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The Many Faces of LGBT Inclusion

SESSION REPORT

570



SALZBURG GLOBAL LGBT FORUM

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Session 570

October 2 to 7, 2016
Chaing Rai, Thailand

The Many Faces of LGBT Inclusion

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LGBT FORUM



*Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.*



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Introduction

A year after Fellows met at Schloss Leopoldskron, Austria in 2015, the Salzburg Global LGBT* Forum gathered in Chiang Rai, Thailand for its first meeting outside of Europe to both learn from diverse Asian LGBT communities and to contribute to expanding the plurality of global LGBT discussions. As in previous years at the Forum, participants shared stories, joined causes and raised sensibilities. This is crucial at a time when the tides affecting LGBT human rights worldwide are mixed, with continued anti-LGBT violence happening in parallel with remarkable progress in favor of LGBT inclusion at the national and international levels.

The opportunity to reflect in a comforting environment is not to be taken lightly. In the often-tough road of LGBT activism, policymaking, creative work and research, the impact of finding new collaborators, confidants and kindred spirits is beyond measurement.

The Forum this year brought together 58 Fellows and staff representing 33 countries. They engaged in 20 scheduled activities during 100 hours that produced 60,000 words of minutes. Plenty of valuable material was left out because of space and security aspects, yet it is hoped that this report is insightful, informative, and motivating to the reader.

Since its beginnings, Salzburg Global Seminar has encouraged open and candid discussions and supports session participants to speak as individuals and not as representatives of their organizations. A guiding principle for participants that have chosen to become part of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum community is to protect one another. All session attendants ensure the comfort and safety of any participants in need of greater protection, and treat the diffusion of audiovisual, photographic or written media with great care. Under the Chatham House Rule, no direct statement attribution in print, audiovisual or digital form is made without the author's expressed permission. In line with these principles, some identities have been omitted in the report.

* LGBT: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender. We are using this term as it is currently widely used in human rights conversations on sexual orientation and gender identity in many parts of the world, but we would not wish it to be read as exclusive of other cultural concepts, contemporary or historical, to express sexuality and gender, intersex and gender-nonconforming identities.

To facilitate the reading, this report uses the LGBT acronym throughout, but we would like to emphasize that Forum participants used many variations of this acronym and other terminology during discussions.



Background

Origins of the Forum

The Salzburg Global LGBT Forum was developed in a context where some countries are seeing rapid progress in the recognition of LGBT rights as human rights while in other parts of the world the stigma, discrimination and violence suffered by wide numbers of LGBT people remains unchanged. Even in places where tolerance or inclusion has moved forward, backlashes threaten equality.

With such a mixed record for LGBT rights, the Forum began in 2013 to recognize the “necessity of a global conversation on LGBT issues and their place within the greater human rights conversation” – as its founder and chair Klaus Mueller stated in the first session. Such conversation thrives in diversity. This is why the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum seeks to bring together human rights defenders, activists, artists, researchers and politicians – regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity, religious background, ethnicity or nationality – as they all are part of the global movement pushing LGBT human rights forward.

“LGBT issues are not about special rights, they are about human rights,” Mueller told participants at the 2013 session. It is in this spirit that the Forum hopes to contribute to the global LGBT movement and its quest for expression, protection, and equality under the law.

“LGBT issues are not about special rights, they are about human rights.”



Klaus Mueller



Countries represented in the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum

Sessions of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum 2013–15

LGBT and Human Rights: New Challenges, Next Steps

(June 2013, Salzburg, Austria)

The Forum's inaugural session organized discussions around five themes: **Mainstreaming**, analyzing how LGBT communities can open spaces dominated by heteronormativities and expand rights; **Connectivity**, looking into the opportunities or setbacks of the internet for global and local initiatives; **Security**, considering mechanisms to ensure safety, health, and protection of LGBT communities; **Education**, examining the current state of LGBT access or exclusion from education worldwide; and the **Identity** discussion focused on the issues currently faced by transgender communities.

For the 2013 report, please see:
www.SalzburgGlobal.org/go/506

Participants issued the **Salzburg Statement of the Global LGBT Forum**. This document provides principles, recommendations, and priorities that seek to guide conversations about and actions to advance LGBT human rights.

For the full text of the Statement, please see:
lgbt.SalzburgGlobal.org/our-statement

Creating Long-Term Global Networks to Sustain LGBT Human Rights Organizations

(May 2014, Berlin, Germany)

The Forum moved to Berlin in May 2014, in cooperation with the German Federal Foreign Office to look at the ways in which LGBT issues are addressed by foreign services and embassies and how to improve the relations between embassies and LGBT rights organizations. Participants debated on global **Network Improvements** amongst organizations, embassies and activists; analyzed the **Context Awareness** necessary

for LGBT human rights work; and discussed the **Globalization of Hate Campaigns** and the increasing backlash affecting some LGBT human rights movement worldwide.

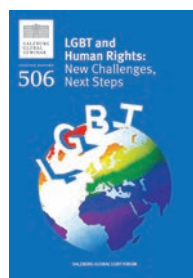
For the 2014 report, please see:
www.SalzburgGlobal.org/go/545

Strengthening Communities: LGBT Rights & Social Cohesion

(June 2015, Salzburg, Austria)

In June 2015 the Forum brought together 57 participants from 34 countries to focus on LGBT inclusion and social cohesion in relation to families, communities, democratic institutions, education, employment and social justice. Within this framework, discussions centered on three themes. The **Cost of Social Exclusion** opened debates on the effects of economic exclusion on LGBT populations and how this exclusion also impacts national economies, corporations and policies. Through the **Power of Storytelling**, participants reflected on LGBT portrayal in media and how the community can tell its own stories to different audiences. **Transformation** brought attention on how LGBT human rights could consolidate or retreat in the face of a global backlash or loss of momentum for LGBT inclusion.

For the 2015 report, please see:
www.SalzburgGlobal.org/go/551





Key Themes of the 2016 Session of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum

The fourth session of the Forum gathered 58 Fellows and staff representing 33 countries. This year's title, *The Many Faces of LGBT Inclusion* brought visibility to groups and stories from the Asian region that are underrepresented in global LGBT dialogues.

The Forum had four interrelated themes. The topic of **Family** encouraged participants to talk about the challenges LGBT communities face regarding family rights, social acceptance, and how family is perceived, defined and lived across our different identities.

Continuing the dialogue started in the previous year's session, **Storytelling** conversations helped writers, filmmakers, photographers, activists, and policymakers to exchange ideas and expertise on the work they produce, the messages they share, and the audiences they hope to reach.

Strengthening International Connections is a key theme of the Forum, and one goal is to deepen the relationship between LGBT human rights groups and foreign embassies, governments, and international organizations which provide logistical, financial and network support to LGBT human rights groups.

Transgender Asian Perspectives were discussed with particular attention given to the ongoing legal and social changes affecting transgender populations in Asia.

The 2016 session had six complimentary goals that served as inspiration for participants' conversations, reflections and brainstorming:

- Explore regional and global challenges and how they intertwine;
- Enable LGBT rights activists to present contexts and best practices;
- Reinforce innovative approaches for transnational exchanges;
- Explore storytelling as a critical means to achieve social impact;
- Promote a concept of "family" that is inclusive of the LGBT community; and
- Develop action plans for specific regional and national contexts.

“Institutions don't talk to institutions – people talk to people.

The Salzburg Global LGBT Forum is building a global community of trust to advance LGBT human rights. ”

Klaus Mueller

Day 1

The Forum’s Founder and Chair Klaus Mueller opened the gathering emphasizing the importance of respect and trust for the Forum: “The Forum is a place to retreat, a safe space that keeps developing a global community of trust.” Together with Edmund Settle, they shared the cooperation between the Forum and UNDP that made possible the Chiang Rai meeting. The first panel gave an up-to-date overview of LGBT rights in the Asian region. Group discussions on regional LGBT priorities followed and the day ended with a rapid round of personal introductions.

Welcome & Opening Remarks

Klaus Mueller

Founder & Chair, Salzburg Global LGBT Forum

Edmund Settle

Session Co-Chair; Policy Advisor, United Nations Development Programme, Bangkok Regional Hub

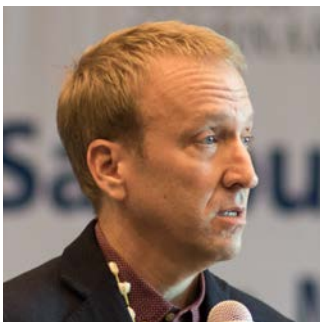
Welcoming participants to the fourth session of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum, its first in Asia, Mueller announced that 65 countries are now represented in the network. Mueller explained why coming to Asia is crucial: “If Asian societies do not advance on LGBT rights, the global LGBT community will not move forward.” He added: “The Forum is aware of the strong Western discourse in LGBT human rights, and the underrepresentation of Asian voices within that global discourse.” The engagement of more Asian voices in the Forum is a step in the right direction to change this.

Settle presented the work of the “Being LGBTI in Asia” program, explaining that despite initial skepticism of some actors in tackling LGBTI issues, the program has developed partnerships with NGOs, governments, including ministries and departments, and human rights bodies across the region. Settle highlighted the themes guiding the cooperation between “Being LGBTI in Asia” and the Forum, saying: “We want to work with the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum to define an inclusion and positive LGBT narrative. This narrative includes engaging how communities and families can be inclusive of LGBT and show the diversity of family formats. Storytelling, as a strong grassroots tradition in many Asian communities, helps to show that LGBT populations share family values.”

“We want to work with the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum to define an inclusion and positive LGBT narrative.

This narrative includes engaging how communities and families can be inclusive of LGBT and show the diversity of family formats.

Storytelling, as a strong grassroots tradition in many Asian communities, helps to show that LGBT populations share family values.”



Edmund Settle



Starting Point: LGBT Human Rights in Asia

Thilaga Sulathireh, Manisha Dhakal,
Matcha Phorn-in, Nara Lee and
Ying Xin

Manisha Dhakal	<i>Executive Director, Blue Diamond Society, Nepal</i>
Nara Lee	<i>Chief Officer, Solidarity for LGBT Human Rights of Korea (Haengsungin), Republic of Korea</i>
Matcha Phorn-in	<i>Director, Sangsan Anakot Yawachon, CSOs for Gender Equality, Thailand</i>
Thilaga Sulathireh	<i>Researcher and Sexual Rights Advocate, Malaysia</i>
MODERATOR:	
Ying Xin	<i>Executive Director, Beijing LGBT Center, China</i>

The inaugural panel of the Forum introduced the diversity of Asia and provided backgrounds, current developments and challenges of LGBT rights. Panelists provided valuable insights into developments across the region.

Nepal: Gradual change towards legal protection

As recently as 2011, government support was precarious and the police arrested transsexuals, however by 2015, arrests had almost disappeared and the Nepalese government recognized transgender as a third gender. Challenges remain, but there is optimism: “Now the parliament consults us on what laws need to be formulated and UNDP engages with us for policy design.” Also, some television and radio stations are broadcasting discussion programs for LGBT people.

“The public thinks that LGBT people are all the same, but every individual has their own story. We need to show the diversity within our community.”



Manisha Dhakal

South Korea: The first steps of LGBT visibility

The first Korean LGBT group was founded in 1993, following the country’s return to democracy after military rule, and by the 2000s there had been some progress in social attitudes and laws. In the past decade, the Human Rights Law Commission included sexual orientation as a grounds on which discrimination is prohibited. However, the current political and economic crisis has paved the way for hate and conservative religious communities have slowed the institutionalization of LGBT human rights.

Thailand: The needed conversation

As of 2016, Thailand has a gender equality law that still lacks clarity on LGBT issues. Anti-LGBT bullying in Thai schools also remains a problem, often overlooked and not addressed by teachers, students or communities. A crucial but difficult starting point for change lies at the family unit: “As a society we don’t talk about where this violence originates from, because it leads to attitudes in the family. This is a difficult conversation.”

Despite some shrinking spaces, Asian organizations mobilize

In South Korea LGBT groups are excluded from consultations in the national human rights discourse and local governments are dropping LGBT rights protections. Despite backlashes, Korean LGBT groups are still taking part in demonstrations on issues beyond LGBT rights, much like in Thailand: “LGBT and other human rights groups are coming together, finding ways to talk to the government and bundle issues that affect us all.” Intersectionality has helped to bring groups together: “In Korea and Taiwan, LGBT movements work with labor and women rights groups, making more groups acknowledge the importance of the LGBT movement.”

LGBT diversity needs greater visibility

Despite growing visibility for the community-at-large, LGBT visibility needs to include the subgroups that make up this community. As one Fellow remarked, “[In Nepal], the majorities think that LGBT issues are trans issues. Every subgroup must share their story and show the diversity within the diversity.” Another agreed, referring to China where “LGBT issues are seen as predominantly pertaining to gay men.”

Questions for the Week Ahead

After the first discussions, all participants were divided in four roundtables to gather some of the questions they wanted to address in the week ahead:

- How can we better understand the pros and cons of placing all LGBT issues within or outside the umbrella of human rights and health rights?
- What could motivate policymakers to really address discrimination, bullying, violence prevention, and freedom of association?
- How can we take into account that activists often face problems in funding, health, skill development or employment, which strongly affects their struggle for change?
- How can LGBT communities build narratives that represent their diversity and reach out to groups that block reform?
- How can LGBT groups extend working with other human rights groups?
- How can we better explain that legislation may not be representative or beneficial for all people in the LGBT communities?
- How can we better talk about the impact of LGBT repression on mental health and wellbeing?

New United Nations Independent Expert on LGBTI

As Fellows arrived at the Forum, the United Nations Human Rights Council appointed Thai professor Vitit Muntarbhorn as the first independent expert to investigate the violence and discrimination faced by the LGBT community. Professor Muntarbhorn is a professor of law and human rights expert who has dealt with cases ranging from child prostitution to rights in North Korea and participated in the drafting of the 2006 Yogyakarta Principles on international laws related to Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI). Prof. Muntarbhorn has been very supportive of the Forum and we hope to be helpful to him and his team in this new endeavor. His appointment both felt timely and reaffirming to the Forum's focus on Asia's growing role within the LGBT human rights struggle. Congratulations!



Day 2

A panel on the challenges of measuring LGBT inclusion brought together views about data gathering, policy and examples of successful inclusion. This bridging between the quantifiable and the private, was the perfect opening to one of the most intimate panels of the Forum: In Life Stories, three Fellows from the Netherlands, Bhutan and Syria shared their life stories through candid storytelling. In the Knowledge Café, six Fellows led discussions to share expertise on LGBT advocacy issues and farm ideas to support their work at home. At the Open Forum participants shared their multitude of talents and passions through film, performances and photographs, and an evening panel brought insights into Transgender Asian Perspectives from Cambodia, Mongolia, Vietnam and Nepal.

Can We Measure LGBT Inclusion?

Tamara Adrian

Lawyer and Member of Congress, Venezuela

Passang Dorji

Bhutan Health and Medical Council, Bhutan

Angeline Jackson

Executive Director, Quality of Citizenship Jamaica

MODERATOR:

Edmund Settle

Session Co-Chair; Policy Advisor, Bangkok Regional Hub, UNDP

There are many sides to quantifying, measuring, and tracking inclusion and its progress. Despite growing empirical surveys, many problems remain. How do you give data a voice to show those who get kicked out of schools or bullied? What are the implications of this visibility? These were some of the questions raised in the Forum's second panel.

“Intersectionality matters. I am not just a lesbian. I am a Jamaican and I am a woman...

We tend to operate in silos, but intersectionality pushes conversations forward.”

Angeline Jackson





“Opportunities to exchange best practices between governments and civil society across regions are tremendously beneficial for those working on the protection of transgender health and citizenship rights.”

Tamara Adrian (left)
with Edmund Settle

The road ahead in the era of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a set of policy priorities adopted by United Nations members on September 25, 2015 to address issues such as poverty, the environment and global prosperity by 2030. The language of the SDGs is broad with five areas identified as directly relevant for LGBT issues: political and civic participation, personal security and violence, economic wellbeing, access to health and education. However, none of the 17 SDGs specifically mention LGBT people, which raised questions of how to ensure LGBT participation in UN consultations.

Intersectionality is helpful but needs clarity

The concept of intersectionality has helped to understand and quantify LGBT inclusion. It can be described as a method to recognize how different forms of discrimination can cause, influence or reinforce patterns of oppression and inequalities. Discussants suggested to review how policies can be affected by different layers of exclusion and discrimination.

Measurements, policies and laws

The lack of inclusive legislation and policies was identified as a reason for wider confusion: “We often have laws and organizations for disabilities or race but none for LGBT issues. We need more encompassing laws and policy architectures for tackling discrimination.” As one panelist noted, “It is better to have holistic laws than a series of fragmented laws.” Integrating issues across LGBT, ethnic and other groups can help policy, law and quantification.

“When I came out on TV and told my story, I think that this was to mainly indicate that our homosexual community does exist in our beautiful Himalayan country...”

It was a silent breaking moment for the Bhutanese LGBT [people].”

Passang Dorji

The dilemmas and complexities of visibility

LGBT groups often have to refrain from public exposure out of self-preservation, and this hinders their acceptance in societies. “A personal story is important to convince other people, instead of abstract ideas like social justice or gender equality demanded by populations that are invisible to majorities,” remarked one Fellow. Therefore, each person’s decision to be visible depends on many social and personal factors but stepping out of the closet helps the push for inclusion.

Visibility in Jamaica

During a 2015 visit to Jamaica by former US president Barack Obama, Angeline Jackson agreed to be mentioned as a lesbian activist in his speech at the University of the Americas. After this, Jackson explained to several media outlets that her decision to be public was not tied to a sexual orientation: “This was also about me being Jamaican and a woman. We tend to operate in silos, but intersectionality pushes conversations forward.” Yet, Jackson warns that amid security threats, the individual person must determine when to be visible.

Visibility in Bhutan

Passang Dorji’s visibility experience occurred in front of an entire country. Unsettled by the lack of a public conversation about LGBT people, he risked everything and went on national television to tell his story as a gay man. “The interviewer helped me in the dialogue, which was difficult for both of us,” recalled Dorji. His is an example of how one individual can help change the public discourse: today, a broader Bhutan LGBT community has come out and is reaching out to different language groups while parliament is drafting inclusive laws.





Life Stories: Truth and Transformation

Pema Dorji *LGBT Activist, Bhutan*

Danny Ramadan *Volunteer Coordinator, QMUNITY, Canada, previously Syria*

Saskia Wieringa *Chair, Foundation IPT 1965, Netherlands*

A key function of the Forum is to deepen our understanding of the diversity and complexity of LGBT lives. No global conversation is easy, and it relies on the art of listening and the willingness to enter new worlds. Saskia,

SASKIA'S STORY

Saskia was born in 1950 to a family that was part of the Dutch resistance movement during World War II. This idea of fighting against injustice was a constant feature since Saskia's early life. She was a tomboy as a little girl. This was not an issue as a child. But her adolescence was a period of great anguish. There was no physical violence, but great psychological pressures to behave "like a girl." "I sometimes remained silent for weeks, as nothing I wanted to say could be said," Saskia shared in Chiang Rai. "The terror I lived through shaped me," confided Saskia. She recalls being in love with the same teacher that her brother was attracted to, something that she kept secret. She knew why, as she was confronted with violence. "I was once beaten up in a homophobic attack. I lost two teeth. But I remember having to develop resilience," she remembers.

Saskia moved to Amsterdam in 1968. It was there where she discovered her attraction to women, a feeling for which she "didn't even have a name." For her, the late 1960s were a rebirth – exciting, exhilarating, full of life, with plenty of friends to talk to. It was in university where Saskia found her second family in a new web of friends, lovers, and colleagues. She joined Third World

Danny and Pema opened their hearts to share memories of love, loss and courage starting with the question: "What did the world you were born into look like?"



“I’m an activist, I am a mother, I’m a grandmother, I’m a partner, and I’m proud of the families that I have established.”

solidarity and feminist movements and found empowerment through her dedication to policy, academic work, and activism.

With the love and support of this second family, she brought up a baby girl. Decades later, that girl would make Saskia a proud grandmother. "That lucky kid is going to have six grandparents! We are going to fight about the schedule for looking after this child," says Saskia through a broad smile.

Saskia's third family is in Indonesia. She met Nur, her partner, in 1995 while at a women's conference in Beijing, China. Nur's arrival in her life opened a new chapter: "Now I have hundreds of family members in Indonesia,"

says Saskia. She remembers the time when she visited Nur's late mother. Although they were married in the Netherlands, this was not discussed openly. In Indonesian custom, guests leave a gift as appreciation to the host based on proximity and familial relations. "I had to leave a larger gift because I had taken her daughter. How do you know that you are over or under giving?" In the end, the whole family managed the situation wonderfully, she says. Today, Saskia and Nur's Indonesian family

is even bigger. They have become the foster mothers of lesbian women in Indonesia, both through supporting individuals or working as board advisors to organizations like the Ardhanary Institute in Jakarta or Dipayoni in Surabaya. With intellectual training, guidance and care, they have provided many women dealing with hardships, such as homelessness, with a caring family. Saskia's wisdom and kindness has only kept rising across decades and geographies.

PEMA'S STORY

Pema grew up in a normal middle class family in Bhutan – "a country with a happiness measurement index," Pema reminded Fellows in Chiang Rai. During childhood he felt normal, but at five-years-old, schoolmates started to call him insulting nicknames to the extent that some people stopped using or forgot his actual name. Growing up wasn't easy for Pema. Going to school for him was "like going to a war." He would avoid busy streets as many classmates would call him names every time he crossed their paths.

Loneliness settled in. "When you are constantly reminded that you are not normal, it gets to you eventually. I would go to sleep crying many times," he remembers. But one episode marked him for years. One classmate's teasing became so acute that Pema, in self-defense, threw a bottle at him and the bully retaliated by pouring a freezing bucket of water over Pema. When Pema asked his teacher for support, the bully argued: "He behaves like a girl!" Instead of offering comfort, the teacher told Pema: "You need to change if you want this to stop."

Despite being surrounded by loving friends, Pema felt lonelier and lonelier, and would constantly think of the words that people would say to him every day. People would



“No child deserves to go through the same situation that I went through”

remind him that "he was not normal" and relatives would avoid him out of embarrassment. Without any information or ways to find support, Pema became depressed. He tried to commit suicide twice. But, in his determination to make things better, he eventually found information on the Internet and educated himself on LGBT issues and began to educate people around him. Despite his shyness, he now focuses on advocacy work to change social attitudes and help people in situations similar to those he went through.

After all of these experiences Pema is now aware of his strength: "I consider myself a survivor." Not only that, he is a courageous person that has turned years of suffering into a drive to help those that, like him in the past, may be suffering in silence at this very second.

DANNY'S STORY

Danny was born in Damascus in 1984 to a conservative Muslim family. Syria was then a country surrounded by an iron wall of information, which made culture and religion all the more intense. At around ten years old, “my dad tried to get me to do manly activities’ like working in a construction site, while all I wanted to do was read books and write poems,” remembers Danny. Bullied at school, he remembers feeling like “the loneliest kid in the world.” His solitude also made him curious to understand his city, his culture, and Islam.

In his adolescence, he wasn’t ashamed of his sexuality. “It pushed me down some social hierarchies but I reminded myself that I was a normal person,” he recalls. The sense of feeling an outcast gave him a thick skin and an ability to deal with crises. Eventually, he came out to his father and had to leave home. He travelled and worked in different countries, finally landing at 22-years-old in Egypt to work for a newspaper. Adversity would hit again. A colleague outed him and Danny was fired.

This was a turning point for Danny: “My sexuality was something [that would] follow me in professional settings, friendships and lovers. I decided to become an activist and push for causes.” He came out on social media, which led to gay bashing online and a homophobic attack that landed him in hospital for two weeks. There was an initial sense of self-pity. “I didn’t deserve to be treated like that, or to be the lonely kid, or the youngster that was kicked out of home or fired from work,” Danny felt. But he kept him moving forward.

He went back to Damascus in 2011 to report on the revolution. Over time his apartment became an underground LGBT center. “We would play cards or have movie nights. It



“I was the loneliest kid in the world.”

was basic, but it was an on-going support system.” This came at a cost. By 2012, these gatherings got him arrested. After a week in prison, some 150 friends gathered the bail out money and the authorities demanded he leave the country. After a complex application procedure, Danny was sponsored to relocate to Canada, his new home.

The complexities of relocation are often ignored. Danny discovered that “As a refugee, I embodied certain privileges. I couldn’t say that I missed home, because it felt impolite. But I missed it; it’s the place where I climbed a tree, where I kissed a boy the first time. I am thankful for being in Canada and yet I was also pushed away from my country and community.” The reality of what had happened did not catch up with Danny until months after his arrival. After speaking at a fundraising event, Danny went home and was hit by an endless emptiness. “I was celebrated for being a strong person, but I realized that I wasn’t that person. I had been vulnerable for so long and kept pushing that thought away, until the wall broke,” he recalls.

From all these experiences, Danny takes inspiration and catharsis: “I am determined to help other folks to not have to go through what I went through.”

Knowledge Café on Visibility and Inclusion

MODERATORS:

Louise Hallman *Editor, Salzburg Global Seminar*

Katri Kivioja *Program Specialist, HIV, Health and Development Unit, UNDP*

Six Fellows led group discussions about their organizations, the contexts in which they work, and gathered ideas to support their activities back at home.

Global and local authority: Making use of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum

Mariano Ruiz *Latin America and Caribbean Outreach and Communications Officer, International Day against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia Committee (IDAHO Committee), Argentina*

This discussion analyzed how Forum participants from all sessions use social media to exchange information and support their work. The group gathered ideas on how the Forum's more than 120 Fellows from 65 countries can improve exchanges for research, consultations, support and activism.

Protective legal mechanisms for LGBT families in Cambodia

Seaklay (Pipi) Say *Advocacy Officer, Rainbow Community Kampuchea (RoCK), Cambodia*

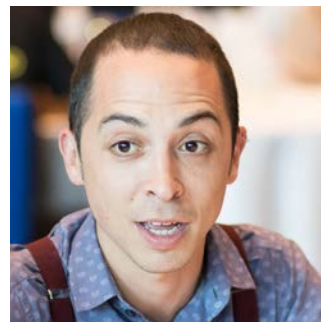
Say recounted Cambodia's gaps in same-sex marriage and adoption laws. In this context, RoCK has designed a "Declaration of Family Relationship" (DoFR), which is a legal private contract providing protection for same-sex couples and families. This legal document is increasingly accepted and generating useful data on LGBT communities nationally, with the contracts now issued in ten Cambodian provinces and bringing together LGBT populations and authorities. Say discussed specific examples of how DoFRs work and ways to further consolidate this legal instrument in Cambodia.

Intersectionality between faith and SOGIEB (Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Expression and Bodies) and how to reconcile multiple identities

VK Lasarati *National Coordinator, Youth Interfaith Forum on Sexuality, (YIFoS) Indonesia*

Lasarati presented on the intersection and interaction between faith, gender and sexuality and how the organization YIFoS supports people of faith to balance these often conflicting identities. YIFoS also helps bridge-building across communities to overcome situations where LGBT people of faith are discriminated against by both religious communities and LGBT groups. Storytelling and conversations helps build mutual acceptance and reduce conflicts between faith and sexuality.

“LGBT youth are the future of our struggle for equality. Sharing our life stories and experiences helps us realize that we face the same challenges no matter where we live, who we are or which faith we follow. Together we can improve our lives.”



Mariano Ruiz



1. VK Lasarati leads a table at the Knowledge Cafe
2. Nakhornphet Pasomsouk
3. Mariano Ruiz

Looking ahead: Bangladesh LGBT movement & the security crisis

Withheld

For safety reasons this group leader's identity has been withheld

This group discussed how law enforcers in Bangladesh harass or arrest Hijra, Kothi, sex workers or cross-dressers without warrants and LGBT-targeted abductions, arbitrary arrests, beatings and gang rapes occur worryingly frequently. As a consequence, trauma, suicide, school dropouts and isolation has greatly increased in LGBT communities, worsened by collective silence and the normalization of anti-LGBT violence. The blind eye or implicit support from state officials has an extreme example in the murder of gay activists Xulhaz Mannan and Mahbub Rabbi Tonoy on April 25, 2016. Group participants discussed strategies to improve activists' safety, legal aid access, crime documentation, and media outreach.

Inclusion of LGBT community voice and legal environment in the Gross National Happiness country

Passang Dorji

Bhutan Health and Medical Council, Bhutan

Dorji explained how the new Bhutanese constitution declared that all citizens are entitled to full rights regardless of “race, sex, language, religion, politics or other status.” This “other status” provision triggered a process of law harmonization to ensure LGBT inclusion nationwide. Dorji discussed strategies so LGBT groups ensure far-reaching legal reforms in this unprecedented era of reform in Bhutan.

Proud to Be Us Laos: A milestone event in LGBT community in Lao PDR

Nakhornphet Pasomsouk

Technical Specialist, Glaxo Smith Kline Project at Care International, Laos PDR

“Proud to Be Us Laos” is a local initiative that started the discussion of LGBT rights and provides support to local LGBT communities and organizations. The initiative has garnered attention from agencies, media outlets and government offices within and outside of Laos, both helping and limiting the scope of their work. Pasomsouk gathered ideas for improving advocacy, international cooperation and community-building sensitive to local context.

1. Pipi Say

2. Passang Dorji



Culture and Resilience: An Open Forum

In the Open Forum, participants shared videos, projects or performances that gave wonderful insights into the multitalented pool of restless creative minds gathered in Chiang Rai.

Klaus Mueller presented video highlights of the ongoing Salzburg Global LGBT Forum project *Family Is...*. In this interview series, Fellows reflect on their definition and experience of what “family” means to them.

Laurindo Garcia shared video clips from the B-Change Foundation series *Stories of Being Me*. These beautiful short documentaries portray LGBT people in eight Asian countries.

Cha Roque screened a moving speech of her young daughter at a LGBT Pride event in the Philippines.

Jong Geol Lee delighted us with scenes from *Weekends*, a documentary directed by Lee Dong-Ha about G-Voice, South Korea’s first amateur gay choir of which Lee is a member. *Weekends* was screened at the Pusan International Film Festival and won the Audience Award third place at the 66th Berlinale Film Festival.

Nara Lee gave us a photographic account of the 2016 South Korea LGBT Pride march in Seoul.

Tamara Adrian captivated us with a family photograph in which she is flanked by her daughter and son. She remembers a very difficult aspect of being a trans mother: “Their other mother didn’t allow me to see them for 12 years. Eventually we reunited but I didn’t see them growing up. Now they are part of me, of my family.”

Rooi Teve reflected on the importance of wellness of activists by sharing a personal video where she plays a soothing piano rendition of Chopin’s *Prelude in E Minor, Op. 28 #4*.

Danny Ramadan shared a tale of how his need to understand homophobia in Syria made him study and discover aspects of Islamic history, literature and sacred texts that dismantled the arguments used by homophobes.

Ying Xin shared a short animation, done in collaboration between UNDP, Beijing University and the Beijing LGBT Centre. The video shows the findings of a report on LGBT populations in





China and has reached 72 million views, with 2 million people joining its online discussion.

Pema Dorji screened a video from Tibetan Buddhism teacher Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche’s reflections on homosexuality and Buddhism: “Your sexual orientation has nothing to do with understanding truth. You can be gay, lesbian or straight,” Rinpoche argues.

Through a video report, **Andrey Tran** brought us inside a workshop organized by Young Voices Count that supports skills development for young LGBT rights advocates from Pakistan, Fiji, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Bhutan, Vietnam and India.

Bao Chau Nguyen delighted us with scenes from his first documentary *Lam: Inside Out*. This courageous film follows a trans woman from an ethnic minority in Vietnam returning to her village after many years, showing the intricate relations between family, society, and gender dynamics.

Mariano Ruiz brought attention to the “Free & Equal” Campaign, led by the United Nations Human Rights Office and which aims to support the visibility and connectivity of LGBTIQ individuals and organizations.

Wanja Kilber presented quarteera.de, an online platform for connecting LGBTIQ Russian-speaking refugees based in Germany. Kilber also shared the video 11, part of the art project “Save The Date” from Armenian artist Mischa Badasyan.

In the short-animation titled *Olympic Dreams*, **Kasha Nabagesera** (pictured left) was depicted as a cartoon character determined to overcome obstacles in her fight for LGBT rights in Uganda. The animation was done in collaboration with the Frontline Human Rights Defenders campaign in the context of the 2012 Olympics in London.

Danish Sheikh (pictured below) shared his love of Shakespeare by telling us about “The Bardolators,” a Bangalore and New Delhi-based outdoor theatre group where he takes part in adaptations of *Much Ado About Nothing* and *Romeo & Juliet*.

Closing the event, **Edmund Settle** screened a video from the 2015 Regional Dialogue on LGBTI Human Rights & Health in the Asia-Pacific Region. The event titled “Stronger Together” brought together over 240 participants from civil society including experts from 13 governments and 17 human rights institutions in Bangkok.



“There is high degree of ignorance in thinking that Asia is a paradise for trans people.”

Bao Chau Nguyen, Pipi Say and Manisha Dhakal

A Conversation on Transgender Asian Perspectives

Chinzorig Gochoo *Manager, “Through Democracy” Project, Wind of Change, Mongolia*

Manisha Dhakal *Executive Director, Blue Diamond Society, Nepal*

Bao Chau Nguyen *Media Manager, Next Generation Hanoi, Vietnam*

Seaklay (Pipi) Say *Advocacy Officer, Rainbow Community Kampuchea (RoCK), Cambodia*

MODERATOR:

Tamara Adrian *Lawyer and Member of Congress, Venezuela*

This conversation focused on the trans communities of the Asian region. Some Asian countries are renowned for sex-reassignment surgeries and social tolerance of trans communities, “but despite this candid view, there is high degree of ignorance in thinking that Asia is a paradise for trans people.”

Respect starts with a simple question

Adrian began by asking panelists to state their preferred gender noun. “Do not assume, it is important to be asked,” said Adrian. This gesture of awareness about Preferred Gender Pronoun (PGP) is important as trans communities face vast misunderstandings within and outside LGBT communities.



Access to healthcare and the problems of self-medication

In Nepal, healthcare providers are being trained in sexuality, gender and HIV care, although problems persist: “In some hospitals, health personnel would bring colleagues to observe our check-ups.” Often, trans women in Nepal and Cambodia take hormones without prescription and estimate dosage following friends’ advice prompting organizations to translate and improve information on hormone and transition process safety. In Bhutan however, trans women have difficulties accessing hormones.

The voice of Asian trans men

In some Asian countries, “trans women tend to engage more in activism while trans men are more private.” Important trans men support in the region comes from the Asia-Pacific Transgender Network (APTN), which provides materials like oils for breast reduction and other medications that are of great help for trans men’s wellbeing. Stigmas affect the trans men community, who are often forced to marry or undergo transphobic “corrective” experiences. “In Vietnam some people think you are LGBT because a spirit enters your body, and one of those spirits needs to exit you.” Despite this, individual experiences vary greatly. “I did my coming out on Mongolian TV and although my family was in shock, they gradually understood me and were very supportive,” remembers Gochoo.

Legal changes in the region

In Vietnam, the LGBT community submitted proposals to the National Assembly in 2015 to protect trans population during the civil code reform and sex change will become legal in 2017. In Nepal, the government began issuing passports and citizenship cards with third-gender category, while in India a transgender bill in Parliament gave initial hopes to trans activists although important inclusionary parts were lost during redrafting.

The question of sex work communities

In Nepal, female and trans sex workers have joined forces with other organizations to decriminalize and eventually legalize sex work. In Cambodia, transgender women have been arrested, reinforcing negative public views against trans individuals. Some regional organizations have begun work in educating the public about the root causes of poverty, exclusion, and other social factors that push some trans women into sex work in an effort to end the stigma.

The intersex community deserves greater attention

In Asia, as in the rest of the world, there is extensive confusion about gender identity and the differences between trans, inter and cis populations. In Vietnam, however, there is legal recognition of intersex people, whereby they are defined as someone who is not born male or female. Currently, they are



Chinzorig Gochoo

the only people able to legally change their gender, and there is debate in the country on whether parents should be able to decide the gender or sex of their intersex children.

Economic discrimination and sustainable livelihoods

The world over, trans people are by far the unfortunate target of most violent and phobic attacks against LGBT populations. In a recent report from the Uruguayan government, 32% of trans men and 96% of trans women were pushed at some point to engage in sex work. Trans communities also suffer from high school dropout rates, which impacts long-term skills building and limits job access. One panelist relayed his own experience with workplace discrimination: “A supervisor blocked my internship because I was a trans man and I have been often blocked from job applications.” There is some progress, with Vietnam having a rising number of LGBT-friendly workplaces.



Day 3

Four filmmakers opened the day with a conversation on creative processes and the state of LGBT cinema in Asia. A second panel mixed personal narratives and social analysis to look into at the issue of family in Asia and other regions. An afternoon conversation amongst ambassadors and lawmakers included personal stories and analyses of the work done with and for LGBT communities. Sessions ended with a dinner on the banks of the Kok River.

Storytelling: The Power of Sharing Our Lives Through Video and Film

Popo Fan *Filmmaker, Writer, Activist, China*

Su Su Hlaing *Filmmaker, Screenwriter, Myanmar*

Cha Roque *Literary Writer, Filmmaker, Activist, Philippines*

MODERATOR:

Nilu Doma Sherpa *Film Director, Nepal*

Four filmmakers from Myanmar, China, the Philippines and Nepal reflected on their creative processes, the state of LGBT cinema in Asia and how storytelling has changed them in a conversation that was both intimate and collegial.

Motivations for telling stories

The starting point for LGBT storytelling varies greatly. Hlaing remembers the police arrest of an LGBT sex worker as a personal trigger for raising awareness on the community. Roque's inspiration came from a need to change the world for her daughter: "She was being bullied at school because of me, her lesbian mom. I had to do something about it."

The impact of storytelling continues after a film

Some stories portrayed in documentaries have continued past the final cut, transforming their subjects' lives. Hlaing remembered how, after doing a documentary on LGBT people from humble rural backgrounds, some of the film's subjects opened up to their families about being LGBT. "To my surprise," remembers Hlaing, "their families came from far away to the film premiere and to show support to their sons and daughters."

“To my surprise, families came from far away to the film premiere and to show support for their sons and daughters.”



Su Su Hlaing

“I am sometimes criticized because my films are too happy but I am determined tell positive stories about LGBT people and their families.”



Popo Fan

Popo Fan, Su Su Hlaing, Cha Roque and Nilu Doma Sherpa

LGBT happiness also deserves being told

While many LGBT-focused films tell harrowing tales of rejection and violence, Fan supports the view that more LGBT narratives need to be positive: “I am sometimes criticized because my films are too happy but I am determined tell positive stories about LGBT people and their families.”

Who plays LGBT characters?

The panelists agreed that a debate is needed on the extensive portrayal of LGBT characters in cinema by heterosexual or cis actors. For Sherpa, this trend has a certain exploitative dynamic, since it boils down to actors being awarded for playing “challenging roles.” Roque recalled a situation where her casting search for a trans woman with acting experience prompted accusations of cis women discrimination. “I was in shock. Heterosexual men have played trans women for decades,” explains Roque.

Advocacy through beauty

Fan has noted that in some Asian countries, aesthetics have not only been a matter of artistic language: “Some filmmakers have used aesthetics as a way to circumvent censorship. Beauty can be rebellious,” argued Fan.

Attracting audiences and sharing stories amongst Asian theatres

Sherpa called for improving the quality, quantity, and distribution of LGBT stories to invite all audiences beyond gender or sexuality lines. Fan proposed that regional filmmakers and festivals build better connections across the continent. Limited access to mainstream theatres, online censorship, and obstacles to LGBT film festivals in some countries however are critical bottlenecks preventing this advancement.

Change of LGBT portrayal in cinema

Panelists said they see a shift in LGBT portrayals on film and television away from stereotypical mockery. Roque notes tangible improvement: “In the Philippines, soap operas now have some gay characters.” In China, LGBT characters are slowly appearing in films. Fan reminded Fellows: “Hollywood took decades to change depictions of LGBT as psychopaths. Things take time.”





Family Is...
Cha Roque and her daughter Kelsey

“I got judged and laughed at for having a lesbian mom. I realized that even if it has been too long, it still pains me. I was in Grade 2 when I was bullied for not having a dad. But I told them ‘It’s okay, I have two mommies!’ ”

“A few months ago, I came out to my friends. But wait, it wasn’t me who really came out. I told them my mommy is a lesbian and thought, ‘So that is how it feels to come out.’ Even if you’re not the person herself, you’re going to get anxious thinking they’ll despise you. If you have a family, friend, or loved one who is an LGBT [person], show the world that you’re proud of them. Then maybe, little by little, the world will start to accept and love them. ”

“Dear Kelsey,

I know that it is hard to be a daughter of a lesbian mom. Maybe even harder than being a lesbian mom. But you never left my side and you always showed me how much you accepted me. Remember to not adjust to society’s definition of family.

Don’t hate judgmental people; educate them. Remember that the fight for acceptance also comes with a responsibility to educate people and potential allies.

I will always be here to guide you.

I love you so much Kelsey. ”

Rooted Within the Family? A Look at Families, Gender and Sexuality in Asia

Manisha Dhakal	<i>Executive Director, Blue Diamond Society, Nepal</i>
Passang Dorji	<i>Bhutan Health and Medical Council, Bhutan</i>
CheyLeaphy (Leaphy) Heng	<i>Communications Officer, Rainbow Community Kampuchea (RoCK), Cambodia</i>
Jong-Geol Lee	<i>General Director, Korea Gay Men's Human Rights Group (Chingusai), Republic of Korea</i>
Anuj Rai	<i>Hotline Operator, Blue Diamond Society, Nepal</i>
Annie Singhal	<i>Community Worker, Support Group and Online & Digital Facilitator, Sangini Trust, India</i>
MODERATOR:	
Danish Sheikh	<i>Consultant, International Commission of Jurists, India</i>

This panel had three sub-themes: biological families, families of choice, and legal issues related to LGBT families in Asia. The discussion included explanations of national

contexts, personal stories and policy analyses and roundtable conversations to reflect on the issues presented.



Leaphy Heng



Annie Singhal



Jong-Geol Lee



Anuj Rai and Manisha Dhakal

BIOLOGICAL FAMILIES

Biological families in Nepal are extensive, compared to the nuclear family predominant in the West. People live with their extended families for decades in closely knit association.

The pressures points are many. Family pressures arise from norms such as the “complete life,” achieved by marrying, having children and grandchildren. There is the ancient belief that one cannot die in peace until one has seen the face of their grandchild. Caring for aging parents creates great economic stress in contexts where LGBT poverty and job discrimination are common. “In Nepal, family is affected by what the society thinks of it,” remarked one Fellow, “Nepali families can be inclusive but the surrounding community is not accepting.” In India, biological family structures extend to cousins, aunts and uncles cohabiting in the same space. These structures grant many social privileges and respect; and when transgressed, conflicts with parents, neighbors, teachers and strangers are certain. In this context, choice disappears and people comply with norms for survival.

THE FAMILIES OF CHOICE

Negative family attitudes can have serious implications for LGBT people, with a number of the panelists sharing personal stories or anecdotes of how they or their friends have been cast out of their families. Many have then sought to establish “alternative” families or “families of choice” that offer them the love and security they did not find with their families of birth. For example, in India, the Hijra community has been organized for decades and has built its own alternative support and familial structures.

“I have found an alternative family where we have love and care,” shared one Fellow, who had been cut off from his family and had at

one point turned to sex work to help fund his university studies. His new family includes parental figures as well as siblings. “To me, family is where there is acceptance and respect. I have found that now.”

THE LEGAL ISSUES OF LGBT FAMILIES

In Cambodia, LGBT couple recognition does not exist, so same-sex couples increasingly rely on Family Book Records (FBR). This document is used to register extended family members but its flexibility allows same-sex families to register adopted or biological children, giving them legal recognition as a family. In South Korea, there is no legal recognition for same-sex partnerships although surveys indicate that up to 11% of people in the country live in couple or family arrangements that are non-nuclear, non-hetero, or otherwise alternative.

After the panel, working groups continued the discussions:

About our biological families

In the Asia, family values are intertwined with the provision of care for parents and children. Some Asian communities believe in the karma of a lonely death if an individual does not provide attention to relatives.

About our families of choice

Gay marriage is not at the core of demands in parts of the LGBT community in South Asia. Instead, advocacy calls for “gender-neutral” marriage in an effort to overcome the male-female binary.

About the legal issues of alternative families

It is important that advocacy work does not only focus on legal recognition of couples and families. It is also important to demand rights in the cases of separation and partner and parental deaths.

“It is imperative that the international community recognize that inclusive development has to address the barriers to equality faced by LGBTI communities. This requires strong partnerships between government, international organizations, civil society and other stakeholders.”



Donica Pottie

Ambassadors’ Conversation: Strengthening International Connections

Ugyen Wangdi	<i>Member of Parliament, Bhutan</i>
H.E. Ms. Donica Pottie	<i>Ambassador of Canada to the Kingdom of Thailand</i>
H.E. Mr. Staffan Herrström	<i>Ambassador of Sweden to the Kingdom of Thailand</i>
H.E. Mr. Brian Davidson	<i>Ambassador of the United Kingdom to the Kingdom of Thailand</i>
Tamara Adrian	<i>Lawyer and Member of Congress, Venezuela</i>
MODERATOR:	
Michael Kirby	<i>Former Judge, High Court of Australia; Vice-President of Vice-Chair of the Human Rights Institute of the International Bar Association, Australia</i>

With Michael Kirby as moderator, the ambassadors to Thailand from Canada, Sweden and the United Kingdom, and two lawmakers from Bhutan and Venezuela discussed how activists can build coalitions, improve communications, and solve issues with donors, agencies and governments.

Motivation for engaging in the conversation

The panelists shared the reasons why LGBT issues are of importance to them. Aside from their role as representatives of states or governments, each spoke as parents of LGBT children, as open members of the LGBT community, or as individuals that support equality.

The pace of progress

Panelists agreed that despite the growing momentum for LGBT issues in recent years, there is always a possibility of retreat despite accelerated progress. “We need to keep aware and prepared because progress is not linear,” recommended one ambassador.

Supporting LGBT populations

With the recent examples of third-gender recognition, it was discussed how some embassies manage third-gender passports in visa applications. There were calls to bring attention to often-marginalized LGBT communities in post-conflict environments. For one panelist, the work of embassies centers often on urban centers, with more effort needed to reach countryside LGBT communities. “It is imperative that the international community recognize that inclusive development has to address the barriers to equality faced



by LGBTI communities,” said Pottie. “This requires strong partnerships between government, international organizations, civil society and other stakeholders.”

Access to funds and support

Panelists warned that in recent years there is less money and more competition for civil society projects. It was recommended that groups take great care and patience in drafting relevant, clear, and realistic plans that will be submitted to specific governments and agencies.

Methods for effective policy shift triggers

Panelists reminded their audience that it is often civil society activism and lobbying that has triggered policy reform, with the example of grassroots work that led to global treaties on landmines. “An active civil society will likely further necessary progressive social and legal change that will advance LGBT peoples’ rights, health and wellbeing,” said Herrström. Although topics such as homosexuality, sex workers or gender bring angst to policymakers, it is crucial to inform politicians of LGBT issues in ways accessible to them. Often government officials perceive LGBT issues as a distant topic because they lack accurate information or statistics.

Parliaments and LGBT rights: The cases of Bhutan

Parliaments and justice systems are crucial for turning LGBT advocacy into law. “In Bhutan, we are currently reviewing the legal provisions in Bhutanese law which discriminate and criminalize LGBTI people, and will be making the necessary recommendations for amendments,” said Wangdi. “This

Klaus Mueller, Michael Kirby,
Ugyen Wangdi, Staffan Herrström,
Tamara Adrian, Donica Pottie and
Brian Davidson

opportunity [Salzburg Global LGBT Forum in Asia] gives us a unique chance to learn about the needs and issues concerning the LGBTI community, and how us, as lawmakers, can make a difference to improve their wellbeing.”

National, regional and global approaches

The challenges confronting LGBTI persons are not only national or regional, but also global. Developing an understanding of how the region’s successes and challenges relate to and influence issues at a global level is essential. The lessons that different cultures and experiences provide should be harnessed to advance LGBTI inclusion on the global stage.

“Countries such as Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia and Ecuador in Latin America have made remarkable strides on improving the legal recognition of transgender people and their access to official identity documents,” noted Adrian, the first transgender woman to be elected to public office in Venezuela. “Opportunities to exchange best practices between governments and civil society across regions are tremendously beneficial for those working on the protection of transgender health and citizenship rights, but also broader LGBTI advocacy efforts.”

Engaging the global south at the diplomatic level

A panelist acknowledged that ensuring the presence of ambassadorial global south representatives is at times difficult. The mixture of cultural sensitivities, adherence to governmental policies, or reservations about public support for LGBT issues still cause reluctance to express open support. But this is gradually changing. At the United Nations level, more countries are joining coalitions or voting in favor of UN decisions supporting LGBT rights.

Following the discussion, participants continued their conversations at an outdoor dinner on the banks of the Kok River.



The Bhutanese Delegation

The Salzburg Global LGBT Forum in Chaing Rai saw the participation of a four-person delegation from Bhutan – two LGBT rights activists and two parliamentarians. The parliamentarians were taking part in the Forum as part of a fact-finding mission to help inform the Bhutanese parliament on how to re-write their laws pertaining to its LGBT citizens as part of a wide-ranging constitutional harmonization process.



Madan Kumar Chhetri



Ugyen Wangdi



Passang Dorji



Pema Dorji

“The Salzburg Global LGBT Forum stood as a bridge between parliamentarians and activists, where we connected the problems and their solutions while understanding the local and global situations of LGBT rights. The parliamentarians assured the participants that they will move forward to create a better environment on legal, health and social issues in Bhutan for the LGBT community. I felt the highest level of happiness in talking face-to-face, and discussing one-on-one about our issues, policies and laws that our country is reviewing.”

Passang Dorji, Bhutan Health and Medical Council, Bhutan

“To attend the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum with the two of parliamentarian members was a very important event in my calendar as we got to interact with them on so many issues concerning the

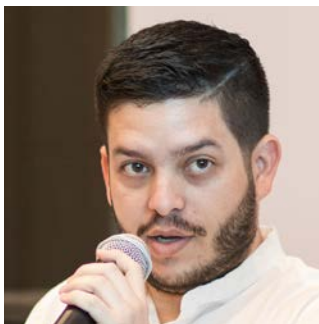
community, and we also got positive feedback and guidance. The Salzburg Global LGBT Forum also acts as a platform for our parliamentarian to learn and be updated on information on LGBT movements around the world. It has also provided us with a way forward.”

Pema Dorji, LGBT activist, Bhutan

“In Bhutan, we are currently reviewing the legal provisions in Bhutanese law which discriminate and criminalize LGBTI people, and will be making the necessary recommendations for amendments. This opportunity gives us a unique chance to learn about the needs and issues concerning the LGBTI community, and how us, as lawmakers, can make a difference to improve their wellbeing.”

Ugyen Wangdi, Member of the Bhutanese Parliament

“Through social media I discovered non-LGBT acquaintances that were LGBT allies. Social media enabled them to speak up... For many LGBT people, such gestures help them know there is someone to count on.”



Enrique Torre Molina

Day 4

Panelists from Mexico, Thailand, Nigeria, Philippines and Vietnam discussed social media as a vehicle enabling LGBT stories to reach audiences globally. Working groups presented their reflections of what “family” is. In the afternoon, Fellows visited the temples of Wat Rong Khun and Wat Phra Keaw while evening time was reserved for what became the first impromptu Chiang Rai LGBT film festival with screenings and director conversations on stories from China, Myanmar, the Philippines, Nepal and Thailand.

Producers and Consumers: Social Media and Storytelling

Enrique Torre Molina *Campaign Manager, All Out, Mexico*

Olumide Femi Makanjuola *Executive Director, The Initiative for Equal Rights, Nigeria*

Andrey Tran *Network Support Officer, Youth Voices Count, Vietnam*

Watsamon Tri-yasakda *Photojournalist and Documentary Photographer, Thailand*

MODERATOR:

Laurindo Garcia *Founder, B-Change, Philippines*

Social media has allowed LGBT individuals and communities to break through isolation, access information, engage with stakeholders, and share stories with wider audiences. Laurindo Garcia led a discussion on the benefits, pitfalls, risks and rules of engagement for LGBT people when using social media.

Garcia began sharing the starting point of his online advocacy. After coming out in a YouTube video as a HIV+ gay man, his story helped engage parliamentarians and activists to tackle HIV+ discrimination.

Reaching out through social media

Social media can help engage with allies. “Through social media I discovered non-LGBT acquaintances that were LGBT allies. Social media enabled them to speak up.” This was an experience shared by many of the panelists, such as when Facebook enabled users to overlay their profile photo with the rainbow flag following the US Supreme Court’s ruling in favor of equal marriage, revealing previously unknown supportive colleagues and relatives. “For many LGBT people, such gestures help them know there is someone to count on.”



Reaching vast audiences with limited funds

Websites such as Nigeria’s www.wearenotacrime.com have helped to bring attention to LGBT issues. Access to traditional, mainstream media can be expensive, whereas social media can reach vast audiences with minimal financial resources.

Social media activism and advocacy needs to be strategic

Panelists underlined the importance to be clear about the purpose of the stories told, the audiences advocates want to reach, and the consumption practices particular to each social media platform. Also, advocates need to be clear about how they want to encourage awareness, solidarity and action in audiences.

Complexity of developing good content should not be overlooked

Storytelling development is time consuming, complex and demands that messages are built from different angles. “I mostly work on LGBT content and I ask non-LGBT people for their opinion. We are surrounded with likeminded people and this could push us into narrative traps.” Aesthetics are also crucial: “Content is not just information, it is about making the message accessible and beautiful.”

Olumide Femi Makanjuola, Enrique Torre Molina, Watsamon Tri-yasakda, Andrey Tran and Laurindo Garcia

Distribution channels are diverse and change rapidly

Distribution channels change very quickly. While storytellers are currently adapting to new apps and livestreaming, they need to also be prepared for upcoming technologies like augmented reality. For Garcia, “there is no silver bullet strategy to distribute a message. Despite trends, it is important to engage on and off-line.” Different technologies are more widely used in some countries than other and storytellers should be aware of their own market. For example, in Nigeria, “SMS bulking” is still a helpful method that allows the distribution of advocacy content to wide audiences – but this is not common in other countries.

Dealing with online harassment and hate speech

Social media has created a sense of proximity but they are also channels where harassment thrives. Panelists recommend being aware of the emotional impact of digital harassment and having personal standard operating procedures: “I pay attention to response times or allow myself not to respond,” recommended one panelist. It is useful to find support in LGBT employee groups of social media companies and to make use of the verification options available for activist accounts as harassers try to get activists blocked or suspended.

Digital safety and cybersecurity

Digital engagement can be dangerous in some Asian countries. Tackling online hate speech, racism and bullying may go unattended in regions like Central Asia when homophobic workers do not follow social media corporate guidelines for these cases. In other countries, tweeting or even just liking a post on Facebook has led to detentions. Small steps can provide digital safety such as two-step verifications, VPN connections or encryption, though no platforms are 100% secure.



Family Is... Telling Our Stories through Interviews, Objects and Exhibitions

FACILITATORS:

Wanja Kilber Board Member and
Co-Founder, *Quarteera.de*,
Kazakhstan

Thilaga Sulathireh Researcher and Sexual
Rights Advocate, Malaysia

Danish Sheikh Legal Consultant,
International Commission
of Jurists, India

Ying Xin Executive Director, Beijing
LGBT Center, China

COORDINATOR:

Rooi Teve Human Rights, LGBT and
Feminist Activist, Russia

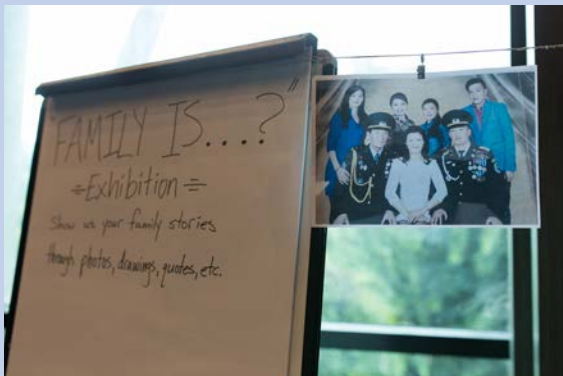
Ian Brown European Development
Director, Salzburg Global
Seminar





Fellows were divided in five working groups to share intimate anecdotes, memories, policy proposals, and current research about the concept of family. Below are concise discussion points addressed although most conversations, given their private nature, were kept off-the-record.

- Homophobia is a violent social construction that undermines family dynamics and affects individuals, often without conscious awareness of it. We can deconstruct it with our personal stories.
- Our contexts might be diverse, but across cultures there are patterns in how we negotiate with our families. Perhaps surprisingly, humor and irony can be powerful tools for telling our stories.
- We need to pay more attention to each other's happiness and wellbeing. In protecting our families and ourselves from harm, emotional and physical burdens will catch up with LGBT individuals who lack proper support networks.
- Developing storytelling skills is crucial to raise awareness of our family experiences, especially since the families we belong to, by birth or choice, make us feel part of something bigger than ourselves.
- The idea of family is not limited to biology. In the complex system that is a family, we also need to be aware of how social class, migration backgrounds, race and gender play in explicit and implicit ways. In families where homophobia is present we need to address the source of this "fear."





After an intense day of events, Fellows visited two of Chiang Mai's most iconic temples. The first stop was Wat Rong Khun or "White Temple", a location mixing Buddhist and Hindu elements with pop-culture references. The temple is the creation of Chiang Rai artist Chalermchai Kositpipat. The last stop was at the Wat Phra Keaw temple, a place believed to have housed the famous Emerald Buddha during the early 1400s.

(Impromptu) LGBT Film Festival

Fellows gathered for an impromptu Chiang Rai LGBT Film Festival (thought to be the first of its kind in the city) where five LGBT-themed documentaries from China, Myanmar, Thailand, Philippines and Nepal were showcased by their directors.

The evening kicked off with **Popo Fan's** ground-breaking documentary *Pink Dads* (China, 2016). The director followed four Chinese fathers who talk openly about their experiences with LGBT children and who, contrary to cultural codes, have become accepting parents even as social norms about family authority and social reputation are questioned.

Director **Su Su Hlaing** followed with the screening of *Love & Other Matters* (Myanmar). With beautiful visuals and intimate portrayals, viewers are introduced to seven LGBT people living in different contexts of present-day Myanmar.

Directors **Cha Roque** and **Nilu Doma Sherpa** shared two autobiographical short stories that are part of the film series *Stories of Being Me*. Roque showed the film *The Story of Cha* (Philippines, 2014), in which the filmmaker opens up to audiences about her experience as a lesbian mother and her journey towards family acceptance and inner happiness. With *The Story of Nilu* (Nepal, 2014), Sherpa explored self-acceptance, the universality of love, and friendship with a compact series of interviews and personal reflections in different Kathmandu locations.

The evening came to an end with photographer and filmmaker **Watsamon Triyasakda**'s *Toms: The Complex World of Female Love in Thailand* (Thailand, 2015). This documentary looks into "Tom culture", a group that does not identify as trans or lesbian and claims its own place on the gender spectrum and is unique in its own context.

“Contrary to people thinking that there might be a lot of negative remarks because we come from such a small country and community, I wanted to show how supportive people are of love in general and how love can be pushed in the right direction if we believe in it.”

Nilu Doma Sherpa



1. *Pink Dads*

2. *Toms*

3. *Love & Other Matters*

4. *The Story of Cha*

5. *The Story of Nilu*



“Anti-LGBT extremism is not only about political or religious groups. People can exert extremism within families.”

Day 5

The final day started with a conversation on Anti-LGBT Extremism and examples for dealing with hate groups. Saskia Wieringa moderated Raising a Family, a heart-warming conversation where three Fellows shared their stories about building alternative families. Fellows started consultations for the drafting of a Salzburg Global LGBT Forum Statement on Inclusive Families and an Outlook session gathered feedback for the Forum’s next steps.

Anti-LGBT Extremism

Reny Kistiyanti

Executive Director, Talita Kum, Indonesia

Amir Mukambetov

Head of the Community Liaison Department, Kyrgyz Indigo, Kyrgyzstan

Danny Ramadan

Volunteer Coordinator, QMUNITY, Canada formerly Syria

Dennis Wamala

Director of Programs, Icebreakers, Uganda

MODERATOR:

Rooi Teve

Human Rights, LGBT and Feminist Activist, Russian Federation

Participants debated definitions and forms of anti-LGBT extremism and were informed on concrete cases from around the world. Panelists also brought attention to topics of great importance to countering hate and violence.

Understanding extremism as a system

Extremism should not be diminished to the activities of fringe groups or individuals. Panelists proposed that extremisms are forms of oppression maintained and enforced by many political, legal, religious, cultural or economic systems that support each other.

Extremism also happens behind closed doors

“Anti-LGBT extremism is not only about political or religious groups. People can exert extremism within families,” remarked one panelist. Research on identity-based violence has found that in some situations, 80% of anti-LGBT extremism occurs as domestic and household violence.

Current national overviews

In Kyrgyzstan, authorities deny the existence of LGBT populations and turn a blind eye to nationalist or religious-based attacks while family conferences receive extensive financial and logistical support to stage homophobic events. In Uganda anti-LGBT laws have been drafted but are not enacted,

serving the government as occasional leverage against LGBT groups and as tools of mobilization when heated rhetoric is required for political purposes. Indonesia has seen a rise in groups promoting the threatening, punishment and even killing of LGBT people, while organizations are building safe spaces outside urban areas for LGBT populations at risk.

In government-controlled Syria transphobic attacks often are ignored by law-enforcement agencies, while areas under ISIS control use anti-LGBT violence as a brutal spectacle and strategy to reinforce ideological branding. In Russia homophobes increasingly use gay dating apps like Grindr to track, abuse, and blackmail LGBT individuals, while homophobic crimes impunity encourages further violence. In India, despite legal advances, the culture of violence, exclusion from due process, and dehumanization in state and security institutions against hijras continues.

Engaging with hate groups

One way to address hate groups is, if possible, to engage with them directly in a personal conversation. “We try to meet the leaders of hate movements and have dinners with them one-on-one,” recommended one activist. But this is not always possible: “In the ISIS context, there is no logical way to work with them, no points of mutual understanding.”

International solidarity is important but complex

Supporting causes and bringing attention to a specific country is important but context sensitivity is crucial. Sometimes the political voice of foreign LGBT organizations may do more harm than good to local LGBT groups. International solidarity is important, but needs to be guided by local LGBT groups.

Documentation helps to build support

Gathering evidence and documentation on violence helps to build cases, statistics, and better policy to tackle anti-LGBT extremism. Care needs to be taken to reduce the risk that information gathering may expose and endanger victims.

Dennis Wamala, Amir Mukambetov,
Danny Ramadan and Reny Kistiyanti



Raising a Family

Tamara Adrian

Lawyer and Member of Congress, Venezuela

Cha Roque

Filmmaker; Communications Director, DAKILA, Philippines

Wanja Kilber

Board Member and Co-Founder, Quarteera.de, Kazakhstan

MODERATOR

Saskia Wieringa

Chair, Foundation IPT 1965, Netherlands

This panel was an intimate conversation about the beauty and difficulties that some of our Fellows have faced in creating loving families themselves. An edited transcript is provided [here](#).

Saskia: How do you define the family that you have? What legal issues have you encountered?

Wanja: A few weeks before the Forum I became a father. I am a “weekend papa” and his two mothers will raise him in another city. I will not be able to help with day-to-day tasks but we have all planned this ahead.



Cha: My current family is expanding. My ex-girlfriend and her current partner are part of my daughter’s life. My daughter says “I used to have two moms, now I have four!”

Tamara: I had my initial family as a heterosexual man. It was a perfect nuclear family. But things changed when I opened up about being a trans person. I could not see my children for years because their other mother didn’t let me. My children and I restarted our relationship eight years ago. They are independent individuals with no rush to get married. Now I am a bit afraid that I will not be a grandmother soon!

Saskia: How do you overcome the gaps or limitations you are confronted with?

Wanja: People think that in some “Western” countries being an LGBT parent is easy. We are not allowed to adopt, and alternative families have to go to more “homophobic” countries like Poland or Ukraine to find a hospital for insemination because it is almost impossible in Germany.

Saskia: How did you manage legal issues?

Wanja: We went to a private lawyer to define the procedures for situations like divorce or death. A notary also provided the different rights and roles of those involved in raising the child.

Cha: There is no legal tool that supports my family of two mothers and one daughter. I am the full custodian of my child. In an emergency situation, my mom will be there to speak at the hospital because my partner does not have that prerogative.

Tamara: I fight so much for equal rights because I actually have them. I got married to my wife before my transition. This makes us the only legally recognized married lesbian couple in Venezuela. As a lawyer I try to overcome legal obstacles with notarized documents to grant LGBT couples with at least 50% of the rights they should enjoy.

Saskia: What moments of beauty would you like to share?

Wanja: I always remember when I saw him for the first time. His birth was difficult and lasted a day. He was in a small plastic box in intensive care. He looked like a tiny alien in his UFO. I began to tell him stories to turn the situation into a fairytale.

Cha: I remember my daughter's school graduation. When I arrived, I was told she won six awards and I walked her to the stage six times. I was very proud. Heterosexual families saw that we weren't different from them.

Tamara: I remember the moment I put the medal on my daughter's neck at her university graduation. I was at the stage because I am a professor at that university. I waited to put the medal on her. This is a very special memory.

Saskia: We are trailblazers; creating loving families where we are told that love is not supposed to exist. Thanks to all of you for sharing these thoughts and memories.



Family Is... **A Statement on Inclusive Family Values**

FACILITATOR:

Sudeshan Reddy

Communications Specialist, UNICEF, South Africa

Since the first session in 2013, participants have discussed how LGBT communities view their biological families, their families of choice, the families they build or the family experiences they are denied to enjoy. It is hoped that this ongoing conversation pushes a global understanding of family as a diverse, inclusive of LGBT individuals and that recognizes LGBT families in concrete legal, social, economic and political matters.

To continue the conversation, the Forum began a consultation process in Chiang Rai to build a **Salzburg Statement on Equal, Diverse & Inclusive Families**. The statement will complement the 2013 **Salzburg Statement of the Global LGBT Forum: Advancing Human Rights for LGBT People and Communities**. The consultation and drafting process will continue during the fifth session of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum in May 2017.



Outlook: Where Do We Go From Here?

Klaus Mueller

Founder & Chair, Salzburg Global LGBT Forum.

Clifton Cortez

Global LGBTI Team Leader, United Nations Development Programme (since the session, Cortez has been appointed the Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) Advisor at the World Bank)

Closing the session, Klaus Mueller thanked participants for a week of mutual support: “We came here to learn, to build connections and to amplify your voices. This week has shown the impressive leadership of the LGBT movement in Asia and beyond.” Both he and Clifton Cortez expressed their deep appreciation for the new cooperation between the Forum and UNDP. Cortez thanked participants’ discussions. “Some of you here are the filmmakers, writers or academics with whom we engage from afar. It is crucial to gather your ideas,” he remarked. He encouraged Fellows to find ways through United Nations representations to bring voices to the on-going discussion of LGBT issues in the Sustainable Development Goals process supported by UNDP and the Being LGBTI in Asia program.

Clifton Cortez







Continuing Our Work

The work of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum continues between the annual meetings.

Building Structures to Support Equal Rights for LGBT People

In July 2016, the Canadian Embassy in Berlin hosted the seminar *Building Structures to Support Equal Rights for LGBT People*. Klaus Mueller led a discussion between diplomats and civil rights organizations. Among the presenters were Deputy Head of Mission at the Embassy of Canada Jennifer May, Deputy Head of Mission at the Embassy of the Netherlands Henk Voskamp, Advocacy Director of the LGBT Rights Program at Human Rights Watch Boris Dittrich, Executive Director of Transgender Europe Julia Ehrt, and representatives from the Hirschfeld-Eddy-Stiftung and Proud at Work.

The event attracted nearly one hundred participants from Europe, the Americas and the Caribbean, including Slovenian Ambassador Kos Marko and Slovenian LGBT activist Miha Lobnik; Slovenia had just extended partnerships rights to LGBT couples. For the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum, this was an opportunity to strengthen its support of coordination between embassies and LGBT human rights organizations. In the discussion, Mueller emphasized that while cooperation between embassies and LGBT human rights groups is relatively new for both sides, rising trends of anti-LGBT violence in some countries make LGBT groups and Foreign Offices collaboration crucial.

Klaus Mueller speaks at the
Finnland-Institut in Berlin.

Photo: Niklas Willstedt/Finnland-
Institut in Deutschland



Feeling At Home: In the Body, the Family and the Society

In February 2017, the Finnland-Institut in Berlin, together with Homotopia and the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum, held an evening discussion entitled *Feeling at home: in the body, the family and the society* as part of Finland's celebration of the 100th anniversary of its independence. For the occasion, Finnish Institutes in Berlin, Paris, London and the Benelux are hosting a wide range of events under the title #MobileHome2017. The Berlin event revolved around Touko Laaksonen's work. The Finnish artist is world-renowned for his erotic paintings that helped break certain stereotypes related to homosexuality. The artwork of "Tom of Finland," as he is popularly known, depicts strong and muscular men, often dressed in uniforms, in situations of intimacy. His drawings helped to reflect on the social perception of masculinity and sexual orientation. The debate touched on how Laaksonen and his paintings were impacted by Finland, the artist's place of birth. The artist was born and raised in a very conservative and religious environment strongly influenced by the Second World War. Panelists and attendees were invited to think about the effect that these factors could have had on his personality and work.

The Salzburg Global LGBT Forum will further explore parts of this discussion in its upcoming 2017 session, *Home: Safety, Wellness, and Belonging*, when participants will scrutinize the specific challenges that the LGBT community face when trying to develop a sense of belonging. The lack of support, legislative discrimination, migration and exile are just some of the obstacles that will be considered during the five-day program.

The "Family is..." Project

Launched at the third annual session of the Forum in 2015, the "Family Is..." project uses storytelling to advance LGBT human rights and equality. The Salzburg Global LGBT Forum documents the life stories and experiences of LGBT individuals and their families through video interviews and feature articles. LGBT people can find themselves estranged from their birth families or face the difficult decision of having to leave them for their own and their family's safety. Others choose to build their own family of supporters, close friends, and lovers. By sharing personal stories, Salzburg Global seeks to challenge misrepresentations of sexual and gender diversity, help understand similarities and differences across family formats and ultimately support the building of more inclusive societies. The project continued documenting family stories in Chiang Rai, Thailand. The "Family Is..." project is supported by the German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth.

For more information about the "Family Is..." project please go to:
lgbt.salzburgglobal.org/family-is

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”

Margaret Mead, co-chair of the first Salzburg Global Seminar session, 1947

Our Work in the Years to Come

Outlook by Founder and Chair Klaus Mueller

Within the global discourse on LGBT equality, Asian voices and perspectives are underrepresented. The first meeting of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum in Asia – in the small city of Chiang Rai, Thailand, close to the border with Myanmar and Laos – was a chance to learn, listen, and extend the Forum’s connections. While we have been closely working with our Asian Forum members since 2013, coming to Asia added the power of place. The summit deepened our understanding of the largest and most populous continent and explored how its diverse cultures mediate new and traditional realities of LGBT lives.

Our meeting in Chiang Rai aimed to amplify the voices of Asian leaders within a global discourse. We believe that equality for LGBT people in Asia will be essential for securing advancements globally. Our partnership with the United Nations Development Programme “Being LGBTI in Asia” was key to realizing our goals and proved to be a win-win cooperation for both sides. We feel fortunate to have developed this new and trusting cooperation.

Since its establishment in 2013, our Forum has grown exponentially and now includes members from 62 countries on six continents, with the largest group coming from Asia. The Forum is based on our belief in the urgency





of a global conversation about LGBT equality. We are experiencing growing global polarization on human rights, sexuality, and gender. The local, the regional, and the global increasingly intertwine, causing both rapid progress and severe backlashes. While equal rights for LGBT people are more and more understood as fundamental human rights, we also witness the rising exploitation of homo- and transphobia as a false marker of cultural identity, national sovereignty or religious purity.

The Forum's signature is the global representation of leaders from diverse fields – including human rights, legal, artistic, cultural, and religious backgrounds. Fundamental human rights concern all: Gay or straight, cis- or transgender, our community of trust is building a multigenerational network of human rights defenders with diverse national, religious, and cultural backgrounds, and professions and affiliations. While communication across borders becomes ever more accessible through the internet, trust needs time. Our meetings allow us to build trust and to explore together the interconnectedness of LGBT human rights. Our Global Statement, as collectively issued in 2013, continues to guide our intersectional approach and lead themes and projects:

Family

Being part of family is a fundamental human condition as well as a human right. We all come from families that were unprepared for us. As part of a three-year project with the German Ministry of Family Affairs, we used our Chiang Rai meeting to discuss our families of birth and choice, and those

“All of us long to feel at home with the families of our birth, in the families of our choosing, and in the families we raise. Equally, we all have the right to live safely within the cultures and countries in which we are raised. This sense of belonging, connection, and wellbeing is what we call feeling ‘at home’ – this will be our theme for 2017.”

Klaus Mueller

we raise. We continued collecting testimonies for our global portrait of families today. With the collection and dissemination of our now more than 40 personal stories, both in written and video format, we offer an inclusive view on the rich realities of families around the globe. In May 2017, we will present “*Family is...? - A global portrait*” with the German Ministry of Family Affairs in Berlin.

Storytelling

Working with filmmakers, producers, photographers, and writers on storytelling techniques, the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum explores how stories can create empathy and explore the complexities of our lives without being formulaic and repetitive. The Forum has helped to capture and spread the personal experiences of its members in a series of video testimonials which have been featured in print, radio, and online media worldwide. We are also curating photo exhibitions and organizing film premiers by its members from countries around the world. It is the sharing of stories rather than mere facts and figures that helps to galvanize our supporters and challenge our opponents. Our long-term goal is to capitalize on our growing video resources through facilitating multiple access and new narrative formats.

Strengthening the Connections between Embassies and LGBT Human Rights Groups

The Salzburg Global LGBT Forum has established itself as an important and unique network that convenes global dialogues on the most critical issues facing the LGBT community. We have built strong partnerships with government ministries, international development agencies, and foundations through networking, using both public and non-public tools to foster change. Through targeted consultative meetings and publications, the Forum has provided advice to and learned directly from those designing national policies and initiatives and engaged with government officials from Austria, Bhutan, Canada, China, Costa Rica, Germany, the Netherlands, Nicaragua, Sweden, South Korea, the United Kingdom, the United States, Venezuela, and Ukraine. Our Ambassadors Night has become a strong feature of our meetings, where we strive to bring together ambassadors from a growing number of countries on the advancement of LGBT equality.

LGBT Migration and Refugees

At the global scale, migration and exile shape the lives of many LGBT individuals as well as the communities and families they are forced to leave behind. All of us long to feel at home with the families of our birth, in the families of our choosing, and in the families we raise. Equally, we all have the right to live safely within the cultures and countries in which we are raised. This sense of belonging, connection, and wellbeing is what we call feeling “at home” – this will be our theme for 2017. Being truly “at home” remains out of reach for many LGBT individuals who are subjected to exclusion from

their families, cultures or home countries. Legislative discrimination, social alienation, and hate speech can all affect the safety of LGBT people, their wellbeing and sense of belonging. Exploring the theme of “Home” therefore raises the growing question of LGBT refugees and specific challenges for their support services, and deepens a focus of the Forum we addressed over the years.

Addressing the Effects of Globalization

As we move forward with our programs currently in development for 2017-2018 in Salzburg and Berlin, we aim to capitalize on our rapidly grown global network – both within our network and outwards to the partners and donors who work with us. We have built a communications platform capable of sharing our member’s expertise further through our website lgbt.salzburgglobal.org. A secure member-only online group has invited all who have participated in the Forum’s activities to stay in touch, continue discussions and respond to requests from one another. While our website, Listserv, Facebook group and newsletter facilitate ongoing communication, it is the personal connections built during our meetings that nurture and generate transnational projects.

With our fifth meeting in 2017, we want to take stock of what we have achieved and collate results into a publication. Beyond larger gatherings, we continue to create, support, and facilitate smaller meetings and initiatives and actively share our expertise and connections with stakeholders from diverse fields. Last but not least, we remain a “fluid network” that responds to initiatives from our members and partners and grows through evaluation and cooperation.

None of this would be possible without the support of our donors and partners. We look forward to continuing to engage with them as we work together to advance LGBT and human rights discussions around the world.



APPENDIX

Chair

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Salzburg Global Seminar

Salzburg Global Seminar is an international non-profit organization founded in 1947 with a mission to challenge present and future leaders to solve issues of global concern. More than 30,000 people from nearly 170 countries have participated in our programs over seven decades.

Our vision is to shape a better world by forging breakthrough collaborations to bridge divides. Salzburg Global designs multi-year programs to accelerate human, urban and conflict transformation and help organizations and change-makers achieve results at scale. We convene outstanding people across generations and sectors, aiming to catalyze transformative impact and long-term engagement through alliances, networks and projects on the ground. Our work is sustained through strategic partnerships, earned income and philanthropic support.

Our secluded and inspiring home at Schloss Leopoldskron in Salzburg, Austria – built in 1736 by the Archbishop of Salzburg, restored by the Salzburg Festival’s co-founder Max Reinhardt, used by Hollywood for sets in *The Sound of Music*, and now an award-winning hotel – allows us to welcome all participants in conditions of trust, openness and creativity.

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Salzburg Global LGBT Forum

The free expression of sexuality and gender identity has become a defining characteristic of tolerant, pluralistic, and democratic societies in the 21st Century. In the context of the continuing globalization of the LGBT* human rights movement, positive advances of and backlashes against LGBT rights are now increasingly interconnected at a previously unseen scale.

The challenges confronting the LGBT and human rights movements are no longer only national or regional. They are influenced by a multitude of factors at the global level. The Salzburg Global LGBT Forum is therefore working to advance civil dialogue through further developing an active network of global LGBT and human rights actors. The Forum’s goal is to negotiate these interconnected global challenges and advance the free and equal rights of all LGBT people.

FOR MORE *info*. PLEASE VISIT:
lgbt.SalzburgGlobal.org

UNDP & the “Being LGBTI in Asia” Program

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is the UN’s global network supporting countries in building better livelihoods, achieving poverty eradication and reducing exclusion. “Being LGBTI in Asia” is a regional program enabling collaboration between governments, civil society and regional institutions to address and prevent violence, stigmatization, marginalization and discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex status.

FOR MORE *info*. PLEASE VISIT:
www.asia-pacific.undp.org/content/rbap/en/home/operations/projects/overview/being-lgbt-in-asia

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