

Voices from ACSHR 2022

LGBTQIA+ Rights on the African Continent

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Introduction

We start by naming our gratitude to the generous contributions, ideas and advice from representatives from several organisations, individual activists and funders working on LGBTQIA+ rights in Africa, and LGBTQIA+ activists on the Youth Steering Committee. We are particularly grateful to ISDAO for sponsoring a group of LGBTQIA+ activists to participate in the conference through a grant made to Purposeful. ISDAO also shared their guidance for inclusive interpretation when we realised the challenges with the interpretation team. Their openness and honesty as a critical collaborator were vital.

In the midst of compounding crises, the LGBTQIA+ communities are acute and rising oppression, stigmatisation, criminalisation, violence, and threats to their lives - 30% of the governments across the world penalise and punish (even with death sentences) LGBTQIA+ people and only 20% provide human rights protection to the Trans people. This increase, as Human Rights Watch notes, is connected to setbacks in democracy as it is part of the authoritarian playbook, and it requires urgent commitment to be in solidarity and true allyship.

On the African continent, where LGBTQIA+ movements are battling these colonial era laws - over half of the continent criminalises the LGBTQIA+ people- and making

huge strikes without much support, The conference provided an opportunity for those involved in feminist movements to give space to, reflect on, and understand more about LGBTQIA+ issues and movements across the continent. The 10th Africa Conference on Sexual Health and Rights (ACSHR), held in Sierra Leone from the 27 June-1 July 2022, brought together Intersex, Queer and Trans activists from across the African continent to share insights into their work and experiences. At the conference, we created spaces for LGBTQIA+ folks to breathe, eat, laugh, connect, think, debate, share, and exist with one another. There were moments of joy, community, and comfort, as well as moments of pain, discomfort and frustration. This experience was and is a learning process for Purposeful, offering us the chance to reflect on our movement's inclusiveness and ability to cater to and support all of us. We are grateful for the participation and feedback we received from activists and we are moving towards improving the way that we, as an organisation, are able to support our queer siblings.

Learn more about LGBT rights by reading the following Human Rights Watch resources:

[Anti-LGBT laws](#)

[2021 World Report](#)

Article: [How Targeting LGBTQ+ Rights Are Part of the Authoritarian Playbook](#)

Article: [Progress and Setbacks on LGBT Rights in Africa](#)

Through planning calls and pre-conference dialogues, activists generously advised us on the programme, security measures (including at the airport, during the conference and on the return home) and networking opportunities. These informed:

1. An action plan on LGBTQIA+ inclusion and safety that was shared with staff members
2. A briefing pack for LGBTQIA+ activists travelling to the conference
3. A briefing given to airport staff, drivers and security
4. An alternative VIP arrival option for those anticipating challenges at immigration
5. A networking session and security briefing on Day 1
6. Two briefings with the Sierra Leone Police Force and Sierra Leone Armed Forces on zero tolerance to harassment and abuse with a specific focus on transphobic and homophobic behaviour
7. A number of planning meetings with the security services, key Line Ministries and Immigration Services to secure a commitment that no LGBTQIA+ activists connected to the conference would face arrest during their time in Sierra Leone or barriers to entering the country at immigration
8. Retained arrangement with 3 human rights lawyers should any activists face legal challenges or arrest during the conference

An essential part of bringing in LGBTQIA+ topics and activists into the conference was ensuring safety for all participants. Before the conference, we organised calls with activists attending to ensure we were taking as much as we could into account. We ensured the inclusion of LGBTQIA+ voices and needs in the pre-conference package that we sent to all participants, trying to build a safer space.

During the conference, we worked to offer various organised and self-organised spaces where people could come together and explore queerness on the African continent, network, and build community. Below are some of these spaces.

LGBTQIA+ related sessions during ACSHR

Feminist Action on LGBTQIA+ Rights

Inter-movement dialogue organised by the Center for Health Education and Vulnerable Support (CHEVS) that highlighted the cross-cutting and intersecting advocacy needs and approaches between the LGBTQI+ movement and the feminist movement; creating room for collaboration, linking and learning and adopting best practices. The session aimed to garner more cross-movement collaboration and to establish that LGBTQI+ challenges are feminist issues.

“I will not keep quiet about this, I know my rights. I am an intersex person and so many people have these issues. Imagine those who are younger than me, who are shy - then they will stop coming to access services.”

- Nwangwu Eudora Ogechukwu

“An Africa free of violence means that I will be treated with respect at all times. Not because I’m special, it because I’m human!”

- Shika

LGBTQIA+ rights across the continent breakout session

Co-facilitated by LGBTQIA+ activists and Purposeful, This session brought together LGBTQIA+ activists from across the Continent for a conversation surrounding the fight for rights and recognition, as well as the complexities and importance of collaborating and working collectively across borders.

“Accountability – it is something that we are still very much scared of... if we want that synergy we should be able to talk about accountability”

- Participant

“We should learn to come together... [there is] No national or regional synergy... Collective action would do us a lot of good”

- Justin Chidozie Chukwukere

LGBTQIA+ Networking session

Self-organised with support of Purposeful queer team members, this informal space was organised so that queer folks present at the conference could have an opportunity to chat, get to know each other, and be there for one other. Folks shared food, enjoyed each other's presence, and talked about the programme and sessions we wanted to attend.

LGBTQIA+ pleasure

This was a closed session and was facilitated by Tshegofatso Senne. Following a session on pleasure open to all, we had the chance to be in community and discuss

pleasure outside heteronormative discourses. We shared stories, got to know each other and built shared understandings.

We are sharing with the understanding that, even with good intention and a commitment to inclusion, LGBTQIA+ activists still did not feel safe, seen and welcome throughout the conference. It is clear that this planning needed to have started months earlier. For anyone considering hosting such a conference, we recommend partnering with an LGBTQIA+ rights organisation or hiring expert consultants to advise and accompany the process from the very beginning.

In particular, greater attention needed to be paid to the programme.

Throughout the conference gender-based violence was explored in many ways, but few sessions included nuances related to queer and trans women, folks outside the gender binary, and those who challenge gender norms.

Gender based violence also affects queer women, trans feminine folks, feminine folks of all genders, including queer and trans men. Lesbian, bisexual, and trans women face intimate violence, and due to homophobia and transphobia on top of sexism, they are left with very few places to go and report such violence. Navigating power dynamics in queer relationships, masculinities and femininities, as well as internalised heterosexism, is often done individually, with so little support.

Intersex folks were completely excluded from the feminist conversation, even though so many issues are relevant to them. For example, female genital mutilation was a central topic at the conference, a very difficult and painful one, where we had the honour to listen to survivors and learn from them. Though the nature of this violation is different, and is focused more on medical reasons, rather

than cultural and religious ones, many intersex folks are also survivors of genital mutilation. Many intersex folks are subjected to surgery at early ages to “correct” their bodies, so they fit a mainstream image of what they should look like. The feminist movement needs to listen to intersex folks’ stories and realities and include them in their advocacy efforts to stop genital mutilation as well as any non-consensual intervention on one’s body for everybody.

When it comes to sexual health and reproductive rights, we need to acknowledge that cisgender heterosexual women are not the only ones interested in and affected by policies related to pregnancy, parenting, contraception, or abortion. Queer women and trans men can get pregnant and have abortions, people of all genders are co-interested in parenting issues if they choose to have a child. We all need healthy sexual lives if we are sexual beings, as well as access to information that can help us take the right decisions for ourselves. We need to be able to access medical specialists without having to hide our identities and realities.

Queer poetic mosaic - co-written by LGBTQIA+ participants at ACSHR

Queerness is our identity, our right, and a revolutionary movement that shatters the bounds of what is deemed as permissible, correct, and acceptable by an oppressive system. It is recognising that:

“When we begin to look at Queer history and identities within our context, we see all these identities that have been existence in time and memorial. The only evolvment

within, the Queer community is now, we have names and label to our identities, lived experience, realities and journey.”

- Shika Fleischer

We manifest, think, and dream of thriving queer realities and reclaiming our history.

“An inclusive space where I am not scared I will be stoned to death for who I am. A space where we can speak for ourselves and also join other young leaders who are making changes in the world.”

- Nwangwu Eudora Ogechukwu

Of expansion, if “I want to be able to cross dress, today I am masculine and tomorrow I am feminine without heads turning and people asking me why. I want everyone to acknowledge that sexuality is fluid.”

- The Pansexual being

Of “A community where LGBTQIPA+ persons are seen; being seen is sometimes not enough. Being seen with stigma and discrimination is also, being forced to live in the shadows of your oppressors but, being seen and respected gives your visibility all the acknowledgment you need to be thy true self.”

- Shika Fleischer

“Nous avons besoin de prendre la parole, de dénoncer sans crainte, violence et hostilité, d’être honoré, d’être cité, d’être vu et responsabilisé dans les espaces de discussions comme au conseil des nation-Unis, et tous les autres espaces parce

que nous avons longtemps été minimisés, rejetés, discriminés et arrachés à la société.”

- Sessi

English translation :

“We need to speak up and speak out without fear, violence and hostility, to be honoured, mentioned, seen, and empowered in discussion spaces such as the United-Nations Council and all other spaces, because we have long been minimised, rejected, discriminated against and ripped away from society”

Sessi

“We deserve to find strength in the prime of our weakness, hope in the time of our despair, care in times of fear and hardship, comfort in times of loss, direction when we are lost. We deserve to breathe the air of freedom and love which has been taken and denied us.”

- Justin

We manifest, think, and dream of thriving queer realities, reclaiming our present and future. Of telling ourselves and each other to:

“be thy true self”

- Shika Fleischer

حلم حركة كويرية ونسوية أفريقية موحدة. حلم يثق فيه الأفارقة ببعضهم البعض بكل تنوعهم.

Youba Darif, translated as:

A dream of a united African queer and feminist movement. A dream where Africans trust each other in all their diversities

Transgenre, je le suis!

Humaine, je le suis!

Alors pourquoi me priver de mes droits?

- Davila, translated as:

Transgender, I am!

Human, I am!

So why deprive me of my rights?

I am not a woman, nor a man. I am both and I am none. I am all and I am nothing.

You, me, we, are so much more than one thing. We contain multitudes. Our belonging, safety, and dignity are inherent.

- Dani

Queering is decolonising our bodies, minds, and hearts. Breaking the binaries, hierarchies, and borders pushed upon our bodies and lives. It is about honouring the interconnection of our existence. It is liberation and care.

- Laura

I reject boundedness, categories, boxing in and closing off. I am rich in complexity. I know the smell of freedom and it comes the moment raindrops touch the veld. Queer I am, African I am.

- Tana

Lessons for organising future events

- ***When given space and resources, queer folks will self-organise, build community and bring invaluable contributions to our movements.*** We can make sure to always explicitly offer space for self-organising, accompanied by resources, as well as offering opportunities for bringing ideas, feedback and new learnings into the wider conference.
- ***Collective care, safety, and accountability are central to organising feminist convenings that are LGBTQIA+ inclusive.*** We can do this by creating conditions for safety through safeguarding policies that are clear and known by all, through the physical space (for example step free spaces, clear venue map, gender neutral and accessible toilets), and through training facilitators and speakers to be inclusive in their contributions.
- ***We need to find ways of bridging the feminist and queer movements, as their issues are so connected.*** We can create intentional, facilitated relational learning spaces where folks can find the similarities between their stories and experiences.
- ***We need to include more LGBTQIA+ issues and speakers in feminist convenings.*** We can do this by having diverse preparatory teams for the spaces we organise, including LGBTQIA+ folks. We can invite LGBTQIA+ speakers in sessions, so we can explore a multitude of perspectives and build bridges.

- ***Language justice is essential for our liberation: we need to do better at providing it in all our feminist convenings.*** We can ensure this by providing social justice rooted, inclusive translators and interpreters.

Ultimately, Feminism is for everybody. We owe it to ourselves to reimagine gender and allow it to expand, explode, take as many shapes as needed. Queer and trans folks have always brought in different perspectives and invited the feminist movement to look beyond. However, what it means to have a seat at the table has many times been questioned, queer, trans, and intersex issues marginalised and not deemed feminist issues. It is time we change that.

Read more about how feminism is for everybody [on this PDF document on the CHEVS website](#).

ACSHR through LGBTQIA+ activists' lens

We've gathered some of the reflections of LGBTQIA+ folks at the conference, and we include them here as an offering to the wider movement, so we can learn from each other and continue organising better and more inclusive feminist convenings.

A dream of a united African queer and feminist movement by Youba

My name is Youba, a pan African nonbinary person living in the Northwest of my continent, Morocco. An activist who is passionate about the progress of LGBTIQ+ related issues. A loud dreamer. During the break of covid, I had many profound

reflections and dreams about where I want to direct my energy, where I want to contribute, and where my call was. The answer was natural, my continent, Africa. But, I never thought I would understand this profoundly in Sierra Leone. The land of the future, beautiful people and divine nature. One of the countries I genuinely love the most. It impacted my DNA to a certain extent. I do not know how, but I am not the same person after the ACSHR 2022. I became a more passionate believer. Being surrounded by the queer and feminist community from different parts of Africa empowered me to continue the dream. A dream of a united African queer and feminist movement. I belong to that dream, it made me happy. A dream where Africans trust each other in all their diversity. Together we are stronger.

The whole conference was a highlight to me. I can't mention all of it, but a little. It started with a youth pre-conference. I have never been surrounded by this number of young persons. We released a manifesto. It was the most inclusive manifesto, at least from what I witnessed during my journey as an activist and advocate. All possible intersectional identities were represented, especially the underrepresented ones. Heaven. I won't forget the session with children from a local school telling us about their work and how they manage their daily learning journey in their school. They even taught us a dance. We danced together. I can't wait to see those leaders blossom. I was welcomed in a private session about FGM with the people. I hesitated to attend because I did not know how I would be perceived in an exclusive space where people will share their personal stories. At the end of the session, I felt loved, privileged and welcomed. I co-animated a session with my fellow activists about our expectations and how to contribute to a growing African movement starting from being represented at the ACSHR 2022 youth manifesto. I actually believe even in highlights there is a

pick. My pick was the LGBTIQ+ session animated by Justin Dozi. It was a lively and engaging conversation, discussion and debate between queer activists from different parts of the continent and an attentive audience about an intersectional feminist queer African movement for a better inclusive and diverse activism environment. It was about including African LGBTIQA+ visions and perspectives as a critical component of the African feminist conversations. Including gender diverse identities in feminist spaces is key to development. We were explicit about evolving those important aspects in our continent and more explicit talking about sex, desire and pleasure, my favourite topics, in the next session. I was amazed and inspired.

The holy dreamy journey started two months before the ACSHR 2022. When I came back from the AQYI members and staff retreat in Ivory Coast, the land of progress and a beautiful woman called Latiyah. I was listening to a Yemi Alade song (An international Nigerian pop star, everyone knows her I suppose, I am a fan) to energise me to go through some work-related challenges. It was my dream to be at one of her concerts. I did not know it would be at the conference. I enjoyed being with her in the same space. Being in West Africa for the second time in the same year was a sign of good luck and of positive changes to come in my life. The amazement does not stop here. I met people from the conference in Kenya, the pride of Africa. I was attending a training by PAI with other blood inspiring activists from 16 African countries plus Morocco which I represent. It was the most beautiful coincidence I can ask for. They reminded me that Freetown will not leave me until I come back to her with an impactful project.

Sierra Leone, you were magical. You made sense of a dream to be a reality.

Be thy true self by Shika Fleischer (she), @Archershika

The LGBTQIPA+ (Queer) community have always struggled in the general society. Over the years LGBTQIPA+ community has constantly fought to be seen and heard in groupings where every human being is entitled to. However, the oppression theory of people within the general society has made the Queer community build so, much resilience which now brings up conversations on is, and being Queer be the only identity of LGBTQIPA+ persons. **NO!!!**

When we begin to look at Queer history and identities within our context, we see all these identities that have been existence in time and memorial. The only evolvment within, the Queer community is now, we have names and label to our identities, lived experience, realities and journey.

What does a space in which we, the LGBTQIA+ Community, Feel Safe, Seen, Celebrated and Supported look like to you?

A space in which we, the Queer community feel safe; is a community of intentionality, inclusion and acceptance. For me, I envision a safe community of intentionality, inclusion and acceptance to be a place where derogative language towards Queer community are unlearned and, also where the young generation, old generation, disable, sex worker etc. are recognize in terms of the diversity everyone brings.

A community where LGBTQIPA+ persons are seen; being seen is sometimes not enough. Being seen with stigma and discrimination is also, being forced to live in the shadows of your oppressors but, being seen and respected gives your visibility all the acknowledgment you need to be thy true self.

A community where we the LGBTQIPA+ persons are celebrated and supported; I personally believe that being celebrated and supported is finding common connecting struggles between everyone. For me, finding common grounds or moveable grounds for a common goal is the highlight of being celebrated and supported.

Being celebrated and supported also looks like, allowing people to walk you through there, realities without judgment or corrections. It's also sometimes holding intentional safe space as, and when you should. It also looks like, recognizing and the acknowledgement of generational trauma which we must all unlearn, relearn and learn how to break that pattern that divides us from being one people with a common goal.

LGBTQIPA+ persons will really feel safe, seen, celebrated and supported when all persons acknowledge Queer existence and realities without trying to make them conform to societal norms.

You Wonder by Eudora

You are at war with everything
Fighting even a war you know nothing about

Fighting a war that started before you were born
Fighting the battle of your own existence
Fighting things, you cannot see or hear
Fighting your shadows and the light casted upon you
Fighting your friends and enemies as one
Fighting yourself with your brain as the arena
Questioning your stances as you switch sides
Satisfying your claim to ultimate righteousness
Dining and wining your way into truce and battle
You cannot find solitude in peace
For you were built for war
You were moulded in rage
And soothed with ice
You wouldn't know peace even if you saw it in blood, you find bond and supremacy
How can you build without destruction?
How can you love without fear
How can you give without taking
How can you mend without tearing
How do I exist without being visible?
You wonder!

Reflections on the ACHSR by Sessi

<< La sécurité et la tranquillité d'esprit sont essentielles pour la santé mentale et physique comme un commandant de bord chargée de conduit en toute sécurité les passagers qui lui ont été confié pour une destination. La confiance relève tous les défis. Avoir un espace comme est décrit le royaume des cieus sans peine, ni douleurs où les personnes LGBTQI se sentent en sécurité sans aucun risque physique, discrimination et rejet, et avec le soutien et les soins nécessaires développera leur potentiel et leur identité plus affirmée. Nous avons besoin de

prendre la parole, de dénoncer sans crainte, violence et hostilité, d'être honoré, d'être cité, d'être vu et responsabilisé dans les espaces de discussions comme au conseil des nation-Unis, et tous les autres espaces parce que nous avons longtemps été minimisés, rejetés, discriminés et arrachés à la société. La célébration de l'accomplissement, de l'existence et de l'expérience sera une preuve de vie et de joie à trouver au milieu de tant de communautés >>

<< Le plus grand moteur n'est pas le désir sexuel mais le besoin de sécurité. Nous avons besoin d'un espace aussi grand que l'espace aérien, les lieux de pèlerinage pour trouver l'acceptation, la tranquillité et la navigation parmi les communautés sans barrières, avec une très haute estime de soi

Comme les croyants décrivent le royaume des cieux, le paradis sans aucune crainte, douleur, ni lamentation, nous avons besoin d'une communauté qui unit et aide à se connecter et est interconnectée.

Quand on parle de courage, ce n'est pas un soulèvement mais un réflexe d'autodéfense de notre communauté, qui cherche à survivre en exigeant l'acceptation, la confiance et le respect.

Espace?

Avoir un espace de vie consacré comme l'autel du dieu shiva ou la déesse laksmi, parfumé d'abondance, d'offrandes et de consécration dans lequel chacun se sent, être LGBTQI et, ne craindront pas l'hostilité, sont exempts de violence physique,

sont exempts de violence morale et maintiennent la santé mentale et physique. Comme les quatre porte d'entrée du temple de bouddha, nous voulons atteindre la libération permanente de la souffrance, en construisant quatre réalisations particulières de la sagesse qui comprennent la vérité ultime des choses ; qui comprennent directement la manière dont les choses existent réellement.

pour une société plus inclusive et sans discrimination. Comme dans sa pratique qui nous enseigne le soi nous espérons un espace pareil dans notre conscience individuelle pour être tre capable de s'exprimer librement, à la fois verbalement, sexuellement ou émotionnellement en marchant légèrement sans crainte d'agression, de violence, de coupure ou même de meurtre.

Participer à des groupes de soutien qui sauvent des vies et facilitent la recherche d'identité sans crainte de mépris, de rejet et avec maîtrise de soi, résilience et ressources.

Je suis la preuve vivante que je suis un survivante.

L'honneur c'est comme la virginité, ça ne marche qu'une fois.

Étant à l'intercession de plusieurs violations de droits, l'honneur est plus cher que les choses de la vie. Célébrez notre combat, célébrez nos souffrances, notre existence, honorez la mémoire des survivants comme la célébration des mariages, un événement inédit et mémorable. Cette célébration sera la reconnaissance du mérite qui montrera une certaine vision dans une société où ceux qui s'identifient comme LGBTQI sont réduits au silence et oubliés. Même s'il faut côtoyer pour vivre mieux, la tolérance doit d'abord suivre ses lois et l'honneur est la vérité et l'obligation que

nous devons respecter afin de manifester notre existence et notre résistance en étant différents.

Les sixième et septième mois de 2022, nous ont honorés, nous ont réunis entre différentes communautés à travers un espace de sécurité, d'inclusion, de voix, de solidarité, de communication, de culture et d'apprentissage. La joie de l'exprimer renforce notre présence.

C'est ce que nous appelons une réponse collective à l'intolérance et à la violence pour une Afrique meilleure..

Par et pour

A-mour

C-ommunauté

S-exe

A-mitié

R-ésilience/R_ésistance

C'est notre définition de l'ACSHR 2022 au-delà de la promotion de l'élimination de la violence sexiste.

Une première en Afrique et nous devons la maintenir.

Nous étions pris en otage par le silence et la peur>>.

What Does A Space In Which We The LGBTQI Community Feels Safe, Seen, Celebrated And Supported Look Like To You? by Justin

As people whose voices are quite literally, and heard less than those of others

As Men and women that every system stands against

As humans who have learned not to speak because we won't be understood

We need a space where we don't have to do much translation, where we don't have to explain why we look the way we look, act the way we do or what a certain word means or countless other little queer culture signifiers.

A space, somewhere, where we don't have to do that translation and without having to always be on guard to justify our actions.

I call it home.

A place where we do not think twice about whether we can show affection to our partners – and whether we can just be ourselves.

A safe space which will be home is all we need, because, just like everyone else, LGBTQI persons deserve to be happy, loved and supported. Like every human, our rights, health and well-being matter.

We deserve to find strength in the prime of our weakness, hope in the time of our despair, care in times of fear and hardship, comfort in times of loss, direction when we are lost. We deserve to breathe the air of freedom and love which has been taken and denied us.

We would want to live our lives as every normal person and not to merely exist in the universe, for this we need a space that ensures that all we need to enjoy as humans are possible.

Reflexion Sur La Rencontre De ACSHR 2022 by Davila

La conférence en elle-même a débuté du 29 juin 2022 par les mots de bienvenues de la présidente du Libéria et s'est achevée le 1 e juillet 2022 par le discours du président de la république Sierra-Léonais et d'une cérémonie de clôture.

Nous avons eu le privilège durant ces jours de conférence à participer aux différents panels selon notre choix en s'inscrivant initialement sur la plateforme créée à cet

effet par l'équipe organisatrice de cet espace. Il en est ressorti pas mal de situation de crise que traverse les jeunes filles exprimant le besoin que cette conférence est le moment crucial pour les droits de l'homme et la justice de genre sur le continent de se réunir et s'engager à nouveau sur des valeurs, des principes et pratiques prometteuse communes pour mettre fin à la violence sexuelle et sexiste.

C'est dans cet élan d'esprit que nous avons pu participer au panel ayant pour thématique : COMMENT DEVONS-NOUS ADRESSER LES VIOLENCES BASEES SUR LE GENRE DANS LES MOMENTS DE CRISES ?

Il était question d'exposer les situations que vivent la communauté de personnes Transgenres partout en Afrique et bien plus le cas de la Côte d'Ivoire en situation de crise sanitaire impactant trois fois plus sur leur condition de vies où elles sont sujettes de plusieurs violations tant bien morale, physique que financière. Aussi, de partager avec les participantEs et des donateurs les actions de résilience que nous intentons avec les autres organisations de personnes Transgenres afin de leur venir en aide. Cette session fut enrichissante, nous en sommes reparties avec de grande satisfaction, de savoir que nous avons le soutien des organisations internationales dans les réponses rapides aux violences que subissent la communauté LGBTQAI+, telle que Urgent Action Fund Africa (UAF-AFRICA).

Cependant, force est de constater qu'un tel rassemblement réunissant plus de 800 personnes venues de partout dans le monde ne saurait garantir une stabilité émotionnelle (Joie, Pleure, Réseautage, Retrouvaille etc...) mais aussi de stigmatisons limite voir de discriminations faites à l'endroit de la communauté de personnes LGBTQAI+ en raison de leur expression et/ou identité de genre dans les différents sous-espaces auxquels elle a pris part et même lors des séance plénière

où, il fallait interrompre un membre de la communauté lors de ses interventions pour la bonne compréhension de ce qui se disait dans les débats d'échanges d'idées. Ainsi, au-delà de la barrière linguistique où il fallait vraiment donner de son mieux pour se faire comprendre et se faire entendre, il y avait ce regard des participantEs stigmatisant qu'il fallait surmonter, au mieux se retrancher et se limiter à subir, chose qui n'a pas manqué d'être énuméré lors des échanges que nous avons eu avec l'équipe de Purposeful qui a pris le soin de relever nos appréciations et nos ressentis personnel, en espérant qu'aux prochaines éditions un suivi sur les questions d'inclusion et de tolérance zéro soient appliquées de toutEs.

En termes de logistique séance tenante tout a été bien élaboré sauf la question de faire venir des agents sanitaires pour le prélèvement du Test PCR sur place, qui eux ont à leur tour, sont venus l'après-midi du dernier jour de la conférence, sachant que le voyage retour de certainEs participantEs était prévu pour le jour suivant. Ainsi les résultats du Test PCR ont été mis en ligne un peu plus tard ce qui a contraint une personne de chaque délégation (Côte d'Ivoire & Nigéria) à rater leur vol. Fort heureusement que parmi ces personnes il y a une personne anglophone, sinon qu'advierait-il de la personne francophone à expliquer aux autorités de l'aéroport Sierra-Léonais sa situation de prélèvement du TEST COVID qui a été fait en retard, pour un pays qui n'est pas la sienne. Cette situation a eu des répercussions sur la santé mentale de celle-ci, heureusement qu'elles ont été vite prises en charge par l'équipe organisatrice de la conférence. Nous le mentionnons dans ce rapport afin de pouvoir relever les points faibles à améliorer pour les prochaines organisations. Au regard de tout ce que nous avons pu énumérer, cela reste une très belle expérience acquise et à restituer au sein de notre communauté dont cette conférence a développé en nous des capacités dont nous ignorons en s'appropriant

des Workspaces pour faire entendre nos voix et démontrer notre engagement afin de contribuer au progrès du militantisme QUEER.

Reflections of a Pansexual Being by an anonymous participant

I am a lamb living among wolves. Every turn I take, every move I have to be wary of what I do, what I say lest they see that I am a fraud- or so they call me. Then, they will mock me, tease me, torcher me and ridicule me just because I am different. Just because a document, a constitution does not recognise my existence and instead yearns to throw me in jail for being a sexual being.

I remember when I applied for the ACSHR conference and I was successful I was excited. I was going to make sure that in the organization, they recognised me, and my people. I was going to be heard, after fighting so hard for a voice. I was going to be the voice of the voiceless but then, like always, they had to shut me down. They wanted to drown me out. 'You shall not, and will not be involved whatsoever with the LGBTQIA community,' they told me! 'If you do, we will have no option but to expel you because it is against the constitution.' What a quandary I found myself in. Do I allow them to silence me? Or do I rise like the moon and sun despite all odds and risk my whole future being ruined?

So, I bottled it up and shamefully disregarded my association and affiliation with the community. As much as it burned and I bled within, I had a greater goal at hand. I was going to learn and accumulate knowledge and one day, with the right force and momentum I told myself I will challenge the constitution itself because ignoring a whole community will not make it go away. And so, I learned. I interacted, I built a

network and although there were issues that we too faced in this conference that were discriminating it was a learning curve and one day, we will all rise and paint the nation, the continent and the world in multiple colors!

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