2019.

Manisha Dhakal and Mani AQ, Co-chairs of ILGA Asia, on behalf of the ILGA Asia Executive Board



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 7th ILGA Asia Regional Conference took place from 4-8 December 2018 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, hosted by Rainbow Community Kampuchea. The conference was divided into 2 days of pre-conference and 3 days of main conference. Some of the pre-conference meetings were not open to the public, while all of the sessions during the main conference were open to everyone, although decision-making right was only possible by memberships present at the conference.

ILGA Asia and RoCK welcomed 281 participants coming from 62 organizations in 35 countries, most of which were in Asia. There were 41 member organizations present, although only 26 were able to exercise their voting rights. Those who had their membership registered in other regions and those who had not paid their membership fee in accordance with ILGA Constitution were not able to vote.

There were 249 scholarship applications to attend the conference, out of which 74 had been selected: 10 of whom self-identified as intersex, 23 identified as lesbian, bisexual and queer woman (trans and cis), 20 identified as trans, and 20 identified as gay, bisexual and queer man (trans and cis); 27 of whom were under the age of 30. Geographically, 15 of the scholars were from East Asia, 29 from South Asia, 26 from Southeast Asia and 3 from West Asia. These scholars were selected by the ILGA Asia Executive Board on the basis of their engagement at the conference, either through organizing, facilitating or speaking at a workshop; the community they represented; and the region they came from. Applications that were incomplete or submitted after the deadline were not being considered.

There were 6 pre-conferences taking place during the first 2 days: Bisexual; UN and Advocacy; Lesbian, Bisexual and Queer Women; Interfaith; Trans; and Intersex pre-conferences. The Youth Caucus was independently organized by a group of youth organizations and youth activists present at the conference. The Trans Caucus was taking place as a part of the trans pre-conference. All of these meetings, except for the UN and Advocacy, produced a statement to the conference. All the statements except for the LBQ Women's statement were adopted by the conference prior to the Closing Ceremony.

During the main conference, there were 4 plenary sessions, 19 experiential and information workshops, and 4 general workshops. The 4 general workshops made recommendations to the plenary sessions to be approved by members. These sessions were selected by the ILGA Asia Executive Board out of 54 proposals, with priority given to topics that had never been discussed at previous ILGA Asia conferences, emerging issues with huge impact to Asian communities, and those featuring speakers representing diverse identities and geography of Asia.

The conference elected a new Executive Board comprising of 10 members, 5 of whom were re-elected from the previous board. The previously vacant positions were filled during this election: 1 trans representative, 1 intersex representative and 2 West Asian representatives. The Constitution was amended to remove member organizations in Central Asia from ILGA Asia to support the decision at the ILGA World conference in Bangkok 2016, among other changes as elaborated later in this report.



INTRODUCTION

The International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA) is the world federation of national and local organisations dedicated to achieving equal rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex (LGBTI) people across the globe. Established in 1978, ILGA enjoys consultative status at the UN ECOSOC Council. It speaks and lobbies in international fora on behalf of more than 1,200 member organisations from 132 countries.

ILGA Asia is the Asian Region of ILGA, representing more than 100 member organizations in Afghanistan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, India, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Israel, Japan, Jordan, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Oman, Palestine, Pakistan, Philippines, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Timor-Leste, United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam and Yemen.

ILGA Asia Regional Conference is the highest level decision making body of ILGA Asia, taking place every other year, alternating with the ILGA World Conference. The last ILGA Asia conference was in Taipei in 2015, while the last ILGA World conference was in Bangkok in 2016.

Our vision is a world where Asia is a safe place for all, where all can live in freedom and equality, be properly informed in the nature of sexual orientation and gender identity & expression and bodies (SOGIEB) rights, have access to justice, and diversity is respected.

Our missions are:

1. To promote universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the elimination of all forms of discrimination and stigmatization based on (SOGIEB) in Asia and including the specific provisions of the UN conventions and covenants specified in the constitution of ILGA;
2. To work for the equality of all people regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity / expression and bodies, as well as liberation from all forms of discrimination and stigmatization;
3. To empower and support LGBTI communities, organizations and individuals in Asia, while encouraging community building and networking.

By the end of the 6th ILGA Asia Regional Conference in Taipei, CamASEAN made a bid to host the 7th Asian conference in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Because CamASEAN was not a member of ILGA back then, Rainbow Community of Kampuchea (RoCK) became a co-host, and remained the only host of the conference in the end. After months of planning, ILGA Asia and RoCK decided that the conference dates would be 4-8 December 2017. The theme for the 7th Asian conference was "United for Love" to symbolize the regional solidarity in a time when adversity against LGBTI community is taking place across Asia. The conference had the following objectives:

- To review adversities against LGBTI communities in Asia during the past 2 years and brainstorm countermeasures
- To create a safe space for LGBTI human rights defenders to freely discuss their works, share best practices in tackling SOGIESC-based violence and discriminations, lobbying changes in national laws and policies and advocating for LGBTI rights at the international levels
- To identify and agree on collective strategies and priorities for regional advocacy and cross-country

collaboration

- To strengthen the solidarity amongst LGBTI activists in Asia for a strong and united regional movement
- To elect leadership and representatives for the Asian LGBTI communities for 2017-2019

The planning and organizing team of the conference included the 2015-2017 Executive Board members and Coordinator of ILGA Asia, Board members and staff of RoCK, and a consultant from Destination Justice recruited by RoCK.

Organization of the pre-conference was supported by member organizations: Organisation Intersex International - Chinese, Society of Transsexual Women of the Philippines (STRAP), Blue Diamond Society, ASEAN SOGIE Caucus, Global Interfaith Network, Sayoni, and Korean Sexual-Minority Culture and Rights Center. The social program was supported by Meta House Phnom Penh, the Amazingly Fabulous Tuk-Tuk Pride Race, Prumsodun Ok and other local artists and craftspersons.

The main conference was supported by many other partner organizations and members: The Rainbow Sky Association of Thailand (RSAT), Taiwan Tongzhi Hotline Association, ICS Center - Vietnam, Solidarity for LGBT Human Rights of Korea (Haeng Sung In) - South Korea, Bandhu Social Welfare Society - Bangladesh, PELANGI Campaign - Malaysia, Asia Pacific Transgender Network, Codiva - Timor-Leste, Arus Pelangi - Indonesia, GALANG - the Philippines, PFLAG Vietnam, Pink Mountain - Nepal, Secure Momnchildren - Pakistan, Srishti Madurai LGBTQIA Student Volunteer Collective - India, Global Philanthropy Project, Foundation for a Just Society, Open Society Foundation, COC Netherlands, AIDS Walk, Freedom House, Gay and Lesbian Campus Association of China, NextGEN Hanoi, ARC International, Provedoria dos Direitos Humanos e Justiça (PDHJ) - Timor-Leste, National Human Rights Commission of Thailand, Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines, National Human Rights Commission of Bangladesh, Rape Crisis Network - Japan, Oogachaga - Singapore, Hanoi International Queer Film Project, DAKILA - the Philippines, Beijing Queer Film Festival, Boys of Bangladesh, Korean Society of Law and Policy on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, Justice for Sisters - Malaysia, Buku - Thailand, Community Business - Hong Kong, Equal Opportunities Commission of Hong Kong, Outright Action International, Sangsan Anakot Yawachon - Thailand, Gay Japan News (Equality), Naz Pakistan, Transmen Indonesia, Destination Justice, Ministry of Justice of Viet Nam, Government of Orissa - India, Ministry of Justice of Thailand, Coalition for Sexual and Bodily Rights in Muslim Societies, APCOM Foundation, IPPF Humanitarian, National Transgender Network Sri Lanka, Parwaz Pakistan, VHS India, Youth Interfaith Forum on Sexuality - Indonesia, Trans Center - China, Young Out Here - Sri Lanka, NTU Lambda - Students Group of Gender Issues Alliance in Northern Taiwan, the League of Northern Taiwan Student Gender Association, United Nations Development Programme - Bangkok Regional Hub, SEED - Malaysia, Youth Voices Count, Beijing LGBT Center, Qorras - Lebanon, Braille Without Borders - Cambodia, Federation of Gay Games, Good Aging Yells - Japan, The Straits Games - Malaysia, Amazin LêThi Foundation - Viet Nam, National Institute of Education Management of Viet Nam, Chinese University of Hong Kong, Burapha University in Thailand, and UN Women Cambodia.





THE CHAIRING POOL

The Chairing Pool of the 7th ILGA Asia Regional Conference was elected right after the opening ceremony, prior to the first plenary, in accordance with the Standing Orders of ILGA World Conference adopted in Bangkok 2016. Since ILGA Asia had never developed a Standing Orders of its own, the Chairing Pool was using the ILGA World's one to coordinate this conference.

The following members were elected to the Chairing Pool:

- Pisey Ly - RoCK
- Martin Yang - Beijing Gender
- Nhuun - RSAT
- Ryan Silverio - ASEAN SOGIE Caucus
- Candy Yun - Korean Sexual-Minority Culture and Rights Center
- Mikee Inton - STRAP
- Aisha Mughal - Wajood

The Chairing Pool selected the following members to act as Election Officers throughout the conference:

- Soudeh - Ppectrum
- Joelle - Beijing LGBT Center
- Jan - ASEAN SOGIE Caucus

The Chairing Pool also assigned note-takers for each session at the conference to support the drafting of this report.



WORKSHOPS AT THE MAIN CONFERENCE

PLENARY SESSION 1 UNITED FOR LOVE – THE RACE TOWARDS MARRIAGE EQUALITY IN ASIA

Moderator

Cheyleapy Heng, RoCK, Cambodia

Speakers

Nhuun Yodmuang, Rainbow Sky Association, Thailand
Ngo Le Phuong Linh, ICS Center, Vietnam
Sanjay, Blue Diamond Society, Nepal
Nara Lee, Solidarity for LGBT Human Rights of Korea
Sean Du, Taiwan Tongzhi Hotline Association

Summary

In the past few years, the marriage equality movement in Asia had been going through some significant progresses, notably the results of advocacy efforts in Taiwan where the highest court ruled in favor of legalizing same-sex marriage. The session reviewed the marriage equality movements and the experiences of LGBTI activists in several Asian countries.

In Taiwan, during 2016 and 2017, the marriage equality movement has reached to an unprecedented peak. In December 10th, 2016, more than 250,000 people went to the street showing their support for the issue, which also made the event become one of the three biggest rallies in recent years. In May 24th, 2017, the Justices of the Constitutional Court announced the constitutional interpretation implying that the parliament should amend current laws to achieve marriage equality. For years, LGBTI activists had used various approaches including public mobilization, social media and policy campaign. The opposition, composed of mainly the conservative wings of Christianity, was strongly against marriage equality, gender equity education, HIV/AIDS and LGBTI teenagers issue. For the LGBTI Taiwanese, marriage equality was a starting point not a destination.

In Thailand, Ministry of Justice was working on the 2nd draft of the same-sex Civil Partnership Act. The draft had been criticized by local activists for not reflecting the views of the LGBTI communities. It was known for discriminating against same-sex couples when compared to the regulations for heterosexual couples.

In Vietnam, the Law on Marriage and Family got a significant milestone when the ban on same-sex marriage were removed in 2014. It was not the best possible result for our community, but it reflected the positive changes of both society and government toward LGBT people, considering that just some years ago being LGBT had been still a taboo. Those changes were the efforts of the LGBT community, N.G.Os, grass-root groups and PFLAG, with public support from journalists, lawyers, celebrities, influencers and government agencies. Those support and efforts had been increasing ever since. Currently, Equality Marriage task force is forming and aiming to achieve the ultimate goal in the next revision of the Law on Marriage and Family.

For South Korea, there had been positive shifts in public attitude in recent years. Their support was shown by the increasing number of people showing up at the annual pride event in Seoul.



PLENARY SESSION 2 RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISM AND INTENSIFICATION OF STATE-SPONSORED HOMOPHOBIA AND TRANSPHOBIA IN ASIA

Moderator

Jean Chong, Sayoni/Asean SOGIE Caucus, OutRight Action International, Singapore

Speakers

Tanvir Alim, Boys of Bangladesh
Minhee Ryu, Korean Society of Law and Policy on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGILAW)
Thilaga, Justice for Sisters, Malaysia
Dr. Anticha Sangchai, Baku, Thailand

Summary

The session discussed the growing influence of religious fundamentalism and its impact on LGBTI communities in Asia. Within the past two years, the influence of religious extremism, backed by increasingly authoritarian governments, had incited various forms of violence across the region: two gay activists were murdered in Bangladesh leading to an exodus of LGBTI activists to other countries; in Indonesia, raids and arbitrary arrests were conducted by both state forces and civilian vigilantes; in Malaysia, government institutions promoted a contest to make an anti-LGBTI video and state-sponsored “conversion therapy” practices; and in South Korea, soliders were arrested for engaging in homosexual acts.

Panelists presented how they were struggling with anti-SOGI laws in their respective countries and the influence of their government and religious institutions. In fact politicians were using the conservative version of religion to push back the LGBTI rights and promote homophobia at national level. Collaboration of anti-LGBT movement to attack the Equal Rights movement was a common issue in all these countries.

Activists were changing strategy from being reactive attacks to being proactively introducing the LGBT-friendly version of religion and traditional lifestyle.

PLENARY SESSION 3 FROM MARGINS TO MAINSTREAM: LGBT INCLUSION IN NATIONAL POLICY AND PRACTICE

Moderator

Edmund Settle, UNDP Bangkok Regional Hub

Speakers

Nareeluc Paicaiyapoom, Ministry of Justice, Thailand
Dinh Thi Phuong Hao, Ministry of Justice, Vietnam
Sarada Prasad Panda, Government of Orissa, India
Sineth Sar, Ministry of Women's Affairs, Cambodia
M. Rabiul Islam, National Human Rights Institute,
Bangladesh

Summary

National level policies and legislative initiatives have shown they can have a positive impact on social inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people in Asia, but these efforts require mainstreaming to have widespread change, said government and policy makers speaking in a panel discussion today at the ILGA Asia Conference in Phnom Penh.

The panel discussion, titled 'From margins to mainstream: LGBTI inclusion in national policy and practice', featured government participants from Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Thailand and Viet Nam, and was moderated by Edmund Settle, Policy Advisor with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Bangkok Regional Hub.

In the Asia-Pacific region, LGBTI people continue to face both legal and social barriers to equality and inclusion, which must be dismantled for these marginalized populations to fully enjoy their deserved individual rights to development and quality of life.

In Cambodia, the Ministry of Women's Affairs addresses the rights of LGBT people in three national policies, namely the Fourth National Strategic Plan for Gender Equality (2014–2018), the Second National Action Plan to Prevent Violence on Women (2014–2018) and the Cambodian Gender Assessment 2014. In these policies, and for the first time ever, the Cambodian Government is working to promote the inclusion of LGBT people from a holistic and human-rights based perspective. The Women's Affairs Ministry also included sexual diversity and gender identity in a program for improving parenting skills, with the goal of promoting understanding and support of Cambodian parents towards their LGBT children.

"At the moment we are undertaking the 16 Days of Activism Campaign to End Gender-Based Violence, where a video on non-violence against LGBT people was showed. In addition, there is a new and ground-breaking program called 'Leading the Way for Gender Equality', led by my Ministry and supported by UNDP and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), aimed at ending discrimination against females from LGBTI community," said Sineth Sar, Department of Legal Protection, Ministry of Women

Affairs, Cambodia. “My advice to CSOs, based on our own extensive experience, is to engage with government agencies early on—at the planning stage. This cooperation can also be reflected in a Memorandum of Understanding that can be signed to provide a specific framework for bilateral collaboration.”

In 2015, Thailand has enacted a Gender Equality Act, which is the first law in the country that explicitly protects people whose gender expression is different from their sex assigned at birth. UNDP, in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (MSDHS) and the Rainbow Sky Association of Thailand (RSAT), supported the launching of this Act in September 2015 when it first came into force. UNDP is now working with MSDHS and the World Bank Office in Bangkok to roll out a training curriculum on sexual orientation, gender identity and expression (SOGIE) for government officials to effectively implement the Act.

“Besides the Gender Equality Act, the Ministry of Justice is working on a draft civil partnership act which we hope will be ready for submission to the cabinet by the end of next year,” stated Nareeluc Pairchaiyapoom, Director of the International Human Rights Division, Department of Rights and Liberties Protection, Ministry of Justice, Thailand. “The Ministry of Justice also appreciates the cooperation with agencies like the UNDP as their technical assistance on LGBTI issues are valuable and helpful for the development and improvement of our work on the subject matter.”

Speaking about the situation in India, Sarada Prasad Panda, Additional Director at the State Urban Development Authority, Government of Orissa, India, said: “Though challenges such as Sec 377 of the Indian Penal Code exist, many hurdles have been crossed with regards to transgender people with their meaningful inclusion in skills development, social protection, access to identity documents and in the civil and police services. Social mindsets are slowly changing towards having accepting attitudes towards LGBTI persons.”

However, in too many countries and settings, shrinking civil society space, discriminatory legal and policy frameworks, and homophobia and transphobia in media, politics and wider society remain. To address these challenges, some governments have adopted the strategy of working together with UN agencies and civil society to advocate for the inclusion of LGBTI people in all aspects of development, and to support efforts to end stigma, discrimination and violence.

“The Ministry of Justice has co-operated with USAID to compile a handbook on the basic rights of vulnerable groups including LGBT persons,” said Dinh Thi Phuong Hao, Department of Civil and Economic Laws, Ministry of Justice, Viet Nam. “Moreover, we have partnered with the Ministry of Health to draft a gender reassignment surgery law that will be submitted to the National Assembly in two years.”

“The National Human Rights Commission of Bangladesh can play a vital role to work with the government. We have already formed eleven committees on key thematic areas. If we work together, a lot of gaps will be filled,” said M. Rabiul Islam, Deputy Director, National Human Rights Commission, Bangladesh. “With the support of CSO partners that are working on human rights, we will be able to make advancement to ensure that the human rights of sexual minorities are recognized.”

Story republished with the permission of the United Nations Development Programme - Being LGBTI in Asia. Link to the original article: <https://medium.com/being-lgbti-in-asia/barriers-to-equality-and-inclusion-for-lgbti-people-must-be-dismantled-say-panelists-at-ilga-asia-a73e3aae5cf3>



PLENARY SESSION 4 ENGAGING YOUNG PERSONS IN THE LGBTI MOVEMENT: FOUNDATION AND EMPOWERMENT

Moderator

Matcha Porn-in, Sangsan Anakot Yawachon, Thailand

Speakers

Vica Larasati, Youth Interfaith Forum on Sexuality,
Indonesia

Gopi Shankar Madurai, Srishti Madurai LGBTQIA
Student Volunteer Collective, India

H.C., Trans Center, China

Sandepa Perera, Young Out Here, Sri Lanka

Lim Khinlui, NTU Lambda - Student group of Gender
Issues Alliance in Northern Taiwan / The league of
Northern Taiwan Student Gender Association, Taiwan

Summary

The session aimed to explore the strategies that have been used by young LGBTI activists to engage their peers and the important role they were playing in the LGBTI movement in Asia.

Every panelist shared how they used the traditions and existing sources to attract the community and society's attention to the value of equality. For example, in South India, they used the traditional songs to remind people of homosexual or trans Gods existing in their culture and traditions.

One of the most present challenges facing young people is the lack of financial independence from their parents, which places them in a vulnerable situation. Yet, most youth activists are using the existing infrastructures, such as student unions or international events to raise their voice and bring change among the LGBTI community and society at large, mostly through education and awareness raising campaigns. While they are considered the younger generation, they are also sharing their experiences with even younger members of LGBTI community to keep the movement going and alive.



WHAT DO DONORS WANT

Moderator

Matthew Hart, Global Philanthropy Project

Speakers

Zaynab Nawaz, Foundation for Just Society
Michael Heflin, Open Society Foundations
Ariel Herrera, Freedom House
Martin Yang, Beijing Gender Health Education
Institute
Arjos Vendrig, COC Nederland
Erica Lim, Arcus Foundation

Summary

After short introduction of Global Philanthropy Project, each panelist introduced their grant donation process, their missions, strategies and timelines. Some mentioned their sources of money and how they got the fundings to distribute among the projects. Thus, participants got to learn about the variety and different ways their projects might be granted financial support by national and international organizations. The fact that some donors need to lobby and work to get the funds was raised during the introductions.

Some donors, like COC mentioned how they supported advocates by providing them services such as training or technical support and how their work in the UPR process - lobbying with states - helps improving human rights LGBTI people in different countries.



SHRINKING SPACE FOR LBT ACTIVISM IN ASIA

Moderator

Jean Chong, Sayoni/Asean SOGIE Caucus, OutRight Action International, Singapore

Speakers

Matcha Porn-in, Sangsan Anakot Yawachon, Thailand
Thilaga, Justice for Sisters, Malaysia
Azusa, Gay Japan News (Equality)
Mani, Naz Pakistan
Caesariano Budhiono, Arus Pelangi / Transmen Indonesia

Summary

The situation of LBTQ equality and violations against community members in Asia was discussed. New spaces for LBTQ movements were recommended to be discussed. A feminist framework was recommended in LGBTI movements, together with a concrete framework in driving for justice.

Keep safe spaces safe. Being economically deprivation becomes an issue. Opening spaces for allies brings changes in societies. Being an ally makes you a target for discrimination. Do we exclude people to keep our space safe?

Shariah Law in Malaysia becomes a struggle in the movement. There have been 63 cases of arrest in Malaysia of transgender women. Specific LGBT+ health care needs has not been properly addressed. Violence in on-line platforms like social media and the internet is becoming increasingly prevalent. There has been cases of shaming because of your ethnicity.

In Pakistan, there is a high ratio of honor killing. In other cases, community members were subject to forced sex to “cure” homosexuality.

There is a lack of information about the LBT community, and the danger of harassment in public because of their expression. LBT people are often kicked out of their families and villages because of their identity.

COLLABORATION ACROSS ASIA: INTERSECTIONAL APPROACHES ON HOW SOCIETY CAN ADDRESS GENDER AND DIVERSITY

Moderator

John Gabriel

Speakers

Justin Francis Bionat, Youth Voices Count, the Philippines
Bao Chau Nguyen, NextGEN, Viet Nam
Joelle Cai, Beijing LGBT Center, China
Zakaria Nasser, Qorras, Lebanon
Arky, Braille Without Borders, Cambodia

Summary

The panelists of this session shared their experiences of collaboration within the LGBT community and with other fields. In doing advocacy work, there is a collaboration between many stakeholders and individuals both professionally and academically. The panelists also shared best practices in working with other fields in their respective countries.

Zakaria from Lebanon talked about the collectives and networking, why a collective could be revolutionary, and why it made sense to come and work together. He shared that the Lebanese LGBTI community had many collectives now which originally started as peer support groups.

Arky, based in Cambodia, talked about using mobile phones to take photographs, write stories, and post on the internet to inform people about different struggles that the community was facing. Through his project, he aimed to collaborate with people in different countries and engaged communities who understood and wanted to create stories.

Joelle of the Beijing LGBT Center discussed the struggles of LGBT people in China, especially in terms of mental health issues, conversion therapy, bullying, and coming out. She talked about combining the use of medicine and law to gain community participation, lobbying, etc. and connect with other LGBT organizations in China.

Justin Bionat of the Philippines talked about Youth Voices Count, the first regional network of young people from diverse gender orientations in Southeast Asia. He shared their experience in conceptualizing and implementing their different campaigns including a peer-led mentorship program, stories of struggles online, and a World Aids Day survey to collect opinions from young people.

Bao Chau Nguyen (Vietnam) shared the success story of how he founded the Hanoi International Queer Film Week, the first ever recognized queer film festival in Vietnam, and how films had the power to be weapons in our fight for gender equality and LGBT rights.



BRIDGING THE GAP: DATA TO POLICY

Moderator

Edmund Settle, UNDP Bangkok Regional Hub

Speakers

Kelly Kiseki, Beijing LGBT Center

Prof. Yen Nguyen, Ph.D., National Institute of Education Management

Ryan Silverio, ASEAN SOGIE Caucus

Prof. Suen Yiu Tung, Chinese University of Hong Kong

Kangwan Fongkaew, Burapha University, Thailand

Cianan, Asia Pacific Transgender Network

Viente. S, RoCK, Cambodia

Summary

This panel discussed the extent and effects of LGBTI research conducted under the Being LGBTI in Asia programme on public policies on socioeconomic, family, and health outcomes. This session will explore the relevance of empirical research to LGBTI policy and programmatic issues.

Cianan from Asia Pacific Transgender Network talked about access of trans people in employment in Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. The study used the same CV to apply to the same job, with the only difference being one cis and one trans. The team reached out to 400 different jobs in 4 different sectors of employment, totaling 3000 jobs overall. Application of the trans candidate received less than 18% positive responses, while those of the cis candidate received around 25-28% overall. Trans applicants are 40% less likely to be called for an interview. Trans applicants were asked about their surgery, current appearance etc. They were also asked to submit photo.

Ryan from ASEAN SOGIE Caucus brought up a desk review of reports and submissions, reviews of UN human rights reporting mechanisms and their effectiveness. CEDAW had been highly ratified by the governments, and so had been CRC. There is a significant rise in LGBTI engagements with the UPR within Southeast Asia. Data on intersex people and their issues are still missing, which is currently a challenge. Other challenges are the understanding the role of UN mechanisms and dynamics of engagement, understanding of Human Rights framework, the use of language, sometimes considered elitist. Response from government could be hostile, which led to self-censorship, or prevented activists from participating in the UPR or going to Geneva, or following up on the implementation of recommendations. Other other hand, submitting joint reports is one way to educate other human rights groups about SOGIESC issues. Ryan recommended to provide Human Rights education and training on reliability of collected data to LGBTI activists.

Tung from Chinese University of Hong Kong: Discrimination is not just about self-esteem, but productivity

and belonging. Data is relevant to lots of companies because data shows diversity in age, area. The lack of bonding among colleagues would lead to decreased productivity and cooperation.

Kelly from Beijing LGBT Center talked about their online survey of transgender and gender non-conforming people. It is very difficult for them to get sex-reassignment surgery and hormone therapy, while domestic violence and school-based violence are extremely common. Kiseki recommended legislation promoting trans-specific sex education, anti-discrimination, standardized redress, and simplifying the process of changing education certification to align with one's gender identity.

Professor Yen Nguyen from the Vietnam National Institute of Education Management talked about their efforts in preventing and addressing SOGIE-related school violence. They collected data through questionnaire, focus groups with students, parents, teachers and school administrators. Their study revealed that the most unsafe place for LGBTI students was toilet and changing room. Recommendations from their study included professional training programs and workshops for teachers and school management staff.

Kangwen from Burapha University in Thailand found in a study that 1047 news items had words and narrations that labeled, threatened and degraded human dignity of LGBTI people. He suggested providing code of conduct on reporting of LGBTI issues and LGBTI representatives in the media with the authority.

Vicente discussed how LGBT people were excluded from social protection mechanisms in Cambodia.

The United Nations Development Programme - Being LGBTI in Asia also covered this panel with their article here: <https://medium.com/being-lgbti-in-asia/importance-of-data-in-developing-and-supporting-legal-and-policy-advancements-in-lgbti-inclusion-4804cdd07c53>



QUEERING FAMILIES: THE EMERGENCE OF DIVERSE FAMILIES AS POLITICAL ALLIES IN LGBTI ACTIVISM

Moderator

Ryan Silverio, ASEAN SOGIE Caucus

Speakers

Nguyen Thi Lang Mong, Parents and Family of LGBT People (PFLAG), Viet Nam

Maroz R. Ramos, GALANG, The Philippines

Natalino Soares Ornai Guterres, Codiva, Timor-Leste

Summary

This panel explored current initiatives that engaged the families of LGBTI people to be primary sources of support and allies in advocating for LGBTI rights and recognition.

Across contexts, the dominant construction of the “ideal” family is a unit that follows hetero-patriarchal norms, which is promoted in educational settings, in national discourse, and in cultural and religious ideologies. Families can act as powerful enforcers of these values, even resorting to violent and coercive means in a misguided attempt to “fix” LGBTI youth.

Maroz from Galang spoke of the impacts of discrimination on the emotional, physical and mental well-being of LBT youth, especially when they feared and faced rejection from their families. The lack of economic independence further marginalized youth.

Nguyen Lang Mong, a member of PFLAG Vietnam, shared her personal experiences of deconstructing the invisible hetero-patriarchal norms and fighting against it. She highlighted the social, cultural and religious challenges and pressures she faced, and how she found support through community that enabled her to shift her perspectives.

All speakers demonstrated the importance of outreach and community-support mechanisms; of documenting perceptions & experiences of LGBTI people to support evidenced-based advocacy; and of the power in popular education approaches that support community mobilization. Natalino Soares shared the success of a public video campaign in Timor Leste, that brought LGBTI youth, family members, and allies in religious communities and in political parties to share public messaging about the importance of love and acceptance as a core value of their cultures and communities. The success and opportunities for change presented by all panelists inspired the audience, who affirmed the importance of working to support rainbow families and advocate from the community level out.

YOGYAKARTA PRINCIPLES PLUS 10: REFLECTIONS, UPDATES AND NEXT STEPS

Moderator

Arvind Narrain, ARC International

Speakers

Cianán Russell, Asia Pacific Transgender Network
Commissioner Angkhana Neelapaijit, National Human Rights Commission, Thailand
M. Rabiul Islam Robi, National Human Rights Commission, Bangladesh
Commissioner Homero MP Rusiana, Commission for Human Rights, the Philippines
Moises Pereira, Provedoria, Timor-Leste

Summary

Advocates for human rights of people with diverse gender identity and sexual orientations took part in a panel discussion on the newly revised Yogyakarta Principles plus 10 at the ILGA Asia Conference today in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

The session, titled “Yogyakarta Principles +10: Reflections, updates and next steps”, was convened by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and ARC International. It aimed to improve understanding of the revised principles among National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs), NGOs and LGBTI advocates to ensure that the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people are adequately promoted and protected.

The Yogyakarta Principles were adopted at a meeting of experts in international law in 2006 in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, and outline legal standards for how governments and other actors should end violence, abuse and discrimination towards LGBTI people. Since their inception, the principles have garnered praise for enshrining the rights of persons of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities.

In 2017, the principles have undergone an update, with the revised principles reflecting significant developments both in the field of international human rights law and in the understanding of violations affecting persons of ‘diverse sexual orientations and gender identities’ (SOGI), as well as a recognition of the often distinct violations affecting persons on grounds of ‘gender expression’ and ‘sex characteristics’.

The session engaged signatories to the revised principles and NHRI representatives from the region in a reflection on the emergence and the genesis of the revised Yogyakarta Principles. The panel also discussed specific instances of their content and application.

Arvind Narrain from ARC international opened the session and expounded on the principles, saying: “The Yogyakarta Principles plus 10 marks an innovation in international human rights thinking, as for the first

time the oppression suffered on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics are acknowledged as distinct and intersectional grounds of oppression.”

The panel examined the extent of the principles’ impact, legal rigour, and responsiveness with actual lived experiences of LGBTI people, with specific reference to transgender and intersex persons.

The panel discussed country level experiences from Bangladesh, the Philippines, Thailand, and Timor-Leste, and re-affirmed the primary obligation of States to implement human rights. M. Rabiul Islam Robi from the National Human Rights Commission of Bangladesh shared examples from his country where the principles have had an impact, particularly with regards to efforts currently underway to broaden the focus of anti-discrimination legislation to include sexual and gender minorities.

“Rights of sexual minorities are nothing new or a different set of rights,” said M. Rabiul Islam Robi. “They are part of core human rights and not optional. They must be applicable equally to everyone everywhere.”

Each principle is accompanied by detailed recommendations to States. The principles also emphasize, however, that all actors have responsibilities to promote and protect human rights. Additional recommendations are therefore addressed to the United Nations human rights system, national human rights institutions, the media, non-governmental organizations and others.

Examples were also shared of joint efforts by UNDP and the Asia-Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions (APF) to promote and protect human rights in relation to SOGI. In 2017, APF with support from UNDP conducted a series of regional trainings for NHRIs and civil society organizations in South, South East Asia and the Pacific, using a newly developed manual. Additionally, in April 2017, UNDP and the APF organized a two-day regional conference, “The Yogyakarta Principles: What have we learnt and where to now?”, in Bangkok, Thailand. The conference celebrated 10 years of the principles and mapped out opportunities for the future.

Story republished with the permission of the United Nations Development Programme - Being LGBTI in Asia. Link to the original article: <https://medium.com/being-lgbti-in-asia/yogyakarta-principles-plus-10-reflections-updates-and-next-steps-110213c2de41>

ADVOCATING FOR LGBTI INCLUSION IN EDUCATIONAL SETTING

Moderator

Frankie, Gay and Lesbian Campus Association of China

Speakers

Gopi Shankar Madurai, Srishti Madurai LGBTQIA Student Volunteer Collective, India
Bao Chau Nguyen, NextGEN Hanoi, Viet Nam
Chiwei Cheng, Taiwan Tongzhi Hotline Association

Summary

This session highlighted the importance of raising awareness of gender and sexual diversity and to remove the stigma towards LGBTI students among educators. One of the campaigns in China targeted teachers, some of the most influential figures in society; thus, their support is the most important force in creating a gender-inclusive campus environment.

The workshop released the following statement:

We are a group of LGBTI young activists whose activist work centers on young LGBTI people's educational environment. We appreciate ILGA Asia's inclusion of the session on advocating for LGBTI inclusion in educational settings at the ILGA Asia 2017 Conference held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

During the session, we all discussed actively the situation of LGBT youth in campus and how we drive the gender diversity-friendly environment for more LGBT youth in Vietnam, China, Taiwan and India as well. We are so thankful to have this opportunity to share the experiences, also we are eager to have a long-term platform to keep in touch with others and exchange ideas regularly.

Because we all know that gender equity education has lasted for over 13 years in Taiwan and was one of the important reasons why the marriage equity movement prospers. The education wave impacted people in their new generations to accept the concept of gender equity in Taiwan. What we believe deeply is the policy could change unexpectedly but the people's awareness cannot.

Therefore, we urge for the theme of "LGBTI inclusion for educational setting" be a regular theme presented in every ILGA-ASIA to attract more attentions around the Asian countries, which could be contribute our the foundation of the LGBTI movement in Asia.

Thank you for thinking of our recommendation. We are delighted to pledge our support and looking forward to hearing about the response!

Best Regards,

The ILGA Asia Workshop on Advocating LGBTI Inclusion in Educational Setting

This statement was not presented to the plenary and thus was not adopted by the 7th Asian conference.



GENERAL WORKSHOP – ILGA ASIA PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

Moderator

Ryan Silverio, ASEAN SOGIE Caucus

Speakers

Lieu Anh Vu, ILGA Asia Coordinator

Minhee Ryu, ILGA Asia Executive Board

Summary

- There is the challenge in communicating with and networking among members, so the recommendation to the board is for them to develop space to engage with members in programming such as webinar or bi-lateral meeting
- Because of staffing limitation, it should be more discussion on allocating budget to increase staffing of secretariat in the finance session
- Because of lacking of Asian voice in the world board, the South to South collaboration is needed to strengthen Asian voice in global advocacy
- Lack of West Asian LGBT activists engagement with ILGA Asia, so the involvement with them shall be increased
- Make trans representative from ILGA Asia work with trans representative in ILGA World in order to organizing workshop with PAI



GENERAL WORKSHOP – ILGA ASIA FINANCE

Moderator

Candy Yun, Korean Sexual-Minority Culture and Rights Center

Mikee Nuñez-Inton, STRAP

Martin Yang Ryan, Beijing Gender

Speakers

Lieu Anh Vu, ILGA Asia Coordinator

Hiker Chiu, ILGA Asia Executive Board

Manisha Dhakal, ILGA Asia Executive Board

Summary

- Get registered and open a bank account ASAP.
- Hire more staff and allocate more budget to staffing.
- Staff needs to get trained for finance management.
- Board and other groups should help staff to recruit people and ease their burdens. ILGA Asia members need to know how money is spent and need to approve the balance sheet of previous year. The balance sheet will be submitted for approval next year when an audited report is available.



GENERAL WORKSHOP – ILGA ASIA CONSTITUTION AND STANDING ORDERS

Moderator

Mikee Nuñez-Inton, STRAP

Speakers

Lieu Anh Vu, ILGA Asia Coordinator

Vica Larasita, ILGA Asia Executive Board

Summary

Final Agenda for Proposals to Amend the ILGA Asia Constitution:

Note: All proposals should have been sent by the second mailing before the conference. No proposals were received by the board. The following proposals are from the existing ILGA Asia Executive Board (2015 to 2017).

- The address and the location of the office has to be changed from Hong Kong to Bangkok, Thailand.
- Central Asia will be removed from ILGA Asia and moved to ILGA Europe. This proposal was discussed and accepted at the Bangkok World Conference in 2016.
- The number of Executive Board Members must also be changed from 12 to 10, to reflect changes in the sub-regions.
- There are no provisions for Co-Chairs in the Constitution. The proposal is to add a subsection detailing the responsibilities of the Co-Chairs.
- Emergency proposal approved by the Conference:
- The make-up of the ILGA Asia Executive Board will be changed to add a Youth Representative. This Proposal was made at the Third Plenary of the Conference on December 7, 2017 by the full member organization, Pelangi Campaign from Malaysia.

Recommendations:

- The constitution committee discussed about the (gender/sexual) diversity of the youth representative. The Constitution Workshop recommends that the incoming Executive Board discuss this further.
- The committee recommended a bisexual representative to the board. The Board may discuss this possibility among themselves.
- The Workshop recommends that the incoming Board also discuss preparations for the shift away from Secretariats to Committees at the ILGA World Conference in 2019.

All the proposals to the current Constitution were approved by the 7th ILGA Asia Regional Conference on 8 December 2017 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.



GENERAL WORKSHOP – ILGA ASIA ELECTIONS*Election Officers*

Soudeh, Spectrum
Joelle, Beijing LGBT Center
Jan, ASEAN SOGIE Caucus

Candidates to the Executive Board

Saw Zin Maung Soe
Civil Authorize Negotiate Organization
(C.A.N-Myanmar)
Myanmar

Midnight Poonkasetwattana
APCOM Foundation
Thailand

Hiker Chiu
OII-Chinese
Taiwan

Manisha Dhakal
Blue Diamond Society
Nepal

Ngo Le Phuong Linh
ICS Center
Viet Nam

Minhee Ryu
*The Korean Society of Law and Policy on Sexual
Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI)*
South Korea

Shakhawat Hossain
Boys of Bangladesh
Bangladesh

Candidates to the host city of 8th ILGA Asia conference Yangon, Myanmar
Bangkok, Thailand
Seoul, Korea

Since the candidates for trans representative, intersex representative and West Asian representatives were missing, the conference opened the nomination again on the first day of the conference 6 December 2017.

The following nominations had been received

Gopi Shankar Madurai
Srishthi Madurai
India

Mani AQ
Naz Male Health Alliance
Pakistan

Charbel Maydaa
MOSAIC
Lebanon

Shadi Amin
6 Rang
Iran

Midnight Poonkasetwattana withdrew prior to the election, so there were 10 candidates left.



Elections result

The following people were elected into the Executive Board:

The two Asian representatives to the World Board are:

- **Manisha Dhakal**, Blue Diamond Society, Nepal - South Asian representative
- **Mani AQ**, Naz Male Health Alliance, Pakistan - trans representative

The two alternates are:

- **Charbel Maydaa**, MOSAIC, Lebanon - West Asian representative
- **Shadi Amin**, 6 Rang, Iran - West Asian representative

Other members of the Executive Board:

- **Gopi Shankar Madurai**, Srishti Madurai, India - intersex representative
- **Hiker Chiu**, OII-Chinese, Taiwan - East Asian representative
- **Minhee Ryu**, SOGILAW, South Korea - East Asian representative
- **Linh Ngo**, ICS Center, Viet Nam - Southeast Asian representative
- **Saw Zin Maung Soe**, Civil Authorize Negotiate Organization, Myanmar - Southeast Asian representative
- **Shakhawat Hossain**, Boys of Bangladesh, Bangladesh - South Asian representative

Seoul, South Korea was selected as the host city for the 8th ILGA Asia Regional Conference.





Total		
18	Charbel	31
14	Shadi	26
	Hiker	23
	Minhee	25
	Saw Zin	11
	Linh	23
	Manisha	37
	Shakhsat	21
	Cropi	24
	Mani	32







PRE-CONFERENCE

THE BISEXUAL PRE-CONFERENCE

The Bisexual Pre-conference released the following statement:

On December 4th 2017, the very first Bi-Preconference took place at biennial ILGA Asia conference. We, bisexual and/or allies are proud and pleased to be participating in this one day event and thank ILGA ASIA for this first step!

We recognize that all over Asia, we face the same issues, in different forms and degrees. There is a general lack of awareness about Bisexuality, Bi+ and BiVisibility, not only in societies but also among the movements. We are seeking for awareness raising and – more – inclusion of non-monosexuality at the local, regional and international level.

We ask ILGA ASIA to act more inclusively and encourage all members to do so. We demand ILGA ASIA to provide members with adequate educational material and empower them in facing the challenges in mono-sexist communities. We want ILGA ASIA to consult with local and regional NGOs and activists about specific Bi issues at local and regional level.

We want non-monosexuality related sessions to be integrated in the next biennial conference and not only in a pre-conference event.

We also wish ILGA ASIA to be an incubator for the Asian Bi-Movement by facilitating the collaboration between individuals, activists and organizations. Dedication of funds for research and activism is vital.

We ask all participants in ILGA Asia conference, and all members in general, to recognize Bisexuality as it is, an independent valid sexual orientation, to acknowledge Biereasure and Biphobia and not considering Biphobia a form of homophobia. Inclusion is a duty, not thinking/acting/talking inclusively is a failure.

Taking into account “Intersectionality” is the key point for all of us who want to bring change, forced or conventional marriages, bi-parenthood, self-identification and sense of belonging to a community are the important topics in need to be addressed promptly.

Signed,

Participants of Bisexual Pre-conference

This statement was adopted by the 7th ILGA Asia Regional Conference in Phnom Penh, Cambodia on 8 December 2018.

THE TRANS PRE-CONFERENCE

The Trans Caucus was convened within the Trans Pre-conference. The Trans Caucus released the following statement:

The Trans Pre-conference was convened on December 5, 2017 at the 7th ILGA Asia Conference held in Phnom Penh Cambodia. The Pre-conference was composed of sessions that tackled Legal Gender Recognition advocacy in the region, as well as possible opportunities to collaborate with the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) in the drafting of the 8th version of the Standards of Care (SOC8). The ILGA World Trans Secretariat, represented by the Society of Transsexual Women of the Philippines (STRAP), also delivered a report on the activities of the Secretariat from 2015 to 2016. Over 60 individual trans activists and allies were present at these sessions.

The ILGA Asia Trans Caucus was convened after the above-mentioned sessions and included around 30 trans and gender non-binary individual activists. The primary task of this caucus was to decide among ourselves our nominee for the position of Trans Representative on the ILGA Asia Executive Board. After careful deliberation and insightful conversations, the caucus has decided to nominate Mani AQ from Naz Male Health Alliance, Pakistan, as our nominee for ILGA Asia Trans Representative. As such, the caucus would like the ILGA Asia Conference to support the nomination of Mani, who will be one of the first transgender men to serve on the ILGA Asia Executive Board, by voting for him at the upcoming election.

The Caucus would also like to respectfully make the following recommendations to the ILGA Asia Conference and the incoming ILGA Asia Executive Board:

- *To convene a panel or workshop on Trans Sex Work to be included in the Main Conference at the next ILGA Asia Conference in 2019;*
- *That the next Trans Pre-Conference at the ILGA Asia Conference in 2019 be centered on themes of Work, Labor, and Economic Empowerment for trans people.*
- *And to create an intersectional space within the next Trans Pre-Conference on Work, Labor, and Economic Empowerment to talk about other 'minoritizing' factors of identity such as sexual orientation, ageism, and access to education.*

Respectfully,

The ILGA Asia Trans Caucus

This statement was adopted by the 7th ILGA Asia Regional Conference in Phnom Penh, Cambodia on 8 December 2018.



THE INTERSEX PRE-CONFERENCE

The Intersex Pre-conference released the following statement:

On Tuesday, 5th of December 201, the Asian Intersex Meeting took place in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

Facilitated by ILGA Asia, this meeting gathered Asian intersex organizations working for intersex human rights. The goal of the meeting was to identify objectives for the full implementation of human rights and bodily integrity and self-determination for intersex individuals in Asia.

Affirming that intersex people are real, and we exist in all regions and all countries around the world. Thus, intersex people must be supported to be the drivers of social, political and legislative changes that concern them,

Keeping in mind that intersex organizations in Asia are working together on ending discrimination on the ground of sex characteristics,

Asking the intersex movement in Asia to work together based on respect for different cultures and the context of different regions,

Asking intersex people living in Asia to work together and to respect other intersex persons,

Deeply convinced that people must respect each other regardless of the name they use to describe their variation of sex characteristics,

Declaring that we use the word intersex simply for the purpose of this document and that we recognize the right of people to use other words to identify their variations of sex characteristics,

Demanding society respects the rights of intersex people to define what intersex is.

We ask ILGA-Asia and intersex organizations in Asia:

- 1. To raise awareness about intersex issues and the rights of intersex people in society at large;*
- 2. To challenge the definition of sex as consisting of only male and female and promote the knowledge that sex is a continuum, as is gender;*
- 3. To ensure that intersex people are fully protected against discrimination. To achieve this, we recommend the adoption of anti-discrimination legislation on the ground of sex characteristics – regardless of the specific appearance or configuration of these characteristics;*

4. *To recognize that 1 in 200 refugees is intersex and that these intersex people need protection against discrimination and need psychosocial help with the intersectionality of being intersex and a refugee;*
5. *To ensure that all stakeholders that have a specific role to play in intersex people's wellbeing such as, but not limited to, health care providers, parents and professionals working in the area of education, as well as society in general, are instructed on intersex issues from a human rights perspective;*
6. *To work towards ending the infanticide of intersex children and the honor killings of intersex adults; To work towards making non-consensual medical and psychological treatment unlawful. Medical practitioners or other professionals should not conduct any treatment with the purpose of modifying sex characteristics which can be deferred until the person to be treated can provide informed consent.*

In view of these objectives, the Asian Intersex Meeting calls on the national governments in Asia, to take on board intersex issues in their work and provide full protection for intersex people.

This statement was adopted by the 7th ILGA Asia Regional Conference in Phnom Penh, Cambodia on 8 December 2018.



THE INTERFAITH PRE-CONFERENCE

The Interfaith Pre-Conference released the following statement on the Importance of Interfaith Work:

December 6, 2017

Cambodiana Hotel, Phnom Penh

The ILGA Asia Interfaith Pre-conference

We were a group of 50 LGBTI faith-based leaders and allies, collectively representing Abrahamic and Karmic faiths as well as non-religious groups, gathered on Monday 4th December 2017, at the Interfaith Pre-conference of the 7th ILGA Asia Conference in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

This Interfaith Pre-conference was the first ever in the history of ILGA Asia's annual conferences, and the third in the history of ILGA World Conferences, during which LGBTI faith-based leaders and allies came together to discuss the past and current realities and challenges of being an LGBTI person of faith in the region. This pre-conference was also the opportunity to launch the book "I am Divine, so are you", an exploration of Karmic faith's views of sexuality, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression. Finally, at this particular Interfaith Pre-conference, we held a session for all of us to express our recommendations to ILGA Asia and ILGA, regarding the combination of human sexuality and spirituality, and integration of such a faith-based lens within the organization's work.

As a group, we expressed some of the challenges faced by LGBTI people of faith:

- 1. The rejection from family because of religious values;*
- 2. The rejection from LGBTI and/or religious communities;*
- 3. The correction of SOGI identities based on text or scripture of bible;*
- 4. The doctrine that homosexuality is sin, immoral;*
- 5. The past sexual violation which led questioning of sexuality.*

We developed the following recommendations for ILGA:

- 1. Database on faith based communities that works for LGBTI movement and/or LGBTI organisation that work closely with interfaith issues. We urge ILGA Asia to identify and map out the LGBTI-friendly faith based groups (including churches, temples, mosque, pagodas, etc) and/or religious leaders within Asia communities*

2. *Resource Center on Interfaith and Sexuality.* We urge ILGA Asia to collaborate with the Global Interfaith Network particularly within Asia region to create and/or develop platform that provide guidelines, tool-kit, publication, resource (books, article, journal) related to interfaith and sexuality, including the above-mentioned database. It can be integrated within the ILGA Asia platform such as website and social media.

3. *The development of interfaith work in the future of ILGA Asia's work.* We urge ILGA Asia to sustain creating safe space to address interfaith discussion within the member of ILGA Asia through further programs including sub-regional and regional meetings and discussion,

4. *Strengthening of support to local and regional interfaith organizations.* We recommend ILGA Asia to provide such support and advocacy connections through the establishment of a formal technical support mechanism, the provision of training and workshop sessions including within religious and LGBTI communities, and to create a system to report violations to religious communities.

5. *Network Development and Expansion.* We would like to see further integration of interfaith issues in future regional and global ILGA conferences, including through the creation of separate sessions for LGBTI leaders of faith to present their work.

The ILGA Interfaith Pre-Conference now call upon the ILGA Asia Conference and ILGA to adopt this statement as supportive of the global inclusive interfaith movement.

The Interfaith Preconference Planning Committee

The Global Interfaith Network for People of All Sexes, Sexual Orientations, Gender Identities and Expressions

This statement was adopted by the 7th ILGA Asia Regional Conference in Phnom Penh, Cambodia on 8 December 2018.





THE YOUTH CAUCUS

The Youth Caucus was convened independently by a group of youth organizations and activists present at the 7th Asian conference. The Youth Caucus released the following statement:

We are a group of 18 young people, representing 11 organizations from 9 countries and territories, gathering at the 7th ILGA Asia conference held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

We have reached a consensus on the following points:

- 1. We define youth as people between 15 and 32 years old. However, we also believe that anyone who identifies themselves as a young person should not be excluded from participating in youth-related discussions.*
- 2. We define youth organizations as those led by youth and serving youth. But we welcome organizations who may only meet one of these two requirements.*
- 3. LGBTQI youth are especially vulnerable as they are highly exposed to stigma, violence and censorship.*
- 4. Within the LGBTQI movement, youth organizations are not equally treated, space for and attention to their voice is not enough.*
- 5. LGBTQI youth organizations lack financial and technical support to operate and strengthen their capacity.*
- 6. We need a deeper awareness and to take greater responsibility in building an inclusive youth movement which recognizes every individual who works from the grassroots and who is underrepresented.*

We therefore make the following recommendations:

- 7. We call for members of our youth community to support each other to form local groups and organizations.*
- 8. We call for the establishment of a mentorship mechanism between youth organizations and those more experienced and resourceful in order to develop a new generation of youth leadership.*
- 9. We encourage donors and funders to invest more in youth organizations and youth community, and to make efforts to support youth organizations that cannot meet the established funding requirements due to their limited capacity.*
- 10. We encourage intergovernmental organizations and international NGOs to pay attention to linguistic and cultural diversity in Asia and to make their publications and resources available to youth who do not speak English by collaborating with local partners.*
- 11. We encourage ILGA Asia to provide more support for youth pre-conference and youth caucus in upcoming conferences.*
- 12. We encourage ILGA Asia to include at least one youth representative in their board and chairing pool.*

13. We encourage ILGA Asia to keep providing scholarship for young participants in upcoming conferences.

14. We encourage ILGA Asia to work with ILGA World to reduce membership fee for youth organizations.

15. To make sure that our recommendations are recognized and implemented, we decided to establish a working group to follow up closely with ILGA Asia and other identified stakeholders in the upcoming year. Members are selected from participants in the caucus meeting on a voluntary basis, but we encourage more young participants of this conference to join.

We call upon the ILGA Asia conference to adopt this statement as a sign of its support to the Asian youth empowerment movement within the LGBTQI community.

We thank you for your attention.

Signed:

Yang Shi, China

Justin Francis Bionat, Philippines

Sadam Hanjabam, India

Sandeepa Perera, Sri Lanka

Mengying Han, China

Junmi Chen, China

Guobing Wang, China

Gopi Shankar Madurai, India

Yishu Li, China

Khînluí Lîm, Taiwan

Hiroto Shimizu, Japan

Mari Yoshida, Japan

Fuis Sao Paotawan, Taiwan

Declan Loke, Malaysia

Numan Afifi, Malaysia

Ngo Le Phuong Linh, Vietnam, ICS Center

Adhe Saiful Akbar, Indonesia, PLUSH

Eric Pham, Vietnam, Hanoi Queer

The statement was sponsored by member organization Pelangi Campaign, Malaysia. This statement was adopted by the 7th ILGA Asia Regional Conference in Phnom Penh, Cambodia on 8 December 2018.

THE LESBIAN, BISEXUAL AND QUEER WOMEN PRE-CONFERENCE

The LBQ Women's Pre-conference was held during 4-5 December 2015 at the ILGA Asia conference, as a commitment from ILGA Asia and memberships to create a safe space for LBQ women in the region followed by the petition of the LBQ women present at the ILGA Asia conference in Taipei 2015.

This statement emerged from a 2-day forum focusing on lesbian, bisexual and queer women's needs, organized by ASEAN SOGIE Caucus (ASC), Sayoni, UNWomen Asia Pacific, Justice for Sisters & the Coalition for Sexual and Bodily Rights in Muslim Societies (CSBR) and supported by OutRight Action International and ILGA Asia. For the caucus, women is based on self-determination, and includes intersex, transgender, cisgender and all who identify as women. The LBTQ Caucus was held from 4-5 December 2017, in advance of the ILGA-Asia regional conference which ran from 6-8 December 2017 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

Lesbian, bisexual, trans women, trans men, and queer persons (LBTQ) exist in all of human diversity. Our issues and concerns cut across diverse groups and communities, including other marginalized groups such as people with disabilities, refugees, migrant workers, and indigenous peoples.



LBTQ persons experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and violence in multiple spaces based on our assigned, actual, or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC). We face arbitrary persecution, socio-economic marginalization, and violation of our self-determination, sexual autonomy, and bodily integrity because of our SOGIESC. Our experiences are often invisible, silenced, and unaddressed.

Gender based violence

The multiple and intersecting layers of discrimination and violence that LBTQ persons experience are underpinned and informed by patriarchal socio-cultural, religious and familial values and structures that expect or impose heteronormative, cisnormative, and socially prescribed behaviors and relationships. Failure to adhere to these norms results in stigma, social exclusion, and increased vulnerability to discrimination, violence, and other forms of punishment.

Families are often sites of violence and discrimination against LBTQ persons. Families can act as powerful enforcers of deeply held patriarchal values that demand of women and persons assigned female at birth to accept a subordinate place in social and familial hierarchies, and to uphold family and community interests. This becomes an integral part of the continuum of violence and discrimination that is perpetuated against LBTQ persons in public institutions and society at large.

Domestic violence and intimate partner violence within LBTQ communities remain unaddressed, due in part to a lack of data, tools, and understanding of how to respond to these forms of violence. While some community support mechanisms exist, their scale and reach remain limited. Moreover, people who experience domestic and intimate partner violence often face isolation, and are pressured to keep silent on these issues by the society at large as well as their own communities.

Criminalization

States institutionalize discrimination and violence against LBTQ persons through laws, policies, and practices, arbitrarily marking us as criminals or deviants. Across national contexts, our consensual sexual relations are criminalized, with several countries even imposing the death penalty. Increasingly, laws are also being used to criminalize and restrict our freedom of assembly, association, and expression.

Even when LBTQ persons are not criminalized, we are at heightened risk of harassment, intimidation, arbitrary arrest, or trumped-up charges by state actors with impunity. In plural legal systems, the multiple layers of anti-LBTQ norms and regulations from quasi-state and non-state legal institutions and actors add to the oppression that LBTQ persons experience and create complications in our efforts to access to justice. Advocacy often focuses on how discriminatory laws and policies target gay men, which speaks of the need to expand recognition and understanding of the cascading effects of criminalization on lesbians, bisexuals, and transgender persons.

Physical, sexual, and mental health

The discrimination and violence that LBTQ persons experience impacts adversely on our physical, sexual, and mental health. Depression, substance abuse, and self-harming behaviors, even suicide, are common among LBTQ people. The lack of family and social support, and the lack of accessible health services, aggravate the effects of these problems. Medical health professionals generally lack consciousness about the health issues of LBTQ persons or are not trained to deal with us. In general, society and even LGBTI+ movements have failed to acknowledge the serious health dimensions of the discrimination and violence that LBTQ people experience. This includes the physical and psychological harms caused by medically unnecessary and invasive surgery on intersex people. Sexual and reproductive health rights of LBTQ peoples are still not seen as a priority concern within existing SOGIESC advocacy.

Feminist organizing and movement building

LBTQ persons continue to mobilize resistance to the discrimination and violence we face, and to protect and promote our rights across Asia. The movement for LBTQ rights is growing, and it also faces many challenges. Externally, our organizing is taking place amidst rising political authoritarianism and religious fundamentalisms, the expansion of neoliberal trade policies that increase disparities in social welfare and the feminization of poverty, as well as forced migration and displacement due to conflicts and climate change. Feminist movement building is all the more urgent in this context.

Within the broader movement for the recognition, protection, and promotion of the rights of all persons of diverse SOGIESC, the dominance of cisgender gay male leadership, discourse, and practices shapes the movement's international and national advocacy priorities, and poses a challenge to the struggle of LBTQ persons to be visible, recognized, and respected. The use of English as a medium in practically all areas of regional and international advocacy, including communication materials, has further marginalized LBTQ people who do not speak the language.

Movement building has also been affected by funding models, results-oriented criteria, and frameworks of donor organizations that do not reflect the lived realities of LBTQ women, thereby reinforcing our marginalization. The added layer of global north organizations and networks acting as intermediaries and directing regional priorities and the flow of financial resources limits the genuine growth of grassroots and global south led initiatives, and maintains existing disparities. Global resource reviews from 2013-2015 showed that funding for lesbians makes up 3-5% and for bisexuals less than 1% of the total funding for LGBTI+ organizations outside the United States. There is a critical need to review existing donor frameworks and to address the significant funding gap for global south LBTQ organizing.

LBTQ persons continue to experience resistance to integrating our concerns within other movements. Our concerns are still perceived as “too political” or “too controversial”, potentially jeopardizing the progress of the feminist, development and human rights agenda.

LBTQ human rights defenders

Presently LBTQ human rights defenders face increased threats, intimidation, censorship and persecution within a context of rising state crackdowns on human rights organizing across the region. In some contexts, there is no protection at all for human rights defenders. This has created fertile ground for collusion between state and non-state actors to proceed with impunity in targeting LGBTI+ people and communities. While some data exists, there remains a clear gap in our understandings of the nature and expanse of threats specifically against LBTQ human rights defenders.



RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. Guiding Principles.* In the adoption of measures and interventions to eliminate discrimination and violence against LBTQ and to address our needs and concerns, state and non-state actors should uphold the right to self-determination, autonomy and bodily integrity of LBTQ persons. Participation of LBTQ persons and communities in the revision or creation of legislation and programs must be a priority. Our human rights must be respected, protected, and promoted at all times.
- 2. Decriminalization.* States should work toward repealing all laws criminalizing LBTQ persons based on assigned, actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or consensual sexual acts. This includes all laws criminalizing and restricting freedom of assembly, association, and expression of LGBT groups and the work of human rights defenders.
- 3. Legal protection from gender-based violence, discrimination and mechanisms for redress.* States should pass comprehensive anti-discrimination and other appropriate laws that explicitly include protections for all forms of discrimination and violence on the basis of SOGIESC. Domestic violence laws should cover diverse forms of families, relationships, and violence. Governments should also explore alternative redress and support mechanisms beyond criminalization, particularly at the municipal levels. Community-driven prevention and support mechanisms, including targeted social services for LBTQ people, should be budgeted for, established and made accessible.
- 4. Legal gender recognition.* Governments and communities should work toward the legal recognition and affirmation of trans people's gender identity, based on self-determination and bodily autonomy, without mandating medical interventions.
- 5. Review international human rights norms and standards.* The sex and gender binary of male and female and the heteronormative framework of many international human rights standards need to be reviewed, including in CEDAW documents.
- 6. Documentation and research.* Documentation and research on varied forms of discrimination, lived experiences and needs of LBTQ persons and human rights defenders is imperative, using feminist and participatory framework and methodology. Research should be action-oriented, and produce disaggregated data based on gender identity and intersecting groupings.
- 7. Addressing physical, sexual, and mental health issues.* LBTQ people's experiences of physical, sexual, and mental health issues must be heard and define any interventions to be made. Health care and support service professionals need to be provided appropriate training in order to enact sensitive and gender-responsive approaches to LBTQ persons' health needs, without necessarily medicalizing or pathologizing our concerns. Comprehensive and accessible healthcare information and services for LBTQ people, including friendly

and affirming sexual reproductive health services and counseling, must be established and integrated in national healthcare systems.

8. Education. Gender, SOGIESC, and comprehensive sexual health and rights education should be introduced and integrated in school curricula.

9. Political participation. Affirmative measures designed to increase the political participation of LBTQ persons in community, government and international processes and institutions, including measures designed to ensure that the LBTQ people are represented in elective positions, must be adopted.

10. Movement building. Movement building is critical in empowering LBTQ people and enhancing our capacity to take action to address the discrimination and violence we experience and to transform social attitudes towards us. Grassroots LBTQ community-led initiatives must be supported as the foundation of building effective and sustainable movements for the protection and promotion of our human rights. Responsive budgeting and financial commitments should be made to ensure meaningful participation and language justice for diverse LBTQ persons, including on the basis of disability and language accessibility.

11. Funding, Donor and Program priorities. Consistent with the principles of participation and self-determination, donors, women's rights, human rights, development, and LGBTI+ organizations must ensure that decisions on funding LBTQ groups and projects targeting LBTQ issues are made after consultations with the affected LBTQ groups or communities. Projects must be implemented in partnership with us, with a practical and applied commitment to accountability, transparency, and LBTQ led organizing.

This statement was released only after the 7th ILGA Asia Regional Conference concluded and thus was not adopted by the conference.







AFFILIATED SIDE EVENTS AND SOCIAL PROGRAMS

LAUNCH OF ILGA TRANS LEGAL MAPPING REPORT – 2ND EDITION

The second edition of ILGA’s Trans Legal Mapping Report was launched on the 7th December 2017 during the 7th ILGA Asia conference. The report is a worldwide compilation of laws and processes for trans and gender-diverse people to change their sex/gender markers and names on official identity documents.

The report is available on ILGA’s website: <http://ilga.org/ilga-releases-2017-trans-legal-mapping-report>



LAUNCH OF UNDP & APTN LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION: A MULTI-COUNTRY LEGAL AND POLICY REVIEW IN ASIA

A lack of legal recognition of gender identity is exacerbating the stigma, discrimination and exclusion that transgender people in Asia are experiencing, participants heard at a panel session at the ILGA Asia Conference.

The session was organized by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and featured key findings from the joint UNDP and Asia Pacific Transgender Network (APTN) study *Legal Gender Recognition: A Multi-Country Legal and Policy Review in Asia*.

The multi-country study undertook a comprehensive review of existing laws, policies and practices related to legal gender recognition for transgender people in the following countries: Bangladesh, China, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines and Thailand.

“Throughout much of the world, transgender people experience daily stigma, prejudice, discrimination, harassment and abuse,” said Zainab Patel, Policy Analyst, UNDP Bangkok Regional Hub. “In many places they live in fear of transphobic violence. This can lead to poor emotional health and well-being, and drive transgender people towards the margins of their communities, and into situations and behaviour patterns, including sex work, that put them at risk.”

The violations experienced by transgender people are broad-ranging and varied, from laws against cross-dressing, to denial of health care, to discrimination in employment and housing.

“Gender recognition, in documents and in law, is important for transgender people. Without such recognition, it is difficult or impossible for trans people to enjoy the rights and opportunities available to other people in one’s society,” said Zhan Chiam, Gender Identity and Expression, Senior Programme Officer, ILGA.

Gender recognition laws, and the rights and health issues surrounding them, are currently a matter for public debate across much of the world. Lack of legal gender recognition is a key barrier that often prevents trans people from exercising their rights related to marriage with a person of their desired gender, child adoption, inheritance, wills and trusts, employment, access to public and private health services, and access to and use of social welfare and health insurance schemes,” said Mitch Yusof, APTN Regional Steering Committee Co-chair.

The report found that progress has been made in the provision of legal gender recognition in many of the countries reviewed. Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan recognize a third gender on specific government-issued documents. Of the countries reviewed, only China provides a clear administrative process for transgender people to change gender markers on official identity documents from male to female or vice versa. The process, however, is subject to restrictive eligibility criteria.

Among the reviewed countries in which gender recognition has not been formalized, progress has been made

in other areas. For instance, in 2015, Thailand’s Gender Equality Act specifically included transgender people under the definition of ‘gender’ and as protected from unfair gender discrimination. In the Philippines, gender identity is included as a protected ground in some local anti-discrimination ordinances.

Despite positive policy developments in some countries, the report illustrates that eligibility criteria or other restrictions set out in laws, policies, regulations or court decisions, or imposed through administrative practices, effectively exclude many transgender people from obtaining government identification documents which reflect their gender identity.

One of the main points of the discussion was that any litigation strategy for legal gender recognition must envision these rights within a larger trans movement—one which places similar emphasis on sensitization of medical service providers, the criminal justice system and other stakeholders.

“It is important that there be a wider campaign around trans rights to ensure that any legal change percolates down to the grassroots,” said Wannapong (Nhuun) Yodmuang, Advocacy and Human Rights Management Officer, Rainbow Sky Association of Thailand.

It was also noted that the Yogyakarta Principles highlight legal recognition before the law based on one’s self-defined identity as a fundamental right. The Principles highlight that everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law, and that persons of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities should enjoy legal capacity in all aspects of life. Each person’s self-defined sexual orientation and gender identity is integral to their personality and is one of the most basic aspects of self-determination, dignity and freedom.

Story republished with the permission of the United Nations Development Programme - Being LGBTI in Asia. Link to the original article: <https://medium.com/being-lgbti-in-asia/lack-of-legal-gender-recognition-exacerbating-stigma-discrimination-and-exclusion-in-asia-7b64640aa379>



THE AMAZINGLY FABULOUS PRIDE TUK-TUK RACE

The Amazingly Fabulous Pride Tuk-Tuk Race had taken place twice prior to the ILGA Asia conference and had attracted strong participation from LGBTI community and allies. The race was organized for participants of the ILGA Asia conference to let them explore Phnom Penh together and get to know some of the LGBTI friendly businesses in the city.

The race attracted half of the participants at the conference, many of them posted their photos on our event page as a challenge to win the competition. The tuk-tuk race also filled the hectic street of Phnom Penh with vibrant colors of the rainbow flags and decorations. Social activities such as the tuk-tuk race made sure that the conference was not only a place to network and work, but also a place to enjoy, to be oneself and to explore new locations, new people and new potentials.



THE ILGA ASIA FILM FESTIVAL

The ILGA Asia Film Festival was taking place in the evening during the conference dates, creating an additional platform for those who were into the 7th art to express themselves and their works. Several filmmakers were invited to show their films and interviewed by the audience. The following movies were shown along with a discussion with the producers:

- How Gay is Pakistan - Masoon Khan, 2015
- Pink Dads - Fan Popo, 2016
- What I Would've Told My Daughter if I Knew What to Say Back Then - Cha Roque, 2017
- Queer Upon a Time - Bao Chau Nguyen, 2017





FEEDBACKS FROM PARTICIPANTS



WORKSHOPS AT THE CONFERENCE

The workshops were nicely formatted, with diverse topics being discussed, but some of them were not very strong. There was not session specifically on HIV issue.

Facilitators should be selected very carefully because they would decide the success of a workshop. Also, the presenters should be briefed prior to their session so they would talk more about the success of their project or advocacy, rather than just about the group they represented. There should be more lessons and best practices for everyone to learn from.

Sometimes, one person was speaking at multiple workshops. It may have been better to let different people speak instead. Some panelists were not proficient in English while there was no translation being provided, which made it difficult for participants to understand.

The Bisexual pre-conference was especially noted that there was no program, and the meeting was being improvised by the bisexual activists on the day. It came out successful, but there should be more attention to preparation of this meeting. Some people also appreciated the organization of the first bisexual pre-conference at ILGA Asia.

There was a lack of regional diversity in representation of government officials coming to the conference.



SCHEDULE AND PUNCTUALITY

Participants complained that almost every workshop started late. Other participants also arrived at their session late, which was a big annoyance for the rest. Because some participants didn't attend the workshop, some sessions had very few participants. Participants recommended to push everyone back into the meeting room after the breaks and lunch.

The change in schedule although was communicated to all participants through email and social media, didn't come soon enough, which caused some confusion for participants. The meeting room was also changed quickly due to some last minute issues, which was not well communicated to participants and they could not find it.

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

Participants complained about the lack of information on local LGBTI social scenes in Phnom Penh. Vice versa, the local LGBT community didn't know much about the event.

The receptions were very entertaining.

The art exhibitions by community artist at the venue were very well received.



FACILITIES

The venue, meeting room and the food were excellent, taking into account different dietary restrictions and religious practices, but the wifi didn't work at all.

PARTICIPATION

Participants appreciated the presence of many new faces and the efforts to bring in a very diverse group of people and from many countries. The participation and voice of youth activists were also inspiring to many. The youth statement was a success.

The conference felt safe, comfortable and exciting. However, some people also felt excluded at some sessions and didn't feel welcome. Any closed meeting should be advertised as such to avoid the feeling of exclusion.

The process for elections was very fair and open.



MEDIA COVERAGE

OFFICIAL MEDIA RELEASE: 300 PEOPLE COME TO CAMBODIA FOR ASIA'S LARGEST LGBTI MEETING

Phnom Penh, December 4, 2017 - More than three hundred people from 30+ countries have arrived in Phnom Penh since yesterday in anticipation of the largest gathering of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex (LGBTI) activists in Asia. The meeting, called ILGA Asia Conference, is organized by Rainbow Community Kampuchea (RoCK), the first Non-Governmental Organization in Cambodia to be led by LGBTI people, and the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association of Asia (ILGA Asia).

The ILGA Asia Conference took place in 6 different cities in the past, including Mumbai, Cebu, Chiang Mai, Surabaya, Bangkok and most recently Taipei. At this 7th biennial meeting, RoCK and ILGA Asia aims to review the challenges and achievements of the Asian LGBTI community in the past 2 years, and from there identify strategies and opportunities for collaboration between different countries.

“Since our last conference in 2015, the situation varies greatly from one country to another,” said Manisha Dhakal, Co-chair of ILGA Asia and Executive Director of the prominent LGBTI organization Blue Diamond Society in Nepal. “We saw increasing violence against gender and sexual minorities in countries like Bangladesh and Malaysia, and this is only what is reported.”

Through this conference, RoCK wants to create a safe space for LGBTI people to freely be who they are, a basic right that now seems like a privilege to many LGBTI people in Asia.

“We make sure that everyone feels safe and welcome in Cambodia,” said Pisey LY, Coordinator from RoCK. “Although there is noticeable tolerance toward LGBT community, there is still much to do to improve the understanding of LGBTI issues and advancing legal protections to ensure their well beings.”

With many prominent activists coming from more than 30 countries, this is a great opportunity to share best practices in tackling violence and discriminations, lobbying changes in national laws and policies and advocating for LGBTI rights at the international levels.

“Taiwan recently made headline all over the world when their highest court ruled in favor of same-sex marriage, paving way for it to become the first Asian country to legally recognize it,” said Hiker Chiu, Co-chair of ILGA Asia based in Taiwan. “Moreover, there will be the largest meeting of intersex individuals in Asia ever,” Hiker continued. He is also the founder of Organization Intersex International - Chinese, famous for his campaign Free Hugs to raise social awareness on intersex issues.

The conference, hosted in Phnom Penh, will also be attended by a number of local LGBTI activists who will share their creative approaches in advocating for human rights and gender and sexual diversity.

“There will be exhibitions from local artists who use art for social activism, and there are researchers who are contributing to the wealth of knowledge on LGBTI issues in Cambodia,” said, Cheyleaphy Heng from RoCK. “We hope that through this conference, great ideas spread across our region.”

The opening ceremony will take place in the morning of December 6th, 2017 to start the 3-day conference. Prior to that, several meetings will take place among different communities such as intersex, trans or bisexual community, and among different interest groups: interfaith topic or UN mechanisms and advocacy.

INTERSEX ACTIVIST GOPI SHANKAR MADURAI TO SPEAK AT ILGA ASIA REGIONAL CONFERENCE IN CAMBODIA

CHENNAI: The International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA Asia) and Rainbow Community of Kampuchea is organising the first intersex regional conference and the seventh ILGA Asia regional conference in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, from December 4 to 8. And this time round, an Indian intersex activist will be participating in the event.

Gopi Shankar Madurai, intersex activist and founder of Srishti Madurai, an LGBTQIA+ non-funded student collective that aims at educating academicians, members of the medical fraternity as well as schools and college students about the community's issues, will be a speaker at three sessions and moderator one session.

Shankar, who prefers to use 'ze', a gender-neutral pronoun, will present the plight of people born and living with the intersex traits in India.

"I will be speaking about achieving gender equality through sports as it is a field that is at present gender-biased. We have to see how we can accommodate women who have transitioned as well as non-binary people in sports," says Shankar. Gopi will also be talking about LGBTQIA people in the educational setting and how religious spaces are accommodating members of the community.

Government representatives from Thailand, the Philippines, Nepal, Vietnam, Cambodia and China are expected to participate.

ILGA is the world federation of national and local organisations dedicated to achieving equal rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex (LGBTI) people across the globe. Established in 1978, ILGA enjoys consultative status at the UN Ecosoc Council.

This Article was published by The Times of India on 29 November 2017

Link: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/chennai/indian-intersex-activist-gopi-shankar-madurai-to-speak-at-ilga-asia-regional-conference-in-cambodia/articleshow/61851588.cms>





PUSH FOR LGBT RIGHTS

The head of the Cambodia Human Rights Committee has encouraged lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTI) people to keep up the pressure for social recognition and reduced discrimination, so that legislators may consider policies to recognise them legally.

Keo Remy spoke at the 7th International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association Asia conference “United for Love” at the Cambodiana Hotel in Phnom Penh.

About 300 LGBTI people, development partners, organisations, embassy representatives and local authorities from more than 30 countries took part.

Some countries in the region consider homosexuality a crime, with fines and imprisonment.

Others, including Cambodia, have no punishment and there is wide freedom for LGBTI people although the Cambodian Constitution has not yet recognised them.

Mr Remy called on LGBTI people continue to educate and disseminate awareness of their rights in local communities, across the nation and among their families.

He said they must not cause any problems in society so that legislators would consider preparing amendments to the law in accordance with the social, cultural, economic and political context of the country “For Cambodia, it is not a problem,” he said. “But we may take some time to educate the people in the community and to get recognition from Cambodian society.

“After that, legislators will prepare policies and amend the law giving them legal recognition.”

Soth Ouk, a 49-year-old LGBTI person from Mondulakiri province, said people in her community do not know about the rights and the desires of LGBTI people yet.

This meant LGBTI people suffered from discrimination, psychological abuse and violence by members of their families.

She asked local authorities to hold public meetings to educate and raise awareness of LGBTI issues in the community.

“I want this to be disseminated widely. I want to stop repression and discrimination against LGBTI people.

“In the countryside, they do not respect our rights. They insult us like we are crazy and stupid to love the same sex. It hurts when I hear that.”

Rainbow community Kampuchea coordinator Ly Pisey said: “Although there is a lot of understanding of the diversity of gender and sexual orientation in Cambodia, it needs ongoing efforts to raise awareness of the LGBTI issues to local levels and strengthen legal protections.”

Mr Remy quoted from an Asean Youth Future report which said that Cambodia has more than 33,000

LGBTI people, including about 6,000 couples who live together.

This article was published by The Khmer Times on 7 December 2017

Link: <http://www.khmertimeskh.com/5094484/push-lgbt-rights/>



OPINION: IS TAIWAN REALLY A BEACON FOR LGBT RIGHTS IN ASIA?

Jay Lin

Why you need to know

Taiwan's LGBT community has an easier time than many, but more needs to be done for such progress to receive international recognition.

Taiwan, with its commitment to be the first Asian country to legalize gay marriage, should have been the star of the 2017 ILGA (International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association) Asia conference in Phnom Penh. In reality, it was hardly a blip on the radar.

A previous speaker at the 2015 Taipei conference, I came as a participant to find possible partners to ally with for our GagaOOLala [LGBT streaming movie] service and to research which subjects we might use for an upcoming documentary web series. The issues that were explored – 23 sessions concerning 25 nations – were a bit daunting and overwhelming, but there are three observations that I would like to share:

Far too few Taiwanese organizations were present

Only one Taiwanese LGBT nongovernmental organization (NGO) was present to share Taiwan's progress toward marriage equality. We often brag that Taiwan is the beacon of LGBT rights in Asia, but what is the point of this beacon if people are not following it to come ashore and engage in dialog with us?

With a Pride parade that had crowds of over 120,000 people, LGBT support rallies that amassed 250,000 participants and online fundraising campaigns that raised over US\$350,000 in a period of three days, it is a pity that there are not more Taiwanese organizations and individuals there. Taiwan needs to create lasting face-to-face connections. Fortunately, Taipei-based LGBT organization Tongzhi Hotline sent three representatives who spoke on various panels, but there could and should be more.



The most urgent issues vary dramatically in each country.

While Taiwan is focusing its efforts on legalizing marriage equality, many LGBT individuals in West and South Asian countries are concerned about how to stay alive and avoid physical violence. Xulhaz Mannan of Bangladesh was hacked to death last year for publishing the country's only LGBT magazine, but nobody has been charged for his brutal murder. This horrific violence will silence those wanting to speak out. Meanwhile in Southeast Asian countries like Cambodia and Vietnam, delegates were more concerned about how to catch-up on LGBT activism by starting queer film festivals and implementing gender education in schools.

I realize how privileged and lucky I am to be living in Taiwan with the loving support that I have from family, colleagues and friends. I met up with several gay parents from Thailand and the Philippines. Despite their kids being in their teens, they still fear discrimination and worry that visibility could jeopardize their relationship and children. This opportunity for dialogue with parents from across the region, including out-and-proud parents from Hong Kong and Australia, makes me feel at least more connected and part of this global rainbow family.

Third, Taiwan's diplomatic isolation is a double-edged sword.

Perhaps one of the key reasons why Taiwan sent so few participants is because it is not an officially recognized part of the international community. ILGA gets significant funding from the United Nations (UN) and the European Union. Taiwan, a UN outcast, is unable to tap into important funding nor participate in or conduct studies through organizations like the United Nations Development Program.

The result is that there is a great deal of research commissioned by organizations from UN member countries which analyzes and documents the status of LGBT communities, but Taiwan is never included. One afternoon, I heard presentations about research findings in Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia, the Philippines, and China — but nothing on Taiwan.

But perhaps this type of isolation gives us a can-do attitude, enabling Taiwan to rely less on foreign aid and focus more on effectively and productively finding ways to fund, conduct and analyze research related to LGBT topics.

For these three days, we sub-groups of the LGBTQIA community, minorities in every society, became the majority present at Hotel Cambodiana. I get to go back to the safety of home and hug my adorable babies. Others will reluctantly return to an environment where they must constantly watch their back as well as what they say or do.

I am privileged, but ironically, I am just asking to be treated the same. I hope that this privilege and "sameness" will spread far and wide to every participant of ILGA Asia.

TNL editor: Morley J Weston

This article was published by The News Lens on 11 December 2017

Link: <https://international.thenewslens.com/article/85204>

OTHER LANGUAGES

ILGA アジア 国際会議4日目 清水展人 Hiroto Shimizu Japan 日本

Link: <https://ameblo.jp/1000-oku/entry-12334627601.html>

全亚洲拭目以待，香港会否向同志平权迈出重要一步？

Link: <https://zh.amnesty.org/more-resources/blog/hong-kong-lgbti-equality-asia-is-watching/>

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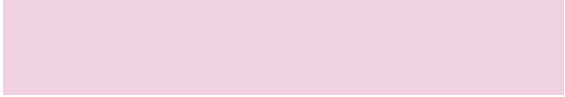








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