"This Body!"

Supporting Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) Organising in East Africa

Conference Report June 2006

URGENT ACTION FUND-AFRICA
“THIS BODY!”

Supporting Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) Organising in East Africa

Conference Report

Held at Grand Regency Hotel, Nairobi
June 15-18, 2006
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“My paintings articulate self expression be it of sexuality, personality etc. ... they are about people being free in their own minds. To be what they want to be and freedom to express it however they wish. I think the mind is the worst kind of prison... this is because it makes people unable to fully enjoy life and live it to the maximum.”

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The views expressed in this report are those of the conference participants.

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# Acronyms

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<tr>
<td>AI</td>
<td>Amnesty International</td>
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<td>AIDS</td>
<td>Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome</td>
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<td>CPSS</td>
<td>Community Peer Support Services</td>
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<td>GALZ</td>
<td>Gays and Lesbians in Zimbabwe</td>
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<td>HIV</td>
<td>Human Immuno-Deficiency Virus</td>
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<td>ICCPR</td>
<td>International Convention on Civil and Political Rights</td>
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<td>IGLHR</td>
<td>International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission</td>
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<td>ILGA</td>
<td>International Lesbian and Gay Association</td>
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<td>JWG</td>
<td>Joint Working Group</td>
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<td>LGBTI</td>
<td>Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex</td>
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<td>MPs</td>
<td>Members of Parliament</td>
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<td>MSM</td>
<td>Men who have Sex with Men</td>
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<td>NACC</td>
<td>National Aids Control Council</td>
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<td>NCGLE</td>
<td>National Coalition for Gay and Lesbian Equality</td>
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<td>TALESA</td>
<td>Tanzanian Lesbian Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>TRP</td>
<td>The Rainbow Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>UDHR</td>
<td>Universal Declaration of Human Rights</td>
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<td>UNGASS</td>
<td>United Nations General Assembly Special Session</td>
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<td>VCT</td>
<td>Voluntary Counselling and Testing</td>
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<tr>
<td>WSW</td>
<td>Women who have Sex with Women</td>
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<tr>
<td>BTM</td>
<td>Behind The Mask</td>
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<td>JTP</td>
<td>Journalism Training Programme</td>
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Acknowledgements

This conference report would not be in existence, were it not for the incredible courage and determination of all the East African LGBTI activists who participated in the 2005 research study, the country meetings, and finally the June 2006 regional conference that brought them all together to share experiences and develop strategies for movement building. We would like to thank them for participating in this process and for contributing powerfully towards the struggle for peace, freedom and social justice.

UAF-Africa is grateful to our funding partners who not only financed this project, but also collaborated with us as we created the goals and activities that culminated in a transformative experience for the East African LGBTI activist community. We thank The Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice, The Ford Foundation’s Office for Eastern Africa, Global Fund for Women, and HIVOS for their partnership in this process, and commitment to enhance support for LGBTI activism and organising in the region.

Special thanks to all the resource people who shared their invaluable knowledge and experience in designing, planning and facilitating the conference. Thuli Madi and Ian Swartz were particularly instrumental as they offered their expertise and insights throughout the planning process, ensuring that we maintained respect, understanding and sensitivity to the various issues facing East African activists working on sexual minority rights. The conference program would not have been as informative and inspiring were it not for the incredible contributions made by Jane Bennett, Carla Sutherland, Petronella Maturure, Kaari Murungi, and Sylvia Tamale. Finally, we would like to thank Bishop Christopher Senyonjo for providing such extraordinary support for the LGBTI movement, and creating a much-needed space for dialogue on sexuality and religion.

We would like to acknowledge the invaluable contributions of Jane Kiragu, the lead consultant on this project, for guiding the entire process, and for documenting this historical event. Many thanks also go to Muthoni Wanyeki, a long time partner and friend of UAF-Africa, who helped edit the report.

We are grateful for all the individuals and institutions that made it possible for UAF-Africa to successfully host this conference.

We would also like to thank all UAF-Africa staff, and particularly Liz Makimaro and Zawadi Nyong’o for coordinating the project and contributing towards the compilation, editing and publication of this report.
There is no reason to suppose that white colonialists brought same sexual behavior to Africa for the first time. What they did bring, was the criminal categorization of that behavior. The acts were indigenous. The name and the crime were imported....The laws that some politicians now defend as bulwarks of independence and authenticity are themselves colonial imposition.

(Scott Long, 2003)

Kenyan society has not "developed" to the level where people with a different sexual orientation are allowed to be themselves or develop within laws and rights set out for them. As a result, "we have a good number of Kenyan men who are constitutionally homosexual and socially heterosexual, so as to fit in the society."

(Dr. Frank Njenga, quoted in Kuria, 2005)

People read and interpret the scriptures' through the spectacles of their culture' and then have a tendency to use the scriptures to support their often unexamined and taken for granted' cultural views of what is right and natural.

(Bishop David Russell, 2004)

The discriminatory provision of information on HIV/AIDS in Africa makes MSM and WSW feel invulnerable to the disease but also entrenches the view that there is no homosexuality in Africa. "If you do not see them, they do not exist" is perhaps the slogan upheld by many communities in Africa, and the threat of physical abuse even death hangs loose on anyone who would like to prove this slogan misleading.

(David Kuria, 2005)
Preface

This report seeks to deepen understanding of notions of equality and generate interest in a broad based approach towards affirming and securing equality for all, particularly minorities. The struggle for equality and equal treatment across the world has been long, gruelling and discouraging, requiring tenacity. It is a struggle to affirm our humanity and existing models of success—such as the struggle for independence, the fight against apartheid, the struggle to attain women’s suffrage—provide hope for other struggles.

The Urgent Action Fund-Africa (UAF-Africa) is a women’s fund grounded on the Beijing Platform for Action (PFA). It prioritises promoting and protecting the full and equal enjoyment by women of all human rights and fundamental freedoms without distinction of any kind as to religion, race, language, sexual orientation, political or other opinions, national or social origin. Although the Beijing PFA nods in the direction of the diversity of women’s experiences, it nevertheless presents women in a limited, encumbered way. The major role for women remains that envisaged in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)—wife and mother. Attempts to highlight the diversity of women’s identities with respect to sexual orientation were unsuccessful at the Beijing conference, which ultimately failed to acknowledge sexual orientation as an aspect of women’s identity.

The new discourse of women’s rights as human rights is also limited in its understanding of equality. Although there have been significant moves towards the recognition of some women-specific harms, particularly violence against women (VAW), the major remedy proposed to address the global subordination of women is an increased role in decision-making. This allows women only access to a world already constituted by men, not to a world transformed by the interests of women.

UAF-Africa seeks to move the discourse further by challenging why women are perceived as heterosexual and why advocacy around their attaining equality is defined within a heterosexually-defined world. The dialogue captured in this report in the section on human sexuality and gender informs the move towards an all encompassing approach that does not homogenise women’s experiences and obscure the position of women who suffer multiple forms of discrimination. In more ways than one, the conversations captured in this report awaken all activists to the challenge of developing “situated perspectives,” creating imagined communities or employing “discursive universalism” which encourages awareness of the differences between women as a basis for feminist strategising. This report is intended to

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1 The Beijing Platform for Action (PFA), Paragraph 46, recognises that “women face barriers to full equality and advancement because of such factors as their race, age, language, ethnicity, culture, religion or disability, because they are indigenous women or because of other status. Many women encounter specific obstacles related to their family status, particularly as single parents and to their socio-economic status, including their living conditions in rural, isolated or impoverished areas. Additional barriers exist also for refugee women, other displaced women, including internally displaced women as well as for immigrant women and migrant women, including migrant workers. Many women are also particularly affected by environmental disasters, serious and infectious diseases and various forms of violence.”

2 Ibid.

3 Charlesworth, Hilary and Chinkin, Christine. The Boundaries of International Law: a feminist analysis.

4 Ibid.
provoke new dialogue to position women in a differently constituted world, where their humanity is not sanctioned by societal predictions of how women and men should relate. This report notes that our world is inhabited by human beings who are heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered (LGBTI), whose human rights must be accorded humanity and respect without discrimination.

In pioneering the creation of a public platform for the voices of sexual minorities, UAF-Africa demonstrates its commitment to explore new opportunities to advance the human rights agenda in Africa. This platform, as illustrated in the report, has created a space for sexual minorities to begin thinking of themselves as a minority group struggling to redefine the meaning of sexual identity and working for equality. This is a powerful model for LGBTI advocacy work. First, it is a useful strategy for community building amongst LGBTIs as they protect themselves against oppressive majority power which stigmatises them and violates their human rights with impunity. Second, making claims for equality, fair treatment and non-discrimination is important, implying that LGBTIs have common interests with other oppressed groups. This presents an opportunity for collaboration with mainstream human rights and women’s rights organisations.

This awakening is crucial for it responds directly to the challenge faced by many human rights and women’s rights organisations, who perceive sexual orientation as a negative personal choice, undeserving of the “serious politics of human rights advocacy.” How can issues, practices and perspectives located in intimate life be transformed into ones that are politically recognisable and negotiable? The conversations in this report clearly attest to the need for private life to be connected to the public life of citizenship and politics, so that injustices in the private realm of economic, familial and sexual relations become actionable and sources of empowerment for would-be citizens instead of accepted as insurmountable givens.5

This report presents a reality for human rights work—to advance, there is need to frame human rights in a broader template that embraces all diversities without distinction because the central principles of human rights are those of equality and non-discrimination. Accord humanity to the human beings we all are!

*Hope Chigudu*
*Chair, Urgent Action Fund-Africa*

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5Boling, Patricia. Privacy and the Politics of Intimate Life.
Executive Summary

This report captures the deliberations of the first regional conference of LGBTI activists in East Africa. It provides concrete and useful ways to advance dialogue around sexuality—dialogue that has been curbed with myth, silence and taboo.

The report captures the history of the nine months which informed and shaped the historic regional conference—flowing from research, to country dissemination and consultative fora, to an experts’ planning process leading up to the regional conference. The report candidly captures the challenges that funding agencies face whilst seeking to support LGBTI work within East Africa—including LGBTI invisibility, weak institutional capacity amongst others. This report, being informed by the experiences and aspirations of LGBTI activists, deepens our understanding of how laws in the three East African countries have been informed by homophobia and intolerance with respect to same-sex relationships. It provides a concrete framework upon which legal activism can be grounded—namely through seeking constitutional declarations that these laws contradict individual rights and freedoms embraced and stipulated in each of the countries’ constitutions as well as each of the governments’ international obligations stipulated in international human rights treaties and conventions. The report provides information on sexuality, placing it within a gendered context and questioning the social ordering and predictions of society about the roles of girls and boys or women and men. The sexuality section brings to life the invisibility and discrimination of LGBTIs, whom society has failed to recognise and accord basic humanity. Societal predictions of how we are to behave are predicated on patriarchy, which is oppressive and violates individual human rights. The report also examines religion and its interpretation of same-sex relationships, demonstrating that these interpretations are unfounded and not credible. Through the lens of LGBTI activists, successful experiences of LGBTI movements in southern Africa are shared to inform and nurture an East African LGBTI movement. Finally, the report provides insightful reflection on activism and how movements are built, informing the action plans of LGBTI activists within the three countries.

This being the first documented conversation amongst LGBTI activists in East Africa, this report provides both a historical record, and a profound and solid base for moving the movement forward and ensuring that the rights of sexual minorities become integrated into and promoted within the broader human rights and women’s rights movements.
About UAF-Africa

Grounded on the Beijing PFA, UAF-Africa gives priority to promoting and protecting the full enjoyment by women of all human rights and fundamental freedoms without distinction of any kind even as regards sexual orientation.

Established in 2001, UAF-Africa is a consciously human and feminist organisation that is committed to enhancing African women’s leadership to bring about justice, equality, equity and peace. UAF-Africa adds value to the work of women in Africa through provision of critical financial and technical resources to women’s rights organisations, and supporting innovative, rapid and unique initiatives that promote women’s leadership in peace building and justice processes.

Strategic Objectives:
UAF-Africa’s Rapid Response Grantmaking and Collaborative Initiatives programmes:

- Promote and advance women’s human rights in Africa by providing immediate funding through small, rapid response grants to women activists responding to conflict or crisis.
- Promote the full and effective participation of women in peacebuilding, conflict transformation, and transitional justice processes.
- Support the sharing and exchange of knowledge, expertise, technical assistance and information among African women’s organizations.
- Encourage dialogue and support initiatives to expand the discourse on human rights in Africa.

Supporting LGBTI Rights Issues in East Africa:
UAF-Africa seeks to build partnerships through collaborative initiatives with women and organizations working to promote the human rights of women and girls. Convening dialogues around LGBTI issues is one opportunity to affirm the diversity of women and facilitate spaces to advance their human rights. We are concerned that the space to dialogue and act around issues of sexuality is currently very constrained and hence seek to expand this space as a first step in the promotion and protection of sexual rights in the region. Rising homophobia and intolerance even in the mainstream human rights movement is of concern and has to be addressed if any progress is to be made in this area.
The socio-cultural and political context that we operate in remains both patriarchal and highly homophobic. These global trends impact most negatively on women’s rights and particularly sexual rights. LGBTI issues are considered ‘un-African’ and ‘deviant’ not only by majority of the public but also by a section of human rights defenders for whom the purview of human rights is not seen to extend to LGBTI issues. LGBTI people therefore remain isolated for the most part, and find it extremely difficult to mainstream their basic rights into wider human rights debates. Laws that criminalize consensual adult sexual behaviour between same sex partners are also a huge contextual impediment. Without legal frameworks to support their work, LGBTI activists are forced to operate in an unequal and difficult environment, which thwarts any efforts to transform the current status quo.

Human rights organizations that operate within this context also face many of the same challenges that LGBTI activists do. For Urgent Action Fund - Africa, engaging in this work has forced us to navigate many of these challenges, therefore forcing us to reflect on various strategies to expand the space for dialogue on this long silenced and ignored human rights issue.
Welcome Remarks

Kaari Murungi thanked participants, stating that it was a privilege for the UAF-Africa to host the conference—the first of its kind in the sub-region. The aim was to provide LGBTI activists with an opportunity to gain new insights and examine sexuality and sexual freedom, issues that often cause confusion and pain. It was therefore imperative to address these issues. The time had come to speak out clearly, stating that all human rights, including LGBTI’s human rights, are universal and indivisible. The conference provided a conducive and safe space for sharing, learning and networking. Knowledge is empowering! The courage participants brought to the conference was historical. Their presence demonstrated a resounding commitment to promoting human rights and, in particular, the rights of a minority which is marginalised and excluded in human rights discourse.

The conference was only the beginning of an ongoing process. Human rights activism is a long journey riddled with challenges, particularly the challenge of exclusion. We must struggle to continuously articulate that human rights are endowed equally to each and every human being irrespective of their gender, religion, race, political affiliation and sexual orientation amongst other diversities. Participants were urged to be persistent and focused in taking upon themselves the call to rise up and build a movement in tandem with other marginalised movements.

2.1 Expectations

To affirm each other and create a safe space for all, the process of setting the context for the conference included self-introductions. Participants were asked to introduce themselves by sharing an adjective they would use to describe themselves, which began with the first letter of their name, for example, Powerful Patricia or Sensitive Susan. They were also asked to share their expectations by completing the sentence: “by end of the conference, I hope I will have...”

Expectations were thus built up around the following areas:

- deepening understanding of human sexuality;
- achieving the confidence to be open/attaining the skills required to fight for the movement;
- networking, building solidarity, bonding and making friends;
- building knowledge, learning more about LGBTI issues and how to strengthen and invigorate the movement;
- sharing experiences: best practices of LGBTI organising and charting a way forward for the movement by developing a Nairobi Declaration;
discussing how non-governmental organisations (NGOs) can be supportive to the movement without fear due to an unaccommodating legal framework;
understanding the role of donors in the movement;
building a basic foundation for a movement that is fundable.

To construct the desired culture of the conference, participants also developed ground rules to enable their full and free participation. They guided everyone’s participation in the conference, emphasising the importance of being respectful, appreciating the sensitivity of the conference and thus ensuring confidentiality.

Bishop Senyonjo and Thuli Madi

Regional conference participants reflecting on their expectations
The LGBTI Conference on Sexuality hosted in Nairobi, Kenya in June 2006 was a historic meeting, the first ever in East Africa, bringing together LGBTI activists from Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya, Zimbabwe and South Africa. The conference was a culmination of several activities undertaken over a nine-month period.

In October 2005, the Ford Foundation Office for eastern Africa and Hivos partnered with the UAF-Africa to convene an international donor roundtable to discuss the priorities of LGBTI groups in East Africa, with a view to establishing how to provide support by examining the impact of strategies utilised by LGBTI groups. These discussions were informed by research findings undertaken in Kenya and Uganda on three aspects:

- an examination of existing LGBTI groups and activist work: focused on priorities, approaches and resources. The research sought to contextualize the discourse on sexuality and LGBTI activists’ work within East Africa as well as examine gender inequality issues;
- an examination of how key human rights organisations, HIV/AIDS groups, women’s groups and legal practitioners undertake their work around sexual rights and sexual minorities;
- establishing the attitudes and knowledge of independent political analysts and media personalities on the rights of sexual minorities.

The roundtable and research both noted that the context within which LGBTI work is undertaken is one rife with cultural, religious and political fundamentalisms which suppress sexual pluralism in the sub-region. Institutionalised homophobia is growing, breeding isolation stigma. There is thus shrinking space for LGBTI organising and dialogue on sexuality, causing LGBTI groups to operate in a clandestine manner. At the same time, integrating LGBTI issues into human rights and women’s rights organisations remains a challenge. All these constraints remove LGBTI activists from the protection afforded by law enforcement agents, leaving them vulnerable to continued isolation, exclusion and discrimination.

Following the roundtable, systematic dissemination of the research findings was undertaken from February to May 2006. The research report titled, “LGBTII Organising in East Africa: The True Test for Human Rights Defenders” was shared with all research study participants including LGBTI activists, human rights organisations, women’s rights organisations and funding agencies. A series of planning meetings were then coordinated by UAF-Africa from March leading up to the conference in June 2006. On March 20, 2006, a planning meeting was convened with experts from southern Africa and Uganda. This meeting helped shape the form and nature of this conference as well as the preparatory country dissemination.

The Tanzanian research took place in December 2005 and, because of this, did not inform the discussions at the donor roundtable. The findings in Tanzania were, however, captured in the research report compiled and published by Urgent Action Fund-Africa (UAF-Africa) in February 2006.
fora. The planning meeting developed the themes for the regional conference on the basis of the research findings and discussed innovative ways to create a safe space. In May 2006, interactive country dissemination fora were convened in Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya. They involved presentations of key research findings as well as generated feedback from the local activists on the same, enabling country representatives to begin reflecting on how an effective LGBTI movement should be designed. They also generated additional information about how the regional conference should be organised, noting which issues required in-depth discussions amongst LGBTI activists and what other elements would be most beneficial to them. Representatives were challenged to mobilise their colleagues to ensure that there was full gender representation of participants at the conference in June. Each country also resolved to develop a position paper to form the basis for commencing this conference.

3.1 Conference Participants, Resource People, Objectives and Country Statements

The selection of participants at this conference was based on their participation in the research undertaken in 2005 and informal meetings held with resource people from southern African LGBTI organisations. They represented Kenyan, Ugandan and Tanzanian LGBTI activists. The resource persons were experts on sexuality and LGBTI organising from Uganda, South Africa and Namibia. (See Appendix V for full list of participating organisations)

The conference objectives were to:

- create a safe space for the expression of diversity;
- deepen participants' understanding of sexuality;
- celebrate individuality while strengthening common struggles;
- bring together LGBTI activists to discuss ways of strengthening the LGBTI movement in East Africa.

To set the tone of the conference, each country made statements which resonated with the research findings.

Kenya

LGBTI activists in Kenya, in resolving to fight against continued marginalisation presented the following statement:

We are indigenous Kenyan women and men who have experienced stigma, discrimination and isolation because of our sexual choice and/or identities. We are seeking our rightful place in our families, communities and society, with all the rights and responsibilities that infers.
We, having realised who we are as individuals, started seeking fellowship with like-minded people in the hope that we could fight for our rights, in the context of no funding, little support and difficult personal situations. We have, individually and together, achieved the following:

- staged Cleopatra, a play publicly engaging issues of sexuality;
- engaged in research at all levels;
- had MSM included in the National Strategy for HIV/AIDS;
- been included in the National Youth Technical Working Group;
- represented MSM/women who have sex with women (WSW) issues in the United Nations General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) and other international and national fora;
- engaged the media to represent LGBTI issues through radio shows/television interviews;
- heightened awareness among our communities;
- contributed to books, journals and newspapers;
- mainstreamed sex and sexual identity issues through dialogue;
- created community fashion pageants;
- created safe spaces for local activists and LGBTI persons;
- been involved in the constitution review process;
- formed alliances with mainstream organisations;
- disseminated condoms and lubricants;
- created the first Kenyan website dedicated to MSM issues;
- engaged the African Commission for Human and Peoples’ Rights.

We feel proud of and encouraged by what we have been able to achieve, often without recognition and funding and in the absence of international support. But our work is far from finished. Working together in solidarity, we shall form an umbrella body to provide each other with encouragement and increase mutual accountability. In this body, we shall seek to engage a process of capacity-building for all LGBTI individuals, groups and networks involved in the process of seeking to secure our human rights. In so doing, we will be able to achieve the following:

- increase and intensify public and private education on LGBTI issues;
- access funding;
- bring forward legal challenges against unjust legislation;
- address policy issues and seek government support;
- register our groups as gay and lesbian organisations;

\(^7\)Following the regional conference, the Kenyan groups successfully formed the Gay and Lesbian Coalition of Kenya (GALCK) which has since publicly organised activities at both the 2006 World AIDS day events organised by the National AIDS Control Council (NACC) and the 2007 World Social Forum held in Nairobi, Kenya.
- ensure we have access to LGBTI-specific HIV and sexual health information, prevention, treatment and care, having our reproductive and sexual health needs recognised by all care providers at all levels;
- create formal and legitimate safe spaces for LGBTIs in Kenya.

With this attitude, we undertake to continue the fight for our rightful place in our families, communities and societies.

Tanzania

Tanzanian LGBTI activists observed they continue to be confronted by many stumbling blocks which they outlined in the statement below:

In Tanzania, we have to deal with the following issues:

- discrimination and stigmatisation: LGBTI activists face discrimination, social isolation, ejection from our homes and rejection by our communities. This undermines our capacity to be active citizens;
- the media: the Tanzanian media portrays gay and lesbian groups as individuals whose morality and religious standing is questionable. This perception has a negative impact on LGBTIs as we cannot freely express oursexuality and are forced to try to adopt a heterosexual lifestyle;
- human rights and the law: laws do not anticipate same sex relationships and marriages. The Sexual Offences (Special Provisions) Act (1998) defines sexual intercourse in a narrow sense meaning “coitus involving penile-vaginal penetration” and any sexual act that is not in conformity is an offence attracting a prison term with corporal punishment of up to thirty years! In instances of abuse occasioned by the knowledge that one is LGBTI, such as physical assault or verbal abuse, law enforcement agents do not provide protection. This disregard about enforcing the law and providing protection emphasises the discrimination and stigma that LGBTIs contend with;
- lack of support mechanisms: the (few) LGBTI organisations have been unable to consolidate activism around LGBTI rights. We lack information, we do not have sufficient management and organisational skills and we have not been able to successfully mobilise funds.

For our organisations to be properly managed and undertake our activities, we need to have effectively designed structure and implementation frameworks. This would enable our young organisations to access information and provide a basis for institutional growth. It is our hope that this conference will provide us with solutions to deal with the challenges we face.
Uganda

Last but not least, the Ugandan activists articulated their concerns and recommendations.

As LGBTI activists, having reflected on our work, we note that we require capacity building in the following areas:

- organisational development (developing a strategic plan with a vision, mission and objectives; management; project management; monitoring and evaluation);
- leadership skills (around: communication and public speaking; conflict resolution; advocacy, dialoguing with and lobbying government and selling ideas);
- dealing with the media;
- fundraising and financial management (proposal writing, budgeting and bookkeeping, accountability and income generation);
- peer counselling (education to foster the movement and avoid situations where a “counsellor” falls in love with a person who has been chased away from home and is seeking help. HIV counselling needs to be gay-friendly because when a gay person is asked to bring his partner, who is a man, this causes consternation. Suicide is high among the young, while alcohol and drug abuse is rampant amongst runaways. Domestic violence within the gay community is also common);
- documentation of experiences and lessons learnt from the ground.

Lessons Learnt

The experiences in all three countries speak to the challenge of living closeted lifestyles for fear of discrimination and being ostracised. The context in which homophobia and intolerance to free expressions of same-sex love has contributed to their inability to organise and nurture an LGBTI movement. All three country experiences attest to the challenges of being unable to formally register organisations and the lack of cooperation from human rights and women’s rights organisations to provide them with legal cover. This undermines movement building as, without registration, most funding agencies are unable to provide support. Most importantly, without registration, most organisations are unable to structure institutional frameworks and build capacity for advocacy and activism.
Context for LGBTI Organising and the Role of Funding Organisations

The context for advancing LGBTI organising is informed by the political, social and cultural challenges affecting rights discourse, particularly with respect to sexual rights. Funding agencies’ contributions to the movement can only be motivated through organised processes geared towards building strong foundations for social transformation. The invisibility of LGBTI groups often presents a variety of challenges for structured support.

4.1 The Ford Foundation East Africa

Dr Carla Sutherland explained that her programmatic focus is on education and sexuality in East Africa, which is challenging. There has been hostility towards sexuality work as religion and politics come together to promote a conservative agenda which activist organisations have embraced. Work on abortion, sexual minorities and rights, sexual pleasure and rights, and religion is restricted. Sexuality is seen as a wedge within the human rights movement and, in particular, the women’s movement. Recent experiences inform this perspective such as the banning of the Vagina Monologues in Uganda, about which both human rights and women’s rights organisations were profoundly silent. Even the Kenyan human rights movement, which has had a tradition of winning rights, was silent. The challenge of overcoming this and integrating sexual rights within the body of human rights is one that could be resolved by a strong LGBTI movement in East Africa.

Work around sexuality is complex because of the nexus between the world’s most sensitive issues: sex and money. Sex and money are political issues that present challenges to free and open communication. Both sex and money generate strong emotions. People find it difficult to express their desires for sex and money often because people’s desires exceed available resources. There is inequality, where some have more than others and dialogue can equally be difficult.

“How do I navigate in this scenario? How do I listen to those working in the area? What do we want to achieve in this area? Am I transparent and respectful as well as innovative and curious? I have to understand the context, which calls for learning how to keenly listen to what people say.”

Most proposals received are declined—of 1500 applications, on average only 20 are funded. This is because many proposals do not present innovation or seem responsive to local needs. Participants were therefore urged to amplify voice around gender, sexuality and HIV/AIDS to change popular culture. Areas that the Ford Foundation East Africa would support include:
- research: there is little local information on sexuality, most of which is generated outside Africa. There is need to develop frameworks for research on sexuality that are African specific;
- public media: books, films, the print and electronic media influence the public and send messages on what is OK and not okay;
- convenings: these are a powerful strategy to bring activists together to reflect on how LGBTI activism can be enhanced. Convenings which unite a range of donor organisations on human rights and the women’s movement to dialogue on ending the marginalisation of sexual minorities are of interest;
- organising: organisations promoting social change, for instance, by enhancing understandings of what hinders free and progressive expressions and conversations around sexuality are also of interest.

4.2 Hivos Southern Africa

Petronella Maturure explained that Hivos is a Netherlands-based NGO that seeks to contribute to a free, fair and sustainable world where citizens, women and men, have equal access to resources, opportunities and markets and can participate actively and equally in decision-making processes that determine their lives, their society and their future.

Hivos’ core support is in providing support to civil society organisations (CSOs) and initiatives. Civil society building, sustainable production and lobbying and advocacy are the three central policy areas. Within its work on human rights and democratisation, Hivos focuses on LGBTI rights and emancipation. Hivos promotes freedom of expression and diversity of vision which give every individual the right to express her/himself freely.

A major challenge is on working with faith-based and religious organisations as they are instrumental in shaping beliefs and values with respect to sexuality. Another is the lack of minimum checks and balances within LGBTI organisations, despite the challenge of legal registration. Participants were urged to develop proposals presenting innovative ways to get around registration, while embracing good governance and accountability. Hivos’ previous support of individuals instead of organisations was not progressive because it “set them up to fail” as they did not have the institutional infrastructure and shielding needed to support their work. Hivos is flexible, however, and looks for innovation and transparency. One of the easily accessible funds, for example, is a micro-fund which supports grants of a maximum of Euros10,000.
4.3 UAF-Africa

Kaari Murungi explained that UAF-Africa provides immediate small grants to support strategic interventions that take advantage of opportunities to advance women’s human rights. Such opportunities arise when an unexpected event—positive or negative—creates a situation in which rapid intervention can have significant impact.

UAF-Africa makes grants in three categories:

- situations of armed conflict, escalating violence or politically volatile environments;
- precedent-setting legal or legislative action;
- protection of women’s human rights defenders.

Regardless of the category of grants, proposals must be:

- **strategic**: the action is related to a pre-determined plan to create structural change that will advance women’s human rights;
- **unanticipated and time urgent**: the situation or opportunity is unanticipated and action must happen quickly to be effective;
- **sustainable**: the group is able to carry out the proposed action effectively and can secure funding for future work related to the strategy;
- **supported**: the group has the support of others involved in women’s human rights or related fields, locally or globally;

UAF-Africa gives priority to promoting and protecting the full and equal enjoyment by women of all human rights and irrespective of their race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation or any other identity.

Increased fundamentalism and militarism shrinks the space for women organising. The dominant discourse around culture is male, masculine and patriarchal—this is our reality and, as such, there is need to design strategies to work around this context. UAF-Africa therefore supports initiatives that are informed by this perspective. Participants were thus encouraged to continue confronting these issues, challenging fundamentalisms and creating more spaces for dialogue knowledge sharing, and movement building for social justice.
4.4 Plenary Discussion

The Challenges of Invisibility

The unfriendly context for LGBTI organising has resulted in groups working in a clandestine manner. Mobilising for activism by LGBTI groups around sexual minority rights is difficult due to LGBTI invisibility. The invisibility constrains growth of the movement as LGBTI groups remain informal with weak institutional structures that hinder their ability to network, collaborate and receive funding support. In Kenya for instance, the lesbian community is not known and, when preparing for this conference, deliberate efforts to mobilise them had to be developed. In Tanzania, communication challenges confronted the mobilisation process, requiring face to face interactions to build trust and enable engagement with the process.

This conference thus presented a rare opportunity to understand LGBTI organising in the sub-region.

Locating Patriarchy within the LGBTI Movement

It is important to be aware that, even within the LGBTI movement, patriarchy exists, resulting in situations where the voices of lesbians are unheard and the movement is structured along male-dominated lines. Hence, there is a need to prioritise women’s support and promote women’s leadership in the movement. UAF-Africa is one such model for responding to this. The existence of funds such as UAF-Africa, the Global Fund for Women, Mama Cash and the Astrea Lesbian Foundation for Justice are

Responding to the Poverty Challenge

Ensuring that funding does not perpetuate poverty is a joint responsibility of grantmakers and grantees. Funders ensure that proposals are subjected to the tests of sustainability, impact and results. This requires those seeking support to reflect on the type and nature of support being requested.

Designing Innovative Projects

Innovation refers to novelty or difference and innovative projects address issues creatively. LGBTI organisations should design unique initiatives that support activism for social change, particularly in promoting sexual minorities’ rights within the broader discourse of human rights. Hivos for example, has an experimental fund for innovative project proposals with no deadlines for proposal consideration.

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8 Following the conference, lesbian activists came together to form a new organisation called Minority Women in Action (MWA). The group has since been actively involved and taken on leadership within GALCK as well as organised women-specific activities to help strengthen the LGBTI women’s movement.
Dr Sylvia Tamale first looked at the background against which the LGBTI movement is operating in East Africa. One of the constraining issues surrounding the LGBTI movement is the nature and character of the education system which minimises critical analysis and intellectual exploration. Hence the need for activists to re-frame issues and challenge perspectives that are oppressive and are informed by prejudice and stereotypes. It is imperative for activists to create new thinking that is empowering and challenges the order of things by infusing new frameworks for analysis. For instance, there is need to engage in meaningful dialogue with funding partners by establishing the areas that they support to ensure that a successful proposal is submitted. This dialogue changes underlying dynamics that are riddled with anxiety as to whether or not a proposal will receive support.

Although lumped together as LGBTIs, it is also true that lesbians are often not aware of the lifestyle or issues of gay men and vice versa, while very little is known about transgendered people or their concerns. To build activism for the voice of LGBTIs, there is need to understand one another and be knowledgeable. This understanding forms the basis for solidarity.

In her presentation Sylvia Tamale examined the laws and the constitutions of the three East African countries, international treaties on sexuality and how the movement could be advanced by these instruments.

Criminal laws in all three countries, in “seeking to prevent harm in society,” do not capture or visualise LGBTIs. The term “homosexuality” does not appear in the Penal Codes of Uganda, Tanzania or Kenya. Acts categorised as criminal are “unnatural offences” which are defined as having “carnal knowledge against the order of nature.” (CKATON) The range of sentencing varies from life imprisonment in Uganda, to 14 years in Kenya and 30 years in Tanzania.
Although “gross indecency” is criminalised in the three countries, Kenya and Uganda do not define it and elements of indecency are consequently unclear. As standards of proof for criminal cases must be beyond reasonable doubt, the mere declaration that one is LGBTI is insufficient to sustain a conviction and, as such, one must be arrested in the act\(^9\). The carnal knowledge and gross indecency provisions directly target same sex desire and love and transgendered people. Both these crimes are categorised as “offences against morality” in the Penal Codes, meaning that they are formulated to regulate public sexual morality. Sexual morality, on the other hand, is shaped to reflect the values of the dominant majority and reinforce patriarchy. For instance, with criminal adultery or prostitution, the sellers of sex are guilty of a crime but the buyers are not.

These laws need to be challenged. Two channels along which the laws can be challenged are invoking and seeking constitutional declarations that provisions of the “offences against morality” contradict: a) constitutional provisions; and/or b) governments’ commitments to international human rights obligations.

The constitutions of the three countries provide useful language to facilitate LGBTI activists declaring the provisions of the Penal Code unconstitutional. All constitutions give us all types of rights and freedoms. For instance, as per Article 21 of the Ugandan constitution:

> “all persons are equal before and under the law in all spheres of political, economic, social and cultural life and in every other respect and shall enjoy equal protection of the law.”

LGBTIs are human beings and laws that undermine the supremacy of the constitution by their inconsistency should be declared null and void.

The Kenyan constitution allows for freedom of conscience and privacy, as provided in Section 70:

> “whereas every person in Kenya is entitled to fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual that is to say, the right, whatever his race, tribe, place of origin or residence or other local connexion, political opinions, colour, creed or sex, but subject to respect for the rights and freedoms of others and for the public interest, to each and all of the following, namely— a) life, liberty, security of the person and the protection of law, b) freedom of conscience, of expression and of assembly and association, and c) protection for the privacy of his home and other property from deprivation of property without compensation, the provisions of this Chapter shall have the effect for the purpose of affording protection to those rights and freedoms subject to such limitations of that protection as are contained in those provisions, being limitations designed to ensure that the enjoyment of those rights and freedoms by any individual does not prejudice the rights and freedoms of others or the public interest.”

\(^9\)Nonetheless, LGBTI persons are often unfairly targetted and experience all forms of police brutality. For example, while they may not have been caught “in the act”, LGBTI persons have been arrested and charged with “impersonation”, “disturbance of the peace” and all manner of other things.
According to Article 12(1) of the Tanzania constitution:

“all human beings are born free and born equal”

Article 12 (2) also states that every person is entitled to recognition and respect for his dignity, while Article 13(1) provides that,

“all persons are equal before the law and are entitled, without any discrimination, to protection and equality before the law.”

Only Tanzanian law defines sexual intercourse under the Sexual Offences (Special Provisions) Act (1998) which states that,

“whether natural or unnatural shall be for the purpose of proof of a sexual offence be deemed to be complete upon proof of penetration only not the completion of the intercourse by the emission of seed”

This definition interprets sexual intercourse narrowly to mean coitus involving penile-vaginal penetration. The law cannot imagine women having sex with women or even individuals pleasuring themselves sexually. Any sexual act that does not conform is criminalised under carnal knowledge provisions.

International conventions reaffirm the liberty and freedom of all human beings. Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) states that,

“all human beings are free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another with the spirit of brotherhood.”

Article 26 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) provides for non-discrimination and equal protection of the law:

“all persons are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to the equal protection of the law. In this respect, the law shall prohibit any discrimination and guarantee to all persons equal and effective protection against discrimination on any ground such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.”

In addition, the Beijing PFA, in Article 96, asserts that,

“the human rights of women include the their right to have control over and decide freely and responsibility on matters related to their sexuality, including sexual and reproductive health, free of coercion, discrimination and violence.”

The African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights is the regional framework for invoking equality for all human beings. Article 3.1 states that

“every individual shall be equal before the law”

Finally Article 3.2. provides that

“every individual shall be entitled to equal protection of the law.”
These provisions must be made a reality for everyone. LGBTI activists should take advantage of existing opportunities for asserting their rights.

The struggle for LGBTI rights requires a multifaceted approach to raise visibility, enhance understanding and mobilise support for respect for LGBTIs. Such an approach could include: law reform, test cases, political engagement, policy proposals, public awareness and enhanced education on sexuality.

The human rights framework offers the best strategy although its success depends on the political will of states. The significance of this approach is that it moves the needs and concerns of LGBTIs to an assertive realm of rights which can be legislated, monitored and fostered.

It is also important to position LGBTI rights within the framework of sexual rights and work with other marginalised groups such as women, people with disabilities and the elderly amongst others. Forming coalitions with people who face sexual oppression enables all those who are marginalised to speak with one voice and demand respect for their rights.

The possibilities of using the human rights framework for sexuality may be approached in two ways. First, evolutionary claims which seek to apply existing rights to new claimants such as LGBTIs and, second, revolutionary claims which seek to expand and introduce new and transformative sexual rights such as applying the principle of sexual autonomy—the right to determine and enjoy sexuality without causing harm to another.

Participants were urged to acknowledge gains, however small, and avoid pessimism. There are ways to address state and religious inspired homophobia, such as persuading people in power to come out, even as legal ways continued to be explored.
Activists’ work is often modelled on successful, well structured and executed strategies. The model of Behind the Mask (BTM) in South Africa, and the Rainbow Project (TRP) in Namibia, illustrate how LGBTI organising has been effectively designed and managed by and for Africans. Most importantly, the lessons learnt throughout the project, give direction as to how east African LGBTI groups can proactively shape their organisations to become advocates for sexual minorities. The similarities in the political, social and cultural environments as well as the practical challenges of building and nurturing a movement, testify to the necessity of acknowledging diversities and developing mechanisms to respond and manage anticipated institutional tensions. These case studies provide motivation to East African LGBTI groups that are at a nascent stage.

6.1 Behind The Mask (BTM)

Context for LGBTI Organising

Thuli Madi reminded participants that South Africa’s constitution was the first in the world to prohibit discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation. It thus guarantees equality for gay men and lesbians. The constitutional provision on equality specifically mentions race and ethnicity in response to South Africa’s past and sexual orientation is included because of the injustices gay men and lesbians have suffered. It is also important to note that gays and lesbians also played critical roles in the struggle to end apartheid, fighting for the elimination of all forms of discrimination against persons with diverse identities.

Previously, sex between two people of the same sex was considered a crime and public displays of affection were considered indecent. Gay people were harassed (frequently by the police), often denied employment and refused custody of their children after divorce.

Until 1998, South African law under the Criminal Procedure Act was hostile stating that “any person authorised to arrest a sodomy suspect” could kill that person if they attempted to run away.” The end of apartheid also was an opportunity to reframe the human rights architecture as demonstrated by the (new, progressive) constitution and its equality provision, Section 9 of the Bill of Rights which prohibits discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation by the state and all persons.

To secure the equality provision, the courts have been central by facilitating access to justice for LGBTIs and affirming the equal standing of same sex relationships. The constitutional court has played a role in enforcing the prohibition against discrimination. Its judges have, in a number of cases, struck down or adjusted legislation that violated the constitutional right to equality.
However, despite the constitutional provision, South African LGBTIs still face discrimination due to their sexual orientation, in all spheres. The difference between South Africa and countries in East Africa is that South Africans have a mechanism for redress and that its constitutional court has consistently upheld non-discrimination provisions.

BTM’s Mission and Vision

BTM, through journalistic activism, strives to mainstream LGBTI interests and change negative attitudes towards homosexuality and same sex traditions in Africa.

BTM is a communication initiative around LGBTI rights in Africa. The organisation considers information and communication technology (ICT) and journalistic activism as its main tools. By publishing an electronic magazine, the organisation gives voice to African LGBTI communities and provides a platform for exchange and debate for LGBTI groups, activists, individuals and allies.

BTM works towards a continent where LGBTIs have a celebratory voice and information on LGBTI issues is available to all. Throughout Africa, everyone’s human rights should be recognised as indivisible and guaranteed.

BTM’s objectives are to:

- develop and maintain a pan-African LGBTI website10;
- provide LGBTI-focused journalism training;
- coordinate a network of correspondents in African countries;
- pursue other projects which address local or pan-African LGBTI needs;
- develop and sustain the capacity to further the organisation’s mission.

BTM has developed partnerships with funding partners in areas that include capacity building, partnership building with other civil society structures (international and national), leadership development, lobbying and advocacy, monitoring and evaluation.

The lessons learnt are derived both from organisational management and project implementation. Organisational lessons include: the need for strategic planning and revisiting the mission and vision as frequently as possible; the role and support of the board; the development of organisational and human resource policies and procedures; and the importance of recruiting people with specialised skills.

BTM has, through project implementation, realised significant results and transformation within the LGBTI movement through appreciating:

- the importance of making specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound (SMART) implementation plans for its projects;
- the need to balance between on and off-line projects (equal dissemination of information);

10www.mask.org.za
• the necessity of developing a nationally-accredited outcome-based basic journalism training programme with a standardised curriculum;
• the institution’s growing capacity to monitor human rights violations and build support with broader civil society on the African continent;
• the power in monitoring the media’s reporting and depiction of LGBTI stories nationally and continentally.

**Key successes** the organisation has registered include the development of multimedia information such as: the new content management system website; BTM5 magazine; the ABC LGBTI resource booklet; the Link newsletter; and the pilot radio programme “Is Homosexuality un-African?” BTM has also developed an advanced journalism training programme with a curriculum, a dedicated and skilled staff team, an internship and fellowship programme and an online counselling program for LGBTIs.

Future plans include a media monitoring project, revision of the Gay Man Eats Crocodile manual”, a cybercafé for LGBTIs in South Africa, airing the BTM disk on South African community radio stations, translation of all website stories and articles into French and finally the recruitment of journalism trainees for 2006 in Kenya¹¹, Uganda, Malawi, Mozambique, Botswana and South Africa.

Upcoming events and processes include:

• a same sex marriage and domestic partnerships forum on December 1, 2006;
• a joint working group strategy aimed at: developing a position paper; gearing the human rights, gender and faith-based sector for parliamentary lobbying and public debate; gearing the LGBTI sector for parliamentary lobbying and public debate; and creating visibility and knowledge on the campaign.

### 6.2 The Rainbow Project (TRP)

Ian Swartz noted that The Rainbow Project, in Namibia was founded on February 5, 1997 as a result of the hate speech by Namibian President Sam Nujoma. President Nujoma said then that homosexuals and people who commit sodomy were exploiting the country’s democracy and should be condemned and rejected. He described homosexuals as pandering to “foreign influence” and “corrupt ideologies.”

TRP was supported by broad-minded individuals who formed an initial core group of 15 people consisting of predominantly white, middle class, well-educated and well-resourced people. The newly founded organisation therefore had access to a wide range of expertise with the drive to improve the situation of LGBTI people.

The Zimbabwean Rainbow Project was founded in 1994 as a result of the hate speech by Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe and other political leaders as well as police harassment.

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¹¹A number of Kenyans who attended the June conference, later participated in the BTM journalism training programme, which took place in Nairobi, in 2006
It was supported by broad-minded individuals who formed a founders’ group primarily consisting of men that were white and middle class who worked on a voluntary basis.

In both countries, TRP is affiliated to the National Coalition for Gay and Lesbian Equality (NCGLE) and the International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA). TRP has established relationships with Amnesty International (AI), Human Rights Watch (HRW), the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (IGLHRC) and potential donors. To design effective advocacy programmes, TRP has undertaken an analysis of the legal environment and the role of religious communities, investigating how different ethnic groups culturally construct sexuality and entering into agreements for information sharing and exchange. In the first two years of TRP’s work, members supported convenings and TRP did not apply for funding. Formed as a network responding to the political incitement of hatred towards LGBTIs, they sought to build solidarity amongst themselves, deepen their understanding of society’s homophobia and design innovative ways to sensitise the public about sexuality and respect for sexual minorities. In both countries, TRP is building a solid reputation.

Challenges that TRP continues to face include:

- a homophobic environment;
- political, religious and community leaders who negatively affect attitudes;
- negative media reports;
- health institutions’ refusal to provide care;
- the lack of readiness of human rights and other NGOs to associate with TRP;
- the lack of family and other support structures;
- the prioritising of other issues;
- patriarchy and hetero-normativity;
- the “homosexuality is un-African, unnatural and un-Christian” debate;
- other cross-cutting issues such as poverty, unemployment, the lack of education, HIV/AIDS and the inequality of women.

While TRP has worked towards overcoming some of these challenges, change is yet to be realised. These challenges are not only external but also internal to the LGBTI communities in Namibia and Zimbabwe. Other internal challenges include the challenges of seeing past the self and individual needs to address issues such as:

- poverty and unemployment;
- poor education and inaccessible health services;
- limited capacity, personality differences and personal dynamics (envy and infighting);
- lack of respect for diversity resulting in class, gender and racial tensions;
- lack of understanding of sexuality (gender identities and sexual orientation) and how culture and religion impact on it;
- lack of a common and suitable language;
- unrealistic expectations of TRP resulting in frustration.
That said, TRP has been successful in nurturing LGBTI activism in Namibia for the following reasons:

- having a clear vision and unambiguous goals;
- realising that working towards a common goal does not mean that all agree all the time;
- understanding the context in which TRP works: being able to read and analyse the environment and identify strategic opportunities as the status of LGBTIs is part of that context and there is need to encourage growth amongst individuals, within organisations and in the movement;
- informing the LGBTI community of new developments all the time, seeing communication as a two-way process;
- creating egalitarian and safe spaces for sharing;
- understanding the limitations and working with what is available;
- strategising and staying focused: TRP broadened the range and scale of activities while Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe (GALZ) narrowed them down;
- constant skill sharing/transfer;
- being proactive;
- establishing a reputation;
- investing in networks, knowing and supporting allies where possible;
- inserting LGBTI work into other activist movements: claiming space and packaging commonalities;
- linking, networking and forming partnerships with HIV/AIDS service providers;
- working with the media: encouraging conversation and staying visible;
- being patient, repetitive and building ownership so as to develop common language;
- having sound institutional policies and conducting continuous evaluations;
- celebrating being and the strength of diversity.

Jane Bennet (South Africa) and Ian Swartz (Namibia) facilitate a session on Human Sexuality and Gender.
7

Human Sexuality and Gender

When the human body comes into this world, the politics of gender forcefully come to play. Society carves and develops key predictions for the girl or boy immediately after they are born. The relationships that are projected and predetermined are inspired by notions of patriarchy. Society has predetermined and predicted that naturalness or normality is as decided by the heterosexual male body. That the humanity of the person can only be affirmed once society can clearly assign one the identity and accompanied role of girl or boy—the role of girl being that of inferiority and that of boy that of superiority means that the space for the girl is private and that of the boy is public!

The journey of discovering and understanding our human sexuality reveals that society’s predictions for the human body to fit into “either/or” categories is a fallacy. This journey also teaches us that society’s predetermined roles as conceived by the heterosexual male body are not cast in stone and can be challenged and reconfigured because they are oppressive and unjust! The body is a beautiful sensual being that can freely determine its destiny and design its creative and non predictable ways for sexual gratification.

7.1 The Gender Story

Jane Bennet took participants through a reflective exercise of self understanding. It is important to recognise that, through socialisation, our world view has been confined so as to believe that people live in a society of men and women. This view is constrained in that it grants humanity to people who can be concretely identified to be man and woman. To illustrate this point, the “person on the street” exercise can be used.

When you are walking along a street and see somebody you cannot tell is a man or a woman, what do you do? You stare. You look puzzled, examine the way the person walks or look at the person’s chest to see if s/he has breasts.

What happens in your mind, when you seek to establish whether a person is a man or a woman, says something about the world that is ordered. We live in a world where, unless a person looks like a man or a woman, her/his humanity is threatened. We are not allowed to be human beings if people cannot identify us as men or women. Understanding sexuality thus also means understanding gender, because gender is powerful with respect to structuring ways of being accepted.
Understanding “This Body!”

What makes a body? What is it in a body that determines one is a man or a woman? Contributions from participants showed that the following contributes to constituting a man and woman:

- hormones or genetic makeup with effects such as facial hair;
- sexual organs, which are not necessarily reproductive organs (for example, a finger can be a sexual organ in a lesbian situation);
- secondary characteristics such as muscle to fat ratio and anatomy;
- chromosomes: these are important as they affect intersex people who are XO as compared to females with XX and males with XY. The sex of an intersex person is therefore ambiguous and can be a small opening and a small penis. Where a baby has a small penis and bigger clitoris and given the prevailing culture that values boys more than girls, the baby’s clitoris will be cut and baby assigned a role as a boy. In the past, such babies were either abandoned or grew up stigmatised (together with their mothers). However, in some communities these babies were also accepted just as they were and even considered closer to God who is seen as gender neutral.

In summary, the body is a mixture of many factors. Intersex people have different configurations and when they are born, enter into a complex process where questions emerge around whether their bodies are that of boys or girls. Yet being a boy or girl is not the most important thing in the world. Intersex people are stigmatised and their sense of humanity is threatened. As activists, it is crucial to explore how the marginalized are treated, as the lives of the minority often tells us the truth about the rest of the world. Activists can advance human rights by invoking humanity as critical protection for all human beings.

“This Body’s” Potential

The human body has great potential and capacity, particularly for relationships. For instance, the body has a capacity to build its relationship with the earth so as to move, eat, sleep and have a relationship with others so as to reproduce in partnership with another body.

The human body has great capacity for sensitivity. The skin covering the body is the most sensitive. The body is therefore rich with potential for partnership and pleasure. But the body is not only about biology—it is also about politics.

Becoming Gendered

Gender refers to boy/girl predictions. Gendered processing starts at birth when roles are assigned amid welcome exclamations around:

- **Labour/roles**: if one is a girl, the prediction is that you will be involved in reproductive work on a full time basis. That is, you will sweep, take care of the house and so on. If one is a boy, the prediction is that you will be involved in productive work;
• **Authority:** if one is a girl, the prediction is your spiritual authority and decision-making power is confined to the private space, while if one is a boy, the prediction is that you will have public (visible) authority;

• **Performance:** if one is a boy, predictions demand certain standards, for instance, eating specified parts of animals, making decisions and being the final authority!

• **Sexuality:** your sexual attitudes, desires and behaviour will and must all be directed towards the opposite sex. Heterosexuality is one of the predictions around gender to the extent that we cannot tell the difference. For instance, “how can you be a man if you are not heterosexual?”

### The Rebellion Exercise

Not all the above predictions become reality. Gender relations are socially constructed and can be challenged. That is why society often witnesses diverse forms of rebellions against these predictions, equally expressed by LGBTIs and heterosexuals. To illustrate this, “the rebellion exercise” can be used.

As a man or woman, where have you rebelled with most success? In response, participants noted that they had successfully rebelled against:

- religion and sexuality, not planning to marry and reproduce;
- religious circles, standing ground as a male soprano, not tenor, in the choir;
- authority where parents were against theatre and dancing;
- friendship, not caring what is said as a result of being gay;
- sexuality, being with boys and not girls and wooing girls.

### 7.2 The Sexuality Story

Ian Swartz noted that sexuality is as powerful as gender. A human being is not only physical but also spiritual, emotional, intellectual and sexual. The difference between physical and sexual is that the latter is more than physical.

Human sexuality encompasses:

1. **Sexual anatomy:** physiology, growth and development when the life long journey begins, affecting how you see yourself as you become aware of feelings;
2. **Biological sex:** the physiology (or actual biology) of human sexuality, and sexually-related aspects of how the body works, are used to categorise human beings as being male or female;
3. **Gender identity:** our psychological and social sense of who we are as male or female;
4. **Gender role identity:** these are the actual gender roles we see ourselves playing. This can be problematic for lesbians and gay men who may not necessarily identify with the gender roles society ascribes to them;
5. **Sexual orientation:** this is what shapes our emotional, romantic or sexual attraction to others. We are currently perceived to fit in three categories (homosexual, bisexual or heterosexual), which is also unrealistic;
6. **Sexual orientation identity**: this refers to how we choose to identify our own sexual orientation, recognising that the process of “naming” is also political, cultural, and personal;

7. **Sexual behaviour**: Human sexual behaviour in most individuals is typically influenced, or heavily affected by societal or cultural expectations and norms. These ‘norms’ often fail to reflect the natural and diverse sexual inclinations of the individual. Homosexuals, for example, are said to behave abnormally. What is overlooked is that in sex, the only limitation is imagination. Sexual behaviour can include an endless list of basic, alternative/explorative, socio-cultural, religious, and even crime-related acts and practices;

8. **Sexual lifestyles**: one does not choose orientation but lifestyle is one’s choice. Whether we are homo-, bi- or hetero-sexual, the way we act in seeking sexual activity is a matter of choice, e.g. celibacy, monogamy, polyamory, casual sexual activity, etc.;

9. **Sexual beliefs**: commonly held beliefs about homosexuals are that they are physically weak, crazy, abnormal, badly brought up or were abused in childhood. Sex is seen as simple and sexuality as a sin—the redeemer is sex for procreation. This fuels homophobia for sex is a gift and people should have the freedom to live what they believe;

10. **Attitudes**: whether our own, or those expressed in our communities/societies, attitudes about human sexuality affect our identity;

11. **Values**: determine the sexual lifestyles we choose. Examples include religious values that prohibit sexual intercourse before marriage;

12. **Body image**: this refers to how we perceive our physical appearances. People with poor body images perceive their bodies as being unattractive or even repulsive to others, while those with good body image see themselves as attractive, or at least accept their bodies as they are;

13. **Self esteem**: this is particularly important to LGBTIs as they are constantly fighting negatives but should be assured that they are well-balanced and that their sex is normal;

14. **Sexual health**: they physical, mental and social well-being required to have responsible, satisfying and safe sex;

15. **Sexual fantasies and dreams**: these provide room for unlimited and unrestrained self exploration;

16. **Relationships with others**: our relationships with our parents and others also shape our sexuality;

17. **Spirituality**: as we are spiritual beings, our sexuality is also affected by our spirituality;

18. **Experiences**: these are the events that influence and shape our sexuality.

Sexuality is individual, as no two people can have the same sexuality. Sexuality changes, is dynamic, and is never stagnant. Hence, the categories described above overflow and are not compartmentalised or fixed. Sexuality also varies across different cultures and regions of the world, and will continue to change throughout our existence and the existence of those that will come after us.
LGBTI Challenges: Religion and Homosexuality

In this session, Bishop Christopher Senyonjo shared a powerful presentation facilitating participants’ reflection on how socialisation through religion has continued to oppress sexual pluralism. Can a loving creator (God) condemn love between two people?

One would have expected that the church of Jesus Christ would reflect those attractive characteristics of its Lord and Master. Alas, this has not always been the case, for the church of Jesus Christ has caused him to weep yet again, as it has been riddled with racism, sexism, and heterosexism.  

Religion is important in one’s sexual life. Though often disregarded, religion essentially grapples with the purpose, meaning and functions of sexuality among sexual beings. The human being is complex and reproduced through sexual intercourse, which is different from an amoeba which reproduces by binary fission, not needing sexual activity. Plants do not care about sexual activity as they may be pollinated by wind or insects but animals are different.

8.1 Functions of Sexuality in Animals and Human Beings

Mammals:

Males woo females to gratify their sexual instinct. Females feel the urge of sex when they are on heat, ready for impregnation. In short, animals seek sex to reproduce and satisfy sexual urges.

“I know that God created in me a need to love, the ability to love. I cannot believe that God would be so spiteful to say “Ha! You’re gay, you can’t do anything about it.” Member of a support group for Anglican/Episcopalian gays and lesbians.

“I’m tired of people telling me that homosexuality is a terrible sin. Homosexuality is not a sin. Heterosexuality is not a sin. It is coerciveness, promiscuity, manipulation, lack of safety, and lack of a prior commitment that makes a sexual act sinful—not the gender of the two people involved.” Anonymous posting.

“When religion sanctifies hostility, it erases the moral inhibitors and lends to hostility an irrational ferocity.” From a Cardinal

In human beings:

Humans are also interested in reproducing themselves and caring for offspring. Humans enjoy the pleasure of having sex so as to satisfy the sexual urge. The other function of sex is to express love for each other. Sex is a sign of commitment to each other. Sex creates a relationship that make the lovers co-workers with God as they share together physically, emotionally, intellectually, spiritually, economically, socially and ecologically. In Genesis 2:18, the Lord God said “it is not good for a man (Adam) to be alone; I will make a companion for him, a helper suited for his needs.”

In “The Good Book” one of the most contemporary books that has been written on the Bible, Peter J. Gomes, who has been a minister of The Memorial Church since 1974, shares some critical reflections about how the creation story has been used to perpetuate heteronormativity.

The Genesis story is indeed about Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve\(^1\), as the critics of homosexuality delight in admonishing. “Heterosexuality may be the dominant form of sexuality, but it does not follow that it is the only form of appropriate sexuality.” What the story does do is reflect the world experience of those human beings who wrote it. Of course they would privilege the only way available to perpetuate the race, and they would do so with the aid of their cultural lenses... The creation story in Genesis does not pretend to be a history of anthropology or of every social relationship. It does not mention friendship, for example, and yet we do not assume that friendship is condemned or abnormal. It does not mention the single state, and yet we know that singleness is not condemned, and that in certain religious circumstances it is held in very high esteem. The creation story is not, after all, a paradigm about marriage, but rather about the establishment of human society. .... The creation story is the basis and not the end of human diversity, and thus to regard it as excluding everything it does not mention is to place too great a burden on the text and its writers, and too little responsibility upon the intelligence of the readers, and on the varieties of human experience\(^2\).

Most religions lay emphasis on child bearing while paying little attention to the companionship enhanced by sexual intimacy. Sex for pleasure is scorned and homosexuality considered one of the greatest sins, resulting in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. But careful study of the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah reveals that it was the sin of inhospitality that led to male-male rape not simply to male-male sex. Critical reading of the text concerning Sodom is referred to in Ezekiel 16:48-49 and commented on in Mathew 10:5-15.


\(^2\)Gomes, Peter J., The Good Book: Reading the Bible With Mind and Heart, New York, 1996.
According to Peter Gomes:

The conventional wisdom is that the city of Sodom was destroyed because its inhabitants practiced homosexuality. That was its great wickedness. Even if we credit the Hebrew word “know” in the demands of the Sodomites, however – “that we might know” the strangers – in a carnal sense, we should not neglect the fact that the fate of the city was determined well before the ugly incident at Lot’s door... Sodom is referred to throughout the Old Testament as a place of wickedness and is synonymous with it, but nowhere does it state that homosexuality was the wickedness in question. Among the sins attributed to Sodom in other books of the Old Testament are pride – in the books of Ecclesiasticus and Wisdom in the Apocrypha – and in Ezekiel, in addition to pride, “Fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hands of the poor and the needy.” (Ezekiel 16:48-49) In the New Testament, Jesus himself is under the impression that Sodom was destroyed because it was a place lacking hospitality; we find him saying as much in Matthew 10:14-15, and in Luke 10:10-12.

What is revealing about all this is that nowhere in the Old or New Testaments is the sin of Sodom, the cause of its sudden and terrible destruction, equated with homosexuals or with homosexuality. The attempted homosexual rape of the angels at Lot’s door, while vivid and distasteful, is hardly the subject of the story or the cause of the punishment, and non one in scripture suggests that it was. Homosexual rape is never to be condoned; it is indeed, like heterosexual rape, an abomination before God\textsuperscript{15}.

The struggles that LGBTIs encounter contradict Christian teaching even though discrimination is done invoking Judeo-Christian morality. LGBTIs suffer discrimination, abuse, intimidation, unemployment, expulsion from their families, separation from other children, denunciation from pulpits, expulsion from schools, depression, violent murder and suicide. There is need to change attitudes so there is more religious tolerance, embracing all people as well as creating awareness around the “naturalness” of homosexuality.

\textsuperscript{15}Gomes, Peter J., The Good Book: Reading the Bible With Mind and Heart, New York, 1996.
8.2 Using Religion to Support LGBTIs

Enhanced Awareness Creation and Education

Education is the tool to transform our world. Most religious leaders are ignorant of human sexuality. They consider that sexual orientation is determined by upbringing and not genes. Some attribute homosexuality to poor parenting and believe that sexual orientation can be changed through therapy and prayers. Many believe that people catch it like a cold. Some think it is a demon. People should be willing to know the reality—heterosexuality, bisexuality and homosexuality are three normal, natural variations, found in all cultures and eras.

Institutions of learning, including theological colleges, should create understanding about sexuality. A curriculum entitled “Human Sexuality and Marriage” should be included which discusses the spectrum of human sexuality. Heterosexuals should be aware that the world is not inhabited by them alone. *(John 16:12).* Religion should be the refuge of LGBTIs.

Integrating and Giving Space for LGBTIs’ Free Expression

LGBTIs should be listened to, not banned or condemned. They are among us and we should not play ostrich by hiding our heads in the sand. Religious leaders should follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ who was chosen to bring “good news”—the Gospel—to marginalised and down-trodden people. *(Luke 4:18-19).* It is possible to transform all societies to enable LGBTI people enjoy respect and understanding in harmony with heterosexuals.

Bishop Christopher Senyonjo and a participant of the conference review biblical texts.
Thuli Madi and Ian Swartz led this session, focused on LGBTI activism from an individual perspective. Guiding questions to shape the discussion were presented for personal reflection and sharing and later integration in each of the country teams as follows:

1. Why do you consider yourself as an activist?
2. What are characteristics of an activist?
3. What is the value of coming together in country teams?

### 9.1 Understanding Activism

Being an activist and part of a movement begins with a personal commitment and resolve to be an agent of change. Participants affirmed their pride in being activists by concluding the following sentence: I am an activist because...

- of my presence at this conference.
- I believe in sexual freedom and believe that heterosexual is not normal but common.
- I am a leading lobbyist and educator on gay rights in Tanzania.
- I am fighting for gay rights and seeking to know how the law can advance gay rights.
- I belong to a group that is discriminated against, abused and stigmatised and I will fight for equal opportunities to do the things I aspire to.
- I live my life out of the shadows and in the open, proactively looking for opportunities to advance LGBTI rights.
9.2 Characters of an Activist

An activist:

- lives in the open and is not reactionary;
- stands up and speaks for the marginalised and inspires them to oppose suppression;
- is a fighter and defender of rights armed with a vision, mission and objectives;
- realises and knows that they have a role to play in movement building;
- has a driving force, a cause and direction;
- is not inspired by personal enrichment and glorification but is prepared to sacrifice and take risks;
- sticks to their beliefs and is not swayed no matter what the circumstances;
- does not pass judgment but encourages people to come out and fight;
- stands up for what they believe in, knowing that they have the intellect to do so;
- is about passion and resilience;
- refuses to be told by others how to lead their lives.

LGBTI activism is about intelligence, keeping an open mind, standing up and speaking out. How can people be criminalised for loving one another? Similarly, there is no validity in doctrines that suggest women are dirty during menstruation and that women cannot be priests—they are oppressive and violate human rights.

9.2 The Value in Coming Together within the Three Countries

Kenya

Because we are socially responsible for one another, we need to sustain bonds and remain active to make a change.
Tanzania
Coming together enhances unity between CPSS and TALESA while strengthening each individual organisation in the fight for LGBTI rights.

Uganda
By coming together, we can build trust, share experiences, build solidarity, strengthen all networks and speak with one voice.

Working together will require action-oriented initiatives. Building on the momentum generated at this conference and creating a movement promoting LGBTI requires commitment and courage. It requires taking responsibility to move and shape dialogue around LGBTI rights in the sub-region. The challenge of human rights and women’s rights organisations taking on sexual minority issues within their advocacy remains, but this should not extinguish the spark generated at this conference. LGBTI activists must begin to walk the path of activism boldly and courageously!

Kenyan, Ugandan and Tanzanian participants of the regional convening on “Supporting LGBTI Organising in East Africa” - June 15-18, 2006.

Six months later... East African LGBTI activists organised a rally at the January 2007 World Social Forum in Nairobi.
The aim of this session was to bring out key issues, priorities, challenges and opportunities for LGBTI activism in each country. The session was conducted through group work followed by a question and answer session.

In three country teams, participants reflected on and answered the following questions:

1. What are the key issues and priorities for LGBTIs?
2. What are the challenges and opportunities facing LGBTI activism?
3. How have the challenges affected LGBTI organising?
4. What actions will you take to strengthen LGBTI organising?
### Key Issues and Priorities for LGBTIs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kenya</th>
<th>Uganda</th>
<th>Tanzania</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Capacity building;</td>
<td>- Organisational development;</td>
<td>- Establishment of task forces: this is important given Tanzania’s size and unreliable infrastructure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Lobbying: voter cards can be used as a lobbying tool to identify MPs and lobby;</td>
<td>- Resource mobilisation and financial management;</td>
<td>- The task forces will attend to administrative issues in their areas on behalf of headquarters as well as recruiting, mobilising and counselling;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Using all avenues possible: any leverage we have, for example, the National AIDS Control Council has recognised men who have sex with men (MSM);</td>
<td>- Developing a strategic plan with a vision, mission and objectives;</td>
<td>- Reconstruction of our own leaders to make them resourceful to our organisation, particularly with respect to skills, innovation, mobilisation, tactics, courage, oratory powers, patience and knowledge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Forming an umbrella organisation to merge individual groups: hold elections of the umbrella organisation on July 15/16, 2006 with Liverpool Voluntary Counselling and Testing (VCT) appointed as the convener.</td>
<td>- Leadership skills including communication and public speaking;</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Conflict resolution;</td>
<td>- Advocacy skills: how to dialogue with and lobby government and sell ideas;</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Project management;</td>
<td>- Income generation and management skills;</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Dealing with the media;</td>
<td>- Peer counselling skills.</td>
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### Challenges and Opportunities Facing LGBTI Activism

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Fundraising;</td>
<td>- Conservative culture, ignorance of human rights, homophobia, traditional norms and the lack of open mindedness. For example, a radio station was fined for hosting a discussion on homosexuality.</td>
<td>- Lack of freedom of expression;</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Registration of LGBTI groups;</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Lack of financial resources;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Organisational structures bridging fragmentation along class and other lines;</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Insufficient managerial skills;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Communication;</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Dependency on the part of members;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Negative media attention, which could be turned into an opportunity;</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Cultural and religious beliefs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Stand taken by religious bodies: seek audience with religious organisations and form alliances with other human rights organisations after determining what it is we want from these organisations.</td>
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How the Challenges have Affected LGBTI Organising

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We have been unable to sustain activism and in-country networking.</td>
<td>Entrenched homophobia creates fear among LGBTIs and forces LGBTIs to try to change their sexual orientation. Members are scared of losing their jobs and being chased away from their homes.</td>
<td>The growth of our organisations is limited by the lack of the freedoms of expression and association. This limits our exposure and forces people to hibernate.</td>
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Actions to be Taken to Strengthen LGBTI Organising

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Work on social change as individuals and a group;</td>
<td>- Create and maintain solidarity;</td>
<td>- Re-establish task forces in existing zones;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- meet regularly to discuss our issues;</td>
<td>- Maintain a network with local and international organisations;</td>
<td>- Lobbying for support from religious leaders, government officials and traditional leaders as well as other NGOs;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- communicate our issues to other LGBTI groups to draw experience and</td>
<td>- Create rapport with allies (gay-friendly people);</td>
<td>- Make positive contributions to society to have an impact on society, for example, being involved in public works.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- invite LGBTIs from other countries to share and exchange knowledge, information and ideas.</td>
<td>- Make use of the media (print and electronic) to reach the public.</td>
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</table>
10.4 Moving Ahead

In terms of structuring LGBTI groups within the countries it is important to note that differences of opinion are not necessarily weaknesses—they can provide new (and better) ways of framing issues. A sub-regional strategy can be developed as there is a lot in common in the three countries. But having an umbrella organisation is not a prerequisite for moving forward. Each country can develop at its own pace in terms of structuring its organising and recalling the focus on movement building. The movement is not about money but about working towards a common goal—hence the need to sacrifice, learn to forgive and forget and forge ways of working together with what is available.

There are some LGBTIs who consider that non-LGBTIs should not be working on LGBTI issues. But, as seen with TRP, expanding the constituency of support is important for LGBTI activism. There is need for genuine allies to move the cause forward.

In terms of capacity building, Liverpool VCT can carry this out individually, organisationally, for an umbrella or within the sub-region. As an immediate follow-up action, the possibility of developing a common paper for each country to present during the global HIV/AIDS conference to be held in Toronto, Canada in August 2006, was discussed. A strong movement must be built that cannot be derailed by individuals.

10.5 Conclusion

This conference demonstrated that there is great potential of building the East African LGBTI movement. Securing the rights of sexual minorities is as important as securing any other human right. History has shown that whenever a minority group becomes organised and demands equal rights, that they eventually attain equality. This conference was one way of sowing and nurturing the seed of activism. The challenge of strengthening activism resides with the participants at this conference. A safe space to deliberate having been provided, through which innovative and powerful strategies emerged, now requires the LGBTI activists to forge ahead to shape and strengthen the movement.
Kaari Murungi expressed her appreciation to all present as they had all contributed to the success of the conference. It is evident that the issues call for understanding. It is also clear that LBGT groups could learn from other organisations, such as women’s organisations, which have already weathered some of the challenges mentioned. The real (and hard) work lies ahead, after the conference.

The participants were thanked for taking the risk to actively participate throughout the conference and the facilitating/resource team for bringing hope. The donors were also thanked, including the Ford Foundation East Africa, Hivos, the Global Fund for Women and Astrea Lesbian Foundation for Justice. Finally, UAF-Africa staff were thanked for having organised the conference efficiently, overcoming the challenges of fear, mistrust and the possibility of creating a space that would not be “safe” enough for the activists.
APPENDIX I

Conference Programme

15th June 2006, Thursday

4:00 pm Tea, Arrival and Registration
6:30 pm Early Dinner
8:00 pm “Four More Workshops” Film

16th June 2006, Friday

8:30 am Late Registration
9:00 am Welcome – Jane Kiragu
Ice Breaker – Agatha Wangui (WE-PET)
Introductions – Jane Kiragu
9:45 am Opening remarks – Kaari Murungi (Director, UAF-A)
9:50 am Country Reports – Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya
10:35 am Context for LGBTI Organising and the Role of Funding Organisations
Carla Sutherland (Ford Foundation, East Africa)
Petronella Maturure (Hivos)
Kaari Murungi (Urgent Action Fund – Africa)
11:00 am HEALTH BREAK
11:30 am Law, Human Rights and Sexuality – “Advancing the Rights of LGBTI. Through Legal Means: the Case of East Africa”
Professor Sylvia Tamale (Dean, Law Faculty, Makerere University)
Plenary discussions – Jane Kiragu
1:00 pm LUNCH
2:00 pm LGBTI Case Studies
Thuli Madi (Behind The Mask)
Ian Swartz (The Rainbow Project)
Plenary discussions – Jane Kiragu
4:30 pm HEALTH BREAK
6:30 pm       DINNER
7:45 pm       Fun & Games – Carla Sutherland & Sylvia Tamale
              “Ask-It-Kibo”

17th June 2006, Saturday

9:00 am       Recap and Reflections – Jane Kiragu
                Structure of the Day – Jane Bennet
9:30 am       Human Sexuality and Gender – Jane Bennet & Ian Swartz
                Plenary discussions
11:00 am      HEALTH BREAK
11:30 am      Human Sexuality and Gender (contd) – Jane Bennet & Ian Swartz
1:00 pm       LUNCH
2:00 pm       Human Sexuality and Gender (contd) – Jane Bennet & Ian Swartz
                Religion and Family – Bishop Senyonjo (Integrity Uganda)
3:30 pm       HEALTH BREAK
4:00 pm       Strengthening the LGBTI Movement – Thuli Madi & Ian Swartz
5:00 pm       BREAK
6:30 pm       DINNER
8:00 pm       Queer Fiesta

18th June 2006, Sunday

9:00 am       Strengthening the LGBTI Movement and Next Steps – Country
                Working Groups – Jane Kiragu
10:30 am      LGBTI Country Working Group Presentations
12:00 pm      Closing Remarks – Kaari Murungi (Director, UAF-Africa)
1:00 pm       LUNCH & DEPARTURE
One Profound Thing

Each participant was asked to complete the sentence “one profound thing I will take away from the conference.” The answers included:

- the sense of responsibility the organisers had.
- the understanding that sexuality is dynamic.
- knowing ourselves better and being in a better position to teach others about sexuality.
- a better understanding of LGBTI issues.
- a better understanding of who we are in the context of fellow LGBTIs.
- how to explain to our parents who we are.
- encouragement: not being alone in the need for strengthening.
- endurance.
- confidence that we can overcome anything with the skills, passion and energy seen at the conference.
- confidence that a foundation for an East African LGBTI movement has been set.
- that courage is essential.
- the diversity within the LGBTI community.
- diversity, what it means and how it affects us.
- how to work with diverse people.
- being an activist.
- knowledge, ability and capacity to work as an activist.
- knowing how to fight for and defend rights.
- the knowledge that we are all different and unique and need each other’s support.
- the need for a strong network for the region: collaboration, solidarity and working together.
- the awareness that building a movement takes time, patience and courage.
- the need to look at the challenges facing LGBTI groups.
- accepting challenges, both positive and negative.
- looking at challenges as opportunities: the difference between impossible and possible is determination.
- knowledge that there is a LGBTI movement in East Africa.
- the willingness to make the ship sail because we know what we believe in and what we want for this movement.
- the way to look forward.
APPENDIX III

Conference Evaluation

34 participants completed evaluation forms at the end of the conference and said the following:

1.0 Words to Describe the Conference

Educational, interesting, unforgettable, resourceful, inspiring, interactive, excellent, informative, enjoyable, well-organised, impressive, mind-opening, brilliant, fantastic, wonderful, engaging, supportive, powerful, inclusive, diversified, historical.

2.0 Most Liked Parts of the Conference (With Reasons)

- The party: it was fun dancing and expressing my sexuality in an uninhibited way. It was an opportunity to relax and see everyone in their true colours and I was able to invite my family as part of my coming out process;
- Case studies: made us aware of our rights and gave us a history of LGBTI organising in our countries, which was encouraging;
- Country presentations: enabled us to know more about LGBTIs in East Africa;
- Group discussions: were an opportunity to meet fellow activists at the country level;
- Human sexuality and gender: gave us knowledge to explain our cause to the public and other LGBTIs;
- Legal activism: opened our minds about LGBTI rights issues;
- Religion: it is a big concern and it got rid of my guilty conscience;
- Fun and Games;
- All of it!

3.0 Least Liked Parts of the Conference (With Reasons)

- The timing: there was too much free time and we should have made use of the time available;
- Interaction: there was suspicion and arms-length engagement;
- The charades game: our team lost!
- Country working groups: they showed we are not on the same footing;
- Country reports: some presenters were not conversant with what they were presenting and the different organisations did not seem clear as to what was expected;
- Seeing the Uganda group backbiting one another;
- Religion: focused only on the Bible and not different religions.
4.0 Most Enjoyed Speakers

Participants agreed that all the speakers were great and commended them as follows:

- Jane Bennet: eloquent, lady of her word, gorgeous, confident and simplified complicated stuff;
- Bishop Christopher Senyonjo: a breath of fresh air and strong ally;
- Carla Sutherland and Kaari Murungi: focused and to the point;
- Ian Swartz: clear and precise;
- Sylvia Tamale: bold and detailed;
- Thuli Madi: good understanding of the issues and motivating;

5.0 What Could Have Been Done Differently

Some of the recommendations made included:

- Inviting sympathetic people in leadership positions (govt. NGOs or civil society) to attend;
- Not inviting people who are not LGBTI;
- Covering even more questions and issues instead of having free time and games;
- Spending more time doing group work;
- Facilitating more discussions on the role of media, role of heterosexuals and how to engage these groups;
- Providing preventive health measures (condoms);
- Giving men more time to speak;
- Having professional Kiswahili interpreters;
- Hosting future conferences in less expensive hotels;

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall facilitation of the meeting</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The venue (accommodation and conference facilities)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
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6.0 Additional Remarks

Being the first LGBTI convening in East Africa, it was a tremendous experience.
I had a good time in a conducive environment and it was educational for my group and thus our community at home.

We should have more such conferences.
should have had at least half a day to tour Kenya.
Thank you!
I'm so glad we did this!
APPENDIX IV

Profiles of Resource Persons

JANE BENNETT is a Senior Lecturer at the University of Cape Town (UCT) in South Africa and has been with the African Gender Institute (AGI) for the past five years, working mainly in two programmes: gender studies; and gender-based violence (GBV) in education. She holds a Doctorate in Applied Linguistics from Teachers College, Columbia University, and has taught literature, linguistics, social studies and women’s and gender studies at a number of university campuses in Africa and the United States of America (USA). She has been an active member of various community organisations committed to fighting colonialism, especially as colonialism has impacted the psychological, sexual and physical health of women. At the AGI, she is responsible for academic teaching at undergraduate and postgraduate level, for the delivery of training with her colleagues and for the development of research and action projects.

JANE KIRAGU, a board member of UAF-Africa, is a Human Rights Lawyer with over 16 years experience. She is the immediate past Executive Director of the Federation of Women Lawyers in Kenya, FIDA Kenya and has also served as Commissioner of the Law Reform Commission, Kenya. She has extensive experience in human rights, lobbying, research, training, facilitation, empowerment, evaluation, operational management and legal work. Ms Kiragu has undertaken research on women’s reproductive rights whose outputs are considered an authority in the African context. Kiragu has an MA in international relations from the Fletcher School of Law & Diplomacy, a Bachelors of Law degree from the University of Bristol, UK, and a Postgraduate Certificate, in Human Rights Lawyering from Oxford University, UK. She is an advocate of the High Court of Kenya and serves on several regional and International boards.

THULI MADI is the director of Behind The Mask, a communication initiative around LGBTI rights in Africa, that is based in Johannesburg, South Africa.

PETRONELLA MATURURE is the Hivos Sector Programme Officer for Gender, Women and Development for Southern Africa. A sociologist by profession, she has been in the development field since 1992. Petronella has worked for various international organisations, including Norwegian Peoples Aid in Mozambique and a Social Forestry Project for the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) in Zimbabwe. Petronella has been involved with communities as a project coordinator in both Mozambique and Zimbabwe. As a Gender, Women and Development Officer, Petronella is actively involved in human rights work with a special emphasis on women’s rights. Her current work involves assessing proposals for funding and monitoring. Her passion is ensuring and supporting gender equality for all.
BISHOP CHRISTOPHER SENYONJO was consecrated Bishop of the Diocese of west Buganda in 1974 and served for over 20 years. Senyonjo retired in 1998 and fell out with the Church of Uganda in 2002 for publicly supporting homosexuals. Since the 1998 Lambeth Conference of World Anglican Bishops, where some clerics openly demanded that homosexuals be recognised, Christopher’s views on gay rights have bothered the local clergy. Senyonjo was dropped as the assisting Bishop of Namirembe for his pro-gay sentiments. After he was ex-communicated from the Church of Uganda, he formed his own church, the Charismatic Church of Uganda. Christopher says the experience of watching a Ugandan woman and her father struggle with her announcement that she was a lesbian changed his mind about homosexuality and led him to chair the African continent’s first Integrity chapter. As Chair of Integrity-Uganda, he has released a statement in which he apologised for thinking that homosexuality in Africa was a foreign import.

CARLA SUTHERLAND joined the Nairobi office of the Ford Foundation on April 1, 2004 as the Education and Sexuality Programme Officer. Previously, she worked as a consultant for the Rockefeller Foundation in Nairobi under the direction of Dr Katherine Namuddu, providing support to a wide range of projects in Kenya, Uganda and Zimbabwe addressing barriers to girls’ education, with a particular focus on improving the institutional management of the process of growing up and sexual maturation. While working in east and southern Africa, Carla completed her PhD in Social Policy at the London School of Economics (LSE), examining the impact of cost-sharing measures at Makerere University in Uganda within a broader investigation of issues of equity, efficiency and sustainability of higher education in sub-Saharan Africa. Prior to this, Carla worked as a policy researcher at the UCT, looking at a wide range of institutional equity issues, including sexual harassment and employment equity. With Dr Mamphela Ramphele, she assisted in the establishment of the AGI at UCT, before being seconded to work for the South African chapter of the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE-SA).

SYLVIA TAMALE is the Dean of the Faculty of Law at Makerere University and an Advocate of the Courts of Judicature in Uganda. Sylvia is a public intellectual who routinely appears in the Ugandan media as a spokesperson for Ugandan women and a human rights advocate. She played a leading role in efforts to establish a sexual harassment policy at Makerere University and has been in the forefront of legislative efforts to establish women’s rights in the areas of land ownership and family relations. Sylvia is a human rights defender and activist, academic, writer and grassroots mobiliser who has influenced critical thinking at national and international levels. She is one of Africa’s leading feminist scholars. Her book When Hens Begin To Crow: Gender and Parliamentary Politics in Uganda, published in 1999, has been recognised internationally as a landmark piece. Her analysis puts her at the cutting edge of human rights discourse. In July 2003, Sylvia was awarded the University of Minnesota’s Distinguished Leadership Award for Internationals.

IAN SWARTZ is the director of the Rainbow Project, an LGBTI rights organisation based in Windhoek, Namibia.
## APPENDIX V

List of Participating Organisations

### Kenyan (22 Participants)

1. WE-PET
2. Liverpool VCT & Care
3. Diverse Outing
4. Gay Kenya
5. Ishtar
6. Galebrita
7. Positive Women Action Group (PWAG)
8. The Other Men In Kenya (TOMIK)
9. Movement of Men Against AIDS in Kenya (MMAAK)
10. Changing Attitudes
11. Equality Now! Development Project

### Ugandan Participants (12 Participants)

13. Spectrum Uganda Initiatives Limited
14. Integrity Uganda
15. Anti-homophobic Africaine (AHA)
16. Soliddhe ARC DRC
17. Right Companion Foundation
18. Livelihood Development International (LDI)
19. GALA Uganda
20. Straight Talk Foundation Limited
21. Sexual Minorities Uganda (SMUG)

### Tanzanian Participants (11 Participants)

22. Community Peer Support Services (CPSS)
23. Tanzanian Lesbian Association (TALESA)

### Other LGBTI International Organisations

24. Queer Solidarity - Norway

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For purposes of protecting the activists’ identities, it was agreed that individual names would not be published in this report.
Resource Persons

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   Email: ian@trp.org.na

29. Bishop Christopher Senyonjo  
   Email: dcsenyonjo@yahoo.co.uk

Donor Organisations

30. The Ford Foundation,  
    Office for Eastern Africa  
    P.O. Box 41081, 00100  
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    Fax: +254-20-2712203  
    Website: ford-nairobi@fordfound.org  
    Contact Person:  
    Dr. Carla Sutherland  
    Email: C.Sutherland@fordfound.org  
    Program Officer: Education,  
    Sexuality & Religion

31. International Humanist Institute for  
    Cooperation with Developing Countries  
    (HIVOS)  
    Raamweg 16, P.O. Box 85565  
    2508 CG The Hague  
    Tel: +31 70 376 5500 fax: +31 70 362 4600  
    Email: info@hivos.nl  
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    Marijke Mooij  Email: m.mooij@hivos.nl  
    Petronella Maturue  Email: petronella@hivos.co.zw

32. Urgent Action Fund – Africa:  
    Life Ministry Centre, 2nd Floor  
    Jabavu Road (next to Kilimani Police Station)  
    P O Box 53841-00200, Nairobi Kenya  
    Tel: 254-20 2731095  Fax: 254-20 2731094  
    Website: www.urgentactionfund.org  
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APPENDIX VI

Some Useful LGBTI Resources

The list of resources below is by no means extensive. It comprises a list of resources that were deemed useful to the participants of the first East African convening of LGBTI activists. For further research on LGBTI and other sexuality issues, a wealth of additional information can be found on many of the websites listed below.

LGBTI Organizations & Websites

Behind The Mask (BTM), Johannesburg, South Africa
www.mask.org.za

Black Looks, a blog by an African lesbian
www.blacklooks.org

Centre for Popular Education on Human Rights (CEPERHG), Ghana
www.ceperhg.net

Centre for the Study of AIDS, University of Pretoria
www.csa.za.org

Encyclopedia of GLBTQ Culture
www.glbtq.com

Engender, Cape Town, South Africa
www.engender.org.za

Durban Lesbian & Gay Community & Health Centre
www.gaycentre.org.za

Forum for the Empowerment of Women (FEW), Johannesburg, South Africa
www.few.org.za

Gay Goodies, Johannesburg, South Africa (suppliers of rainbow goodies)
www.gaygoodies.co.za

Gay and Lesbian Archives of South Africa (GALA), Johannesburg
www.gala.wits.ac.za

Gay Kenya
www.gaykenya.com

Gay Uganda
www.geocities.com/gayuganda/contents.html

Gays & Lesbians of African Descent (GLAD), Canada
www.gladtoronto.com

Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe
www.galz.co.zw

Gender Dynamix (first and only African organisation for the transgendered community), Cape Town, South Africa
www.genderdynamix.co.za

Huriyah, a queer muslim magazine
http://huriyahmag.com

Human Rights Watch – LGBT, New York, USA
www.hrw.org/lgbt

The Inner Circle (Muslim faith-based organisation), South Africa
www.theinnercircle-za.org

International Center for Reproductive Health and Sexual Rights (INCRESE), Nigeria
www.increse.org

International Gay & Lesbian Human Rights Commission (IGLHRC), New York, USA
www.iglhrc.org

International Lesbian and Gay Association, Brussels, Belgium
www.ilga.org

Joburg Pride, South Africa
www.joburgpride.org.za

LGBT South-South Dialogue, Ecuador
http://www.movimientos.org/dss/

Mambaonline, Johannesburg, South Africa – news and entertainment
www.mambaonline.com

Metropolitan Community Churches, International office, USA
www.mccchurch.org

Out-LGBT Well-being, Pretoria, South Africa
www.out.org.za

Out in Africa, South African Gay and Lesbian Film Festival, Cape Town, SA
www.onia.co.za

Skeiv Solidaritet/Queer Solidarity, Norway
www.sirilindstad.com

Support Project in Nigeria (SPIN)
http://spin.maxworks.net

Triangle Project, Cape Town, South Africa
www.triangle.org.za
 Email groups/List-serves (only a small selection)

African Gay Christians – moderated by Rev Jide Macaulay of North London Metropolitan Community Church – it has a strong Nigerian and West African flavour but Africans from other parts of the continent also participate http://groups.yahoo.com/group/africangaychristians/

African Solidarity – for African Human Rights Defenders with a strong focus on LGBTI issues http://groups.yahoo.com/group/africansolidarity2006/

Afrique Solidarite – similar to the above group but in French for Francophone LGBTIs and allies! http://fr.groups.yahoo.com/group/afrique_solidarite/

Queer Somalis/Qaniisinta Soomaaliyeed http://groups.yahoo.com/group/queersomalisis/

E-Books


Funders & NGO’s with Funding Mechanisms

Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice www.astraeafoundation.org

Ford Foundation East Africa Office www.fordfound.org/global

Front Line International Foundation for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders www.frontlinedefenders.org

Funders for Lesbian & Gay Issues www.lgbtfunders.org

Global Fund for Women www.globalfundforwomen.org

Hivos www.hivos.nl/english

International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA) www.ilga-europe.org/

Mama Cash www.mamacash.nl/english

Open Society Institute (OSI) and Soros Foundations www.soros.org

Queer Youth Fund of Liberty Hill Foundation www.libertyhill.org/qyt/

Sigrid Rausing Trust www.sigrid-rausing-trust.org

Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) www.sida.se/Sida/

Urgent Action Fund-Africa www.urgentactionfund-africa.or.ke

Bibliography

Blackwood, Evelyn and Wieringa, Saskia. Female Desires - Same-Sex Relations and Transgender Practices Across Cultures,


Epprecht, Marc. Hungochani: The History of a Dissident Sexuality in Southern Africa


There is also a good bibliography (academic) on the topic http://www.glbtq.com/social-sciences/africa_pre2.html#bibliography at the Queer Encyclopedia of the Visual Arts