

Changing Faces Changing Spaces

Report



Acronyms

CBO	Community Based Organisation
CFCS	Changing Faces Changing Spaces
LGBTIQ+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer and others
MSM	Men who have Sex with Men
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
PEP	Post-exposure Prophylaxis
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UHAI-EASHRI	UHAI - The East African Sexual Health and Rights Initiative

Foreword

At the 2019 CFCS, UHAI celebrated ten years of existence. Ten years ago, it was the first and only sexual and gender minorities and sex worker fund in Africa. Since that time, the Other Foundation, the Red Umbrella, the International Trans Fund and others have also been established. It is part of the legacy of the CFCS conference that UHAI and other activist funds now exist.

As sexual and gender minorities and sex workers, we are reminded daily that the world that we live in was not set up for us to survive, but we continue to push back. Sexual and gender minorities bodies are sites of violence, but we push back. We dance, we celebrate. What is the point of a revolution if we can't dance? We influence narrative and we change the culture.

We do it fabulously and fiercely. We survive and thrive. We sit here as a testimony.

As we come together at the seventh Changing Faces Changing Spaces Conference, we celebrate our resilience and look to the future. We are grateful to our board for its efforts in organising this conference. We are also grateful to the tireless CFCS activist task force and the amazing UHAI staff team for making the seventh conference a reality.

This report captures the key themes that emerged during CFCS VII conference and gives us guidance on the most relevant areas within the sexual and gender minorities and sex worker movements which need support in the next two years.

**Mukami Marete and
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Co-Executive Directors, UHAI EASHR

INTRODUCTION

Where We Are:



UHAI - The East African Sexual Health and Rights Initiative is an indigenous activist fund which provides flexible, accessible resources to support sexual and gender minorities and sex workers in the Eastern Africa region (**Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda and Uganda**). UHAI EASHRI aims to build a strong, diverse and organised movement for change through grant making, capacity support and convenings.

The Changing Faces Changing Spaces Conference which so far is Africa's largest convening bringing together grantmakers invested in Africa's sexual and gender minorities and sex worker human rights movements and activists from these movements is organised by UHAI EASHRI.

CFCs provides for direct and active interaction among activists and funders allowing for mutual learning as part of wider advocacy to narrow the knowledge gap between those that resource African movements and those that do the work.

The roadmap to CFCs

1

Call out for applications from sexual and gender minorities and sex worker activists across the continent to volunteer as part of the conference planning taskforce.

This drew interest from 92 activists (**Thank you all for your willingness to share your time and energy**) from which 13 activist taskforce representative of the sexual and gender minorities and sex worker communities from Northern, Southern, Central, Western and Eastern Africa were selected

2

The role of the taskforce was to conceptualise the theme of the conference that informed the call for abstracts.

3

They collectively developed the conference agenda by reviewing and selecting abstracts. After deep thinking, conversations and analysis of continental identity, community, politics, desired shifts and a number of coffee breaks, the selected conference theme emerged as: *Voice, Visibility, Freedom.*





The conference has been held every second year since 2007.

The 7th CFCs took place on 19th to 21st June 2019 in Kenya.

Activists promoting sexual and gender minorities and sex worker human rights from all across the African continent attended the conference. Grantmakers in attendance included public and private foundations, individual and corporate funders, government agencies, embassies as well as bilateral and multilateral agencies. The conference accommodates Arabic, English, French and Swahili-speakers.

The CFCS VII conference had 7 plenary sessions that alternated with parallel sessions taking place concurrently as well as a number of **self-organised sessions**.

This report is structured thematically, in order to capture and communicate the most prominent themes that arose during the 2019 bi-annual convening.

The conference had three cross-cutting themes



Visibility: we have to be visible and we need to claim this in our communities and elsewhere.



Voice: we need to have the courage to speak out in our communities and countries against discriminatory laws.



Freedom: we need to be able to speak and work without stigmatisation and to be free from all forms of violence

A notable CFCS tradition includes a structured speed dating session between funders and activists to bring activist voice on activist identified priorities to the resourcing table.

Self Organised Sessions

Global Philanthropy Project and UHAI

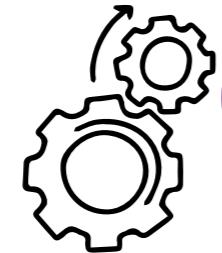
The who, what and how of sexual and gender minorities and sex worker financial resourcing and the global gag rule.



1.0

Legalité: Opportunities and Challenges in Using the Law to Challenge Oppression

Litigation is one of several strategies on a long, hard road to equality for sexual and gender minorities and sex worker Africans. The conference discussed current litigative practices for using the courts as an avenue for the decriminalizing of same-sex conduct and also looked at litigative strategies beyond decriminalisation.



The High Court of Botswana issued a unanimous judgment on June 11, 2019 which declared articles 164 a), 164 c) and 165 of the Botswana Criminal Code to be unconstitutional. In Kenya, the Constitutional and Human Rights Division of the High Court confirmed the provisions of the Criminal Code criminalizing same-sex relationships in a judgment rendered on May 24, 2019 (EG and 7 others v. Attorney General ; DKM and 9 others (interested parties); Katiba Institute and Another (Amicus Curiae), petitions 150 and 234 of 2016, consolidated).



A sex worker activist from Kenya, reflecting on a loss in a case for the protection of the rights of sex workers, advised the documentation of violations as a first step in implementing a litigation strategy. Notably, human rights violations of sexual and gender minorities in Botswana have been documented since 1991



In SALC's the Botswana victory would not have been possible if it was not for the selfless activists who came forward and used their visibility to raise issues. Community movement strengthening and building is what creates change; making it an important investment part of a litigation strategy

Takeaways:

A Kenyan activist, reflecting on three cases from Kenya and three cases from Uganda in respect of sexual and gender minorities rights, advised that:

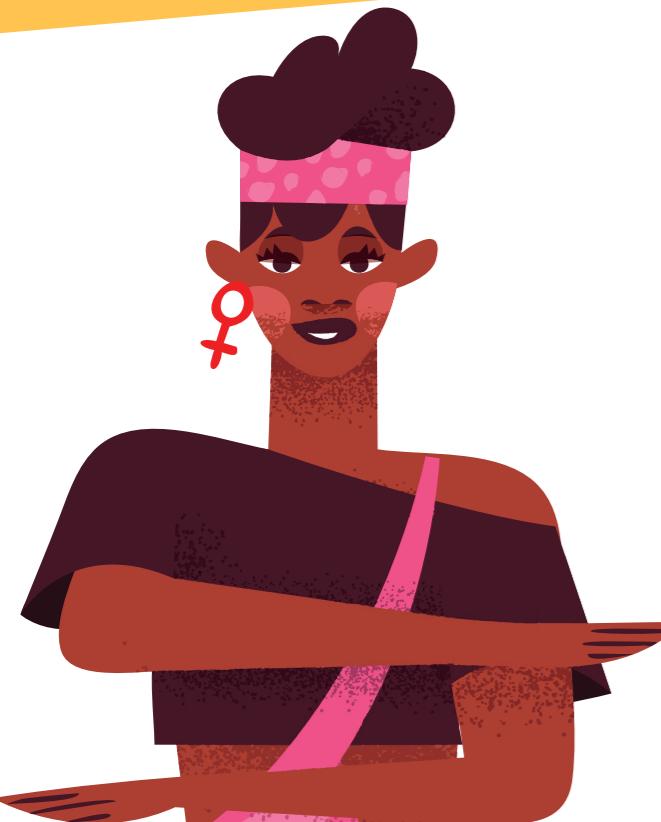
- 1 **Strategic litigation** should not simply be a response to a particular incident of discrimination, but rather approached as part of a broad and inclusive strategy.
- 2 **Joint advocacy** (between sex workers and sexual and gender minority organisations), which is also supported by funders;
- 3 **failure to resolve amicably intra-institutional disagreements on the strategy can have dire consequences for the movement.**
- 4 **Great encouragement for sexual and gender minorities activists in Kenya and elsewhere in Africa** is the fact that the sexual and gender minorities movement in Botswana has seen numerous failures and disappointments in their strategic litigation efforts before achieving victories. Every time the Botswana courts denied the sexual and gender minorities activists what they sought, they went back to the drawing board and bravely approached the courts with new cases under a refined strategy.

The conference celebrated the recent victory in the Botswana decriminalisation case and collectively mourned the loss for the sexual and gender minorities movement in Kenyan courts. Lessons were shared on practices which encouraged the positive decision in Botswana. The Southern African Litigation Centre (SALC), an organisation based in South Africa and working in Southern Africa, was involved in the Botswana case. SALC's representative shared details about the complexity of the legal strategy that they employed and emphasised on the importance of that the litigation was accompanied with information campaigns, advocacy and networking.

2.0

Addressing the Persistent Challenge of Violence

Violence against sexual and gender minorities persons and sex workers persists in all the countries that were represented in the conference. The increased visibility of sexual and gender minorities and sex workers' movements contributes to this increase in violence. The definition of violence in our context is, “**any barbaric act that makes us feel inferior and emphasizes our difference**”. Violence occurs and is perpetuated in various spaces and by various stakeholders, particularly in spaces and/or places where we should be safe:



“Most of the violence that we experience is verbal violence from family especially parents who do not understand gender identity. For example, a parent may fail to understand why one is a trans person i.e. you were born as a boy, why do you want to be a girl?”

Others are religious leaders who disseminate hateful messages of violence against the trans community. Media is the third culprit as it is used to transmit hate messages through traditional and social media



Violence by agents of the State

The trans community face unique challenges and have a different experience to other sexual minorities in that sometimes the subgroups under the LGBTIQ umbrella are the perpetrators.

“Even within the LGBTIQ community, there is silence on trans issues. MSMs are violent towards trans people which is puzzling. There are hateful messages on social media and the internet. These messages are very hurtful and push some trans community want to commit suicide.”

The sad truth is that the legalization of all of this does not guarantee security against abuse:

“Homosexuality is not criminalised in Benin, however, we face violence. Therefore, absence of criminalisation does not protect

Recommendations

Some of the suggested recommendation include:

Documentation 3 of incidents and violence and using these to engage key stakeholders



Raising awareness through focal points 1



Making use 2 of laws that could indirectly protect us

Dialogue 4 with state actors such as magistrates and the police

3.0 Digital Safety

Given the environment we exist in, social media and online activity continues to be a platform utilised widely to organise and to seek work. As such, it has also grown to be a platform exploited to manifest state and non-state sponsored violence against sexual and gender minorities and sex worker Africans. A theme emerging from the conference is web-based safety and security.

Participants shared experiences of safety and the digital space intersecting in their countries.

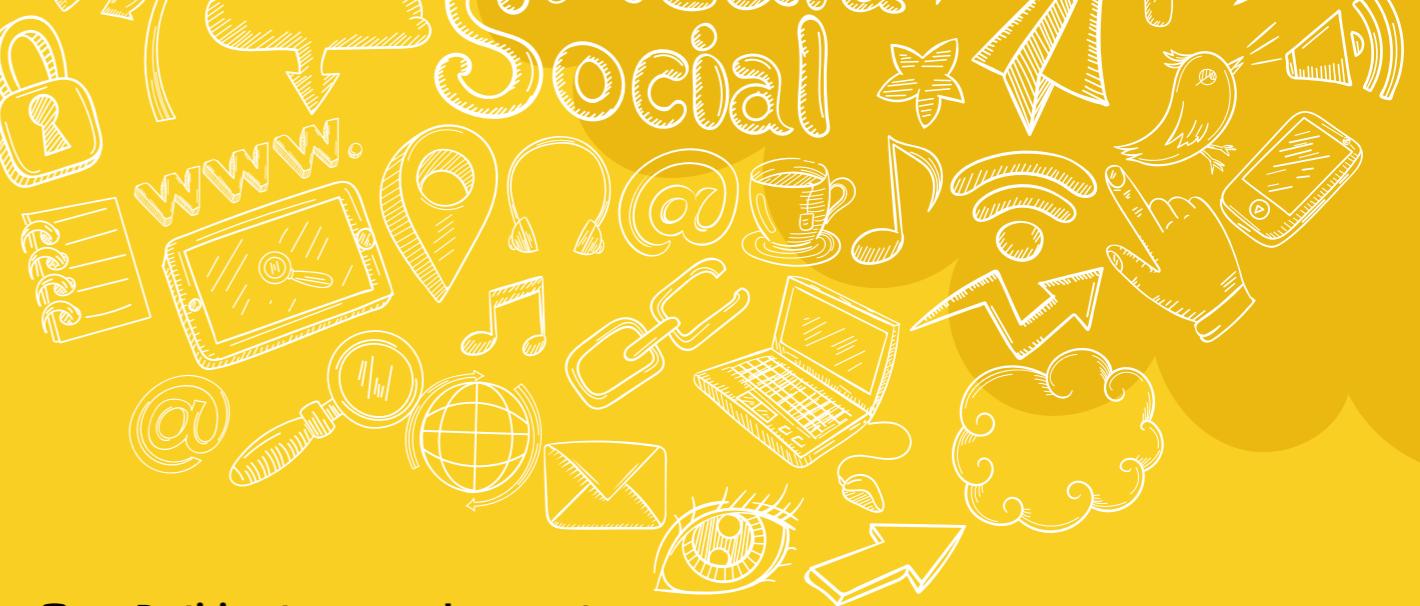
 In 2017 there was a concert in Cairo where young people raised a rainbow flag. A number of people raised the rainbow flag and put it as their Facebook profile picture. Notably, a law exists in Egypt whose aim is to combat prostitution and also criminalises advertising for immorality. In 2018, the 76 individuals who attracted this offence got arrested and went on trial.

Also in Egypt police officers create fake online dating profiles and target sexual and gender minorities. One of the activists who was detained saw 10 police officers who had mobile phones and were chatting with transwomen and gay men to entrap them in this way.

Technology is a place of community for sexual and gender minority Africans. Social media and the internet provide what was once thought to be a safe place to be queer. Technology is also an organising space for sexual and gender minority Africans. However, making information available to the public is also dangerous for the sexual and gender minorities and sex worker community.

 In Mali, there is an anti-gay network that is active on social media. Sexual and gender minorities persons face exposure and security incidents linked to social media platforms. Organisations in Mali had to alert and inform their communities on how to keep their pictures safe and to provide support to the victims, including funds for relocation

They had to develop software to help protect their documents and other data.



Participants expressed an urgent need to hold multinational companies responsible for their part in the lack of digital safety for sexual and gender minorities.

One organisation described itself as 'lucky' to have a digital system supported by Amplify Change through which one can remove published photos and another post which negatively affect the community.



An activist from Morocco expressed how funding can aid the enhancement of digital safety: Considering solutions

on a long term basis, some donors say that sensitisation activities are obsolete. We are the ones who know the situation that we are facing in our countries yet they say that we cannot do that, though this may be archaic, we know the context that we live in.



A participant from an organisation working in the Democratic Republic of Congo said that they advise their members to handle their cellphones with care and not leave them lying around.

“

I would recommend to the donors to make an effort to understand the situation of the country and not impose activities on them as they know what activities are relevant to them

”

4.0

Getting out the Vuvuzelas and Harnessing the Power of Our Voices

A central theme of the conference was the power of activists harnessing their voices and sharing their personal stories.

Telling our stories

In Uganda, RL has harnessed his narrative to move on after being outed in the media. People were shy of associating with him after he was outed afraid of the consequences of being associated with gay people. His family members, former school mates and colleagues stopped speaking to him. This is the kind of trauma that sexual and gender minorities across the globe go through. RL determined that he had a role to play in addressing this situation in his life. He told his story by creating videos with the simple tools he had available. The videos formed a digital storytelling sharing his experience and struggles after being outed.



SN a bisexual sex worker from Uganda...

To tell me that I cannot sleep with however many men or women I want! I am not keeping quiet about this! I am saying we want sexual positivity. We have the power to have sex whenever we want. We have the power to get married or not. We have the power to do sex work. If I want to use my body to do sex work, why could others tell me I can't? I'm an adult. We are telling stories of all the women out there. All the sex workers, we are building a revolution of resilient sex workers

My culture embraces men who have more than one woman. And me, I am called a slut. Me, I am stigmatised. I wish I could share the stories of resilient women who are sex workers. Every industry is full of damaged women. We have promoted a platform for sharing and learning. We talk about the sexual liberation of women. We don't have to cry when somebody leaves you. You don't have to cry if you are thirty and above and not yet married. We are here and we are not going anywhere and we are paying our dues by all means. We encourage women to talk about their sexual experiences. We are teaching women that it is okay not to be married. We are doing much unlearning

SN's advice is to not only bring up the victimisation stories but rather to tell the stories of the people who choose.

Telling the stories of those who had gone before us

Sharing and expanding the repertoire of queer, African narratives and histories can aid activism by deepening our understanding of queer identity and subverting the narratives that currently frame sexual and gender minorities lived experiences.

The Kewpie collection

is the personal photographic collection of Kewpie, a hairdresser and drag queen who lived in Cape Town's District Six. There are around 700 photographic prints in the Kewpie collection as well as accompanying negatives, and the material spans the period 1950 to the early 1980s. Kewpie, whose given name was Eugene Fritz, was born in 1942. In the 1950s Kewpie started going to gay parties and became part of a queer community in District Six who were highly visible through their performances at shows and their attendance at balls in elaborate drag. Members of this community sometimes identified as gay men and sometimes

identified as female, although their relationships with men were generally referred to as gay relationships. From what we know, Kewpie's gender identity was fluid, and she did not strictly identify as either male or female. However, both Kewpie and her friends tend to use feminine pronouns for each other. Most of the photographs in the collection were taken by Kewpie and friends, and show Kewpie's extensive social life and social circle, both within District Six and further afield. The photographs depict the carefully crafted public personas of the drag queens, and also their private 'off-duty' lives. There are pictures from excursions

to Fourth beach and Trafalgar Park, photographs of Kewpie at work in the salon, photographs of elaborate fancy dress balls held at the Ambassador's Club, portraits of Kewpie's friends and neighbours, images from parties, snapshots taken of everyday life in the local area, and photoshoots of Kewpie's friends on the streets of District Six. The collection also includes studio portraits and images taken by street photographers. The vast majority of photographs in the collection have captions which Kewpie provided during the accessioning process in 1999, and most of the photographs have been digitized.

In South Africa, the GALA Initiative has exhibited a collection of photographs of the life of a trans woman who lived in a neighbourhood near Cape Town more than five decades ago.
The exhibition was called Kewpie. Daughter of District Six and was framed as follows by GALA Initiative:

Learning how to work with the media

While the media can be a powerful ally in story-telling for activism, media houses are often more prone to sensationalise the stories of sexual and gender minorities and sex workers to sell newspapers.

According to a participant from South Africa, the media has a difficult history with sex workers. The media makes it their business to out sex workers in the media. Their real names are sometimes used, their photos taken without their permission and misquoting them.

This method of reporting feeds into the narrative of the '**negative sex worker**'.

Some Takeaways

1 A group of South African sex workers' organisations came up with ideas on how they would hold the media houses accountable. The organisations put together a guide for journalists and writers to report on sex work and sex workers. The report was launched in 2014 and was made available to journalists through door-to-door deliveries, mass email of soft copies, online publication and sharing with partner organisations.

2 IRANTI, another South African organisation, is in touch with journalists in the country and ensures input from the sexual and gender minorities as part of the conceptualisation phase of the content. This makes it possible to spot inconsistencies and to correct issues of language and framing. If you create collaborative partnerships with willing journalists it is very helpful.

3 Art is powerful. We get our power back by telling our own stories. VK, an East African visual artist, has made a documentary called 'Out in the Cold' which shows the impact of art and also demonstrates how allies can be good messengers. A religious leader is featured in the documentary and shows support to the LGBTIQ community.

At home: UHAI's African LGBTIQ+ and Sex Work Convening by Dumiso Gatsha

As the world celebrated pride month, LGBTIQ+ and Sex Work activists came together to reflect, share and convene under the auspices of the biennial Changing Faces, Changing Spaces (CFCs) conference in Kenya. The seventh iteration granted me the privilege of facilitating a dialogue on the use of the law to advance the rights of LGBTIQ+ and Sex Work Africans. As we delved into discussions on how strategies were changed to adopt unanticipated developments in Botswana, I found myself saying an internal prayer of power and celebration for the many pioneers that have stood against atrocities of intolerance and hatred the world over. We delved into the intricacies of Sex Work, litigation in Uganda and Kenya and the need for other means of engaging with the government in Mauritius. As a member of African Queer Youth Initiative, birthed at the fifth CFCs - I never felt more at home as my nervousness gradually disappeared.

Enablers and actors alike were in a closed space, a few hours away from Nairobi, meaning that one was bound to speak to those outside their areas of work and politics. I had a moment of reflection from my early days within the domestic movement; finally getting closure and understanding from the pain and harm inflicted on an intelligent,

challenging and naive young Dumi. This one chat made it clear that community care and shared accountability should become priorities within our resilience strategies [where existing]. I facilitated another dialogue on the significance of language in messaging, the institutionalisation of colonial framing and the need for adopting our own indigenous ways of community engagement in our work. It was an intellectually thrilling play at black consciousness within a very linear and predetermined ecosystem of frameworks that have stifled how creative, African and deliberate our advocacy can be in fulfilling our variant mandates. My Zimbabwean panelists, the country of my birth, along with another from Rwanda, shared the importance of history, culture and identity within our work. The need to document our intellect, safeguard all voices and visibility from erasure and stimulate dialogue across the divides of geographic and thematic areas is critical to addressing the shortfalls inherent in our work.

AQYI focused on pleasure in all forms amidst issues of consent, morality, negotiations, all forms of safety and HIV criminalisation in a self-organised session was eye opening. It reflected the need for our activism to be multidisciplinary and not just intersecting. The challenges communities we serve today are complex and not limited to law, health or social norms. The world we are shifting towards is rapidly changing and requires of us to do the same. As we prepare for our first ever AGM, thanks to Wellspring Fund, I am keen to see how the collective is willing to break the boundaries and move away from business as usual. Thinking on issues of programming in systemic structures of impediment beyond 12-month M&E indicators. Or how our freedoms and liberties can be claimed or strengthened in more

future-fit, comprehensive solutions building. The socioeconomic complexity of environments we operate in, duties of home care, non-existent social protections and misinformation are just some of the challenges we have to reflect on in view of sustainability in impact. Job markets are shifting and technology is changing ways of work; are we fully prepared for the future landscape of organising? Are we looking to occupy other spaces of development beyond the human rights and public health? Conversations around the ecosystem of visibility, efficacy and governance are critical to assuring younger generations to come can be supported and strengthened in their own right and efforts. These are the questions I anchored on the few bilateral conversations I had. There is so much more to be done, accepted and adopted across the stakeholder spectrum, Amnesty's certainly open to it.

The challenges we face, unanticipated outcomes and fragmented approaches despite being enabled by shared/similar relationships and resources highlights the need to bridge perspectives and move from business as usual. My persistence in calls for action after each discussions I have is clear on everyone playing a role in their areas of influence. Resources are a consistent need throughout the continent. As a youth collective in country, we have managed to do amazing things on an average budget of less than USD 5000 a year. Working outside the margins of acceptability, morals, core funding, prevalent service provision, attempted suicides, gate keeping and unemployment in the spirit of not accepting normative ways of organising. The norms of a persistent need for financing before curating our own knowledge or taking on an initiative because it can compliment what is already there. The norms of repeated narratives, reconfigured projects with similar outcomes year

on year. The norms of comfortable conversations without pushing for meaningful and equitable interventions driven by interest and creativity as opposed to predetermined need or Global North developed strategic frameworks. UHAI's model for ensuring and reflecting the communities they serve safeguards the imperatives of serving. More importantly, I have observed their working culture and persistence in continuously having conversations that challenge the norm. This is a value system that encourages learning and eliminates power dynamics of money, position, privilege and what is considered 'expertise'.

The CFCS space has taught me so much about myself and the movement. Particularly how we are presented socially in influencing how impactful you can be in organising. Also how kindness is deferred in how power can be exercised reflective of the intolerant societies we challenge and can even serve. More importantly, CFCS truly felt like home. A powerful leadership and a team, whenever I meet them in other spaces, that is continuously inspiring. There is a clear understanding of how all voices and visibility can participate within the contexts of democratic aspirations, climate crises, societal wellbeing, economic productivity and cultural practices. I have unravelled in the variant forms of contributions that big and small forms of organising have all played crucial roles in ensuring our Africanness and our Queerness. It is an ongoing story of change and connecting for generations to come. I am grateful for having met and engaged with so many beautiful souls and deep minds. It is a transformative form of becoming and belonging that can hopefully transcend beyond the panels, side chats and nature that surrounded us in those three days.

5.0

Research, Research, Research.... How do we get better at it?

An example of how trans organisations have influenced national research carried out in Kenya was shared:

Challenges and takeaways

1 There is an issue of **systemic transphobia** in mainstream organizations that discourages trans people from engaging with other NGOs and excludes them from the pinnacles of decision-making

2 The trans community engaging in research also expresses that there is limited funding for trans-specific research. There is money for advocacy, but not enough for research to inform the

3 There is also need to ensure extended collaboration, particularly having trans-people at the table where decisions are made about research design and methodology.

4 There is also need to build the capacity of trans organisations to participate in trans research.

5 It is important to continuously build the capacity of community members to engage in research. This can be done through collaborations with specialist research institutions and Universities. Focus should not only remain on research and data collection, but also on how to package and utilise it effectively

Participants recognised the importance of various forms of research to inform their programmes, advocacy and other forms of engagement with key stakeholders. Experiences were shared of carrying out research as community members, as well as collaborating with other actors including State and non-State actors

An example of how trans organisations have influenced national research carried out in Kenya was shared:

In order to conduct this research, the organisations had to obtain formal approval for the research from Government agencies. This took a long time and involved various challenges, including being kept waiting for weeks, answering uncomfortable questions, among others.

As a result, a study that should have started in November 2018 and ended in February 2019, only started in March 2019 and ended in May 2019. However, this time was worthwhile because buy-in is very important, and significant time was invested in identifying and developing relationships with key stakeholders.

1

We ensured more representation of trans people in the study sample.

2

We also trained supervisors about how to collect data from trans people, and to be mindful about how this data is disaggregated at national level.

3

The trans community is now having similar conversations with those involved in the PEPFAR project.

4

The trans community are also engaged with Government of Kenya officials in national advisory committees on HIV/AIDS.

5

The trans community in Kenya is collecting information beyond health-related data. This information will be used to inform advocacy tool kits and will be used in 12 counties in Kenya.

6.0

Is this umbrella big enough for all of us?

Even in the midst of growing organising within our movements, voices of differently abled bodies remain largely deprioritized. There is various discourse regarding the marginalization of some of us within us. Persons with disabilities face challenges given the intersection of gender and dis/ability and like the rest of the movement manifest resilience in spite of these challenges.



Experiences of being both differently abled and queer

“Ten years ago I was in an accident. For years I would not show anyone my scars. It is an unwanted extension of shame. I read about how someone was told how someone else is ‘such a good person’ for dating a disabled person. Imagine the power dynamics in a relationship like that? At what point are you not fetishising me?”

“When I came back to Kenyatta University they asked me what I needed. I needed a special bed and they arranged for that. They asked whether I was coming back with someone to help me. The school did it right. I don’t want you to pity me, I want you to make sure that I can be in the room. If I don’t see myself in essential spaces what does that mean for me?”

African intersex movement speaks:

The third regional intersex meeting coincided with the CFCs VII and 21 intersex activists, representing various African countries had come together to form the African Intersex Movement (AIM). While it is a positive step that this meeting had taken place during CFCs, one of the intersex participants expressed that there was not a single main session of the conference which focused on intersex rights.

One of the representatives of the newly-formed AIM read the 16 aims of the movement and called to action community leaders, human rights organisations and funders including:



Amplify intersex voices at the regional level.



Affirms that intersex people exist in all countries in Africa and that they live in societies which perpetuate violence and murder against intersex persons.



End infanticide and killing of intersex people; to put an end to mutilating and ‘normalising’ practices and non-consensual sterilization; and to include intersex education in antenatal counselling



Ensure that sex and gender classifications are amendable through simple administrative procedures along with the promotion of all fundamental human rights as they pertain to intersex persons



Enable intersex activists in Africa to share skills, knowledge and resources.

There is need for more active engagement with sub-groups who struggle with visibility within the movement, as expressed by participants who identify as intersex and differently abled.

7.0

Adopting more Creative Approaches to Advocacy

Sex workers are using various creative strategies for advocacy. Responses to human rights issues are seated in passion and interventions can be tailored to evoke this.

Serious issues can be engaged in a playful, creative way. For example, the sex worker movement in South Africa have set up information booths in bright colours in various public places. The booths have a sign saying '**Ask a Sex Worker**' and sex workers wearing bright orange sunglasses are available to engage the public. These booths have been set up in all parts of the country and MPs have approached the organisation to set up the booth during certain seasons in Parliament. Discussions around serious issues can also be presented in a talk show-style format, instead of normal panel discussions.



Ask a Sex Worker

There is power in the use of signs, symbols and spectacles:

These things that are associated with activism. If you have enough symbolism, a picture is all you need. Style matters and it is important to put a lot of effort in fashion and branding used for activism. Having nice and funky t-shirts and holding interventions in clubs, for example, show people that we are cool.



'Being Creative'

Raising awareness about our issues through a (faux) **'Sex Workers Political Party'**

'seriously funny'

This is hard because activists work in brutal contexts and deal with traumatic experiences. Activists also make use of Pop Culture expressed through street art campaigning and engagement of celebrities. It is effective to tap into things that are popular and appeal to people's emotions

We thought about how we could depart from all this madness of elections. We created a fake party: we had a campaign video, we had posters, we had a prominent sex worker leader as the face of the party. It was a party for people who engage in dangerous work. The reception was positive. We participated in electioneering and had a message that if you do not change the law, '**SWAG**' will do it. It fits into our organisation's strategies of creative activism. We also used our social media interviews with radio and media and we ran with it

8.0 Organising in Politically Sensitive Contexts: The Case of Tanzania

The community in Tanzania is operating in a politically sensitive context where sexual and gender minorities and sex workers are constantly under threat.

According to the representatives from Tanzania:

“The situation of sex workers is not good. There has been too much harassment from police since 2016. They arrest us, take us to court, and we are always harassed by various organisations. We are still continually harassed, we are beaten by police, they take our money, they also sexually harass us. They ask us why we have not stopped sex work.
”

Funds for programming have been shrinking from 2017 up to mid 2018 and services have continually declined. Currently, there is no programming within the MSM baseline or Global Fund programming

De-registration of sexual and gender minorities and sex worker organisations and arbitrary arrest are

the new fashion in Tanzania. Transgender Movement in Tanzania (TMT) was registered as a CBO, but has faced many challenges included to explain to government authorities what a ‘trans’ is.

They have been asked to re-register. Most organisations now have two constitutions: one for registration, and the other for purposes of their work. Sometimes government officials will decide to select the name of an NGO and register that instead of the name proposed.



Challenges in Tanzania span to Zanzibar:

In Zanzibar, the government officials were previously known to be more tolerant but now have become very harsh about these issues. Why is this happening now? They seem to have changed in response to the situation in Tanzania after Magufuli came into power in 2016. One of our commissioners in Zanzibar also stated that he does not want to see any gay person in the city, or sex workers or people using drugs. From then on, lots of incidents have been happening including the use of hate speech. We have an incident where most of the clubs have been shut down, mostly those in Stone Town. There is also hate speech by religious leaders. Our families are scared

Specific challenges were also expressed by lesbians and trans women in Tanzania:

As lesbians, we have no strong organisation that supports or protects/stands for us. Some trans and MSM organisations collaborate with us, but there is no specific funding for us.

Trans women are considered the face of homosexuality in Tanzania and suffer because of that. The trans movement is not even 5 years old, and we are crawling. Trans people are considered to either be gay or lesbians. People do not know the difference and therefore we are caught in the middle. We are often harassed by the police. Even in hospitals, people do not understand us. Then we are also used as scapegoats by the MSM community: so we are victims of violence and crackdowns. People say that a real man cannot dress like a woman. We are the ones that they will put on the platform.

A major challenge with organising in this political context is the fact that the movement was not prepared for the surprising transition and crackdown on rights. Those who want to help the situation in Tanzania simply do not know where to start.

As a result of the issues in Tanzania, a group of 12 organisations have formed a coalition with a plan to submit a shadow report for Tanzania's Universal Peer Review in 2020.

“Remember that mentally or physically the community has been distracted by politics in Tanzania. Sometimes we need time to think, energise and collect ourselves. We are therefore using this time as an opportunity to heal. This will take time. We are not fighting amongst ourselves, but having conversations to try and understand each other and to align our work and see how best to work together. This is part of the growth of the movement. Now we have come together and agreed to form the SOGIE coalition. As donors, please just advise, and do not influence. The process of strategising can be confusing. Forgive us, we make mistakes”

9.0

Efforts to Access Quality Health Care and Resources for Health Services

It is of great importance to sexual and gender minorities and sex workers to have accessible health services that are delineated. In particular, health services for transmen should not be incorporated into the mainstream and/or MSM health.

Research is a powerful tool that can be used to enhance healthcare for the sexual and gender minorities community. VOWEK carried out a mapping of the health needs of LBQ women in Western Kenya to better understand these needs. They did not just want women co-opted to distribute condoms and lubricants, or co-opted in heterosexual women's health programmes. The baseline survey was done in Kisumu county, which is one of the counties with high rates of HIV/AIDS and mental health issues

The study found, among others, that:

LBQ women did not have access to reproductive health services

The rate at which LBQ women are infected with HIV/AIDS is high, and yet about 10% of women are not tested for HIV/AIDS

Self -stigma within the LBQ community because they cannot access HIV services, when they do, they will go as heterosexual women

In Togo, some organisations have focused on outreach services. Sometimes, they look for them even in the rural areas, and they use social networks to reach out. There are also some mobile clinics that reach out to particularly vulnerable communities that live and work on busy highways like the road that links Togo to Burkina Faso and Nigeria.

In Morocco there are people who have walked 500,000 kms trying to get to what they consider Eldorado i.e. Europe. These people take many risks and when they get to Morocco they are abandoned.

In Burundi, the legal and political terrain has affected the provision of health and rights for LGBTI persons with legislation that criminalises same-sex relationships, and possible prison sentences for those who try to create awareness about issues related to same-sex relationships (in the law it is described as promotion).

In 2018, there was a situation where a number of LGBTI organisations had to close their doors for about 3 months, including FHI 360 which is the lead organisation especially on the response, prevention and sensitisation of key populations.

A challenge in Morocco is that funders who do resource the HIV/AIDS domain are not interested in this population.

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Sam's* story: On 8th October 2011, Sam* was raped by a boda-boda motorcycle rider and was infected with HIV. This happened when he was homeless after leaving a relationship that had been characterised by IPV. He did not have a job, had no access to information and had no idea what to do. He was going through a process of self-reflection and trying to understand himself. In 2012, he was introduced to the wider LGBTI community and started listening to conversations about the letters (LGBTI) meant and also what support was available. He then joined the community and used it as an opportunity to get the support he needed, as well as to support others. He was trained as a peer educator on HIV/AIDS. However, after being in the activist circles for 3 years, he was also exposed to the gaps in the services and support provided by donors and NGOs. It took him 5 years to get the treatment he required for HIV. However, when he sought counselling, his confidentiality was breached and this caused him further mental anguish, as well as stigmatisation. He also realised that there were no safe spaces for transgender men. He also realised that there are activist-led conversations that are held by groups/cocoons of people who hold the same conversations over and over again, and that these conversations do not benefit the whole community.

In Uganda during a national HIV symposium, the panel to discuss issues related to sex work were denied the opportunity to make their presentations and were told that if they did, those who objected to this would burn down the whole conference.

10.0

Seeking Solutions: Economic Holistic Movement Support

From the viewpoint of some, economic empowerment can solve a great number of human rights challenges faced by sexual and gender minorities persons and sex workers

A Ugandan activist shared that in 2016, he was arrested after a Pride event. He was held in a police cell overnight where he was beaten up, told to undress and to take a shower in front of the men in the cell. After this experience, he decided to take better care of himself. He withdrew from the community, went out of town and started a farming project. He has decided to grow his farming project and use it as an opportunity to create jobs for transgender people. He is focused on addressing concerns about economic opportunity, and more sustainable solutions. He provides skills in farming, promotes saving and financial literacy. He is trying to answer the question: can we create a facility with a holistic approach to human rights? He is on the advisory committee of Baylor Uganda on a project that is looking at alternative strategies for PEP and other more accessible forms of treatments.

Sex worker organisations from Uganda report that there are restrictive application processes for available funding programmes in the country.

Organisations are applying '**resilience tactics**' to survive. They are learning the language of their potential funders so that they can raise their issues with authority.

They showcased the reality of the Key Populations to those distributing the funds.

Other innovative interventions include a model called KiLegs (Kisambi) which supports community health and livelihood enhancement groups and community savings associations for sex workers.

Some Takeaways



Holistic, economic support to LGBTQI and sex workers activists includes the need to look beyond HIV programming when addressing the health rights and related issues amongst the LGBTIQ and Sex Workers' communities.



There is a need to look at HIV and healthcare within the broader framework of the SDGs and also make a link to policy advocacy and research



Activists need strategies to mobilise more effectively and to increase their ability to access existing funds and loan schemes.

Overall Conference Takeaways....

The CFCS VII conference demonstrated a need for supporting, nurturing and renewing leadership for the Movement. As expressed by a participant from Uganda:

- 1 There are lots of situations where our safety and security is compromised, and we have learnt how not to carry out some types of activities and being more mindful. We are also learning how to be visible by being more invisible.
- 2 The level of organising in Kampala is still mainly limited to Kampala and busy urban areas. When you go upcountry, some people do not know the difference between crime and de-crim. The leaders and pioneers in the movement have not mentored younger organisations sufficiently, nor given the right sort of support for emerging leaders to flourish. Will the movement survive the current set of leaders? **There is a need to invest more deliberately in supporting new leadership**
- 3 Reclaiming our African identities includes greater cognisant of the multiple intersections with our other identities including the politics of naming and language justice. This can be enhanced with increased ownership of our narratives through research and flexibility on the parameters for the validation of movement owned research including that which does not fit into the traditional academic realms
- 4 Across Africa, activists are facing struggles that are both unique and shared with those in other countries. The movement keeps working to increase visibility, to share learning for online and offline security measures and to develop strategic partnerships and collaborations that include Africans in the diaspora.
- 5 In some contexts, resilience looks like the continuance of work in secret after your organization had been shut down by the government. In others, resilience is about being able to bounce back from difficult situations. Efforts for resilience require sustained long term and flexible support including from funders.
- 6 The arts and artistic expression as platforms for advocacy need more support.
- 7 A lot of us within the movements need healing justice that is reflected through increased financial and capacity support that enables access to healing spaces as well as rethinking what that means in the context of how we work within organisations and as activists. Resilience without replication does not make a revolution.

Shared thoughts:

I am an Algerian activist. I have been campaigning for LGBTQI rights since 2008. In recent years, I have developed collaborations at the level of my region and internationally.

I recently attended the 7th CFCS conference and I can attest to the fact that it is for me the most rewarding and motivating conference of my career. This is not my first time at CFCS but the third. With each participation in CFCS, I see that my needs and expectations as a North African activist have been taken into consideration.

As a North African, I suffered before CFCS from a lack of recognition by other African activists of my status as an African. This was due to the fact that North Africans are often far from African spaces and often turn to European or international spaces.

At each CFCS conference, I was able to share with my African colleagues the situation of my region and I also learned from them the situation in their regions (East, West and South Africa...). At CFCS, we arrived with my African colleagues to function as activists of the continent and not only as activists stuck in the borders of their region. It was at CFCS that I learned the true meaning of the word "**Pan-Africanism**" ...

What I like about CFCS, which I find extremely important, is inclusivity and intersectionality in their most noble sense. I have seen, for example, the efforts made to ensure translation for different languages of linguistic populations often excluded from regional and international areas. As a Francophone, I was able to express myself with my own language and use my own words without fear of being

misunderstood. This linguistic inclusivity has improved a lot from one CFCS to another and has been perfect during the last CFCS.

At CFCS, for the first time, I was also able to interact with sex worker activists. In my country the situation of sex workers is very complicated because of the criteria related to religion and tradition but at CFCS, I learned from these activists who gave me a lot of hope about a positive change in my country for this community.

I will end by saying that CFCS has made me grow as an actor of change in my country and my region and I would always be grateful to this conference for giving me the opportunity to exist in this space.

How you came to attend CFCS 7?

I was fortunate to have been selected to be part of the conference task force at the invitation of African activists for the realization of the said conference.

What was your favourite thing about CFCS?

I loved it all. I couldn't have mentioned it all. I had the chance to discuss it directly with new donors from West Africa ISDAO thanks to this conference.

I liked working as a member of the taskforce which for a person like me who has no experience of this in the past is an extremely interesting and rewarding thing.

What did you learn or contribute to the space?

I learned a lot about the organization of a conference itself, the downstream work that is done, the choice of themes and sub-themes, the importance that all this will have as an impact on the visibility, the smooth running of the conference.

Being in this space made me aware of the work being done all over Africa to create an enabling environment.

The sharing of experiences was great.

Do you think CFCS is an important convening? If so, why?

Yes indeed thanks to this conference, I personally learned and made a return to my association especially on the risks faced by Trans people in other African countries in order to make them understand that we are not alone.

In addition, it is a space where we can meet and discuss with donors so that we can exchange with them on various issues.

And this point was just as pleasing to me as the sharing of experiences with my peers.

And the beat goes on...

Did you attend the conference and have thoughts to share? Or maybe you didn't but have something to say about the conference report, we would love to hear from you!

Would you like to know more about the other recommendations emanating from the pre conferences?

Reports can be accessed by reaching out to our pre conference co-hosts, the International Trans Fund for the Trans pre-conference, Coalition of African Lesbians (CAL) for the LBQ pre-conference and the African Intersex Movement for the intersex pre-conference.

The next conference will be held in 2021.

Look out for more information beginning with a call for volunteers for the planning task force by following us on social media:

Website: <https://uhai-eashri.org/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/UHAIEASHRI>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/uhiaeashri/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/UHAIEASHRI/>

We remain in solidarity and revolutionary love!

