

Diversified Kenya: Organisational Profile

Overview

Founded in 2021, Diversified Kenya is a grassroots queer community dedicated to creating a safe and supportive space for Lesbian, Bisexual, Queer, and Gender Non-Conforming (GNC) women in Kenya. Initially established as an advocacy group for LGBTQIA+ rights, the organization has evolved into a dynamic hub for queer youth empowerment, self-expression, and community-building. Rooted in African culture and art, Diversified Kenya fosters an environment of joy, love, and mental wellness, offering a sanctuary where LGBTQIA+ individuals can thrive despite prevalent socio-political challenges.

Mission Statement

To provide a safety net for queer youth in Kenya, offering economic empowerment, mental health resources, harm reduction, and community care to help them build mental fortitude and navigate their identities.

Vision Statement

Empower queer youth to thrive, reclaim their stories, and build sustainable lives through resilience and community support.

Key Programs:

- **Economic Empowerment:** Woodwork workshop, financial literacy, career development, and entrepreneurship support, with peer-led skill swaps for crafts like soap-making, wig-making, and online business management.
- **Balconies of Hope:** Provides seedlings for small urban gardens, usually balconies, promoting food security, healthy eating, and mindfulness.
- **Art as Healing:** Workshops and projects that use art for emotional healing, self-expression, and mental wellness.
- **Sobriety Clinic:** A communal initiative offering support for substance abuse recovery, supplemented by professional mental health services in collaboration with Mental 360.
- **Queer Joy:** Celebrating queer identity through body positivity, sexual health education, and inclusive events fostering self-love and community connection.

Key Objectives

- **Economic Empowerment:** Equip 200 queer youth annually with woodworking skills, financial literacy, entrepreneurship, and career development skills for economic independence.
- **Mental Wellness Through Art:** Provide art therapy and creative workshops to 200 participants yearly, supporting trauma healing and personal growth.
- **Substance Abuse Reduction:** Lower substance abuse rates by 30% in 3 years through peer-led sobriety support and drug-free hangouts.
- **Queer Joy & Community Resilience:** Host 12 annual community events celebrating queer joy, body positivity, and mental wellness in safe spaces.

Collaborations:

We partner with key organizations like Mental 360 for mental health services and support for our Sobriety Clinic. Other collaborators include HOLAAFRICA, the National Gay and Human Rights Commission, Traveling Wakili, Queer Wellness Circle, and Nadharia Kenya. These partnerships enhance our impact in areas such as mental health support, financial literacy, and legal advocacy.

Key Achievements

- **Monthly Physical Meets:** Hosting regular meetups to strengthen connections among members and sharing circles to help each other navigate challenges.
- **Drug-Free Hangouts:** Creating safe spaces that promote healthy interactions and support sobriety.
- **Successful 200 Queers Hike:** Organizing a landmark hike on August 25, 2024, attended by 200 participants for a safe and enjoyable experience.
- **Interactive Virtual Sessions:** Offering weekly online sessions for educational content, mental health support, and community engagement for members unable to attend in person.
- **Social Media & Advocacy:** Utilizing social media platforms to educate on queer identities, relationships, and financial empowerment.
- **Economic Empowerment Initiatives:** Offering financial literacy education to help members navigate economic challenges, the **Balconies of Hope** program to enhance food security, and skill-sharing initiatives to reduce the economic burden of household essentials.

Leadership & Team

1. **Gatwiri Koome – Founder:** Advocate for queer rights, emphasizing the need for funding and financial empowerment in the community.
2. **Brenda Viola – Communications Officer:** Manages communication strategies and public relations.
3. **Mwende Mutuku – Operations:** Oversees daily operations and program execution.
4. **Fwande Nasio – Finance Officer:** Responsible for financial planning and management.

Additional Programs & Activities

- **Podcasts:** Sharing lived experiences of queer individuals in Kenya.
- **Entrepreneurship & Career Development:** Featuring segments with entrepreneurs for guidance and inspiration.
- **Queer Sex Workers:** Supporting and advocating for queer sex workers.
- **Speed Dating & Matchmaking:** Facilitating events for queer individuals to connect.
- **Sexual Pleasure & Body Positivity:** Promoting discussions on BDSM, self-pleasure, and consent.

Advocacy & Social Issues

- **Sexual Assault & Consent:** Providing a safe space for discussions on these topics.
- **Parenting & Queer Families:** Offering resources for queer parents and families.
- **Social Issues & Legislation:** Engaging in advocacy for positive legislative changes.