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Salzburg Global LGBT Forum The First Five Years

BUILDING A GLOBAL COMMUNITY

2013 – 2017



Building a Global Community

Salzburg Global LGBT Forum

2013 – 2017

The First Five Years

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**SALZBURG GLOBAL
LGBT FORUM**



Federal Ministry for
Family Affairs, Senior Citizens,
Women and Youth

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Foreword

Clare Shine,
Vice President and
Chief Program Officer,
Salzburg Global
Seminar opens the
fifth session of the
Salzburg Global
LGBT Forum – *Home:
Safety, Wellness and
Belonging*.



Since 1947, Salzburg Global Seminar has challenged current and future leaders to solve issues of global concern. Founded in the aftermath of war at a precarious time in world history, Salzburg Global's young founders imagined a "Marshall Plan of the Mind" – a frontier initiative to regenerate intellectual and cultural exchange and lay the building blocks for peaceful and flourishing societies.

Fast forward 70 years and Salzburg Global has an unbroken track record of connecting change-makers across sectors, regions and generations. Over 30,000 Fellows from 170 countries have come together through our multi-year programs to tackle complex problems and advance leadership and innovation for a better world, and our expanding network of partners has built alliances for systems transformation.

Throughout Salzburg Global's history, the rule of law and protection of human rights have

played a central role in our programming and impact – as critical elements for personal dignity and wellbeing, equality and social cohesion, successful economies and effective international relations. With this track record, the decision to create the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum was a natural and logical, yet bold, step.

In 2013, LGBT rights were rising fast up the international agenda. Yet governments in 78 countries – around 40 percent of the world's nations – continued to legitimize and sponsor violence against their LGBT citizens. LGBT discrimination was becoming an issue in globalization, affecting freedom of movement and enterprise. The Forum set out to support better understanding of this evolving moral, legal, social and political landscape and to create a safe, neutral platform for exchange between decisive global voices, bridging the worlds of politics, law, diplomacy, creative arts, religion and media.

Much has changed since 2013. Many countries have seen LGBT progress in family law, court judgments, school policies and corporate diversity. In 2015, 193 countries committed to deliver the UN Sustainable Development Goals that apply to all people without discrimination and to "leave no one behind." Yet, despite this ambition, basic rights related to family, housing, health, employment and safety are still threatened or non-existent for LGBT people and communities in many parts of the world. Being truly "at home" remains out of reach for LGBT individuals excluded from their families, cultures or countries.



Clare Shine with Salzburg Global LGBT Fellows, Negede Gezahegn and Noël Iglessias, Salzburg Global LGBT Founder and Chair, Klaus Mueller, and Salzburg Global Vice President Benjamin Glahn.

Salzburg Global Seminar seeks to drive impact at three levels: individuals, institutions and ideas. This is embedded in the Forum's design and in this reflective publication:

- The Forum enables outstanding people to share deeply personal stories away from the limelight, forge new strategies and build greater resilience. Some of their stories are woven into this report.
- Our Forum sessions in Salzburg, Berlin and Chiang Rai have enabled partners from government and civil society to explore root causes and regional, cultural and societal dynamics that underpin continuing discrimination, helping them better understand ways to advance policies and practice. You can read about how we have contributed to these new alliances and partnerships in chapters five and six.
- The Forum supports thought leadership through a rich mix of film and cultural products, policy contributions and year-round exchange. In chapter four we profile some of the influencers and

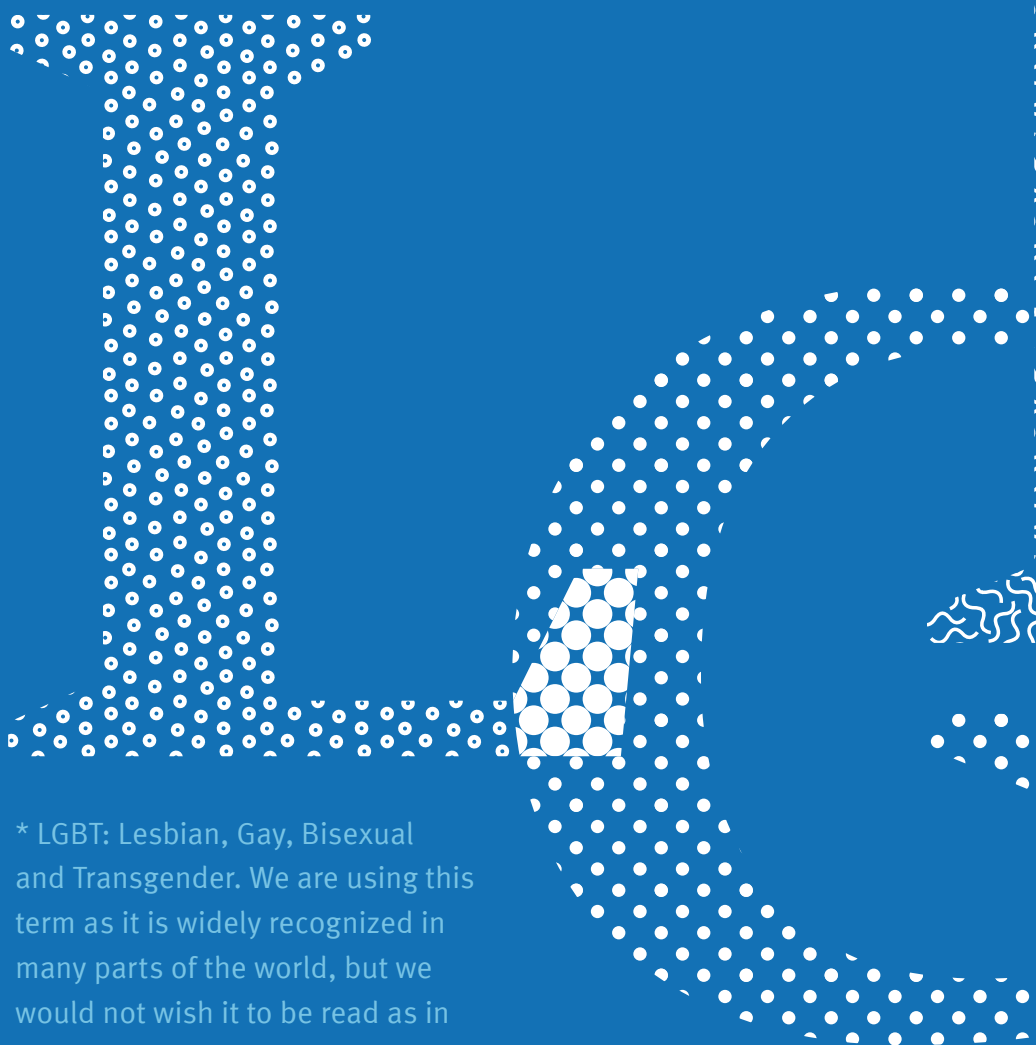
creative artists who have been involved in the Forum network since 2013. You can also read testimonials from dozens of our Fellows throughout the report.

We are proud to celebrate the fifth anniversary of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum and salute the dedication of its Founder and Chair Klaus Mueller, our Fellows from now 70 countries, our partners and our staff. Together, they have made these achievements possible.

Salzburg Global Seminar is committed to advance the Sustainable Development Goals through our program portfolio and our network activities around the world. We believe that continued leadership and action for LGBT equality, wellbeing and family rights are fundamental to this aim and look forward to expanding the Forum's global contribution in the years to come.

Clare Shine
Vice President and Chief Program Officer,
Salzburg Global Seminar

SALZBURG GLOBAL



* LGBT: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender. We are using this term as it is widely recognized in many parts of the world, but we would not wish it to be read as in any way exclusive of other cultures, groups or terms, either historical or contemporary.



The Salzburg Global LGBT Forum was formed in 2013 to establish a truly global space to reflect upon and advance LGBT human rights discussions around the world. Today it is an international network that connects over 150 Fellows in 70 countries across six continents, spanning multiple sectors, generations, cultures and sexual orientations and gender identities.



FORUM

A Journey into Uncharted Territory

Founder and Chair of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum, Dr. Klaus Mueller reflects on the Forum's origins, its progress – and that of its Fellows' – and where it is today.

Klaus Mueller, Founder and Chair of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum opens the first session in 2013 – *LGBT and Human Rights: New Challenges, Next Steps*



I would like to profoundly thank Salzburg Global Seminar for embracing LGBT equality as a topic of global concern and for wholeheartedly supporting the idea to create the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum five years ago. This has been a journey into uncharted territory, and without Salzburg Global's expertise in convening global gatherings and catalyzing collaboration, the Forum would not have grown to what it has become today – a network of over 150 Fellows from 70 countries.

Our Origins

The idea seemed right and worthy from the beginning: to help advance LGBT equality worldwide through a global forum of LGBT human rights defenders and supporters from many different countries, backgrounds, and disciplines. But the question remained: was there a need? Seeking answers, and over the course of two years, we dedicated ourselves to understanding how we could best support these efforts before the Forum's inaugural session in 2013.

I personally first learned about the power of a truly global gathering in 2000 when I participated in a visionary Salzburg Global session, *Museums in the 21st Century*, chaired by Marc Pachter, of The Smithsonian Institution, which expanded my horizons and fueled my writing on museums. Ten years later, in 2010, Salzburg Global invited me to take on an expanded role and serve as chair for their multi-year initiative on Holocaust Education and Genocide Prevention to be developed in cooperation with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, for which I serve as the Museum's European Representative. This new role inspired and encouraged me to approach Salzburg Global independently in 2011 with the proposal to create a Global LGBT Forum to be jointly developed and hosted at Schloss Leopoldskron, Salzburg Global Seminar's home.

For the past thirty years, I have been working on issues at the intersection of LGBT human rights, history, memory, and culture, having started as an activist, focusing on the LGBT identity in the 19th century in my doctoral thesis, and later curating exhibitions, and writing and engaging in film productions. In developing the idea for the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum, I recognized that in the rapidly globalizing world of the 21st century, LGBT human rights no longer seemed to be defined only by regional histories and cultures (if they ever were in the first place), but that they were increasingly shaped through global conversations, whether progressive or hostile. Together with Salzburg Global, I conceived the Forum as a safe space to curate a truly global

conversation on LGBT equality among diverse leaders from human rights, legal, artistic, and religious backgrounds. Free expressions of sexuality and gender define the societies in which we want to live in the 21st century, and our strength is rooted in our diversity.

In launching the Forum, we were entering new ground – from building new donor partnerships (thank you for your trust!) to curating a genuinely inclusive gathering where all would feel welcome and valued. We invited participants as the individuals they are, not as the representative of the institutions, NGOs or governments with which they are affiliated. In addition to being experts in their respective fields, they also brought their life experiences to our sessions.

Finally, in 2013, it was their voice that answered our original question: They told us that yes, there is a strong need and desire to develop a global, yet personal network – a network of trust that enables us to listen to each other and to join forces through diverse forms of collaboration and support. While communication across borders becomes ever more accessible through the internet, trust needs time. The Forum is not a conference. It has become a safe space, our retreat, where we come together in person to comprehend the global interconnectedness of LGBT human rights, including progress and challenges. While we come from different places, cultures, histories and generations, we share commonalities in our views and experiences. But the Forum also provides a setting to acknowledge and explore our distinct personal, cultural, economic and religious differences. We come to listen, to learn, and to build connections. As with all Salzburg Global Seminar programs, our Forum strives to be a space where participants are “tough on the issues but kind to each other.”



Klaus Mueller on why
now is the time to
create a Global
LGBT Forum (2013)

Our Progress

Over the past five years, we have formed a growing network of expertise. In 2013, we started with participants from 34 countries and set our course with the *Statement of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum: Advancing human rights for*



Klaus Mueller on how
the Salzburg Global
LGBT Forum has
grown (2017)

LGBT people and communities. This framework of principles and priorities continues to guide our intersectional approach and lead themes [see page 14]. In 2014, the German Federal Foreign Office invited us to Berlin to advise them on strengthening relations between embassies and LGBT human rights groups. In 2015, we returned to Salzburg and started our “*Family is...*” project with the German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, collecting testimonies for our global portrait of families today – ultimately producing over 40 video interviews and a short film *Family is...? A Global Conversation*, which we released this year. In 2016, our first meeting in Asia took us to the small city of Chiang Rai, Thailand, to listen to and learn from a new generation of Asian leaders. This year we gathered again at Schloss Leopoldskron with the focus on “*Home*” and refugees, collecting testimonies and strengthening our sense of a global community that has grown with each session.

As a network, we have developed the global perspectives that guide us year-round. It has been a steep learning curve, reacting to both crisis and progress, and little did we know how we would be challenged and changed in the process. The Forum’s meetings are not easy: there is both risk and comfort in bringing people from very different contexts together and striving to deepen understanding and trust. We increasingly recognize that LGBT rights as a concept expresses the aspiration and hope of a common cause even as our struggles are distinct. Sharing personal stories helps us to understand each other’s needs and worlds more fully. Many Forum members are exceptionally strong leaders, bold activists and visionary artists and thinkers. Yet for some, it was the first time in their lives that they found a community where they felt they could share their personal story with others.

So many shared stories come to mind. We have been deeply moved by the strength of our two Ethiopian friends, Noël and Negede, who joined the Forum anonymously in 2015, and returned in 2017 as asylum seekers in Austria to build a new life. We were proud when Kasha Nabagesera from Uganda, who has come to all

Forum sessions since 2013, appeared on the cover of *TIME* magazine. We were inspired by the amazing photographers, film directors and writers who introduced us to the realities of LGBT lives around the globe: of indigenous trans communities in the Venezuelan jungle, of a Filipino mother/filmmaker and her daughter, of LGBT families in Cambodia and of transgender communities in Mongolia. They showed us that one fiercely independent voice can make these lives – our lives – visible. More and more, we help each other with our projects and find ways to share them with larger audiences.

Fundamental human rights concern us all. The Salzburg Global LGBT Forum brings together queer and straight, representing gender in many expressions, in short: people with overlapping, changing identities. Whether homo-, bi- or heterosexual, cis-, inter- or transgender, our diverse backgrounds and lives are connected by our shared interest to advance LGBT equality globally.

Since the Forum was launched in 2013, the world has witnessed the journey of communities and nations towards recognition of LGBT human rights and celebrated significant progress. Yet in many countries, we have been confronted with backlashes and many governments still legitimize and sponsor violence against LGBT citizens through legal discrimination, condoned police violence and hate speech. Our Forum has therefore expanded to build larger networks of support with government partners, international bodies and human rights and cultural organizations. Increasingly we are approached as a trusted facilitator for global conversations.

Today

Being part of an emerging global community has changed us. Salzburg Global Seminar has become our home and itself has been changed in the process. Celebrating our fifth anniversary in the same year that Salzburg Global marks its 70th anniversary, the Forum is fully integrated within the major global programs in which Salzburg Global is engaged. All Salzburg Global's staff have gone the proverbial extra

mile, again and again, to help us reach our goals; enabled and guided by vice presidents Clare Shine and Benjamin Glahn, and with support from Salzburg Global president Stephen Salyer and former chief program officer and senior advisor Edward Mortimer.

With 2017 being a year of retrospection for Salzburg Global Seminar, we too looked back and unearthed untold stories that were shared at our fifth session this summer. This was archaeology of a different kind – a “Queering of the Schloss,” an acknowledgment that LGBT people have contributed to the history of Salzburg Global and to the earlier history of Schloss Leopoldskron in the time of Max Reinhardt, its pre-war owner and co-founder of the Salzburg Festival. We learned about early beginnings, important voices, surprising guests. One discovery was made by anthropologist Saskia Wieringa in 2013, who realized that the statues in Schloss Leopoldskron's Chinese Room were of the East Asian transgender deity Guanyin – a feature overlooked for almost a century. Her presence gave us an early sense of belonging as a protective deity for our endeavor.

Historically, we know that LGBT-related stories were often suppressed or omitted. Our desire for a more inclusive and humane future also fuels our desire to reintegrate LGBT lives into a fuller understanding of our history.

Both our history and our future have to be written by ourselves. The Salzburg Global LGBT Forum is a fluid network that fully trusts its Fellows' imagination and leadership to advance LGBT equality globally. As with other histories of prejudice, we know that homo- and transphobia will not disappear, but we hope they will in many places have less tragic consequences.



Dr. Klaus Mueller
Founder and Chair,
Salzburg Global LGBT Forum

“

Now is the time to create
a Global LGBT Forum.
A space to come together and
reflect on the challenges we
face and consider the next steps
needed to secure the safety,
free expression and equality
of lesbian, gay, bisexual and
transgender people and
communities.

”



Our Global Network

Since our founding in 2013, the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum has brought together over 150 Fellows representing 70 countries on six continents to sessions in Austria, Germany and Thailand to engage in a truly global conversation on advancing LGBT human rights.

Albania
Argentina
Australia
Austria
Bahrain
Bangladesh

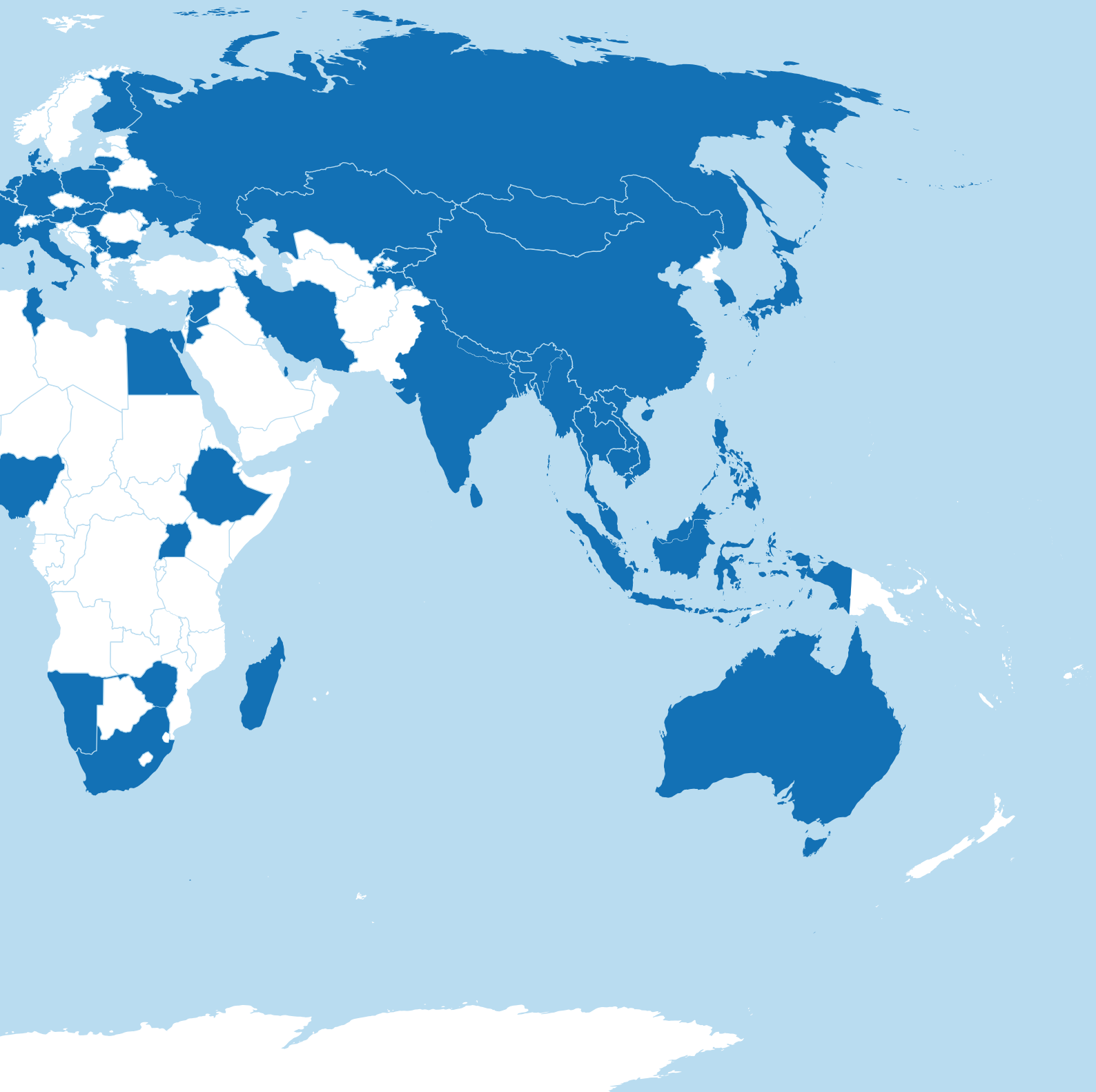
Belgium
Bhutan
Bolivia
Bulgaria
Cambodia
Canada

China
Costa Rica
Denmark
Egypt
El Salvador
Ethiopia

Finland
France
Germany
Ghana
Guatemala
Hong Kong, China SAR

Hungary
India
Indonesia
Iran
Ireland
Italy

Jamaica
Japan
Jordan
Kazakhstan
Kosovo
Kyrgyzstan



Laos
Lebanon
Lithuania
Malaysia
Mexico
Mongolia

Mozambique
Myanmar
Namibia
Nepal
The Netherlands
Nicaragua

Nigeria
Philippines
Poland
Republic of Korea
Russian Federation
Serbia

Singapore
Slovakia
South Africa
Spain
Sri Lanka
Suriname

Syria
Tajikistan
Thailand
Tunisia
Uganda
Ukraine

UK
USA
Venezuela
Vietnam
Zimbabwe

The Salzburg Global LGBT Forum in numbers

154

Fellows

of the Salzburg Global
LGBT Forum from 70 countries
on 6 continents

2

 public
events

222 people

(including guest speakers, observers
and staff) have participated in the
sessions of the Salzburg Global
LGBT Forum

26

donors

based in 12 countries

22

governments and
internationals
organizations

that have consulted with the
Salzburg Global LGBT Forum

89

 video
testimonials

30,000

combined views on
Facebook and YouTube

1

20-minute short film

5 Sessions

3 in Salzburg, 1 in Berlin, 1 in Chiang Rai

1

 Salzburg
Statement

1285
photos published

6 photography
exhibitions

4
Knowledge cafés
on 25 different topics

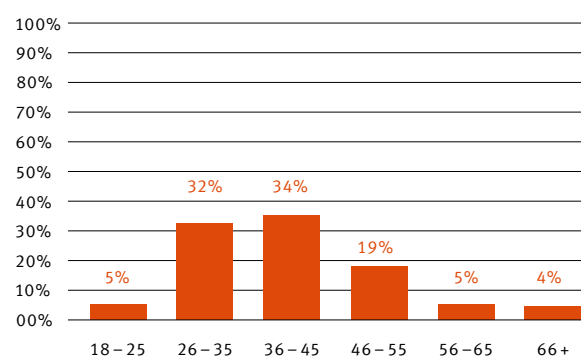
42 panel discussions
and 32 working groups

100+
online features

4
Salzburg Global LGBT Forum
Film Festivals presenting
4 world premières and
29 films shown
at the Film Festivals

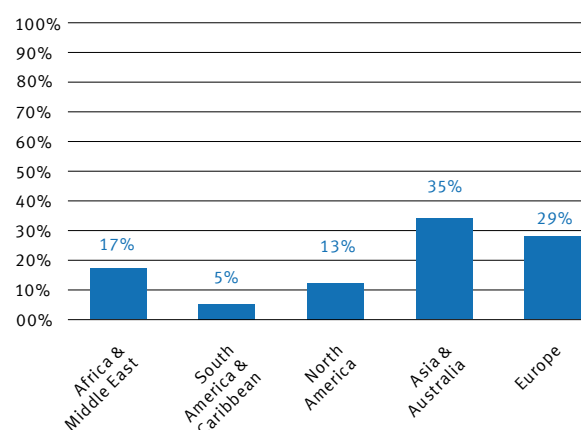
Ages

of the Fellows and guest speakers



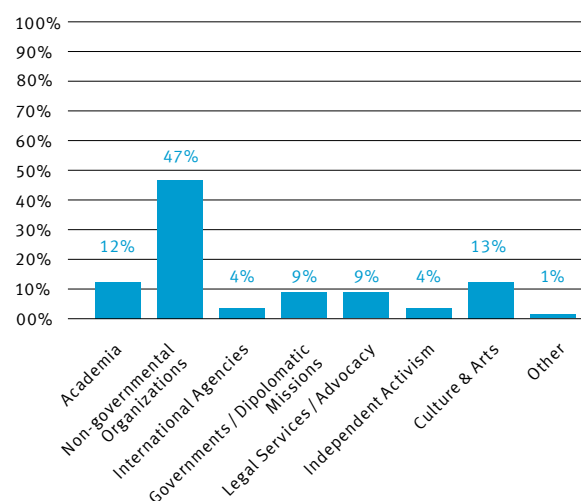
Regions

of the Fellows and guest speakers



Sectors

of the Fellows and guest speakers



Our Donors

Program Support

Since its founding in 2013, the *Salzburg Global LGBT Forum* has received support from the following organizations. We are grateful for all their support.

Archangel Michael Foundation

Austrian Development Cooperation

Austrian Embassies in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; New Delhi, India; and Abuja, Nigeria

Dreilinden gGmbH

The Embassies of Canada in Bangkok, Thailand and Vienna, Austria

The Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Beijing, China and Berlin, Germany

German Federal Foreign Office

German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth

HIVOS International

M•A•C AIDS Fund

Open Society Foundations

Stiftung EVZ – Erinnerung, Verantwortung und Zukunft (Foundation Remembrance, Responsibility and Future)

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the “Being LGBTI in Asia” program

United States Department of State

Scholarship Providers

We are also grateful to the following organizations who, through their support to the Salzburg Global Seminar Scholarship Program, have made it possible for Fellows to travel from across the world to attend the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum.

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

Austrian Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy

Capital Group Companies

Elizabeth S. MacMillan Fellowship

HDH Wills 1965 Charitable Trust

Korea Foundation

The Nippon Foundation

Robert Bosch Stiftung

Our Gatherings

Sessions of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum

LGBT and Human Rights:
New Challenges, Next Steps
(Salzburg, Austria, June 2013)

Creating Long-Term Global Networks to Sustain
LGBT Human Rights Organizations
*(with the German Foreign Office,
Berlin, Germany, May 2014)*

Strengthening Communities:
LGBT Rights and Social Cohesion
(Salzburg, Austria, June 2015)

The Many Faces of LGBT Inclusion
*(with the United Nations Development
Programme (UNDP), Bangkok Office,
Chiang Rai, Thailand, October 2016)*

Home:
Safety, Wellness and Belonging
(Salzburg, Austria, May 2017)

Première:
“Family is...? A Global Conversation”
*(with the German Federal Ministry for Family
Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth,
Berlin, Germany, May 2017)*

Non-Salzburg Global Seminar events at which the Forum was formally represented

Building Structures to Support Equal
Rights for LGBT People
*(Canadian Embassy,
Berlin, Germany, July 2016)*

Knowledge Sharing Workshop on
Cultural and Foreign Affairs
*(German Institute for Foreign Relations,
Berlin, Germany, December 2016 and
September 2017)*

Feeling at Home:
In the Body, the Family and the Society
*(Finnland-Institut,
Berlin, Germany, February 2017)*

Gender Equality and LGBTI in
International Cooperation
(GIZ, Berlin, Germany, March 2017)

The Statement of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum

Advancing human rights for LGBT people and communities

A CALL TO ACTION (published June 2013):

Humankind's strength is its diversity. Free expression of sexuality and gender increasingly defines the societies in which we want to live in the 21st century. But progress is uneven. In 2011, the first UN Resolution on human rights, sexual orientation and gender identity was supported by over 40 countries. Yet in many others, governments still legitimize and sponsor violence against LGBT citizens through legal discrimination, condoned police violence and hate speech.

Now is the time to create a Global LGBT Forum. A space where all those working to advance LGBT human rights can come together to further progress, reflect on new challenges and opportunities and consider the next steps to secure the safety; free expression and assembly; and equality of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people and communities. We, the sixty participants at Salzburg Global's session on *LGBT and Human Rights: New Challenges, Next Steps* (June 2 to 7, 2013), came together from over 30 countries to launch the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum. The following principles and recommendations are a result of our discussions. They are not exhaustive or prescriptive. We hope they serve to deepen future conversations and help us to reach out and build broader alliances across law, politics, activism and culture.

Principles and recommendations to advance LGBT human rights

Who should we work with?

Strength comes in numbers. We need to form broad alliances within LGBT communities and outside them, nurturing collaboration. New alliances can engage religious leaders and the corporate sector, when appropriate, and identify new partners. This inclusive approach should inform all areas of LGBT human rights work, from campaigns to fundraising.

What do we need to do and where?

Our efforts must be firmly grounded in the fundamental principles of universal human rights, but a global approach to LGBT issues that does not take local contexts into account may not be the answer. Understanding local cultures, economies and politics is essential to initiate and safeguard lasting change and achieve recognition of the same rights for all people. Embedding human rights principles in social, political, medical or economic contexts can contribute to a better understanding and greater impact over time.

Global campaigns need a unifying message with broad appeal and clear, realistic objectives. However, their phrasing and presentation should be designed with input from both local and global stakeholders. Although such campaigns can raise the visibility of LGBT struggles and expose violence against LGBT people, public exposure can also worsen dangerous situations. Sensitivity and caution are essential.

How can international law help?

Legal strategies to combat discrimination can differ at global and regional levels. Regular review mechanisms and litigation on the basis of existing international human rights law should be pursued, alongside the development of global and/or regional conventions on LGBT equality.

Action within the United Nations (UN) framework is important to set global minimum standards. UN achievements on LGBT rights

must be protected and this means that we need to remain constantly engaged.

The UN and its entities should establish or adapt structures to address human rights issues specifically related to sexual orientation and gender identity. Gathering reliable data on threats confronting LGBT people is a key next step. Gender identity and sexual orientation need to be incorporated into procedures for documenting and monitoring human rights violations around the world.

How do we fund our work?

Donor countries should be careful about making development aid conditional on the advancement of LGBT rights. This can, and has, backfired in the past. Donors should not be prescriptive, but understand local contexts and listen to advice from local organizations on the ground.

LGBT organizations need to be strategic in identifying donors and understand their respective conditions and agendas. Reliance on a single funder should be avoided, to prevent being subject to shifting changing donor interests.

Defining long-term goals can communicate the vision of the society we are helping to build. We need to demonstrate how our work contributes to overall social cohesion to make our projects more appealing and fundable.

How should we network and communicate?

Global, national and regional coalitions can help share information and promote democratic, transparent, inclusive and non-racist networks. In order for all to actively engage in such networks, building capacity is essential.

Mutual respect, deeper collaboration and the sharing of expertise and resources between and within the Global North and the Global South can strengthen effective international action. We commit to dialogue with all groups founded on the belief of full equality for all.

How can we use art and the media as tools for change?

Telling our stories challenges misrepresentations of sexual and gender diversity as well

as dominant patriarchal and heteronormative values. Increasing the visibility of LGBT people and communities in mainstream and alternative media and spaces is a key step to counter homo-, lesbo-, bi-, and transphobia. Culture and art are essential to dialogue on political and social change. Artists sharing ideas, experiences and collaborations can empower those working on LGBT issues. Skills building and appropriate financial resources are vital to advance dialogue, collaboration and visibility.

We need to work with all media to develop standards to ensure dignified and accurate representation. Social media has become a major global tool for activism and advocacy. However, hate speech, online security, censorship and the digital divide are challenges that need to be confronted.

How can we address the urgency of transgender rights?

Transgender people across the world face threats to their lives and safety. Governments, legal institutions, faith leaders and the media must fulfill their responsibilities to safeguard human lives and challenge transphobia.

The 2013 Salzburg Statement of shared principles and recommendations was accompanied by a comprehensive report on the conversations and topics addressed by this first *Global LGBT Forum*. Our statement guided us ever since and allowed us to begin conversations on many levels.

The views expressed in this Statement are those of session participants individually and should not be taken to represent those of any organizations to which they are affiliated.

Kasha Nabagesera:

“My motivation is knowing you’re not struggling alone”



Kasha Nabagesera is known the world over for her LGBT activism. She has been described as the face of Uganda’s LGBT movement by CNN, appeared on the cover of *TIME* magazine’s European edition and accepted several humanitarian awards for her fight for LGBT rights in her home country of Uganda – where homosexuality remains illegal. Nabagesera, a five-time Fellow of the Forum, credits much of this success to strong international – and deeply personal – connections she has built over the years of her activism. The Salzburg Global LGBT Forum has a special place and meaning for her.

Kasha Nabagesera is a five-time Fellow of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum, having participated in every session since its founding in 2013.



As an activist, executive director of Kuchu Times Media Group, which runs *Bombastic* magazine, TV and radio output, and founder of the gay rights organization Freedom and Roam Uganda (FARUG), Kasha Nabagesera has been a powerful voice in advocating for the rights of the LGBT community in Uganda globally at various international fora. As a plenary speaker at the founding session of the Forum in 2013, she talked about the need for international politicians and campaigners to coordinate with local activists to fight against the hate crimes plaguing her country.

“Uganda is loud,” said Nabagesera, *“but criminalization laws are all over Africa.”* Several people from the US took advantage of Uganda’s poverty and weak society, she explained, promoting fear of an invasive and dangerous “gay agenda.” US evangelicals had been promoting homophobia in Uganda prior to 2014 and were involved in the creation of the country’s notorious Anti-Homosexuality Act. The global community was helpful in preventing the proposed legislation from becoming law but, at the same time, well-intentioned politicians and campaigners – threatening to withhold aid – did not listen to local activists, generating a backlash from the Ugandan people towards LGBT people in Uganda and violence toward Ugandan representatives around the globe.

Nabagesera has strong ties with European embassies in the region, which have aided in her participation of the Forum, and she encourages other Fellows to create relationships with foreign governments to aid in their advocacy. *“During the Berlin session in 2014 it was only Uganda that had a great working relationship with [the German] foreign ministry, but since then I’ve heard that some people have starting opening doors and dialogue back home. So for me I feel it’s important that we keep the dialogues open,”* she said.

In 2015, Nabagesera boldly posed on the cover of *TIME*, as part of a photo essay showcasing 65 LGBT people from 15 different countries who had faced discrimination. Posing with her fist held high, Nabagesera told the magazine she wanted to embody the image of power.



Nabagesera has earned many accolades and awards for her activism, including appearing on the cover of *TIME* magazine.

“For me, it’s more than just me being on the cover,” she said of the article. “It’s more putting the visibility on the LGBT struggle around the world, because as much as they say its ‘Out in Africa,’ it carries stories from very many people around the world. But also it gives me personal security and protection from not only home, but even from the government.”

This visibility does not mean that she is completely invincible, however. Shortly before she was due to arrive in Salzburg to participate in the 2017 session, Nabagesera was arrested in Rwanda. Within hours, Salzburg Global LGBT Forum members were using their diplomatic connections and multiple communication channels, especially Facebook and Twitter, to raise awareness of her arrest and call for her release. *“I was surprised to see people in the Philippines, people in China, were writing,” Nabagesera recalls. “I must say I’m lucky.”* She was thankfully released in time to travel to the Forum, and felt re-energized.

“I feel so good and alive, very fresh and more motivated. Every year I get more amazed at how the Forum has grown and getting more informative, interesting, but also more focused on the issues that many of us neglect or forget about during our

everyday work. The issue of wellbeing and safety plus family is the core of our existence – and the petrol that fuels us to continue to do what we do. I wonder why for so many years the movements around the world have neglected these topics. We work under very dire circumstances, and if we don’t look after ourselves it will be difficult for us to sustain the global movements and struggle. So for me, to have this opportunity every year to come and re-energize, learn from so many diverse people, share experiences with different kinds of cultures is something that I truly need.”

It is that amplification effect that Nabagesera sees as being one of the key values of the network. *“I believe in the power of sharing. That is the strongest weapon the Ugandan LGBT movement has,” she says. “For me, having this network of about 150 people, I know that one of them will share whatever happens. So I use that network to share information out of the continent. But I’ve also used the network, the videos and content that comes from the members of the Forum, because I have 2.8 million viewers on my TV show and website. So people are starting to see that it’s not something new that’s happening to us; it’s also happening elsewhere in the world...”*

“I really wish many donors, corporations and organizations would really understand the importance of this Forum. We cannot always just fight, fight, fight... without loved ones at our sides, without family. If we are not healthy there is no way we can have healthy movements. The Salzburg Global LGBT Forum has given us a platform to learn and also take back home and share with our communities, I will forever be grateful. And I will always be a bit selfish and say for as long as I am invited to the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum I will attend. This Forum brings out a lot of me that sometimes I didn’t know I had. Some kind of burden gets off, being in a place where for us the focus is directly about us and not just our work and politics. It’s a place where I get to interact one-on-one with government officials, diplomats, UN experts and where I don’t have to fight for space to get their attention like in the so many forums I attend where we are over 1000 people, talking about the same thing for decades.”



Kasha Nabagesera on
making the world
pay attention to LGBT issues



CREATING IMPACT

“I feel so good and alive, very fresh, and more motivated. Every year I get more amazed at how the Forum has grown and getting more informative, interesting, but also more focused on the issues that many of us neglect or forget about during our everyday work.”

— Kasha Nabagesera,
Executive Director, Kuchu Times Media Group,
Uganda

The Salzburg Global LGBT Forum has been blessed with amazing leaders from around the globe engaging with each other, exploring commonalities and differences, sharing their challenges, and asking questions. Inspired and encouraged by each other and our sense of a global community, Fellows have returned to their home countries and often started new projects: a LGBT film festival; the English translation of a first novel in Arabic; a refocus of their organization; reaching and nurturing new allies in the business or diplomatic community; or finally making that film that had long lingered in their head and heart. Many of our Fellows report that the new projects they start and goals and methods they recalibrate are as a result of the encouragement and energy our sessions provide. We have seen young activists grow into aspiring leaders of their generation, and established leaders at the end of their professional career reconnect and offer larger perspectives and a sense of calm that comes with time.

In a nutshell, we are all overachievers. And the Forum gatherings give us the friendships and voices we need on our journeys through an increasingly connected world. Our Facebook group (unlisted and open only to Forum Fellows

due to security concerns) has become our tool to promote, alert and embrace each other's work. Many of these achievements are compiled into a periodic newsletter sent to a growing list of subscribers, as well as featured in the main Salzburg Global Seminar newsletter, sent to over 6000 recipients.

As a Forum, we have meticulously documented our sessions, chronicling daily panel discussions across several social media platforms to thousands of followers; published recommendations, adopted by governments and institutions; and made our conversations accessible in five session reports, over 100 articles; more than 80 video testimonies (viewed on Salzburg Global Seminar's YouTube channel and Facebook page almost 30,000 times), and a 20-minute short film.

But what has impacted us most? It is the sense of being part of a global community. This is our fundamental truth: We have become a global community of trust.

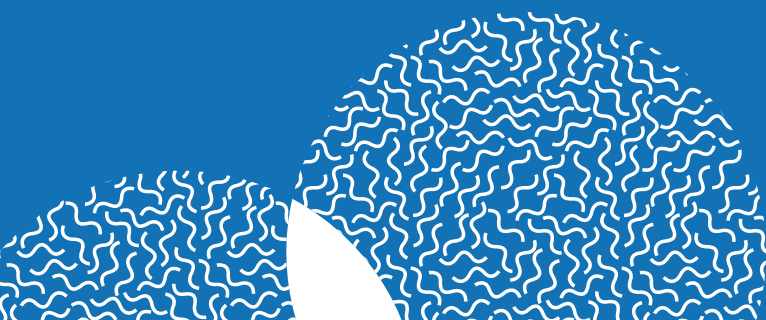
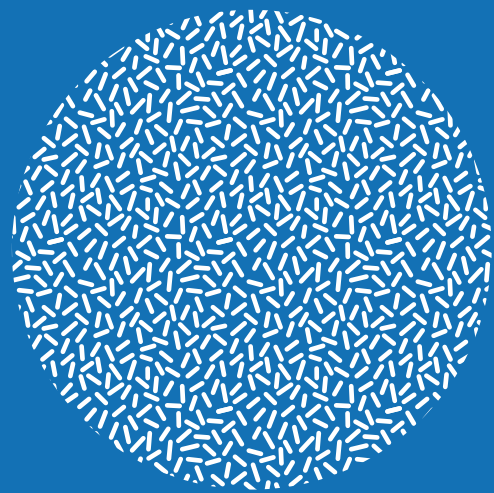
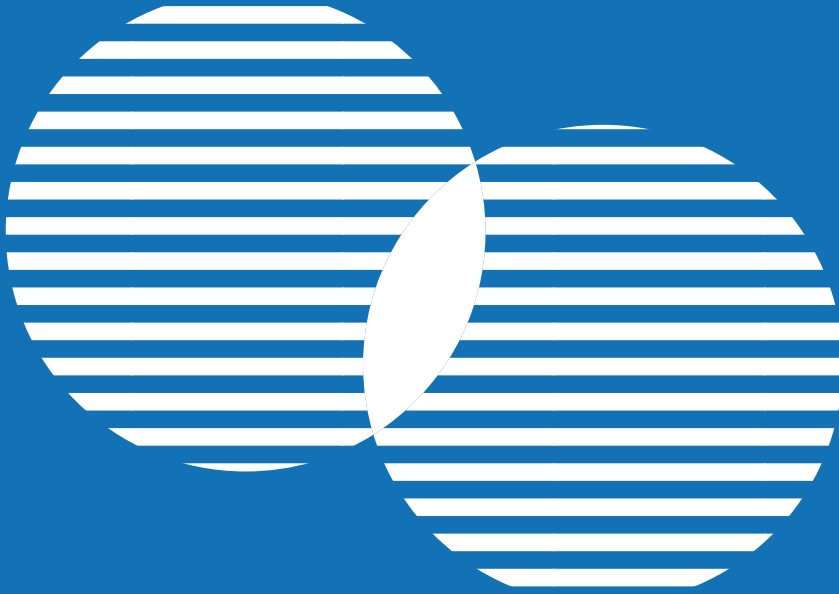
Throughout this report you can find testimonials from our Fellows on what they have gained from being part of our global network.





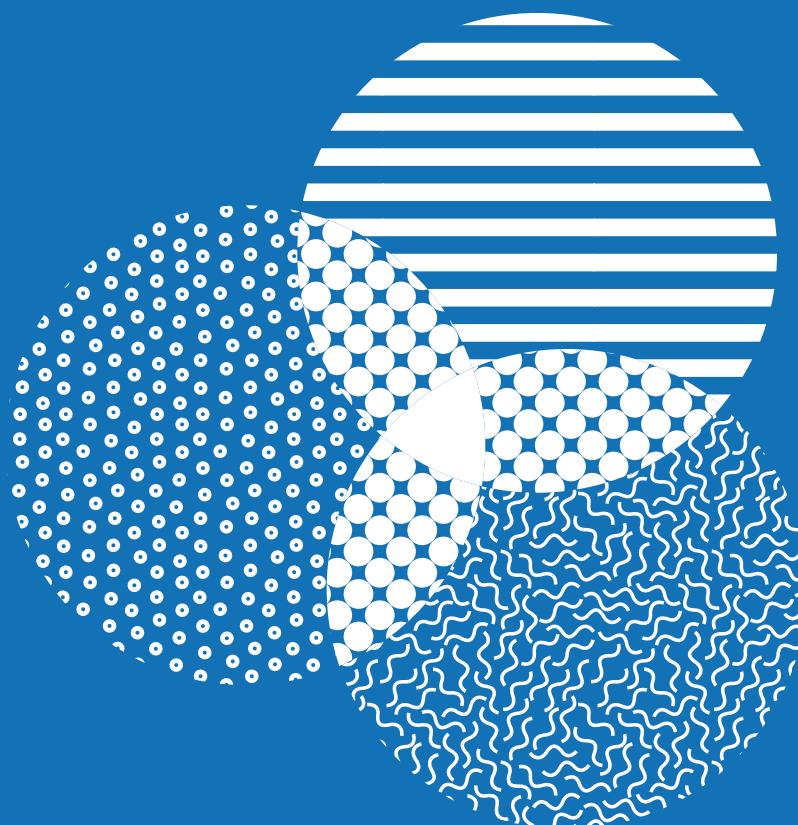
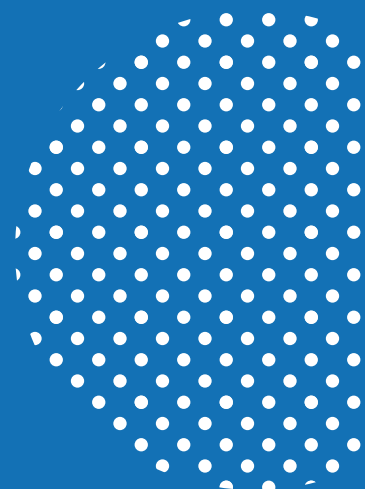






01

DEFINING FAMILY



“We all come from families that were unprepared for us.”

— Klaus Mueller,
Founder and Chair,
Salzburg Global LGBT Forum

Being part of family is a fundamental human condition as well as a human right. 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. This sense of belonging, connection and wellbeing is what we call feeling “at home.”

But does this notion of “family” remain utopian for LGBT people? Many LGBT individuals are rejected by their families, cultures or home countries. So-called traditional family values are often claimed to justify the exclusion of daughters and sons from their families, their communities and the legal protection granted to citizens.

Why does this exclusion find such widespread open or silent acceptance? Why do families, schools, religious communities or government authorities tolerate or even support the discrimination and violence against their LGBT children?

Exclusion is not a value, but an attack on the very fabric of our lives and core idea of family. Where exclusion cannot be prevented, it seriously impacts not only those driven from home but also the families and communities they are forced to leave behind. Much more needs to be done to ensure that “home” can indeed be a place of safety.

Through our three-year project “*Family is...*” with the German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, we collected and disseminated video testimonies of authentic stories about our Fellows and their families. Fellows shared their personal experiences of acceptance, silence or exclusion in their families and of ways to heal and protect families in all their shapes and forms. In 2017, we released our film documentary *Family is...? A Global Conversation* as a free resource and humane document to strengthen loving and inclusive families.



1.1

Family is ... ?

The Salzburg Global LGBT Forum prides itself on providing a safe space in which LGBT activists, artists and allies can engage in open and candid conversations. It was in this environment of trust and understanding that the “*Family is...*” project was born — encouraging participants of all ages and nationalities to share their experiences of living in, building and raising a family.

Salzburg Global LGBT Forum Fellow, filmmaker Cha Roque shares photos of her and her daughter, Kelsey. Her latest film – *What I Would Have Told My Daughter If I Knew What To Say Back Then* – received its European première in Salzburg in 2017.

The “*Family is...*” project was developed with support from the German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth. The Ministry’s support of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum began with its participation in the 2014 session in Berlin, *Creating Long-Term Global Networks to Sustain LGBT Human Rights Organizations*. Since its launch at the 2015 session, *Strengthening Communities: LGBT Rights and Social Cohesion*, “*Family is...*” has seen dozens of Fellows share their family experiences – be that on panels at sessions, in working groups or on film.

Speaking at the 2015 session, State Secretary Ralf Kleindiek explained why his

ministry is supporting the project: “*Collaboration with the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum is important because family is for most people a crucial part of their lives, of their identities.*”

Being part of a family is a fundamental human condition, but the way one defines family can vary widely depending on to whom you speak. How we define “family” or advocate so-called “traditional family values” can be a form of exclusion and discrimination.

“*It is important that we have a very wide interpretation of what family is,*” explains Kleindiek. “*Family is whenever people of different generations look after each other. Married or unmarried, with children or not, old and young, same-sex or heterosexual couples. It is a very serious matter of discrimination if we define family as a closed unit.*”

For some, family may be defined by blood relations or marital ties. But as Klaus Mueller remarked at the opening of the 2015 session: “*None of us come from families that were prepared for us.*”

Through “*Family is...*” Fellows have shared, candidly and movingly, how families of birth can be hugely supportive or painfully abusive. Stories shared range from those who have received tentative or outright acceptance from their parents, siblings and extended family, to those who had suffered stinging rejections and even physical abuse as a result of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

At the 2016 session, *The Many Faces of LGBT Inclusion*, held in Chiang Rai, Thailand, Fellows learned how definitions and practices of family across Asia give or withhold space for LGBT family members and how these practices have changed over time. In many countries across the region, it is typical for multiple generations of families to live together in the same house, leaving few opportunities for independence or privacy. Nepalese and Bhutanese Fellows told the international audience of their compatriots’ ancient beliefs that one cannot die in peace until one has seen the face of their grandchild. A family’s “honor” is important in countries such as India, with certain behaviors or actions considered “dishonorable” and worthy of a variety of often severe punishments, including death.

Such attitudes can have serious negative implications for LGBT people, with a number of the participants over the course of the three-year project sharing personal stories or anecdotes of how they or their friends have been cast out of their families for being LGBT. Syrian author Danny Ramadan recalled how his father took the news of his coming out at aged 17: *“He has a very heavy hand. After a week I had to leave my family’s home – never to come back. And I have never been back ever since.”* Ramadan, now 33, lives in Canada.

As a result of this exclusion, many LGBT people seek to establish “alternative families” or “families of choice” that offer them the love and security they did not find or cannot rely on with their families of birth.

“Alternative family is extremely important,” says Abha Bhaiya, executive director of the Jagori Rural Charitable Trust in India. *“I personally find it’s not enough to have a biological family – that is one part of our lives, it’s important, but not sufficient. For me it has always been about creating a collective of like-minded people, where you can have dialogue together and support each*

other. To be able to give your shoulder to others and put your head on other’s shoulders.”

“I have found an alternative family where we have love and care,” shared one Fellow in Thailand. He 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 now includes both parental figures and siblings. *“To me, family is where there is acceptance and respect. I have found that now,”* he says.

Other Fellows have been luckier in their family’s responses, sharing stories of initial rejection but eventual reconciliation, with their families’ understanding growing over time and after many conversations. As Mariano Ruiz, communications officer for IDAHOT (International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia) explains, despite having grown up in a very traditional Argentinian family, his mother has been very supportive: *“Without her support, I could never be able to be who I am.... I demonstrated to her that things change, that I will sometime in the future be able to raise kids and have a family as she expected, but not in a traditional way of a man and a woman.”*

Saskia Wieringa shares her family story with Fellows at the 2016 session in Chiang Rai, Thailand, *The Many Faces of LGBT Inclusion*.





Hyun Kyung Kim on becoming part of the minority



Yinhe Li on how Chinese cultural values force gay men and women into heterosexual marriage

This desire to raise a family, as well as feel part of one, is one shared by many heterosexual/cisgender people and LGBT people alike – and a desire that is increasingly becoming a legal reality and right for many LGBT people across the world. As of August 2017, 25 countries have fully legalized same-sex marriage or are in the process of adopting it; three more countries recognize marriages performed overseas; and civil unions are recognized in a further 16 countries. Many of these countries also have legalized adoption by same-sex couples.

However, outside of those countries, for LGBT people who choose to raise their own families, legal protections can be sparse, leaving children vulnerable should anything happen to their biological parent – there is little guarantee that their non-biological parent will be able to continue to care for them.

“[In the Philippines] there is no legal tool that supports my family of two mothers and one daughter,” explains filmmaker and mom, Cha Roque. “In an emergency situation, my mom will be there to speak at the hospital because my partner does not have that prerogative.”



For the “Family is...” project, Fellows were encouraged to share stories and photos of their own families. Su Su Hlaing shares a photo of her mother.

But even in countries where full legal recognition and protections are lacking, legally binding workarounds have been found. For example, in Cambodia, same-sex couple recognition does not exist so they increasingly rely on Family Book Records. These documents are 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.

“Family to me is a community of love that we create by choice, as opposed to just one we are born into,” says Danish Sheikh, a lawyer and LGBT rights advocate in India. “It is an institution that can be incredibly disempowering – but also unleash power.”

Sharing his hopes for the “Family is...” project back in 2015, Secretary Kleindiek said: *“We learn from the LGBT Forum how discussions in Germany influence them, and how their discussions in other countries influence us in Germany... Indeed, we are trailing behind.”* For LGBT equality in Germany, a victory was finally won in 2017 when the German Bundestag voted to legalize gay marriage, which in turn also gave same-sex couples full adoption rights.

As former Australian high court judge, Michael Kirby reflected during his “Family is...” video testimonial in 2015: *“We all have that family, most of who are heterosexual, and that is our outreach into the rest of society. It’s hard to hate the people you love.”*

By sharing these personal stories, the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum seeks to challenge misrepresentations of families and their LGBT members; document the lived reality of families around the globe today; and hopes to contribute to building stronger, more inclusive societies, communities – and families.

1.2

In Conversation:

Klaus Mueller & Ralf Kleindiek

The implication of family definitions for exclusion and discrimination has been an issue that has brought together the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum and the German Ministry for Family Affairs since the Forum's 2014 session in Berlin. In 2015, Mueller and State Secretary Ralf Kleindiek introduced a three-year collaboration on "*Family is...*" at the session *Strengthening Communities: LGBT Rights and Social Cohesion*. The Forum has conducted a series of conversations and more than 40 video interviews over three years to develop a global portrait of families today. Its documentary film *Family is...? A Global Conversation* was based on these testimonies and premiered in May 2017 at the German Ministry of Family Affairs in Berlin.

Mueller When our Forum met in 2014 at the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ralf said: "Come to us too to talk about family issues." Out of this, we developed this new cooperation on "*Family is...*" as we both believe in the need to embrace families of all kinds and shapes.

Kleindiek Collaboration with the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum is important because family is for most people a crucial part of their lives, of their identities. It is important that we have a very wide interpretation of what family is. Family is whenever people of different generations look after each other. Married or unmarried, with children or not, old and young, same-sex or heterosexual couples. It is a very serious matter of discrimination if we define family as a closed unit.

Mueller What is the state of affairs in Germany? Why can't Germany keep up when compared to Spain or Ireland?

Kleindiek Indeed, we are trailing behind.* There is a lot of discussion now, especially after the decision in Ireland [Ireland had just voted in favor of same-sex marriage a month before the 2015 session – the first popular vote of its kind]. But our conservative coalition partner blocks equality, and Chancellor Angela Merkel defines marriage as "exclusively between a man and a woman." Within the Ministry of Family Affairs led by my party, we are making clear changes, but we lack a majority.

Mueller How are LGBT issues dealt with now in the ministry? I think you told me once that the acronym wasn't even there until recently?

Kleindiek When I arrived at the ministry, we had a unit for families on "special situations." I wondered if it was a special unit for vulnerable families or in poverty, but it was about same-sex couples. Imagine, that was a surprise! Now there is a unit for sexual orientation and gender identities and we coordinate our government politics for that issue across all ministries.

Mueller Symbolic politics are important. What does the ministry do in contexts such as LGBT Pride?

Kleindiek We will raise the rainbow flag at our ministry. There was a lot of resistance. We had a discussion because of the regulations for flags on federal buildings. I brought this discussion to state secretaries' meetings. We found a compromise. Initially, those ministries that wanted to raise the rainbow flag could do so for two days. But now we can do it for a week. For us, this is an important symbol in order to raise awareness and further the discussion.

* In June 2017, the German Bundestag voted to legalize gay marriage, which in turn also gave same-sex couples full adoption rights. Chancellor Angela Merkel voted against the bill. The bill passed by 393 to 226 with four abstentions.



Ralf Kleindiek is the State Secretary, German Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth. He is a Fellow of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum having participated in three sessions in 2014, 2016 and 2017.

1.3

Our Families

In collaboration with the German Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum has collected video testimonies of authentic stories from our Fellows about their experiences with their families. These stories include their families of birth, the alternative families they have chosen for themselves and the families they are now raising.

Families We're Born Into

The families we're born into represent our "biological families" and ancestral heritage. While LGBT people are an integral part of their biological families, they often struggle with their families' acceptance due to their sexual orientation or gender identity. For some, identifying as LGBT threatens the innate feeling of safety within their families of birth and the communities in which they were raised, while others may gradually find support and understanding from loved ones.



Michael Kirby,
Australia

"I told my siblings first... My mother, I never voiced it until a week before she died. I didn't feel comfortable about not telling her in her lifetime. So I said: 'Mum, there is something I feel I ought to tell you,' and when I did so, she looked at me and she said: 'Michael, you've been bringing Johan (my partner) here for the last 30 years, every Sunday. Do you think I came down in the last shower?' [An Australian expression for 'Do you think I'm naïve?'] ...

That is the great strength of LGBTIQ people: We all have that family, most of who are heterosexual, and that is our outreach into the rest of society. It's hard to hate people you love."



Manisha Dhakal,
Nepal

"I hid myself within my family... They knew that I was a feminine guy from childhood; my voice is soft, and I used to find it easier to grow up with my sisters and my mother. They know. In childhood that is OK. But when I grew up because of the prejudice issue [they

became] very scared for me. They didn't allow me to go to the office for three days and for those three days I took that opportunity. I told them all the things that I faced as who I am, and that changed me a lot. [It made me realize] how important it is to convince the family, and how to get the support from the family. If we get support from the family then we can progress a lot in our personality, in our activism. If there is no support from the family, it's very difficult to work in activism."



Saskia Wieringa,
The Netherlands

"My family of birth instilled in me two values; the sense of justice, because they were fighters against the Nazi occupation of Holland, and that is a positive feeling within me. Secondly, a feeling that is very negative in me: the narrow-minded religious fanaticism, with its heteronormative morality, which led to my being silent for weeks on end when I was an adolescent. What I wanted to say I couldn't say, it wasn't appreciated. And what they wanted me to say I could not say, I refused to say."



Bao Chau Nguyen,
Vietnam

“After my coming out [my mother] told me I can be anyone that I want, she just wanted me to be happy. I was like, ‘Oh, my mom accepted me.’ But after that she and my father tried to change me a lot. She bought me a lot of girly clothes; this pink sweater that I never wore. But now, the last time she talked in public at my graduation, she said she knows that she is the mom of a transgender [man] and she is proud of me.”

Families We Choose

Family, by its very definition, aims to provide a sense of belonging, unconditional love and support. But when our families of birth fail to provide us with those securities, to whom do we turn? Overwhelmingly, our Fellows agree their families of choice play a vital role in their lives, their self-acceptance and their feeling of safety and security.



Danish Sheikh,
India

“I think family for me means something that’s not connected to the biological sphere. So I strongly believe that the families that are really important are the families that we make as we go along, and the families that exist outside the prescribed bounds of kinship, reproduction, biology and the State sponsorship. I believe, as a gay man, I have the possibility of building little communities of love; it doesn’t have to be the one that I was born into.”



Passang Dorji,
Bhutan

“To me family is a structure or institute formed with the bedrocks of love. Where there is care and support together, at all times, and when there is care and support of each other, then this can be a family, whether it be biological or family of choice. I am more comfortable with families of choice.”



Nader Turkmani,
Syria / Norway

“I have a new family. Kind of. I lost some members of my biological family, or the family I used to have [during the war in Syria]. But right now I have my chosen family, my husband, my partner. I have my friends, my network. My LGBT community there [in Turkey where he was a refugee for two years]. We are starting a new network in Bergen, in Norway. So I believe this is my family.”



Saskia Wieringa,
The Netherlands

“I started building the family that I really wanted to have; my own family, composed of my friends, my family’s friends, my lesbian friends, my lovers, my ex-lovers, my daughter. That’s my life now as it is: I’m an activist, I’m a mother, I’m a grandmother, I’m a partner and I’m proud of the families I have established.”



Angeline Jackson,
Jamaica

“Family is about love and safety. So for me it’s about my birth family, who are able to love me in the best way that they can possibly do as I identify as a lesbian. But also for me it is the family of choice: the friends that I make, the secondary mothers and secondary fathers and my partner. That for me is what a family is right now.”

Families We Raise

Much progress has been made to embed LGBT equality as a fundamental part of the global human rights agenda, including the right to create one’s family, be it through same-sex partnership laws or adoption rights for LGBT couples. Though many still struggle for these legal rights and visibility, many LGBT individuals continue to redefine their meaning of family by raising families of their own.



Wanja Kilber with his son, who also has two mothers.

I accept you for being a lesbian.' It's not an everyday thing. When you hear this being delivered by your daughter, in front of other people, it's really heartwarming... She is very outspoken on her social media accounts. If there is an issue about LGBT or human rights issues in particular, she will always say something about it."



Wanja Kilber,
Germany

"[My son] is the lucky one. He has two loving moms – the best moms in the world; he has me, trying to be a good father; he has my partner. The politicians just have to deal with it. It's not that seldom – a lot of people have two mothers and two fathers, if their parents get divorced and married again. It's not a new situation, politicians just have to accept it and make it the new reality. [He is now] seven weeks and four days young, and getting happier every day.

I was dreaming about it, since I can remember, and I always knew, sooner or later, I was going to be a father."



Kelsey,
Cha Roque's daughter

"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 a 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... I got judged and laughed at for having a lesbian mom... I was bullied for not having a dad. But I told them 'It's okay, I have two mommies!'"



Cha Roque,
The Philippines

"We are very open in communicating with each other, but we don't really talk about it like, 'Mom



Tamara Adrián,
Venezuela

"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!"

“I WAS INVITED TO THE SALZBURG GLOBAL LGBT FORUM IN CHIANG RAI IN 2016. ASIDE FROM CONNECTING WITH A LOT OF GREAT PEOPLE AND HEARING ABOUT THEIR STORIES, THERE WAS A PARTICULAR SESSION IN THE FORUM THAT ROCKED MY FOUNDATION AND GAVE A BIG IMPACT TO MY LIFE. I WAS A PANELIST IN A FORUM ABOUT RAISING AN LGBT FAMILY WHEN I WAS ASKED ABOUT MY MOST PRECIOUS MEMORY WITH MY DAUGHTER. THIS QUESTION MADE ME REALIZE I SHOULD KEEP MAKING FILMS THAT TELL THE STORIES OF LGBT PEOPLE – NOT ONLY THEIR STRUGGLES BUT ALSO THEIR TRIUMPHS. WHEN I CAME BACK TO MANILA, I CONTINUED WORKING ON MY FILM CALLED ‘WHAT I WOULD’VE TOLD MY DAUGHTER IF I KNEW WHAT TO SAY BACK THEN’....

Impact:

Cha Roque

*Filmmaker; Communications Director,
Dakila Collective for Modern Heroism, Philippines*

... IT HAS NOW BEEN SCREENED AT A COUPLE OF INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVALS. IF NOT FOR THE SALZBURG GLOBAL LGBT FORUM, I MIGHT NOT HAVE HAD THAT MOTIVATION AND PUSH TO MAKE ANOTHER FILM, AND NOW THAT I JUST CAME FROM ANOTHER OF THEIR SESSIONS, I AM ONCE AGAIN INSPIRED TO MAKE NEW FILMS THAT WILL GIVE A VOICE TO LGBTs AROUND THE WORLD. THANK YOU, SALZBURG GLOBAL LGBT FORUM!”



1.4

Hiroko Masuhara:

“A very strong message to Japanese society”



Hiroko Masuhara is a Fellow of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum, having participated in the 2017 session — *Home: Safety, Wellness and Belonging*.



Hiroko Masuhara can't hide her smile when speaking about her wife, and rightfully so – the first years of a new life together are blissful for many a couple. Yet, for Masuhara and her wife, their partnership not only marks a significant milestone in their own lives but also for all same-sex couples and even society-at-large in Japan: Two years ago, they were issued Japan's first-ever certificate recognizing a same-sex union.

“In the last three years, Japanese society has changed very rapidly,” she says. “[My wife and I] obtained the first issued same-sex partnership certificate by Shibuya city [a city district in Tokyo]. This changed a lot about the notion of family and marriage in Japan. In Japan, to be ‘normal’ is a very strong message – but [the fact that] same-sex couples can be happy and build their own families is a very strong message to society.”

Same-sex marriage is not legal in Japan and these certificates are currently only issued in two districts of the capital, Tokyo. The same-sex partnership certificates are mostly symbolic, allowing couples to sign a notarized document

promising to love and protect each other. While the certificates ensure partners can become each other's life insurance recipients, hospitals, landlords and businesses are not legally bound to recognize them.

These certificates did, however, ignite further conversation about LGBT rights in Japan, especially in the corporate world. *“Japanese companies, not only global companies like Google and Apple, but domestic Japanese companies started to face LGBT employees and consumers. [More] companies started LGBT training and [offered] welfare for LGBT employees,” she says. Masuhara now specializes in promoting LGBT inclusiveness in the workplace by delivering diversity training for private companies.*

“When I was young, I couldn't dream of making my family, and possibly having children, but now I can,” she says. “Young generations in Japan have the possibility and the choice to make a family.”

She continues: *“When I was young there wasn't social media, so I didn't know that there were many LGBT people in the world, or in Japan, or in my own town. But now kids can Google. There are many chances to be yourself, for younger generations.”*

But for all the positive progression for LGBT individuals in Japanese society, there is still work that needs to be done.

“We have many problems still,” says Masuhara, “like bullying at schools and high suicide rates among younger LGBT people. So even if, as a society, [we've taken] good steps forward, the problems remain. We have to fight against homophobia and transphobia. We have to promote diversity and raise awareness of LGBT people.”



Hiroko Masuhara on change
in Japan on LGBT human rights



Impact:

Elle Fersan

LGBTQ Activist, Middle East & North Africa, Lebanon / USA

“CAPTURING THE TRANSFORMATIONAL EXPERIENCE I HAD HERE AT SALZBURG IN A FEW WORDS IS NOT AN EASY

TASK; BUT IF THERE IS ONE THING I BELIEVE I ADDED TO THIS GATHERING IT IS HELPING ACTIVISTS AT HOME UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF ENGAGING WITH THOSE ACTIVISTS WHO HAVE SOUGHT REFUGE OR FOUND THEIR LIVES ELSEWHERE FOR A HOST OF REASONS...

WE IN LEBANON ARE STARTING THIS INITIATIVE TO BUILD SYRIAN LEADERSHIP AMONG THE LGBT REFUGEES IN LEBANON SO THAT THEY CAN TAKE THEIR SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE BACK HOME ONCE THE WAR ENDS...

...INDEED, EVERYONE REALIZES THAT WE AS HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS CANNOT CONTINUE TO RELY ON INTERNATIONAL AID TO PUSH OUR AGENDAS FORWARD. REVERSING THE BRAIN DRAIN INTO A BRAIN CAPITAL IS THUS ESSENTIAL, AND WE, AS ACTIVISTS IN THE DIASPORA, CAN ONLY DO THAT WHEN WE ARE ACCEPTED AND EMBRACED IN OUR HOMES OF ORIGIN. THANK YOU FOR BEING THAT CONNECTING BRIDGE AND FOR OFFERING THE AVENUE OF DIALOGUE AND REDEMPTION. IT IS UNDENIABLE THAT THE SALZBURG GLOBAL LGBT FORUM FOSTERS A ‘SOUTH-TO-SOUTH’ DIALOGUE THAT IS OTHERWISE IMPOSSIBLE GIVEN THE SECURITY CONSTRAINTS AND THE DIFFICULTY IN CALLING FOR SUCH A FORUM IN OUR PARTS OF THE WORLD.”

1.5

Family is... A Global Conversation

The Salzburg Global LGBT Forum has conducted nearly 100 video interviews over three years, over 40 of which focused on developing a global portrait of families and their LGBT members today. Our 2017 documentary film *Family is...? A Global Conversation* is based on these testimonies. We invite you to share the film – a free resource – widely through your networks, at film festivals, or on your website.

Being part of family is a fundamental human condition as well as a human right. 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. But how do we narrate our own stories of family?

Throughout our three-year project *“Family is...”* we interviewed Fellows and collected their authentic stories. They shared their personal experiences of acceptance, silence and exclusion in their families and ways to heal and protect families in all their shapes and forms. You can watch all the interviews on our website



Family Is...
...A Global Conversation



Tamara Adrian
...Where I come from, where I live,
and where I want to be



M. V. Lee Badgett
...Care that lasts



Angeline Jackson
...Both birth and choice



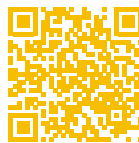
Hyun Kyung Kim
...Unspoken acceptance



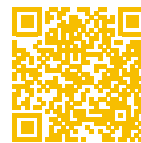
John Lotherington
...Dynamic in nature



Kasha Nabagesera
...Being in a safe place



Rooi Teve
...A team for life



Mariano Ruiz
...Accepting the
unexpected



Dennis Wamala
...Feeling like you belong



Joe Wong
...Sticking together
despite challenges



Tamara Adrian
on family from a
transgender perspective



Abha Bhaiya
on the value of inclusion and
alternative families



Klaus Mueller
on the power of storytelling, family
and home



Cha Roque
on her daughter empowering
her lesbian mom



Ralf Kleindiek
...A joint project



Klaus Mueller
...Unconditional support



...A space to share
our lives



Manisha Dhakal
...Communicating
who you are



Passang Dorji
...Being comfortable



Popo Fan
...Being with
someone you love



Michael Kirby
...Our outreach to society



Michael Kirby and his partner
...Creative tension and
companionship



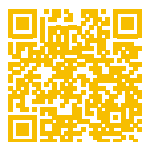
Vasilika Laci
...Negotiation and
understanding



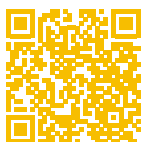
Marc Pachter
...Investing in commitments



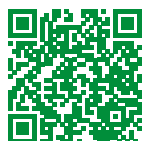
Monica Pisankaneva
...An open relationship



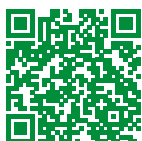
Clare Shine
...Trust, transmission,
and excitement



Thilaga Sulathireh
...Interconnectedness



Ying Xin
...A shifting concept



Victor Yang
...Making sacrifices



Wanja Kilber
on the birth of his son



Nana King
on how we reconnect
with our family of birth



Nader Turkmani
on being an LGBT refugee
and defining family



Saskia Wieringa
on her families
of birth and choice

Scan the QR codes
with your smartphone
to be taken directly to
the video on our
YouTube channel.

→ lgbt.salzburgglobal.org or scan any of the QR
codes on these pages with your smartphone to
be taken directly to the video on our YouTube
channel

The interviews on family are part of
our larger collection of testimonies through
which Forum members share their professional
expertise and life experience. These are all also
available on our website and some are included
as QR codes, accompanying features and
profiles, throughout this report.

Our 2017 film documentary *Family is...?*
A Global Conversation premiered in May 2017 at
the German Ministry of Family Affairs in Berlin
with whom we partnered on this project. State
Secretary Ralf Kleindiek and Klaus Mueller
thank all the Fellows for sharing their stories
and enabling this global and complex portrait
of family and their LGBT members.

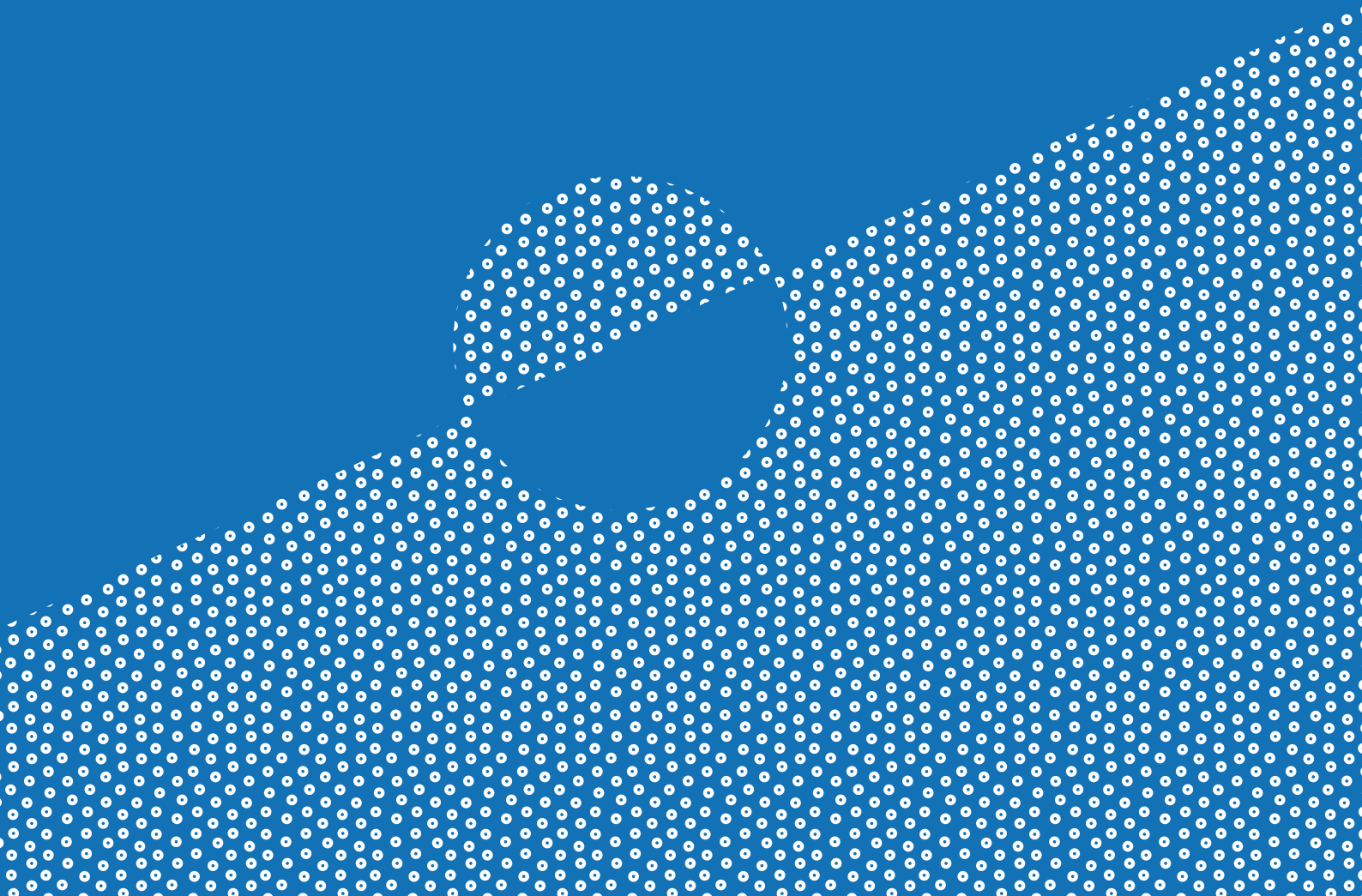
Family is...? A Global Conversation (2017)

Director: Klaus Mueller;
Camera: Eduardo Gellner; Watsamon "June" Tri-yasakda;
Sound: Kathrin Kerschbaumer; Ong Trakarnrungrorj; Interviewers:
Louise Hallman, John Lotherington,
Klaus Mueller, Sudeshan Reddy;
Producer: Salzburg Global Seminar



02

SEEKING SAFETY



“With our house being ransacked, with us being attacked, with all the news spreading... Those were the things that kind of escalated to a point where we couldn’t live there anymore.” [Noël]

“Getting death threats... random people anonymously sending you your photo, your phone number, your address, and telling you ‘We know who are and we are going to kill you.’ It is a very uncertain condition which paralyzes you.” [Negede]

— Noël Iglessias and Negede Gezahegn,
Founders of DANA Social Group,
LGBTI rights organization in Ethiopia

Legislative discrimination, social alienation and hate speech can all impact the safety of LGBT people, their wellbeing and sense of belonging. Addressing persecution and anti-LGBT extremism has been a major feature in many of our discussions. Forum members shared their expertise that homophobia and transphobia and hatred cannot be diminished to only the activities of fringe groups or individuals. Globally we see that this anti-LGBT prejudice permeates actions led and enforced by many political, legal, religious, cultural or economic systems that reinforce each other.

Persecution also happens behind closed doors. Research on identity-based violence has found that in some situations, 80 percent of anti-LGBT extremism occurs as domestic and household violence. Often, social media platforms enable LGBT individuals to break out of their isolation and to learn about their communities. But online bullying, surveillance and hate campaigns can also subject them to new dangers, as we learned in training sessions from online security experts.

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. Refugees from countries including Ethiopia, Syria, Nigeria, Bangladesh and Guatemala shared their stories and explained their specific needs and challenges. Activists responding to recent attacks of anti-LGBT extremism in countries such as Chechnya, Indonesia, or Uganda reported on emergency measures, but also warned about the growing trend of Western-based religious extremists exporting anti-LGBT hate speech and contributing to anti-LGBT laws in Russia, Uganda, Nigeria, Jamaica and elsewhere.

How should we react? Supporting causes and bringing attention to a specific country is important but context sensitivity is crucial. Sometimes the political voices of overseas LGBT organizations do more harm than good to local LGBT groups. International solidarity is important, but needs to be guided by local LGBT groups. Gathering evidence and documentation on violence helps to build cases, statistics and better policy to tackle anti-LGBT extremism and persecution.



2.1

LGBT Refugees

The plight of asylum seekers and displaced people is high on the global agenda as the world faces its greatest refugee crisis since the World War II. LGBT refugees encounter further struggles as they continue to face prejudice and persecution through the asylum system and in their receiving countries.

The Salzburg Global LGBT Forum has been addressing the issues of LGBT refugees since its beginnings, with a special focus placed on their trials at the 2017 session, *Home: Safety, Belonging and Wellbeing*.

Negede Gezahegn embraces Mariano Ruiz at the 2017 session of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum – *Home: Safety, Belonging and Wellbeing* – six months after he and fellow activist Noël Iglessias fled Ethiopia for safety in Austria.

Forced “cures.” Homes vandalized. Vicious beatings. Friends murdered. These are just some of the reasons why a number of Fellows of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum have fled their home countries and sought refuge overseas.

Just as the global population of forcibly displaced people has grown substantially from 33.9 million in 1997 to 65.6 million in 2016 (according to the UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency), so too has the number of LGBT refugees grown. According the UK’s Home Office (interior ministry), applications for asylum in the country on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity has risen 400 percent between 2009 and 2014 – even before

incorporating the large influx of refugees that Europe saw in 2015.

Homosexuality remains criminalized in 72 countries around the world, with several countries – or non-state actors within the country, such as the so-called “Islamic State” in Iraq and Syria – imposing the death penalty for same-sex relations. Even in some of the 120 countries where homosexuality has been decriminalized, LGBT people still face great social stigma and frequent persecution.

A matter of safety or death

Ethiopian activists, Noël Iglessias and Negede Gezahegn were repeatedly harassed by their neighbors after their LGBT advocacy efforts were uncovered. Their home was ransacked twice and they received death threats after they launched an online campaign called “Stop The Hate, Spread The Love.” *“We remember one particular message we received: ‘I am going to get a machete in the name love, name it ‘love’ and kill all of you while declaring the love of God,’”* they shared when they returned to the Forum in 2017 for *Home: Safety, Belonging and Wellbeing*. They had first attended the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum in 2015 under the condition of official anonymity. Their names and photographs did not appear in any materials for fear of putting their safety in further jeopardy.

However, by the time they were invited back to Salzburg for another, non-LGBT Forum session in December 2016, their situation – much like the rest of the country, which was placed in a national state of emergency – had dramatically worsened. *“At that time, we were in a dark state. While in Salzburg, the threats kept coming. It became a matter of safety or death. We had our lives, studies, job, community and activism in Ethiopia but it hit us that we were feeling alienated in our very country of birth. We decided to seek asylum in Austria.”* The two friends were granted asylum in Austria in August 2017 and are receiving administrative and emotional support from participants of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum and the local LGBT community as they start to build their new lives in the foreign country they will now call home.

Continuing difficulties

Making the decision to leave everything – friends, family, support networks, jobs – behind and seek safety in a foreign country is just one of the many struggles refugees have to face. LGBT refugees are often struck with further difficulties as they continue to face persecution and discrimination during the asylum process. Non-activists can find it especially difficult, explains Michael Heflin, director of equality for the Open Society Human Rights Initiative: *“When refugees are trying to enter a country to seek asylum, one of the biggest problems they face is that through the asylum process, you have to prove that you personally have well-founded fear of persecution. In their own countries, they had to lie about their identity and had to live in secrecy. But if you have been very secretive about your life, because you know the situation is dangerous, often it becomes hard to prove that you personally have a well-founded fear of persecution.”*

While the UNHCR has started implementing guidelines to better protect LGBT refugees and sensitizing local personnel, these improvements are slow to “trickle down” the entire system. The European Asylum Support Office offers specialized training on how to best handle LGBT asylum cases, but this training is not mandatory. Language barriers can be a

common hurdle to overcome for all migrants, but this can be further heightened for LGBT asylum seekers. *“In some countries there are no ways to express certain aspects of sexualities and that cannot be solved by training immigration officers. So to explain stories, experiences, and to communicate them in a way that is understood as they are meant to be understood is a challenge,”* explained Lucas Hendriksen, program officer for LGBT rights at HIVOS, a Dutch development organization, at the 2015 session, *Strengthening Communities: LGBT Rights and Social Cohesion*.

As Mary Audry Chard, board member and co-chair of the organization Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe (GALZ) shared on the 2015 panel, “Extreme Forms of Exclusion,” in camps, other refugees sometimes attack their LGBT compatriots; this situation worsened when the UN fast-tracks LGBT cases, thus generating a perception of LGBT privilege and igniting further anger in the camps. LGBT individuals and same-sex couples can often be discriminated against in the refugee system, which is biased towards (heterosexual) families. Fear of further persecution in the camps leads some refugees to further flee again. Outside of the camps, without passports or any legal access to support services, these refugees are especially vulnerable to corruption, human trafficking and illegal activities such as sex work, says Stella

Our conversation on the plight of LGBT refugees has stemmed several sessions, including a panel on “Extreme Forms of Exclusion” in 2015 with Michael Heflin, Mary Audry Chard, Jie Ybo, Dennis Wamala and Fadi Saleh.





Syrian refugee Danny Ramadan, now living in Canada, shares his life story on camera for the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum video series.



Victor Yang on who gets to sit at the table: Discrimination, racism, and difference



Wanja Kilber on LGBT refugees and violence faced in asylum center

Murungi, a protection officer in the Security Management and Protection Department at the East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project (EHAHRDP) in Uganda.

Once they have arrived in the receiving country, many refugees struggle to adjust. Depression and “activism guilt” are worryingly common. Many refugees seek a sense of belonging in their diaspora communities in receiving countries. This option is often unavailable to LGBT refugees. “Your own nationals can make you feel unsafe in a new place, since you do not know their political affiliations or LGBT attitudes,” explained a Russian Fellow. Many refugees who struggle to adjust feel homesick – and thus face accusations of being ungrateful to their host country. While he is grateful to Canada and the opportunities his new home has afforded him, as Syrian refugee Danny Ramadan recalls: “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.”

Lacking a support system, “people may contemplate suicide because they had a good job and the process takes long or they go to an isolated village in Europe or end up unemployed. They get depressed,” explains Dennis Wamala, program manager at Icebreakers Uganda, an LGBT support NGO in the country. In the past decade, Wamala estimates that Uganda has seen nearly 70 percent of its LGBT activists leave. He often stays up at night “talking to extremely depressed people living abroad.”

Diaspora tensions

Having a sympathetic ear on the other end of a transcontinental telephone call can be a literal lifeline for LGBT refugees, but sadly they are often regarded with suspicion by their activist peers they have left behind. This is especially the case if they have been “rescued” by well-meaning international LGBT and human rights NGOs, which often prioritize specific leaders, leaving their lesser-known colleagues behind. This focus on specific individuals can demotivate, demoralize and disempower movements at large. “In rescue missions, they ask for a name, not for lists,” explains Kasha Nabagesera, one of Africa’s most high profile LGBT activists. “The others know they won’t be rescued. How do we support members that are not as visible?” Elle Fersan, a Lebanese activist who recently relocated to the US, explained at the 2017 session that “people at home feel upset because you left and the people where you are do not often understand what you went through.” However, rather than viewing them with disdain for “abandoning” the country, she suggests that this LGBT diaspora should be embraced as a useful resource; overseas activists can provide crucial skills, networks and information for advocacy back home.

Whatever drove them to flee and whatever their fate, all refugees are seeking the same thing: safety. As they now consider their future in Austria, Iglesias and Gezahegn believe they have found this: “We are in a healing process, and we feel safe and loved. But this is still a rollercoaster of feelings as we build a new home.”



Arsham Parsi (sitting with Marc Pachter, Director Emeritus, National Portrait Gallery, Washington, DC) founded the Iranian Railroad for Queer Refugees in Canada to help fellow LGBT people escaping persecution in Iran.

Journalist Nazeemha Saeed, who reports on “issues that are not otherwise covered by the mainstream media” including LGBT issues in the Middle East, has faced harassment, imprisonment and even torture for her work.



Danny Ramadan fled his home country of Syria for safety in Canada, where in addition to writing a novel inspired by his experiences, he helps other LGBT refugees arriving in the country.



Guatemalan-born Fernanda Milán was the first transgender person to receive asylum in Denmark as a result of persecution she faced for her gender identity.



2.2

Fleeing Home: LGBT Refugees' Stories

For some people, relocating to another country can be an exciting opportunity for a new life. For others, it is the only way in which they can even stay alive. The number of LGBT refugees is growing as people are forced to flee their homes in face of legal persecution and the very real threat of death – at the hands of the state or even their own neighbors. The following stories come from the personal experiences of Fellows of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum.



Arsham

As an Iranian gay man living in exile in Canada, Arsham Parsi founded the Iranian Railroad for Queer Refugees, providing counseling and support to LGBT refugees by way of financial aid, food and healthcare. Parsi was forced to flee Iran in 2005 when his work as a queer rights activist made him known to authorities. He now works to secure international refugee protection status for an increasing number of Iranian queer asylum

seekers.

“Homosexuality in Iran is punishable by death, and many people like me escape Iran to Turkey and other countries to have their basic and fundamental human rights. It is very difficult. The Iranian LGBT situation is very crucial - we don't have human rights homosexuals, we have discrimination and violation of human rights. I hope that one day Iranian LGBTs have their own freedom and don't need to escape Iran to have the very basic that lots of people take for granted.”



Arsham Parsi on the lack of basic human rights in Iran and the situation of Iranian LGBT refugees



Danny

As a gay Syrian refugee living in Canada, Danny Ramadan is familiar with the emotional toll relocation can have. Born to a conservative Muslim family, he was forced to leave home after coming out to his father at 17. He has faced relentless gay bashing online and a homophobic attack that left him hospitalized after coming out on social media. Dedicated to changing the refugee experience, Ramadan helps facilitate private

sponsorships for LGBT refugees coming to Canada. His novel *The Clothesline Swing*, published in April 2017, addresses refugees and homophobia.

“I think a lot of people don't understand that refugees are forced out of their own countries which they love... I love Syria. I love my own country... I'm connected to it, and I wouldn't have left it unless I had to...”

“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...”

“A lot of people think this is the end of the fairytale, when people arrive at the airport and they're like ‘Oh, you're in Canada, everything is going to be fine now.’ You've left all the horrible behind and everything is good ahead of you. And that is a black and white understanding of the experience of LGBTQ refugees. To begin with, you didn't leave all the horrible, because you also left your family; your connections; your chosen friends and family; your spiritual connection to the land itself; your familiarity of using Arabic, a language that you understand. When you

are able to tell a joke to someone and they get it right away, you see what I mean? Then you face a lot of challenges when you arrive; as you go through the culture shock, finding a job and finding meaning to your life now that you are completely disconnected to everything that has meaning in your life. Yes, you remain true to your identity, but your identity doesn't click with the community yet. I honestly believe that those challenges are very unique, but they echo in all the refugee stories that I hear. Not everyone is faced with the same challenge, but we are all faced with cultural shock, finding meaning to ourselves. Just getting to know those people, knowing how they find meaning in their lives, and seeing them building their stories, and coming here and sharing it with others is very important."

Read more about Danny on page 134.



Danny Ramadan on being a gay refugee from Syria



Nader

Nader is a volunteer at a refugee center in Bergen, Norway, welcoming LGBT refugees and helping them feel safe in their new

home. A Syrian refugee himself, Nader knows first-hand how important it is for refugees to build new communities and lives in their new homes. Before being granted asylum in Norway, Nader lived in Istanbul for two years where he established the "Tea and Talk" support group for Arabic-speaking LGBT refugees.

"My teenage experience with psychologists that tried to 'cure' my homosexuality, although deeply scarring, inspired me to study psychology and plan to study the psychology of gender and sexuality. But revolution started in 2011. I spent a year in the protests and had 27 of my friends killed.

"A cousin I had in the military service escaped to Jordan but he couldn't stand life there so I helped him to return to Syria. One night, my mother told me of TV news announcing that terrorists were killed trying to enter from Jordan. My cousin was amongst them. He had my number on his phone so I needed to think where to go. Going into Jordan, Turkey and Lebanon all posed risks. I found my way to Egypt. I didn't think of leaving during the revolution but the risk I faced and the way in which the revolution was taken over by Islamists left me with nothing left. Two days after leaving for Egypt,

the secret police came into my house in Damascus, accusing me of aiding terrorism.

"In my brief time in Egypt, my parents supported my university studies, but the Syrian currency collapsed. I tried to work but I didn't get paid and I was beaten in the streets for being Syrian. I thought: It's time to leave. I moved to Jordan. Unable to work or study, I spent six months selling tea to drivers.

"I moved to Turkey, where I met photojournalist Bradley Secker and his network of friends that helped me with an asylum application. I waited for a year and a half. Suddenly, I got an asylum interview and relocated to Norway. Now, I have a loving husband, and I'm building a life in Norway. The homesickness is there and I miss my family but I feel safe and I'm healing."



Nader Turkmani on being an LGBT refugee and defining family



Noël and Negede

Noël Iglessias and Negede Gezahegn, LGBT activists and co-founders of DANA Social Group, a grassroots LGBT support organization in Ethiopia, have been granted asylum

in Austria after facing multiple threats due to their activism; from their home being ransacked to daily death threats.

"In 2013 we founded the DANA Social Group, an LGBT advocacy organization, in the context in which anti-gay rallies were being organized by evangelical Christian organizations. We ran an online campaign titled 'Stop The Hate, Spread The Love' to push the repealing of a constitutional article that criminalizes same sex relations with up to 15 years in prison. As the first LGBTI advocacy organization in Ethiopia, we tried to have the first nationwide conversation about homosexuality. We reached out to LGBT groups abroad so that our campaign could have international attention. The reaction from locals towards the campaign was very negative. We remember one particular message we received. 'I am going to get a machete in the name love, name it 'love' and kill all of you while declaring the love of God.' The harassments continued, but we kept at our work.

"In July 2015, after our participation in the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum, we did a 'Rainbow Photo Project.' In it, we showed with the rainbow flag near Addis Ababa. The slogan was 'This is

my story' and it had a statement in Amharic [Ethiopia's official language] and English. It became viral, but it triggered an unimaginable anger against us. It agitated the government, but also many LGBT people who were angry at the visibility it caused. Eventually, the seamstress that made the rainbow flag we photographed talked about us and neighbors found out who we were. That was a breaking point. Our house was ransacked twice and the police asked constantly for bribes. This safe space we built for the LGBT community was now being attacked. Over three years, tensions built, some of us were beaten and the neighbors and police kept harassing us.

"By 2016 a state of emergency was declared nationally and people were being killed, intimidated or detained. The threats became more direct and real, including menacing messages from the government. We hadn't become internationally recognized or had any major significance in the LGBT movement, so we feared that our detention or death would go unnoticed. We received an invitation by Salzburg Global Seminar to bring an LGBT perspective to a session on genocide and extremism. At that time, we were in a dark state. While in

Salzburg, the threats kept coming. It became a matter of safety or death. We had our lives, studies, job, community and activism in Ethiopia but it hit us that we no longer were safe in our very country of birth. We decided to seek asylum in Austria. We are in a healing process, and we feel safe and loved. But this is still a rollercoaster of feelings as we build a new home."



Noël Iglessias and
Negede Gezahegn
on seeking asylum
in Austria



Ta*

Ta worked for a nonprofit that supported gay men and lesbian women in Bangladesh. After his friend Xulhaz Mannan, the founder of *Roopbaan*, the country's only magazine for the LGBT community was brutally murdered, Ta briefly fled and continues to maintain a low profile for fear of attacks on him or his family.

"It was in April 2016, like any other day. My phone rang and I was told that two of my activist friends were killed in their apartment. I couldn't go back to my home so I had to go to a secret shelter offered by our allies. On the third day after the

phone call, an Islamic movement claimed the attack and announced that more people were on their list.

"In the shelters, people offered support and I ended staying there for around two months. I did not report to the police station as in Bangladesh there are cases of people who disappeared because of state security forces. Later I found out what happened in my friend's on that April day: people stormed into the apartment and slaughtered my friends. This attack was a surprise. LGBT activists had not been targeted before and we didn't know they could reach that degree of violence.

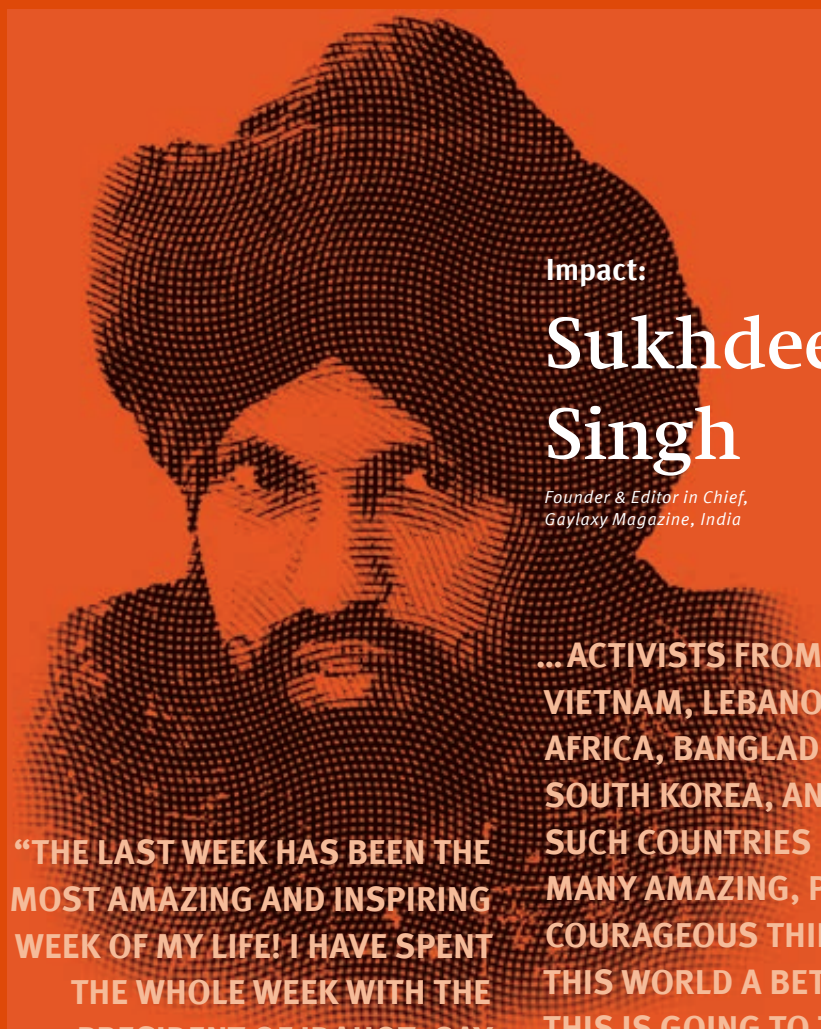
"As a community, our activities have all but stopped. The few who haven't left the country are too afraid to get organized. It's frustrating that all the progress achieved by the LGBT community in Bangladesh has been set back several years. [After the attacks] when I tried to cope with my regular life in Dhaka, the biggest challenge I faced is self-censorship. I had to remove my interviews, blogs, articles and all the traces of my activism. I had to change my mobile phone number. In the last year and a half, I have had to change my location eight times. I have been advised not to

use Facebook, Instagram, Twitter or other platforms that could reveal my location.

"I was afraid, and I had to go away. The need to step out of any risk was something like an animal fear, a survival instinct. I had to leave my job and jump into uncertainty as I could be traced easily from my workplace. I started applying for different fellowships and thus managed to move to New York City. I have been slowly adapting to live there, and most importantly I decided to be active again in social media, and continue my advocacy."

Since this interview, Ta has decided to return to Bangladesh, where he is struggling to cope with the new realities of life and reorganize his group informally.

* Ta is a pseudonym – the name has been changed to protect the Fellow.



Impact:

Sukhdeep Singh

*Founder & Editor in Chief,
Gaylaxy Magazine, India*

“THE LAST WEEK HAS BEEN THE MOST AMAZING AND INSPIRING WEEK OF MY LIFE! I HAVE SPENT THE WHOLE WEEK WITH THE PRESIDENT OF IDAHO, GAY SYRIAN REFUGEES, THE FIRST MARRIED LESBIAN COUPLE OF JAPAN, RUSSIAN ACTIVISTS HELPING CHECHEN GAY MEN FLEE TO OTHER COUNTRIES...

... ACTIVISTS FROM UGANDA, CHINA, VIETNAM, LEBANON, SOUTH AFRICA, BANGLADESH, JAPAN, SOUTH KOREA, AND MANY MORE SUCH COUNTRIES DOING SO MANY AMAZING, POWERFUL AND COURAGEOUS THINGS TO MAKE THIS WORLD A BETTER PLACE! THIS IS GOING TO TAKE SOME TIME TO SINK IN... PHEW! THANK YOU FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART.”

2.3

Bisi Alimi:

Overcoming “activist guilt”



Bisi Alimi is a Fellow of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum, having participated in the 2017 session – *Home: Safety, Wellness and Belonging*.



Bisi Alimi has certainly earned the title of social activist. Not only is he the founder and director of the Bisi Alimi Foundation, which “advocates for the rights and dignity of LGBT people in Nigeria by addressing public opinion and accelerating social acceptance,” he is also the first Nigerian to come out on national television, and is a prolific social media personality (his TEDx Talk “*There Should Never Be Another Ibrahim*” has been listed as one of the most inspiring queer TED Talks of all time). But Alimi admits his journey is not entirely comprised of celebration.

Alimi, originally from Nigeria, moved to the UK in 2007 as a refugee, at the peak of his activism. Just two years prior he, along with a group of friends, started the Independent Project for Equal Rights. Forced to leave Nigeria, Alimi found himself struggling to manage the demands of his activism from abroad.

“I got to the UK in April [and] by December I had lost it,” he says. “I remember many nights I wouldn’t be able to sleep. I was crying. I was diagnosed as clinically depressed.” After seeking help for his

depression, Alimi says it was a psychiatrist who helped him realize he was suffering from what many activists refer to as “activist guilt.”

“[She told me] I had to see the UK as home, and I had to start accepting the fact that I can still contribute to what is going on in Nigeria. It was very personal to me. I was angry at myself; I was angry at everyone. But she helped me to get to a position to say, ‘It’s ok,’” he says. “Now, when activists come to me with this guilt, I tell them my story and say, ‘Let nothing stop you.’ It’s just a matter of borders and geography; we live in a global world now and you can still have the same impact.”

The fifth session of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum centered around the theme of “Home” and took a detailed look at the lives of LGBT refugees and their journey to redefine their sense of belonging and home. Alimi, who has now lived in the UK for ten years, explains that migration forced him to redefine the concept of family. *“It meant that I had to discover and develop a new form of family. It means a lot to me; the process of finding people that I can call father, mother, brother. When I find them it goes deep into my soul.”*

Family for Alimi now includes his husband, whom he married in November 2016. *“For me – that little boy from Nigeria who lived in a country where just thinking about the idea of wanting to get married could land you in jail for 14 years – just having that experience of looking into the eyes of this gorgeous man and saying ‘I do’ was like living in a fairytale.”*

Alimi’s birth family, whom he says rejected him from childhood, did not attend the wedding, nor have they acknowledged their son’s marital status. *“It was the only dark spot on my joy,”* he says.

Yet the activist, a first time Fellow of the Forum, says he has now welcomed many of his fellow participants into this ever-evolving family of choice, speaking of the energy the Forum has fueled inside of him.

“It was such a huge honor that I could not [have] imagined I would be part of this,” he says. “The films that are shown here, the stories of how people are changing generations in their country – it’s very inspiring to me. I know that I am going to go home and do something completely different.”



Bisi Alimi on the guilt activists feel after leaving their home country



Impact:

Angeline Jackson

*Founder & Executive Director,
Quality of Citizenship Jamaica,
Jamaica*

“THE SALZBURG GLOBAL LGBT FORUM, GAVE ME THE OPPORTUNITY TO INTERACT WITH AND LEARN FROM PERSONS WITHIN LGBT ADVOCACY WHOM I CONSIDER TO BE THE BEST WITHIN OUR MOVEMENT. I APPRECIATED BEING ABLE TO SHARE IDEAS AND ADVOCACY STRATEGIES WITH ACTIVISTS FROM VARIOUS PARTS OF THE WORLD. SOMETIMES HEARING DIRECTLY WHAT ONE PERSON IS DOING IN ANOTHER PART OF THE WORLD CAN HELP TO GIVE IDEAS ABOUT WHAT ONE CAN DO IN THEIR OWN COUNTRY...

...FROM THIS FORUM, I WALKED AWAY NOT JUST WITH VALUABLE CONNECTIONS BUT ALSO IDEAS FOR NEW WAYS TO POSSIBLY CHALLENGE JAMAICA’S ANTI-SODOMY LAW, THE USE OF VIDEOS TO ENGAGE PEOPLE AND CHANGE HEARTS AND MINDS, AND POSSIBLE COUNTRY EXCHANGES WITH ACTIVISTS FROM LATIN AMERICA AND JAMAICA... THE BEST PART FOR ME WAS HEARING WOMEN AND LESBIAN AND BISEXUAL WOMEN CLEARLY STATING THE CHALLENGES WITHIN THE MOVEMENT WITHOUT BEING TOLD TO BE QUIET OR BEING PUSHED TO THE SIDELINES. I’VE VERY HONORED TO HAVE BEEN INVITED TO THIS FORUM AND PLAN TO PACKAGE THIS KNOWLEDGE ALONG WITH OTHERS I HAVE LEARNED AND BEGIN TRAINING SMALL GROUPS OF ACTIVISTS IN JAMAICA.”

2.4

Irene Fedorovych:

The case of Ukraine



Irene Fedorovych is a Fellow of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum, having participated in the 2017 session – *Home: Safety, Wellness and Belonging*.



All refugees flee for fear of their safety, but the reasons why they face such danger can differ greatly. Where they can safely seek refuge thus also differs. A country that may be a safe haven for those seeking asylum for political reasons may not be so safe for those fleeing because of their sexual orientation. Such is the case for Ukraine, explained Irene Fedorovych, chair of the country's Coordinative Council at the Anti-Discrimination Coalition during the fifth session of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum – *Home: Safety, Wellness and Belonging*.

“Ukraine is a unique country; we are a country of destination, where people come and seek refuge, but we are also a country which people flee,” Fedorovych explains. *“When it comes to people from LGBTQI communities, those who come to Ukraine to ask for asylum normally do not feel safe.”*

Ukraine has a low rate of refugee acceptance and what Fedorovych describes

as a slow and inefficient asylum system that often leaves people without support during the process. Coupled with a high hate crime rate, including discrimination against LGBT individuals, many LGBT refugees are left feeling alienated.

“[We noticed] by working with our partners from LGBT non-governmental organizations that we were not ready,” she says. *“We were not ready to understand that refugees might differ, that people flee for different reasons – it might be political or economical crises. But it might be sexual orientation and gender identity, and not everyone is ready to accept that [and] provide services without discrimination.”*

While many LGBT individuals flee Ukraine due to persecution, the influx of LGBT refugees into the country stems from people fleeing often worse situations in neighboring countries, including Russia and Belarus. *“That’s the easiest way – they can enter without a visa and stay for 90 days without permission. People are also trying to come to a country where at least they know the culture and the language is similar.”*

Through her work, Fedorovych aims to ensure that refugees receive equal treatment and access to services, regardless of the reason for their application.

“We had to learn to deal with people. Making sure that we respect every side of them and explain to service providers what’s wrong, why people do not feel safe, why they do not want to go to certain service providers,” she explains, noting that transgender individuals, for example, may want a lawyer to accompany them to migration services due to the obstacles he or she may face.

Despite the difficulties still faced by LGBT asylum seekers, Fedorovych notes some progress has been made: *“I think its our greatest victory that after years of work, UNHCR managed to hire a special consultant on LGBTQI issues.”*



Video:
Irene Fedorovych on the challenges
LGBT refugees face in Ukraine

“

Protecting the safety and wellbeing of activists is essential to help them stay motivated in their defense of LGBT human rights... The physical and psychological suffering caused by a lack of belonging, safety and wellbeing adds to the widespread legal discrimination, hate speech, health care exclusion, forced migration and exile suffered by LGBT populations.

”

2.5

Pema Dorji:

The trauma of bullying in schools



For teenagers, school is not just a place for learning, but one for social and emotional growth, and while bullying is something faced by many students across the world, studies show that LGBT youth suffer disproportionately. Many people – LGBT or not – continue to suffer long-term mental health effects from the bullying they experience in adolescence. One of the Forum's youngest Fellows, Pema Dorji shared his experience of bullying in his home country of Bhutan.

Pema Dorji is a Fellow of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum, having participated in the 2016 session – *The Many Faces of LGBT Inclusion in Thailand*.



Pema Dorji grew up in a normal middle class family “in a country with a happiness measurement index” – as he reminded us. During childhood he felt normal, and enjoyed his love for music and the company of girlfriends. 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 Dorji. Going to school for him was “like going to a war.”

“Growing up wasn't fun at all for me, especially because my peers around me never failed to make me realize that I don't belong with them, that I was an abnormal anomaly around them. The situation became so bad they even forgot my name, only remembering me by the name they used to call me – a word that roughly translates to ‘not a male, nor a female.’ After a while it takes a toll on you, you start to feel upset and at the same time angry. Being a young person, I automatically started to blame myself. It was me against a world where there were literally 10 to 20 fingers pointed at me, and I was helpless to point back.”

One episode marked him for years. One classmate's teasing became so acute that Dorji, in self-defense, threw a bottle at him and the bully retaliated by pouring a bucket of freezing water over Dorji. When Dorji asked his teacher for support, the bully argued: “He behaves like a girl!” Instead of offering comfort, the teacher told him: “You need to change if you want this to stop.”

Dorji felt lonelier and would constantly think of the words that people would tell him day to day. Without any information or ways to find support, Dorji grew depressed. He tried to commit suicide twice.

“It's not easy for me to go back and recollect on those days because whenever I have alone time, whenever I am going to bed, these thoughts come across my mind saying that if I hadn't been through this experience I might be a really different person; better or worse, but still a different person. The emotion that I felt is a sense of despair, a sense of sadness. But also I feel really proud of myself for going through the situation at a very young age. As a kid you are not supposed to be exposed to the reality of the cruel world that's out there. But due to that I am really proud I was able to survive that...”

“I'm also trying to create a better environment for the upcoming generation, so that they shouldn't have to go through the same thing I went through as a child. Because no child deserves to go through the same situation that I went through.”



Video:
Pema Dorji on being
bullied in school



Impact:

Ying Xin

*Executive Director, Beijing LGBT
Center, China*

“THIS IS MY FIRST TIME TO ATTENDED A LGBT FORUM INCLUDING ACTIVISTS, ARTISTS, SCHOLARS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD. IT REALLY HELPED ME TO KNOW THE WHOLE PICTURE OF THE LGBT MOVEMENT AROUND WORLD, WHICH HAS REALLY INSPIRED ME TO MAKE MORE CONNECTIONS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES. I LEARNED FROM ONE OF THE PARTICIPANTS FROM AFRICA THAT IT WAS VERY HARD AND DANGEROUS TO DO LGBT WORK IN SOME AFRICAN COUNTRIES. I FELT THAT IT WAS NOT SO BAD IN CHINA, AND IF EVEN THIS AFRICAN FELLOW CAN PERSIST IN THEIR STRUGGLE IN SUCH A BAD SITUATION, HOW COULD WE GIVE UP IN CHINA? ...

... DURING THIS FORUM, I ALSO LEARNT DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES AND STRATEGIES FROM OTHER PEOPLE.

AFTER THE FORUM MEETING, I TALKED A LOT WITH A PARTICIPANT FROM ARGENTINA WHO WORKS WITH IDAHOT AND ANOTHER ONE FROM THE ASIA PACIFIC TRANSGENDER NETWORK: WE HAVE ALREADY PLANNED TO COLLABORATE MORE ON TRANS ISSUES IN ASIA. I REALLY LIKE THE SALZBURG GLOBAL LGBT FORUM AND WILL RECOMMEND IT TO MORE CHINESE ACTIVISTS AND SCHOLARS TO ATTEND. BY THE WAY, THE TEAM OF THIS FORUM IS ALSO LOVELY AND AWESOME!”



2.6

The Role of Rule of Law

Ahead of the inaugural session of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum, Archbishop Desmond Tutu sent a message of support: *“As I wrote in the Lancet last July, ‘In the future, the laws that criminalize so many forms of human love and commitment will look the way apartheid laws do to us now – so obviously wrong.’ We know that LGBT people are a part of every human community.*

“We therefore need a forum for a truly global conversation about how they contribute to, and are affected by, the law, culture and creativity – and how we can ensure that their voices are heard and understood. I applaud Salzburg Global Seminar for deciding to hold a session on LGBT and Human Rights: New Challenges, Next Steps, at which all regions of the world will be represented, and I hope that it will mark the beginning of that global conversation.”

Legal leapfrogging and attempting to introduce laws before the majority of society is ready can lead to backlashes warned Guatemalan human rights lawyer Mónica Leonardo at the session in 2017.

Five years on and the decriminalization of “human love and commitment” very much remains a challenge – and the global conversation plays an ever-growing role through which change can be encouraged, strengthened, but also endangered.

Many of the countries which still criminalize homosexuality and transgender expression base their discriminatory laws, now hailed as a signature of their sovereignty, on

a former global process: colonization. The British Empire, in particular, has left an anti-LGBT colonial legacy in its former occupied countries; today almost 70 percent of states with a British colonial history continue to criminalize homosexual conduct. While Nepal, which was never colonized, has made rapid progress in the decriminalization of homosexuality, the recognition of gender identity and legal protections for its LGBT citizens, neighboring India, Bangladesh and Pakistan, like much of the Commonwealth, still all criminalize aspects of same-sex relations – a legacy of the British Empire’s anti-sodomy laws. In regard to legal support for transgender recognition, all three countries however have made stringent progress.

When the Forum was founded in 2013, 76 countries criminalized same-sex relations. Today, according to the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA)’s annual State-Sponsored Homophobia report, 72 states continue to criminalize same-sex consensual activity. (Former British colonies account for over half of these countries.) In 2013, only 65 countries had legislation offering protection to their LGBT citizens. Today that number is 85. On the issue of families, the number of countries that now have equal marriage and adoption rights stands at 23 and 26 respectively, up from just 14 in 2013. (The UK, a former proponent of anti-sodomy laws through its former empire, has now decriminalized homosexuality, allows gay marriage and adoption, legally recognizes changes in gender identity and offers a variety of protections against discrimination for its LGBT citizens.) Transgender people also have made significant legal progress and built a growing public understanding in some parts of the world; with the 2012 legal gender recognition legislation in Argentina, followed by similar laws in Colombia, Denmark, Ireland and Malta. In April 2017, the European Court of Human Rights ruled that requiring sterilization for legal gender recognition violates human rights.

But this progress is by no means certain. Nor does legal protection ensure societal respect.

Just as some countries have made steps forward, others have taken significant steps

Legal setbacks can exist on both the local and the global level explained South African lawyer Sibongile Ndashe in 2013 on a panel alongside renowned Chinese academic Yinhe Li.



back. Most notable in this regard are Uganda with its Anti-Homosexuality Bill that tried to introduce the death penalty for same-sex relations, and Russia with its similarly notorious federal law “for the Purpose of Protecting Children from Information Advocating for a Denial of Traditional Family Values,” more commonly known as the “gay propaganda law.”

The struggle to advance LGBT rights through courts or legislatures has thus not always been as effective as hoped. As Mark Agrast, executive director of the American Society of International Law recalled at the fifth session of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum in 2017, early moves to achieve marriage equality in a number of US states resulted in federal legislation to outlaw same-sex marriage nationwide. Only after years of effort and major shifts in public attitudes did the United States Supreme Court affirm that same-sex couples have a constitutional right to marry in 2016. Guatemalan human rights lawyer Mónica Leonardo offered another example to illustrate Agrast’s point: In 2017, Guatemala’s LGBT community proposed anti-discrimination laws in Congress – a move that triggered the threat of a counter law that would have legalized discrimination of LGBT people in areas such as marriage and sexual education in schools.

Unless legal progresses are part of a broader strategy to change hearts and minds, such efforts can fall short, or even provoke a backlash.

Such setbacks exist at the global level too, explained South African human rights lawyer, Sibongile Ndashe, in 2013. After the equality resolution by the UN Human Rights Council from 2011, in which violations based on sexual orientation or gender identity were explicitly forbidden, many countries from the Global North encouraged the passage of a second resolution that would have established mechanisms to protect LGBT people against these violations. Although the initial resolution was spearheaded by South Africa and backed by other countries in the Global South, there was a strong lobby from the Global South in opposition to this approach, explained Ndashe, fearing a backlash from local governments and leaders.

Despite potential setbacks and backlashes, legal progress remains the most relevant tool to safeguard equal treatment of all citizens. In its yearly sessions of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum, discussions on the rule of law led by human rights lawyers have been key to the Forum’s overall objectives. The role of international law was incorporated into the *Statment of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum*:



Aung Myo Min on his survey of how LGBT Burmese are affected by the colonial British sodomy law



Milan Antonijevic on combating LGBT hate crime in Serbia



Danish Sheikh on using the law to advocate for LGBT rights in India

"A healthy respect for the rule of law is necessary for human rights to flourish," said American lawyer Mark Agrast on a panel "Building Home on the Rule of Law" in 2017.

Advancing human rights for LGBT people and communities, urging that "Gender identity and sexual orientation [...] be incorporated into procedures for documenting and monitoring human rights violations around the world."

The key recommendation raised by Fellows year after year is: together with pushing forward an LGBT-inclusive legislative agenda, make sure that an educational campaign, media training and political networking go hand-in-hand. If equality legislation is strongly supported at the global level, make sure to understand the local situation and be guided by local human rights groups. Legal reforms should come hand-in-hand with public education schemes to ensure that once these laws have been enacted, both LGBT communities and the public know what the laws are, and the justice system upholds these laws, ensuring that the state and society-at-large respect them.

As one Fellow remarked: *"Sometimes there will be opportunities where government passes something that sounds good but the lived realities of the intended beneficiaries mean that they aren't able to benefit because the change [in society] has not happened yet."*

Fellows' recommendations for combating discrimination through international law

1. Recognize differential approaches to combating multiple forms of discrimination, which implies:
 - 1.1 Applying different strategies and tactics at global, regional and local levels;
 - 1.2 Identifying other frameworks (e.g. international human rights law, human security, etc.) that may assist in protecting LGBT rights;
 - 1.3 Encouraging the use of universal peer review mechanisms and other reporting mechanisms;
 - 1.4 Encouraging litigation on the basis of existing international human rights law; and
 - 1.5 Encouraging positive interpretive approaches on traditional values as related to LGBT issues;
2. Encourage the drafting of separate global and/or regional conventions on LGBT rights.




“A measure of the level of civilization of mankind is always how we treat our minorities,” said Dutch politician Louisewies van der Laan, here with Siti Musdah Mulia of the Indonesian Conference on Religion for Peace, at the first session of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum – *LGBT and Human Rights: New Challenges, Next Steps*.





While primarily focused on advancing LGBT rights in the US, Salzburg Global LGBT Forum Fellow Ty Cobb explained in 2013 that the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) was exploring the formation of an international program partly in response to American evangelicals promoting anti-LGBT extremism overseas.



A photograph of a woman with long dark hair, wearing a black coat and dark pants, walking up a wide, white staircase. She is carrying a light-colored tote bag. The staircase has white railings. A large, vibrant rainbow Pride flag is suspended from the ceiling, hanging vertically. The background shows a bright, open space with a white door and a bust on a pedestal. The overall atmosphere is bright and modern.

The rainbow Pride Flag on display at the 2017 session of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum was commissioned by Ethiopian Fellows Noël Iglessias and Negede Gezahegn. However, once she realized what it was, the seamstress outed them to her colleagues, which led to attacks by neighbors and the police. In many countries, including Ethiopia, Egypt and Saudi Arabia, you can be arrested for flying the Pride Flag.

2.7

Legal Advances for LGBT Rights

Executive director of the American Society of International Law, Mark Agrast explains how pursuing legal change can help – and hinder – the advance of LGBT rights around the world.

Mark Agrast has devoted his career to advancing social justice and human rights, specifically pertaining to the freedom and security of LGBT individuals, through the rule of law. Agrast, who served as deputy assistant attorney general in the Obama administration, is a longtime leader of a number of legal institutions, including the American Bar Association and the National LGBT Bar.

Where are we when it comes to advancing LGBT human rights?

It depends on where you're from and the conditions in your country. Certainly in the United States there has been tremendous progress in advancing the rule of law for LGBT Americans. But there are always a few steps forward and a few steps back. It's a constant struggle, and I think that's the history of the rule of law; it's never something that's finally established for all time.

Every generation has to fight the same battles over and over again, so I think it's important that we equip our community and our allies

to that fight. You start with what you have, conditions as they exist, and you insist on applying universal principals of the rule of law, as derived from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the many international covenants and agreements that most nations have signed on to. Countries may or may not follow them in every respect – and they have to be reminded that these are binding obligations that apply to every society.

How do you change laws that are discriminatory?

There is obviously a legal discussion at the foundation of all of this, and that involves legislatures and courts in most countries. But I think the more important effort to advance the rule of law is to try to inculcate the sense of rule of law... It's not intuitive for most people – it's something that has to be learned, has to be acquired. I think as a movement for human liberation, the gay rights movement is in a particularly good position to advance its goal to the rule of law and, in doing so, to advance the rights of all communities everywhere.

What does the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum mean to you?

I think it's a wonderful opportunity for real interchange at a human level – and at an intellectual level. A chance to be in these beautiful surroundings and engage with people who are in different stages of the development of the LGBT movement. Some are at a point now where they can almost take it for granted; they have the right to marry and the right to walk down the street and not be assaulted. And there are other people who are here who bring a much different and darker experience, a different reality; and, in many cases, they have a lot to teach those of us who are perhaps in places that have advanced further in LGBT rights. And perhaps they have something to learn from how we went about the process of advancing rights in our countries – both the successes and the failures that we experienced.



Mark Agrast on advancing the rule of law for LGBT human rights



Impact:

Danilo Da Silva

*Executive Director,
Lambda, Mozambique*

**“THERE ARE VERY FEW SPACES
WERE QUEER ACTIVISTS,
SCHOLARS, ARTISTS AND
POLITICIANS MEET AND DISCUSS
CURRENT AND PRESSING ISSUES
WITH A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE,
COME OUT WITH COMMON GOALS
AND AN INVIGORATING FEELING
THAT WE ARE INDEED A GLOBAL
COMMUNITY THAT NEED TO LEARN
FROM AND SHARE WITH EACH
OTHER ...**

**... MY EXPERIENCE IN THE
SALZBURG GLOBAL LGBT FORUM
HAD A PROFOUND IMPACT NOT
ONLY IN THE WAY I PERCEIVE THE
GLOBAL STRUGGLE FOR EQUALITY
BUT ALSO IN THE WORK I DO HERE
IN MOZAMBIQUE. AFTER THE
MEETING I HAVE ESTABLISHED
RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER
ACTIVISTS ACROSS THE GLOBE.
WE STAY CONNECTED AND HAVE
BEEN ABLE TO COME UP WITH
SOME CONCRETE ACTIONS TO
PROMOTE THE HEALTH AND RIGHTS
OF LGBT, AND ALSO DOCUMENT
AND SHARE OUR ADVOCACY
EXPERIENCES.
I AM VERY GRATEFUL FOR
THIS OPPORTUNITY.”**



2.8

Staying Safe Online and IRL

The internet offers a wealth of information on LGBT experiences, access to support networks, and a seemingly safe haven in which LGBT people can communicate and express themselves – often in ways that would be unsafe “IRL,” in real life. However, the online space houses its own dangers.

Staying safe online is paramount insists three-time Salzburg Global LGBT Forum Fellow and security expert, Fadi Saleh..

A topic addressed by the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum since its first session has been how LGBT activists and individuals in general can remain safe online. In more oppressive regimes, most LGBT activists depend heavily on social media in order to discuss LGBT rights and issues in their respective countries, mainly because the internet offers a safe space, where activists are not faced by the same threats of doing activism on the ground. However, during the last few years, arrests based on people’s online activism have been on the rise, especially in the Arab world.

At its inaugural session, security expert Fadi Saleh led a knowledge café discussion on how to remain safe online and spoke to Salzburg Global on camera:

“There is an increase of using online activism more than anything else across the region because of course, on the ground it’s very dangerous all the time for a lot of people,” explained Saleh. “So people get a sense of security when they go on the internet. But this is of course a false sense of security. And that’s the issue we [Tactical Tech] try to tackle... especially because across the [Middle East and North Africa] region in the last few years many of the attacks, the arrests, the blackmailings, all of it happens because of online activism and what people post online.”

Cases exist across the Middle East and North Africa: from two men in Algeria being arrested for merely changing their relationship status on Facebook; a LGBT magazine in Tunisia being hacked leading to the arrest of their journalists; to gay men being entrapped by police in Egypt via online chatrooms, leading to them being arrested and tortured. Similar cases have been reported in other countries, including Russia where homophobic vigilantes have used location-based gay dating apps like Grindr to lure gay men and blackmail or beat them.

“So all of this is important – how to change your behavior online? What sort of information are you supposed to share, in which context?” asks Saleh. He realized that there was a great level of ignorance about how unsafe the online space could potentially be. As a consultant for the Berlin-based collective Tactical Tech, Saleh has contributed to “toolkits,” detailed guides on how to stay safe online. Saleh and Andrea Rocca from Frontline Defenders, with whom these resources were developed, presented them at the 2014 Berlin Forum meeting at the German Foreign Office to make them more widely known. All are available online:

→ www.tacticaltech.org/projects

Even when LGBT people are not lured into danger “IRL” (in real life), engaging online can still be discouraging and disheartening as LGBT people – activists and private individuals alike – face harassment, bullying and “trolling” for anti-LGBT extremists. Many of these “trolls” might not be audacious enough to attack someone in the street but they have few qualms about sending messages of hate online from behind the safety of their own screen.

In these cases, many social media platforms now all have features to report abusive comments and accounts. *“Use them!”* was a key point of advice from Kasha Nabagesera, who as one of Uganda’s most prominent LGBT activists – both online and offline – has long endured such online harassment. As activists, there can be the expectation or belief that you must engage with those who disagree with you, but the relentless nature of social media engagement can be disheartening. *“Stay healthy!”* a Russian Fellow advised, by blocking or reporting those who abuse you and mobilize your followers to also report abusive comments and users. However, these report/block functions can also be used against LGBT activists to silence them. Nabagesera has extensive experience in personal and professional social media engagement and, having spoken to representatives from numerous social media corporations, offers the following advice:

Twitter

Apply for verification (the blue tick). Activists do not need thousands of followers to do this and if awarded it can stop instant blocking if reported by anti-LGBT users.

Facebook

Ask other “legitimate” and well-recognized human rights groups to message Facebook on your behalf to vouch for you. This will also prompt Facebook to stop enforcing an immediate block and get you out of “Facebook jail” if falsely reported by homophobic users.

Google

Apply to Project Shield to protect your website from negative reviews and reports in Google Search.

Social media can be a powerful tool to both engage with others in the LGBT community and perform outreach to the wider public, agreed campaigners Enrique Torre Molina and Olumide Femi Makanjuola – but users need to be aware of the safety risks.



Fadi Saleh on how LGBT activists can be safe online in the Arab world

With her extensive experience in using social media and meeting with representatives from major platforms, veteran LGBT activist Kasha Nabagesera was able to offer valuable insights to Fellows in Thailand.



Several Fellows of the Forum have taken steps to protect their online identities. Some use pseudonyms, others do not share images of themselves online to protect their offline identities. Another simple piece of advice to stop hackers is to use the two-step verification features that are now offered by many platforms. Many of the major social media platforms also have LGBT staff and interest groups within their

corporations; activists should try to cultivate a relationship with these groups.

Saleh sees staying safe online as being not only a local or regional issue but also a global one: *“Current human rights and LGBT discourse is getting more and more international... If you want to [join that discourse] you need to do it as securely as possible – not only for your sake but the sake of everybody else as well.”*



03

ADDRESSING TRANS ISSUES



“Legal recognition of gender change in most countries requires that transgender people undergo surgeries that leave them sterile – a major violation of their basic reproductive rights.”

— Fernanda Milán,
a trans asylum seeker from Guatemala, now in Denmark

At our inaugural session in 2013 we learned through two presentations how severely trans individuals and communities are affected by a global culture of violence. The Trans Murder Monitoring (TMM) project, a systematic collection and documentation of reported killings of gender-variant/trans people worldwide, confronted us with realities that largely went unnoticed in public discourse. In its 2017 update, TMM documented 2343 reported killings of trans and gender-diverse people in 69 countries worldwide between January 2008 and December 2016. The 2013 EU Fundamental Rights Agency survey on the rights situation of LGBT people in Europe confirmed safety as an immediate threat for trans people – 43 percent of whom reported having been attacked more than three times in one year.

In response, our 2013 call to action – the *Statement of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum: Advancing human rights for LGBT people and communities* – identified transgender safety as

a distinct, urgent issue: *“Transgender people across the world face threats to their lives and safety. Governments, legal institutions, faith leaders and the media must fulfill their responsibilities to safeguard human lives and challenge transphobia.”*

Through sharing their life experiences in diverse cultures, trans women and men fostered an increased understanding in Forum members of their legal, health and cultural challenges, including for trans refugees. This also led to change in Salzburg Global Seminar’s overall session registration process, which until then had only offered binary gender options. In continuation of exploring trans issues through discussions and exhibitions in 2013 and 2015, the 2016 session of the Forum focused on the high visibility of transgender communities in Asia, forms of their cultural acceptance and the legal challenges communities face.



3.1

Specifics and Urgencies

The challenges faced by trans men and women range from their access to and decision if and how to transition, forced sterilization, and widespread discrimination, to violence and even murder. Still, many of these issues are often not well understood and are marginalized within global LGBT discourses. Learning from trans leaders since its very beginnings, and highlighted in its global statement, the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum has sought to emphasize the distinct challenges faced by transgender people.

Carla LaGata leads the Transrespect versus Transphobia Worldwide project, collecting data on the legislative hurdles, persecution and violence facing transgender people across the world.

Lack of understanding, marginalization, discrimination, persecution and violence frequently beset the LGBT community. This is especially true for transgender people — even within the LGBT community. Speaking at the inaugural session of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum, Fernanda Milán, Guatemalan refugee and co-founder of the Trans-project in Denmark, opened a panel on trans issues by explaining why transgender people are the most vulnerable and exposed segment of LGBT populations.

Milán was the first transgender person to be granted asylum in Denmark after the Guatemalan police attacked and threatened her because of her activism and gender identity.

Urgent concerns

As Milán shared with Fellows, trans people face many urgent issues. Legal recognition of gender change in many countries still is impossible, but even where legislation is in place, it often requires that transgender people undergo surgeries that leave them sterile, which is a major violation of their basic reproductive rights. Access to gender reassignment procedures is greatly unequal around the world, and even in countries with facilitated access, the internationally recognized protocol for regulating access considers transgender persons to be mentally ill. Due to discrimination in families and the education system, transgender people often are economically disadvantaged and lack support networks in their struggle. This leads many into sex work, putting them at heightened risks of HIV. Trans women are especially vulnerable to sex trafficking.

At the fifth session in 2017, human rights lawyer, Mónica Leonardo echoed Milán's concerns: *"We see throughout the Latin American region, and Guatemala is no exception, there is a prevalence of HIV in one percent of the population. For transgender women it's 35 percent." The prevalence among gay men is 18 percent. Furthermore, she added: "There are reports of extrajudicial killings, forced disappearances, torture and extortion, often committed by armed forces, namely the police or the army."*

Statistics unfortunately prove Milán and Leonardo right. *"There has been a constant increase in reported murders of transgender people around the world,"* stated Carla LaGata, lead researcher from Transrespect versus Transphobia Worldwide (TvT), which conducts the Trans Murder Monitoring (TMM) project. At the session in 2013, LaGata presented documentation gathered between 2008 and 2012: at least 958 trans people were murdered in Central and South America, 109 in Asia, 77 in North America, 77 in Europe, eight in Africa, and two in Oceania. Transgender migrants and sex workers, especially people of color, were disproportionately victims of this violence.

It is chilling realities like these that prompted the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum

to explore and address trans safety as a separate, distinct and urgent issue within the Forum. The collectively written *Statement of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum: Advancing human rights for LGBT people and communities* thus declares: “Transgender people across the world face threats to their lives and safety. Governments, legal institutions, faith leaders and the media must fulfill their responsibilities to safeguard human lives and challenge transphobia.”

Each year, the Forum has had held dedicated panels, breakout groups and exhibitions addressing the lived realities of trans people across the world. Asian trans experiences were especially explored in Chiang Rai, Thailand at the 2016 session of the Forum. Some Asian countries are renowned for their sex-reassignment surgeries and social tolerance of trans communities, but, as one trans Asian Fellow remarked: “There is high degree of ignorance in thinking that Asia is a paradise for trans people.”

The Power of Data

Countering that ignorance means researching and sharing the truth of the experiences of trans people. “When we talk about LGBT issues,” LaGata explained, “we are often missing the ‘T’ from our data.” LaGata stressed that the existing research about transgender persons has been dominated

by medicine and by the Global North. These biases produce data that are pathologizing and often misconstruing local contexts. A narrow focus on laws that criminalize homosexuality or gender non-conformity, for example, misses the importance of other (e.g. anti-prostitution) laws that are specifically used against transgender persons on a global level, or too quickly targets contexts where these laws may exist, but where transgender people are relatively well respected by the broader society.

To address this lack of data and counter these biases, the TMM project was developed with 19 partner organizations and within an advisory board of 27 members from every region of the world. The project has a strong empowerment focus – including research trainings for local activists – and produces ongoing reports monitoring the reported cases of murdered trans people and a map of the legal situation of trans people worldwide, all available online (→ www.transrespect-transphobia.org).

There has been progress in addressing some of the legal issues faced by trans people. As of 2017, 51 of the 126 countries mapped by TvT allow the legal change of gender on official documents without challenge, although only four countries (three of which are in South Asia) offer a third gender option. But despite areas of progress, the number of trans people murdered

Bao Chau Nguyen, Seaklay Pipi Say and Manisha Dhakal share their life stories on a panel in Chiang Rai on “Asian Trans Experiences” in 2016.





Fernanda Milán is the co-founder of the activism group, Trans-project and she also volunteers for TalkTrafficking.org blogging about human trafficking – a fate faced by many cis and trans women across the world.

continues to rise, with Latin America markedly the most dangerous region – despite the fact that trans people in many Latin American countries have been granted legal recognition and protections. In particular, Argentina's gender recognition law is seen by many as the best existing policy from which many countries, including from the Global North, could benefit. Passed in 2012, this law allows people to alter their gender on official documents without first having to receive a psychiatric diagnosis or surgery, and also requires public and private medical practitioners to provide free hormone therapy or gender reassignment surgery for those who want it, including those under the age of 18. The high number of recorded murders in Latin America may be because of the number of organizations already monitoring in the region, raising the question about the situation of trans communities in other regions of the world. It also demonstrates that even where laws exist, legislation does not always offer ultimate protection from discrimination, persecution and violence.

The Power of Stories

Data is important. Data is often what helps drive policy. But even with the attention of policymakers, it is hard to gain the attention or change the hearts and minds of the public with data alone. Stories, especially personal ones, can be far more powerful in this regard. The

Salzburg Global LGBT Forum strongly believes in the power of sharing personal experiences and ethical listening. Trans Fellows have opened up and candidly told their stories of their realization of feeling that they were in the wrong body as a child. Stories of their struggles to communicate with parents, siblings, partners and children when choosing to transition. Stories of suffering harassment and attacks from neighbors, strangers and the police. Stories of fleeing their homes and countries in search of safety. And stories of triumph as they establish alternative families, eventually reconcile with family members who had once rejected them, or help the passing of new protective and inclusive legislation. You can read many of these accounts on the following pages.

Sharing these stories far and wide is vitally important to challenge the prejudices that fuel transphobia and hinder legal and societal progress. The media has a large role to play here as Josephine Shaw, who helped to found campaigning group Trans Media Watch (TMW), explained in 2013. TMW has worked to promote the presentation of informed and empowering images of transgender people in the media by engaging in dialogue with television stations and other media and by organizing training workshops.

Historically, trans issues had been marginalized also within the LGBT movement, stated Joe Wong, Program Manager, Asia Pacific Transgender Network, Singapore. However, a new base of trans leadership has given more space for direct advocacy of trans issues. Direct trans engagement with the World Health Organization and the United Nations, for example, especially in regional contexts has allowed for the recognition of data and policy indicators that are sensitive of trans communities. It is better, Wong insists, that instead of people speaking on behalf of the trans community, the community should speak for itself.

The Salzburg Global LGBT Forum continues to learn from trans men and women and strives, through their leadership, to amplify their voices and vision not only to the public but also within the global LGBT community.



Mónica Leonardo on human rights violations transgender women face



At the inaugural session in 2013, a statue in the Chinese Room of the Schloss was serendipitously identified as the East Asian transgender deity Guanyin by Salzburg Global LGBT Forum Fellow, Dutch anthropologist Saskia Wieringa. In 2017, to coincide with Salzburg Global Seminar's 70th anniversary celebrations, the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum launched a "Queering the Schloss" project to uncover and share more of the hidden LGBT stories of the organization and its home, Schloss Leopoldskron.

Upon his transition, Joe Wong asked his parents to choose his name – as they had at his birth. His father named him after himself – which Wong took as a sign of his father's love and acceptance.



Although there is no state recognition for trans individuals and little awareness of LGBT issues in general in Bhutan, in Ugyen Tshering's experience, as she shared in 2015, LGBT people are not subjected to police harassment. In the capital Thimphu, people are finally starting to become aware and informed of this community but very few people are openly LGBT.



In 2017, Anton Macintosh, coordinator of T-Action Initiative Group in Russia, led a Knowledge Café table on “Trans people visiting doctors: Raising support and competence in transgender issues among medical doctors.”



3.2

Manisha Dhakal:

Making significant progress for trans rights in Nepal



Manisha Dhakal is a two-time Fellow of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum, having participated in sessions in 2015 and 2016 in Salzburg and Chiang Rai.



Over the last decade, transgender activist Manisha Dhakal has witnessed significant change in her country. Unlike other South Asian countries that still adhere to long-ago imposed colonial laws on sexual orientation and gender identity and expression, Nepal – which was never colonized – has been at the forefront of LGBT rights progress, enjoying relatively greater freedoms than its regional neighbors. As the executive director of Blue Diamond Society, Nepal's first and largest LGBT rights organization, Dhakal was involved in the court pleadings on behalf of the LGBT community on a case that concluded with the Supreme Court of Nepal issuing a verdict to enact a law enabling equal rights for all LGBT citizens.

She has since worked tirelessly to lobby parliamentarians to include further protections for Nepal's LGBT communities – an effort met with great victory when the country ratified its latest constitution.

In 2015, shortly after Dhakal's participation in the third session of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum, her country took historic steps to pass a new constitution that provided explicit protections for LGBT people from discrimination and violence. These new constitutional protections, along with the legal recognition of a third gender category passed in 2007, were celebrated by human rights organizations as a pathway to a more inclusive Nepal.

The Blue Diamond Society was founded in 2001; it was the only organization working for Nepal's LGBT community at the time. Starting with HIV/Aids awareness and condom distribution, the organization has come a long way in advancing its advocacy.

"HIV is the entry point of our movement. Within [the past 15 years] we changed a lot. We entered in the HIV/Aids awareness program and slowly strategized into activities in rights issues," Dhakal explains. *"We worked with the government, we worked with the Human Rights Commission, police, judicial people, political parties and parliamentarians,"* which has helped the organization's influence reach those at levels possible to implement wide-scale change.

Dhakal and other Nepalese trans individuals have also seen greater inclusion from the government in the past decade. In 2011, Nepal became the world's first country to include a third gender on its federal census, and, in 2015, the same year as the new constitution, the government began issuing passports recognizing three genders. However, despite these advances, challenges persist.

As Dhakal shared on a panel discussing trans issues in Asia at the 2016 session of the LGBT Forum in Thailand, health care providers are being trained in sexuality, gender and HIV care, but in some hospitals, health personnel would bring curious colleagues into the room *"to observe our check-ups,"* violating the patients' dignity. Often, trans women in Nepal take hormones without prescription and estimate dosage following their peers' rather than doctors' advice, prompting organizations to translate and improve information on hormone and transition process safety. (This situation is

better than in neighboring Bhutan, where trans women have difficulties accessing hormones at all.)

These persistent problems were particularly stark in the aftermath of the two devastating and deadly earthquakes in 2015.

Speaking to Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) one year after the tragedy, Dhakal said although the LGBT community has been recognized by the government, much of that recognition remains “in theory,” noting that many government relief efforts following the earthquake separated those in need by gender, leaving transgender people with nowhere to go. *“Some transgender people were not able to claim relief material and many were laughed at or made fun of when they tried. This deterred many from seeking help. We as civil society need to monitor the implementation of the relief efforts by the government,”* she explained to UNAIDS.

While the Blue Diamond Society continues in its human rights advocacy and HIV education and care, the earthquakes have given the organization another focus: disaster preparedness. In the immediate aftermath, the Blue Diamond Society provided funds to LGBT applicants in need and provided temporary shelter in their HIV centers. But as Dhakal admits, more needs to be done, and they need to ensure that the LGBT community is better supported during unforeseen events where governmental support may falter.

“At the Blue Diamond Society we prided ourselves on our focus on HIV programs and our

Human Rights advocacy. One thing we failed to do was prepare for a natural disaster,” admits Dhakal. *“Because of that, our community suffered a lot. We realized that apart from HIV prevention and Human Rights advocacy, there is a need for us to focus on better prevention of any unforeseeable natural disasters whether it’s an earthquake or a flood.”*

The Blue Diamond Society started in 2001 with just six volunteers in the Kathmandu Valley. Today they have dozens of staff and programs conducted across the country; through their outreach efforts, the Blue Diamond Society has directly helped over 350,000 LGBT Nepalese. Increasingly its expertise is called upon from neighboring countries. Just as the Blue Diamond Society’s journey has progressed positively in the face of struggles, so too has Dhakal’s.

As part of the LGBT Forum’s “Family is...?” project, Dhakal shared her experience of gaining her family’s support during her transition: *“When I started to work with the Blue Diamond Society, at that time I was a cis-guy, and did not have the long hair and didn’t wear the female dress. I hid myself within my family; I didn’t tell them I worked for the Blue Diamond Society. I said to them I am working in the HIV prevention project.*

“One time, they knew that I belonged to the Blue Diamond Society, [and] for three days they didn’t allow me to go to the office — and [those] three days changed me a lot. It gave the opportunity to me to convince my family. Over those days I told them, and convinced them of who I am, what is my sexuality... I told them all the things that I faced as who I am, and that changed me a lot. [It changed me to be] more to be involved in LGBTI movement, [and realize] how family is important and how important it is to convince the family, and how to get the support from the family. If we get the support from the family then we can progress a lot in our personality, in our activism. If there is no support from the family it’s very difficult to work and to involve in activism.”

With support from her family, and growing legal protections, she hopes to see further progress not only for herself, but for her country and the region at large.

Dhakal is the executive director of the Blue Diamond Society, Nepal’s first and largest LGBT rights organization.



Manisha Dhakal on advocating for LGBT policy change in Nepal



3.3

Tamara Adrián:

Breaking boundaries and tackling trans rights on a global scale



Tamara Adrián is a five-time Fellow of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum, having participated in every session since its founding in 2013.



Few activists rival the number of barriers Tamara Adrián has personally broken. She is the first transgender woman to serve in the Venezuelan legislature, making her the second transgender person elected to a national legislature in Latin America, after Michelle Suárez Bértora of Uruguay. Adrián married her partner of more than 20 years under her former name, making her and her wife the first legally recognized lesbian couple in the country. As a trans activist and politician, these feats are extraordinary; that they've happened in Venezuela, a country marred by political turmoil and a poor record for LGBT rights, is monumental.

A former law professor as well as international advocate and national legislator, Adrián is one of a select few of Salzburg Global LGBT Forum Fellows who has attended all sessions of the Forum, starting in 2013, bringing her legal and international insights to multiple Forum and public panels.

Adrián has never shied away from monumental challenges in her advocacy. Serving as President of the Committee of International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOT) and co-president of the International Lesbian Gay Transgender Law Association (ILGALaw), she has played a key role in the creation and approval of resolutions to human rights documents within the UN.

During her first visit to the UN in 2005 for the Commission on Human Rights, Adrián joked that she only had “two minutes” to speak before the commission, but instead used her time to meet with different delegations to argue a case for the inclusion of LGBT issues within human rights documents. As it took 20 years to instigate discussion about women’s rights in the UN, colleagues warned her she would need to wait just as long before LGBT issues were given the same consideration. Her colleagues were wrong. The first declaration was signed just a few years later stating that it is against international human rights to provoke or support violence based on sexual orientation or gender identity around the world. “*With these improvements,*” Adrián warned, “*have come increased efforts by fundamentalist groups promoting traditional values,*” – allegedly in opposition to LGBT identities.

Continuing her international advocacy, Adrián credits the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum for its unique ability to connect allies around the world. The challenges confronting LGBT persons are not only national or regional, but also global, and thus developing an understanding of how the region’s successes and challenges relate to and influence issues at a global level is essential.

“*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 Adrián following her participation in a panel alongside other legislators and ambassadors at the 2016 session of the LGBT Forum in Thailand. “*Opportunities to exchange best practices between governments and civil society across regions are tremendously beneficial for those working on the protection of transgender*

Adrián campaigns for LGBT rights on many fronts: she is a human rights lawyer, a member of the Venezuelan National Assembly and president of the organizing committee of IDAHOT.



health and citizenship rights, but also broader LGBT advocacy efforts.”

As she explained at the 2015 LGBT Forum session: *“You have to think globally, and strategize globally. You think of a globally strategic plan, but at the same time you have to give everyone in the field the ability to change this strategic plan according to the specific needs of each country. You cannot impede equality. It is inevitable in humans to have equality. That is where global perspective is influencing local perspective. You have to strategize at both levels: global and local.”*

After her transition and divorce, Adrián was estranged from her daughter and son, but now they are adults and they have reconciled.



Now somewhat of a veteran in the field of LGBT rights, Adrián hopes to encourage the next generation of activists to not be complacent and to carry on the fight. In the Forum’s film on *“Family is...”*, she shared her own life story to encourage a new generation:

“Yes, the journey has been very long and it has come from being a heterosexual married man to a lesbian married woman. Wow! I was never a gay man but at the same time I knew that I was a woman and back when I was 20-something years old, I got married to a woman and we had two children: one boy and one girl. She divorced from me as soon as I disclosed to her my feelings and well — it was the end of the marriage and for many years I was separated [from] my children because she didn’t allow me to see them... Now, they are part of the family — finally. Once they passed the time of teenagers and started to be in their adulthood age, they started to understand and became closer and closer.

“I am a very happy woman, and I feel complete.”



Tamara Adrián on how the core of being a trans person is about being true to oneself

3.4

Joe Wong:

Truth and transformation



A key function of the Salzburg Global LGBT 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. At the 2015 session, Joe Wong, program manager of the Asia-Pacific Transgender Network in Thailand, opened up and shared his life story during one of our annual “Truth and Transformation” panels.

Joe Wong is a Fellow of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum, having participated in the 2015 session – *Strengthening Communities: LGBT Rights and Social Cohesion* in Salzburg.



Joe Wong, a trans man from Singapore, now living in Thailand, was born to a conservative family and educated at a Catholic girls’ school. He felt uncomfortable in his body when touched, and eventually used duct tape as an attempt to conceal the female parts of his body that he felt shouldn’t have been there.

One day, while in an elevator with a close relative and a stranger, the relative noticed the duct tape, humiliating Joe on the spot and demanding an explanation. *“In school I was taught not to show emotions. So I let my relative yell at me, and tear away the duct tape in the elevator,”* he recalls. It was hard for Joe to tell his closest relatives about his body issues.

His father supported him despite the family’s tendency to not share many personal issues. Joe remembers: *“He would put a relevant article or book on my desk. There was no discussion about it but he helped. He died when I was 21 and I wondered where his tolerance came from. I later discovered that he was gay.”*

When Joe decided to transition, he asked his parents to choose his post-transition name *“since they gave me my first name.”* His father gave him his own English name – which he took to be a sign of his father’s love and acceptance. *“It is interesting to discover myself through coming out. A lot of internalized hatred disappears,”* he says through a broad reassuring smile.

“

It is a very ‘trans-’ conference. Not just because the transgender issue is central to the discussions, but that the format of it combines professional academic presentations, with emotionally impacting life story sharing, as well as the highly dynamic knowledge café. Through these activities, the Forum *transgressed* the boundaries among scholarly research, activism projects and artists’ works. It also enables *transnational* communication of the LGBTI communities.

”

Hui Zhang,
China

3.5

Advisory Committee On Gender Identity On Salzburg Global Registration Forms

One immediate outcome of the 2015 session of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum was the formation of an *ad hoc* advisory committee for Salzburg Global Seminar and its admissions, communications and IT teams.

Concerns had been raised internally at Salzburg Global Seminar and by Fellows before and during the Forum around the declaration of sex and gender during the application process and the use of preferred names. Therefore, at the request of Salzburg Global, a small number of expert Fellows of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum coordinated in the weeks after the session to provide new options and language for applications for all Salzburg Global sessions – not only those concerning LGBT issues.

Declarations of sex (not gender) are required for visa application purposes, however due to technical reasons, Salzburg Global is unable to process two entries for a person's legal sex (as stated on their passport) and self-identified gender. Thus

a compromise was found, based on the suggestions of the advisory group: Salzburg Global now includes additional title options in the dropdown menu – Mx., Mre., Other – as gender-neutral titles, which will determine how they will be addressed in official correspondence they will receive from Salzburg Global. The binary “Gender” option on the application form has now been renamed to “Sex” with the accompanying text:

“Salzburg Global Seminar is committed to promoting an open and affirming environment inclusive of the diversity of sexual orientation and gender identity. Binary information about a person’s sex is only necessary for legal purposes to ensure your visa and travel statements are aligned with your passport’s entry.”

Salzburg Global has also added a new field to the registration page that enables Fellows to input their chosen name that is to be used on all informal communication. This is also the name that will be printed on all session material Salzburg Global Fellows receive upon arrival at Schloss Leopoldskron, including their name badge, allowing all Fellows to be immediately identified how they wish.

Although this advisory committee was only formed for this specific purpose, with its commitment to not only diversity but also online security, Salzburg Global will continue to draw on the dedicated Fellows of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum to provide guidance when needed, such as with the planned expansion of its Fellows-only login area and the launch of its bespoke online directory in late 2017.



Impact:

Amy Lamé

*Performer, Writer and Broadcaster,
UK*

**"I WAS INVITED TO TAKE PART
IN THE FIRST EVER SALZBURG
GLOBAL SEMINAR SESSION
ON AN LGBT THEME. MEETING
PEOPLE FROM ALL OVER THE
GLOBE FIGHTING FOR LGBT
HUMAN RIGHTS WAS HUGE
LY INSPIRATIONAL. WHILE
IN SALZBURG I REALIZED I
NEEDED TO DO MORE, AND
I RETURNED TO THE UK
INVIGORATED AND
DETERMINED ...**

**... REALIZING A LONG – AND
QUIETLY – HELD AMBITION, I
STOOD FOR PARLIAMENTARY
SELECTION FOR THE LABOUR
PARTY. UNFORTUNATELY, I WAS
NOT SUCCESSFUL, BUT I AM
CONTINUING MY JOURNEY IN
POLITICS AND I INTEND TO
STAND AGAIN. AND WIN. SALZBURG
GLOBAL SPURRED ME ON TO
THINK BIGGER, DO BETTER,
MAKE A REAL DIFFERENCE.
I WILL ALWAYS BE
THANKFUL FOR THE
INVITATION TO TAKE PART
IN THE SESSION –
IT CHANGED MY LIFE."**

3.6 Trans Experiences

Trans men and women are often marginalized within the LGBT community. At the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum, we ensure their voices and stories are heard and shared.



Seaklay Pipi Say,
Rainbow Community Kampuchea,
Cambodia

“The first reaction for my family was negative. The mental reaction, the physical reaction was negative. So, I stopped understanding the reason behind why they were not accepting the identity of mine.

“My perception of the transition of the body is like, you have to set back from society which says what male should do and what females should do. What male bodies should look like, what female bodies should look like. I start to know about myself, and I set up and look to myself for what I want to look like. Sometimes I still struggle with the medical information, the medical needs, because you can

say in Thailand they have many services and information for you, but not all people have resources for transition. So I see myself, I just want to have big muscle like a man, but I want to keep all my body, just remove my breasts. This is what I want.”



Bao Chau Nguyen,
Founder, Hanoi Queer Film Week,
Vietnam

“After my coming out [to my mom], she told me that I can be anyone I want, she just wants me to be happy. I was like, oh, she accepted me. But after that she and father tried to change me a lot; she bought me a lot of girly clothes; like some pink sweater that I never wear. But the last time she talked in public, at my graduation, she knows that she is the mom of a

transgender and she is so proud of me because I am being a good person, being helpful for this life. She saw me doing charity work, [saw] me making my film and that it got nominated, and she felt so proud of me.

“Until now, I still don’t want to undergo any surgery or transition. It’s not because I like this body, I like every girl part of mine, but it’s like I appreciate what my parents give me. I have some sacredness too, so I don’t want to undergo any surgery, at least not yet. I still want to be a boy, but I’d like if someday I woke up and had a penis and my boobs gone (laughs). I still want to be a boy, have a man’s body, but until now I don’t want to have surgery yet. That’s why I want people to accept my behavior, with my voice like this, everything of mine, because I identify myself as transgender and I wish people to respect my name, my identity.”



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

“I did my coming out on Mongolian TV and although my family was in shock, they gradually understood me and were very supportive.”



Carla LaGata,
Lead researcher, Transrespect
versus Transphobia Worldwide,
Germany

“When we talk about LGBT issues, we are often missing the ‘T’ from our data... There has been a constant increase of reported murders of transgender people around the world.”



Fernanda Milán,
Trans-project, Denmark /
Guatemala

“Transgender people are the most vulnerable and exposed segment of LGBT populations... Legal recognition of gender change in most countries requires that transgender people undergo surgeries that leave them sterile — a major violation of their basic reproductive rights.”



*Bao Chau Nguyen and Seaklay
Pipi Say on being happy and
transgender*

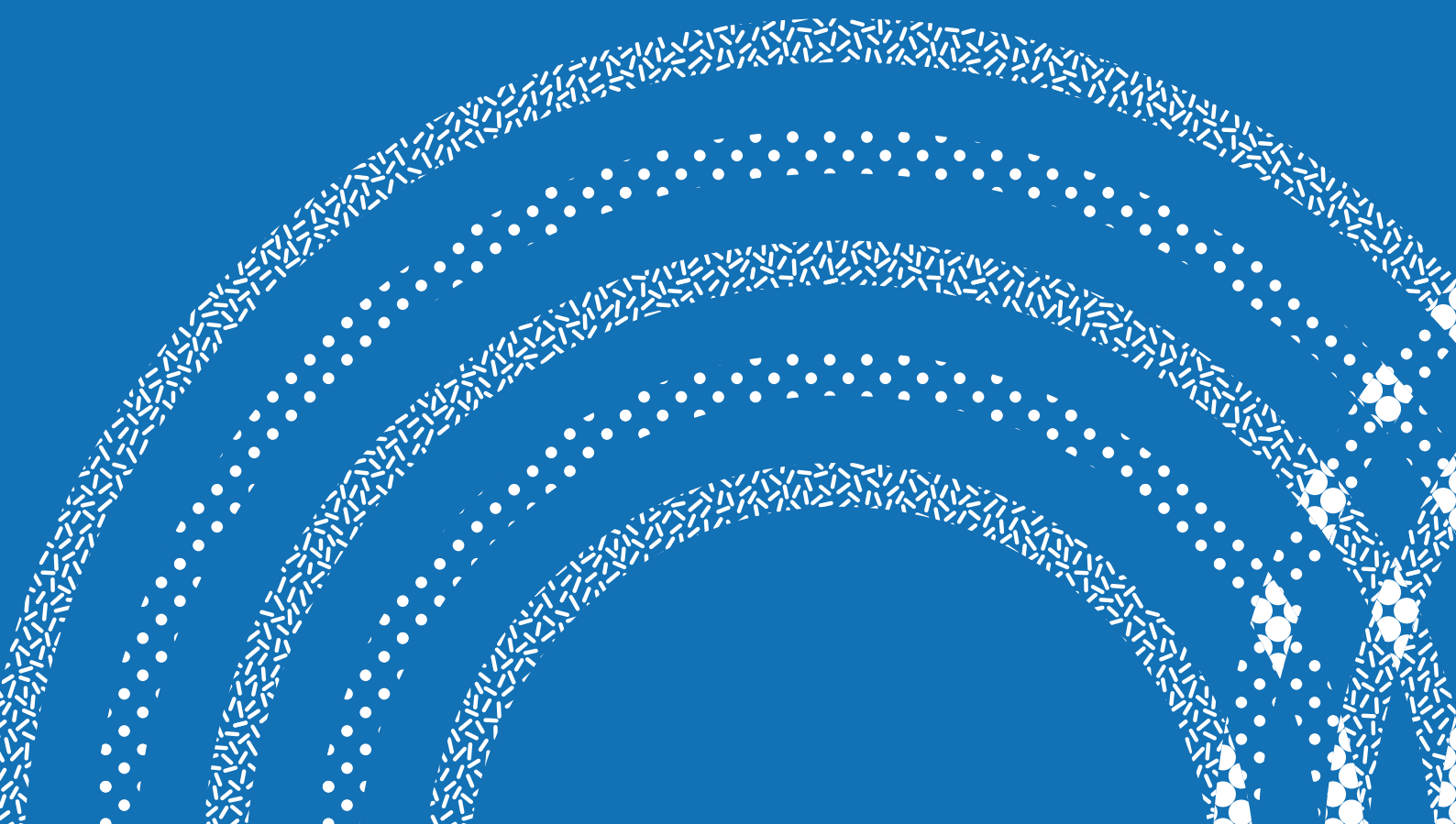


*Bao Chau Nguyen and Seaklay
Pipi Say on being themselves*

“

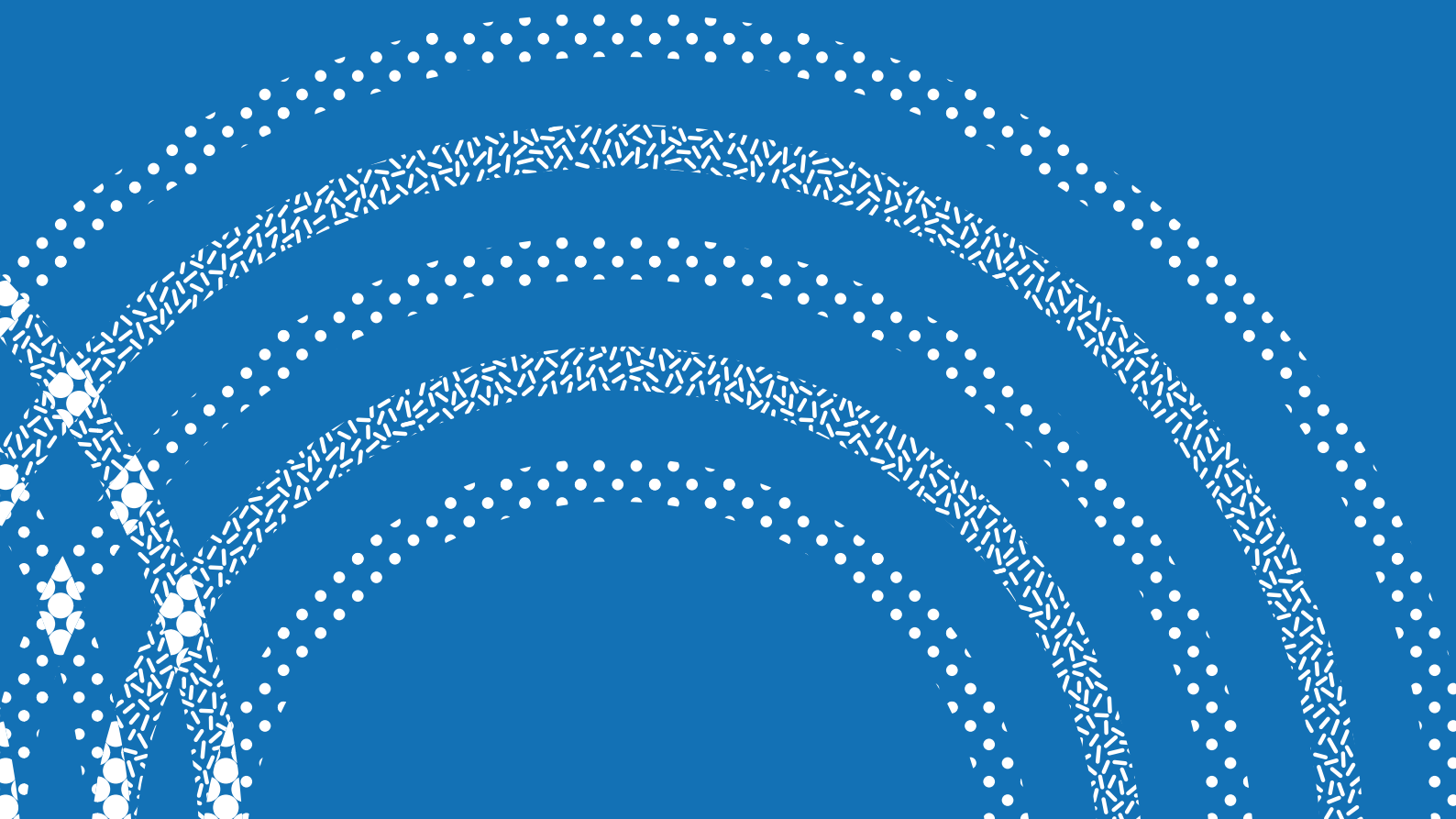
Transgender people
across the world face threats
to their lives and safety.
Governments, legal institutions,
faith leaders and the media
must fulfill their
responsibilities to safeguard
human lives and challenge
transphobia.

”



04

TELLING OUR OWN STORIES



“During the 2016 session in Chiang Rai, Thailand, this Forum had given me the idea to organize the first legal Queer Film Festival in Hanoi, Vietnam. We showed 23 films! I think this year, again, the Forum has given me the energy and resources for the second festival. That was a pretty nice start for a film festival in my opinion.”

— Bao Chau Nguyen,
Member and Media Manager, Next Generation,
Hanoi, Vietnam

Storytelling is a major tool of expressing of who we want to be – and of changing hearts. Increasingly, LGBT lives are portrayed in popular, mainstream culture, often through the lens of heroism or victimhood to reach larger audiences. Still, in many countries, enforced silence and government-sponsored discrimination reject LGBT people as part of the human family.

Our Forum cooperates with and amplifies the work of writers, filmmakers and photographers who portray the complexities of our lives. As declared in our 2013 Salzburg Statement: *“Culture and arts are essential to dialogue on political and social change.”* Throughout our sessions, we offer our Fellows the opportunity to showcase their work – be that poetry, literature, film, photography or performance – in “Open Forums,” film festivals and photography exhibitions.

As part of our focus on storytelling, we collect, produce and disseminate life stories that portray the diverse and rich realities of LGBT lives today, both in written and multimedia formats, and share them widely on a variety of social media platforms. It is the sharing of stories rather than mere facts and figures that helps to galvanize our supporters and challenge our opponents. Sharing our personal stories energized our belief in the value of an open conversation about our aspirations, challenges and failures. These stories have since been featured in print, radio and online media worldwide.

In this chapter, we profile just some of the different storytellers in our network and share insights into their work.



Each year, the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum mounts small exhibitions throughout the week-long session, sharing the photographic work of Fellows. In 2015, Bradley Secker's work focused on the theme of LGBT refugees with an ongoing series of portraits, documenting individuals claiming asylum based on their sexual orientation or gender identity in Turkey.



During the inaugural session's Open Forum, where Fellows of all backgrounds are encouraged to share, co-founder of Trans Media Watch Josephine Shaw, felt encouraged to share her poetry in public for the first time.





In 2015, Álvaro Laiz shared his work *Wonderland* that documented the Tida Wena, “the Twisted Women,” a community of transgender people in the Orinoco River delta in Venezuela.



Indian activist Abha Bhaiya and Chinese filmmaker Popo Fan examine Bradley Secker's second Salzburg Global LGBT Forum exhibition in 2017.

Having had an excerpt translated especially for the inaugural session in 2013, Jordanian author Fadi Zaghmout returned to the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum in 2017 with the full English edition of his novel, *The Bride of Amman*.





BER 2016



Russian- and Chinese-speaking Fellows join together to perform a rendition of "Podmoskovnye vechera" (Moscow Nights), famous in both languages, at the closing dinner of the 2016 session of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum in Chiang Rai, Thailand.

At the Open Forum in 2015, transgender activist Fumino Sugiyama presented the website outinjapan.com, which uses photography and music videos to raise awareness of the LGBT community in Japan.



Namibian poet Elizabeth Khaxas shared two of her poems at the inaugural session of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum in 2013.



4.1 Benjamin Cantu:

“Artists are important because they have a specific way of sensing social injustice”



Berlin-based filmmaker, Benjamin Cantu presented an exclusive preview of his documentary film *Weil ich bin, wer ich bin / Je suis qui je suis* (in English, *Because of who I am*) in 2015 during the session, *Strengthening Communities: LGBT Rights and Social Cohesion*.

During the conception of the film he worked closely with Forum Chair Klaus Mueller, who connected him with artists in Cambodia, Namibia and Morocco and shared global perspectives that artists at the Forum had raised. The film, profiling artists from regions with little visibility for LGBT individuals, found early support from members of the Forum, some of whom have since shown the film in their local communities. Here, Cantu recounts his journey following eight LGBT artists from all corners of the globe, shedding light on the important role the arts play in human rights activism.

What inspired you to profile other LGBT filmmakers, writers and artists?

I was asked to do a film connected with an exhibition that... would talk about the history of homosexual emancipation subculture and art. My film is not the historical, but the contemporary idea of what LGBT art looks like. I made the documentary film *Because of who I am* as a commission for a French/German broadcaster, but it soon became a very personal idea of making a film not only about a very broad subject as LGBT artists, but also about my personal relationship to my ex-boyfriend and our endeavor as filmmakers to travel to these artists.

How does art intersect with advancing LGBT human rights?

I think artists, and filmmakers, journalists, writers, are very important in the LGBT movement because they have a very specific way of sensing social, or gender injustice

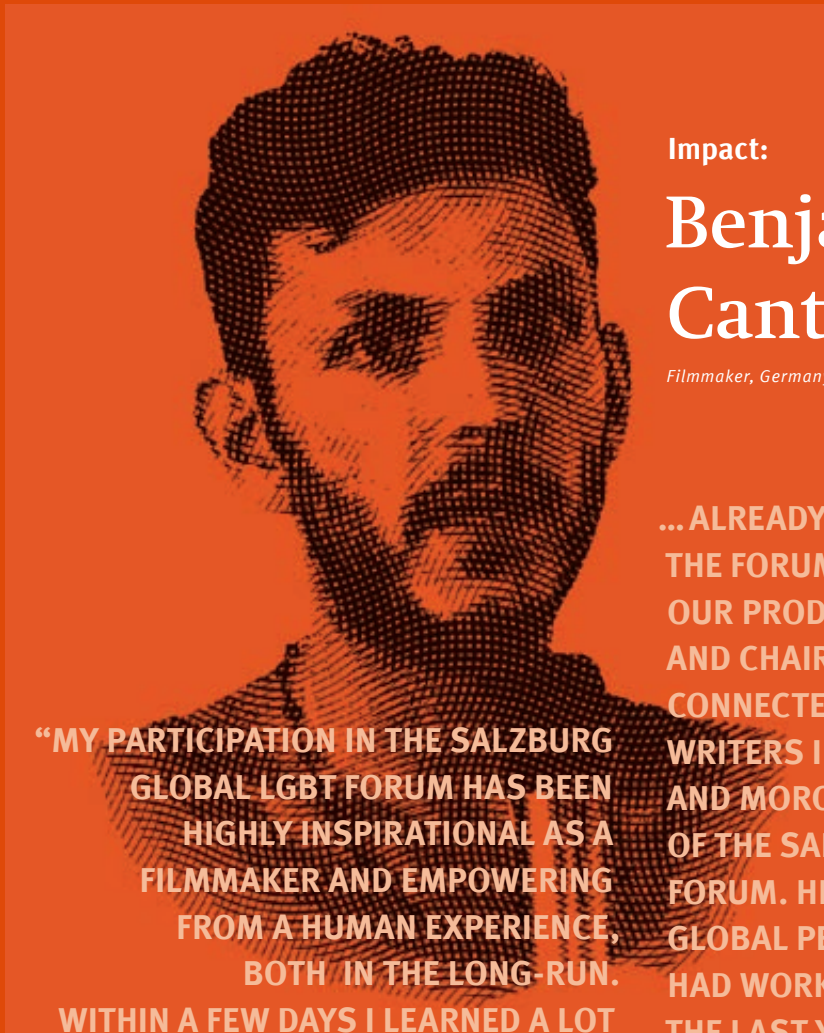
and injustice against LGBT [people]... There is one artist in our film who is a theatre playwright, actor, activist and director, and she really advocates for the oppressed LGBT communities, but [also] for oppressed Palestinians, oppressed women, for historically oppressed characters that she brings back to life and not have us forget them. I really think it's important to have artists involved in activism and human rights defending because they carve out the world that we live in in a very special way so that we can understand people. And people who are not affected can understand what the world is really about, what we have to focus on.

Who are the artists portrayed in the film?

Ideally we wanted to be very broadly global about which artists we were going to film, but it soon was clear to me that the stories that need to be told are all over the world, but the artists we found happened to be from countries that also face difficult situations – not providing LGBT artists, or LGBT people any space to express themselves. So the friction between these artists from Russia, Morocco, Lebanon, South Africa and Nigeria, was more fruitful for a documentary approach, so we could not only speak about the happy life as an artist, but also how their environment creates this need, urge, political necessity to deal with the reality within their art.

What do you hope for the full release of the film?

I hope either this, or the longer version, will have a long life and we will hopefully show it at LGBT film festivals or LGBT community screenings. I really hope to get in touch with local communities. This is great to have Salzburg as a network of people who now know about this film and to hopefully become partners to show the film in small screenings abroad. I hope they fall in love with the artists we portray, as I did. I really admire these people and I really learned a lot. I hope the spark these artists have given us is transmitted in the film. I hope the names of these artists live on in the minds of the people who see it, and are eager to research and find out more about the work.



Impact:

Benjamin Cantu

Filmmaker, Germany / Hungary

“MY PARTICIPATION IN THE SALZBURG GLOBAL LGBT FORUM HAS BEEN HIGHLY INSPIRATIONAL AS A FILMMAKER AND EMPOWERING FROM A HUMAN EXPERIENCE, BOTH IN THE LONG-RUN. WITHIN A FEW DAYS I LEARNED A LOT ABOUT THE CURRENT SITUATION OF LGBT INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS FROM ALL CORNERS OF THE WORLD. ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT TO ME WAS THE INTENSE DIALOGUE WITH PEOPLE FROM A TRANS BACKGROUND. I EXTENDED MY NETWORK OF FRIENDS AND PARTNERS, WITH WHOM I WANT TO COLLABORATE IN THE FUTURE. THE FILM „WEIL ICH BIN WER ICH BIN“ / “JE SUIS QUI JE SUIS” THAT I PRESENTED DURING THE FORUM IN AN EXCLUSIVE PREVIEW...

...ALREADY GAINED MUCH FROM THE FORUM’S NETWORK DURING OUR PRODUCTION AS FOUNDER AND CHAIR KLAUS MUELLER CONNECTED US WITH ARTISTS AND WRITERS IN CAMBODIA, NAMIBIA AND MOROCCO WHO ARE PART OF THE SALZBURG GLOBAL LGBT FORUM. HE ALSO SHARED THE GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES THE FORUM HAD WORKED ON FOR THE LAST YEARS.

AFTER THE FILM’S SCREENING, I WAS INSTANTLY INVITED BY MANY MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY TO FUTURE SCREENINGS IN UGANDA, ARGENTINA, JAPAN AND CHINA. THE FORUM ALSO EMPOWERED ME AS AN INDIVIDUAL TO PARTICIPATE MORE IN HUMAN RIGHTS CAUSES, BEYOND FILMMAKING.”

4.2

Zanele Muholi:

“We don’t document for fun”



Zanele Muholi is a Fellow of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum, having participated in the 2013 session – *LGBT and Human Rights: New Challenges, Next Steps*.



South Africa is the only African country where not only is homosexuality legal, but same-sex couples can also marry and adopt children, and are legally protected under anti-discrimination legislation. However, this masks the horrors faced by many lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender South Africans. Through the medium of photography, one South African “visual activist” aims to show the truth of what it is like to live as a black lesbian in the country.

“I’m a visual activist before I’m a photographer, before I’m an artist,” says award-winning photographer Zanele Muholi.

Despite all the supposed legal protections the LGBT community receives in the increasingly prosperous southern African country, lesbians, especially black lesbians, are frequently subjected to “corrective rape” attacks, where often gangs of men pin down and sexually assault lesbians in attempts to “cure” them of their homosexuality. Some of these attacks have even resulted to the death of their victims. As South Africa struggles to combat its high level of crime, these attacks often go unprosecuted.

Muholi explains why she believes photographing this marginalized group is

important: “If I even talk about the work that I’m doing on black lesbians, I’m not doing it for myself. I’m doing it for the younger generation. I’m doing it for the older generation, who were never even given the opportunity to open their mouths.”

As a black lesbian, Muholi sees her work as part of a wider effort to document black history in the post-Apartheid country. *“My focus has ever been on black lesbians, on black gays, on black trans-men. And why black specifically is because as black people, they don’t have a tangible history that is captured by us on us,”* Muholi explains. *“We have people who write our history on our behalf as if we did not exist... I think one has to find ways to re-write the history, for our own great-grandchildren. For them to know that we were once here and for them to understand fully the resistance and other struggles that we still encounter...”*

“It’s sort of like capturing the visual presence, which then becomes a visual history... To say, yes we are here.”

Muholi’s photographs often capture intimate moments between lovers. But she has also been working with her photography collective to document the abuses South Africa’s lesbians suffer – and the funerals held for the victims. When speaking with Muholi, her anger at the atrocities committed against South African lesbians is glaringly apparent. As a member of the community, these are issues that she feels personally – not as a neutral observer. *“We don’t document for fun, or just because we have powers and cameras. With my team, I have a collective calling; we document all of these atrocities because we want the world to know that we have a situation at hand.”*

Just as the oppressive regime of apartheid was ended in South Africa in 1994, Muholi hopes to see the end of the persecution of the LGBT community in her country, and believes photography can be a tactic in doing so, bringing the plight of her community to the attention of the wider national and international consciousness.

“We call upon those with powers to agitate with us, just like the people who worked with activists in South Africa to end apartheid and I think the same strategies could be used,” she says – angry yet optimistic.

“

We have people who write
our history on our behalf
as if we did not exist...
I think one has to find
ways to re-write the history,
for our own great-grandchildren.
For them to know that we were
once here and for them to
understand.

”

Zanele Muholi,
South Africa

4.3

Bradley Secker:

“It’s about collecting the stories.

It’s about not letting them be lost”



British photojournalist Bradley Secker has been based in Istanbul, Turkey, for the last five and a half years documenting the consequences of social, political and military actions from an individual’s perspective. One of his long-term projects – titled *Kütmaan*, an Arabic word for the act of hiding or concealing something – documents the plight of LGBT asylum seekers in the Middle East.

Why did you begin photographing LGBT people?

Nobody assigned me to do this work; it was purely done for personal motivation back in 2010. I had been to Syria in 2008 and decided to go back in 2010 with a professional focus on for documenting the situation for gay Iraqi men who had to flee from Iraq and ended up in Damascus and other parts of Syria. There was no editorial interest at that time, unfortunately. It was very difficult to get that story into the media’s realm.

I moved to Turkey in late 2011, which is when I started documenting the plight of Iranian LGBT [people] in Turkey, and, more recently, the Syrians and Iraqis who were displaced for a second time from Iraq to Syria and then to Turkey.

As a gay man, how do these stories affect you personally?

The stories I hear and the things I see do affect me. Inevitably. I try to keep it as professional as possible and try not to get emotional because it can also trigger someone [else]. It’s probably not good for them, to re-traumatize them, and it can also be difficult for me to hear, but it’s way more important to be more cautious about the person I’m interviewing. Collecting the stories is time consuming... often putting myself in a place where I don’t feel that safe and I feel quite vulnerable. But I put that aside and concentrate on documenting the people that face much greater risks, and continue to.

[But] it makes me optimistic that LGBT people are strong and united and will always come together wherever they are in the world. They will form a community; they will find each other. It’s quite incredible and I really find that inspiring. At the same time, it’s incredibly negative, in terms of what they are fleeing from and the conditions in a lot of countries. Now, in the recent past, and what looks like the considerable future, it’s not really getting much better. It’s a mixture of optimism, happiness and complete anger and madness at the whole thing.

What sort of impact do you hope your work will have?

I’m not a big believer that photojournalism can change the world. I don’t think it’s that profound. Purely and simply I think the work I’m doing will just illustrate and educate people.

But together, as a more cohesive body of work, I hope it would stand as a documentation of the situation in general in the MENA region and Turkey for this period that I’m covering it. I really don’t think it’s going to change anything politically [or] socially. It’s about collecting the stories. It’s about not letting them be lost.



Bradley Secker on capturing LGBT refugees’ stories through photography



Impact:

Bradley Secker

Photojournalist, Turkey / UK

THE EXPERIENCE FOR ME WAS ONE OF GREAT OPTIMISM. ACTIVISTS, AND PROMINENT LGBT+ SUPPORTERS AND INDIVIDUALS FROM AROUND THE WORLD IN ONE PLACE MADE FOR PLENTY OF INFORMATIVE DISCUSSIONS, MORE UNDERSTANDING AND A SENSE OF MORE UNITY OVERALL. I OFTEN FEEL RATHER ISOLATED IN MY WORK ON LGBT TOPICS, SO IT'S REASSURING TO KNOW THAT THERE ARE MANY OTHERS OUT THERE DOING THE SAME...

... SCHLOSS LEOPOLDSKRON WAS THE PERFECT VENUE, PRIVATE YET VIBRANT. I FELT TRULY FREE AND SAFE FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A WHILE TO BE HONEST, WHICH HELPED OPEN US ALL UP TO HONEST DEBATES. I HOPE TO NOT ONLY STAY CONNECTED WITH MANY OF THE FELLOWS, BUT ALSO TO HOPEFULLY WORK ALONGSIDE SOME OF THEM WITH MY PHOTOJOURNALISM IN THE NEAR AND DISTANT FUTURE.

4.4

Laurindo Garcia:

Using social media as
a loudspeaker for activism



Laurindo Garcia is a three-time Fellow of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum, having participated in sessions in 2015, 2016 and 2017 in Salzburg and Thailand.



Social media has changed the nature of how we share stories; its viral nature allows activists to spread messages further than ever before. Filipino LGBT activist Laurindo Garcia recognized this innate power in its early stages. In 2011, he founded the B-Change Group, an organization dedicated to promoting social change through technology. Today, operating out of three cities globally, the B-Change Group works with small-to-medium non-profit and other organizations to help harness the power of social media.

"We need to try to find ways to build up [social media advocacy] capabilities among activists, because we live in a world where advocacy organizations don't have cash, they don't have resources and they are working in incredibly challenging environments," explains Garcia, a multi-time Fellow of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum.

At the Forum, Garcia, a highly-regarded expert in media and communications, also

shared his life experiences of living openly with HIV: *"I'm openly HIV+. It's been a long journey for me to understand my place as an HIV+ gay, Asian male in the world and I've been learning how to do that over the last 12 years."*

He focuses his work in social justice, diversity and health for marginalized groups, especially the LGBT community and those living with HIV. These groups face great challenges when navigating the murky waters of online activism, often subjected to rampant harassment, "trolling" and even death threats when spreading their message on social media. These threats are amplified when advocating for groups in countries where homosexuality is criminalized, as discussed by Fellows from countries such as Uganda, Nigeria and Bangladesh.

During the fifth session of the Forum, Garcia called on participants to conceptualize a social media campaign aimed at creating online conversations surrounding LGBT families. The exercise was designed to demonstrate the unique way in which activists can tell stories using new media types; but Garcia noted it also provided an opportunity to shed light on social media's implications, something *"we are still grappling with,"* the activist says.

"The reason why I jumped at the opportunity to run a session at the Forum on social media is to try to build resilience and knowledge about how to do it well and approach it with method, a greater understanding of what can work and what might be some of the risks along the way," he explains. *"[Activists] have taken to technology – and that's a great thing – but they are often exposed to many risks. Opportunities like being [at the Salzburg Global*



Laurindo Garcia on
health and access
to health for LGBT
people



Laurindo Garcia on
the Salzburg Global
LGBT Forum as
a safe place

LGBT Forum] offer a way to talk about it and impart new skills, but really help provide a space where people can be sharing how they have identified solutions to problems they have been facing, what didn't work and hopefully through that exchange they are better at solving it themselves."

Garcia's work has proven effective for several organizations. In 2013 and 2014, B-Change partnered with the International HIV/AIDS Alliance to train community organizations on effective social media practices for promoting HIV testing in Algeria, Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia. In 2016, the group assisted six community-based HIV organizations in Thailand to use social media tools to direct clients to healthcare providers. Through a partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), B-Change also aided research investigating the effectiveness of using social media to address discrimination against LGBT people in Asia.

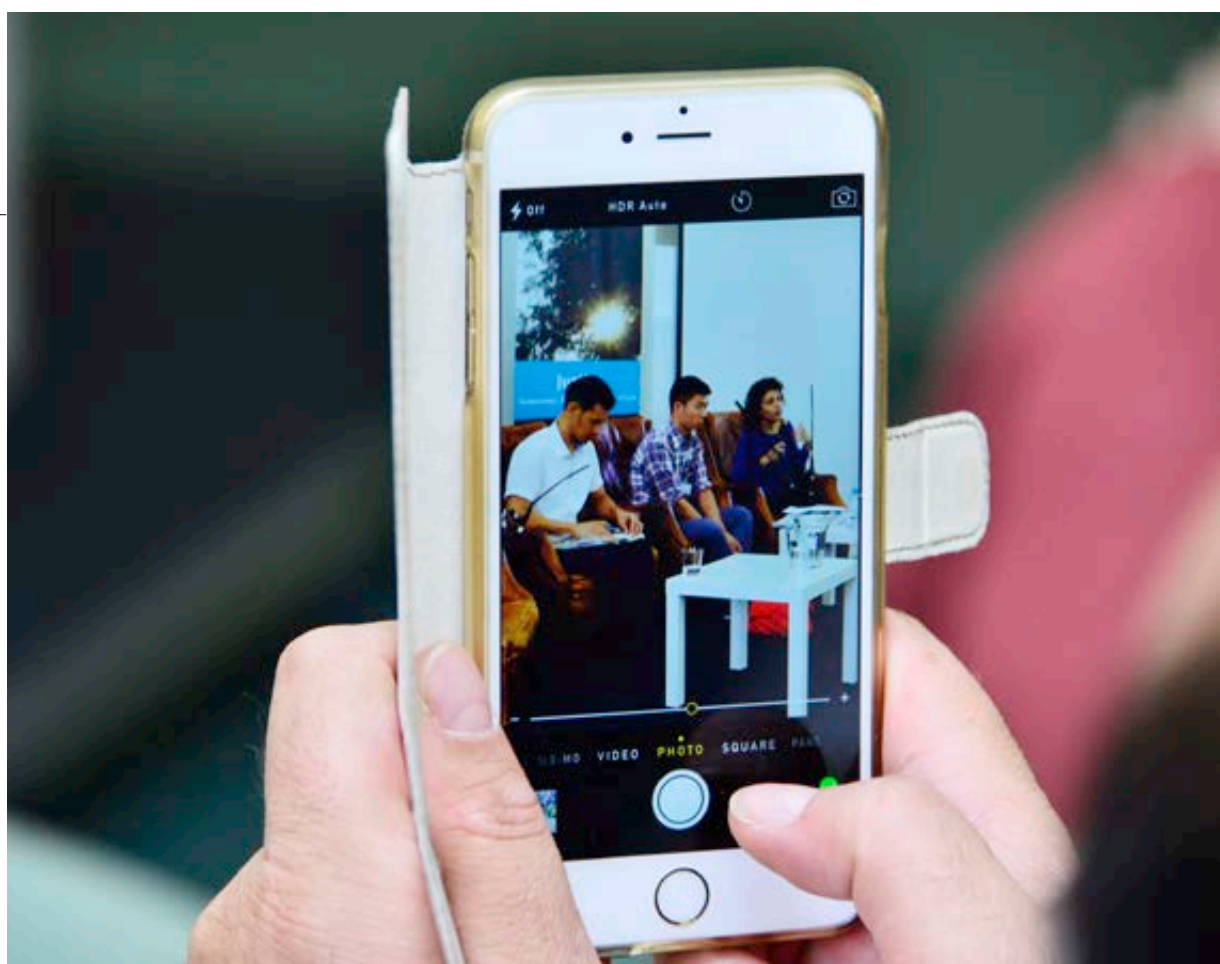
Garcia is now working on building a mobile app called "Be" that allows LGBT people, women, those with disabilities and other minorities to rate public spaces on their level of inclusiveness.

"Be is the only app where diverse women, people with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people and other groups can come together towards a common goal," explains Garcia. "With Be you can find inclusive cafés, clinics, retail outlets, health and social support services, entertainment establishments and other places nearby at the tap of a button. You can filter your search according to your individual needs. Rate and share places so that your friend and others in the community can benefit from your experience. Give feedback to place owners so that they learn how to improve the way they serve you."

"Our vision is that Be will help diverse groups take the lead in shaping inclusive cities of the future."

Inclusion was a key theme of the fourth session of the Forum – *The Many Faces of LGBT Inclusion* – held in Thailand in 2016. Speaking at that session, Garcia reflected on the Forum as a "community of trust" and a "safe space for other activists and individuals to come together," saying: "The stories that are shared here are in good hands, amongst like-minded individuals as well, and we will take care of each other."

In 2017, Garcia led an exercise at the Forum whereby Fellows used multimedia tools to tell their stories and create their own campaigns.



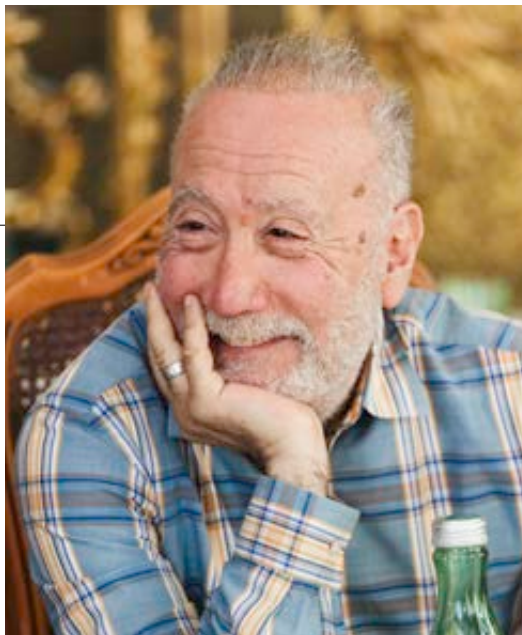
4.5

Marc Pachter:

“History is a construct. A lot happened, but what do we remember from it?”



Marc Pachter is a multi-time Fellow and faculty member of Salzburg Global Seminar, and has attended the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum three times in 2013, 2015 and 2017.



Though we often accept records of history as fact, much of our understanding of that history is indeed constructed; for all that we consider to be significant, there are other events, movements and even whole groups of people that we leave out. Through his work as Director of the National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Marc Pachter noticed America's LGBT history had fallen victim to this fate.

During his tenure at the Gallery in Washington, DC, Pachter was tasked with signifying achievement in American culture. *“This used to be very easy... White men on horses, usually generals or Presidents,”* he explains. *“True history began with thinking of race and gender in general. But... the road was still stopping short of LGBT questions – also part of the reveal of what a culture really is.”*

Pachter, a multi-time Fellow of Salzburg Global Seminar, was involved in introducing

the controversial HIDE/SEEK exhibition to the National Portrait Gallery in which homosexuality was depicted as a core theme in the work of many American artists. He believes national museums play an important role in signaling a growing consensus within society to discuss the history of LGBT communities. Moreover, including those exhibitions acknowledge that LGBT rights and visibility are not new issues – they have always existed in history.

As explained on the Gallery's website, the exhibition (developed by a team under his successor), which ran from October 2010 to November 2011, was “the first major museum exhibition to focus on sexual difference in the making of modern American portraiture. HIDE/SEEK considers such themes as the role of sexual difference in depicting modern America; how artists explored the fluidity of sexuality and gender; how major themes in modern art-especially abstraction- were influenced by social marginalization; and how art reflected society's evolving and changing attitudes toward sexuality, desire, and romantic attachment.”

“It boils down to invisibility; history is a construct; lots happened, but what do we remember from it?” Pachter says. “And that we chose as a nation not to think about it says a lot. The history was always there... People that were not known as gay were living their lives. The nation needed to say: our history telling is incomplete.

“We already knew that about race; we already knew that about women... but we needed to think this way [about queer history]. It felt both revolutionary and, happily, in the end ordinary to do this.”

The exhibition demonstrated that many Americans – although certainly not all – were indeed ready to learn about the nation's queer history. There was controversy: one work was in fact removed due to political pressure, leading to protests. But the exhibition as a whole remained and the Smithsonian has now embraced the collecting and telling of LGBT history.



Joanna Ostrowska on the importance of queer history



Marc Pachter on history as a construct: What do we remember from it?



“THE WEEK OF SALZBURG GLOBAL LGBT FORUM WAS A WEEK OF EFFECTIVE RETREAT. AWAY FROM OUR ‘REAL LIVES’ [WE HAD] AN OPPORTUNITY TO IMMERSE OURSELVES IN INDEED ‘REAL’ IDEALS BASED ON SOLIDARITY. IT WAS ALSO AN OPPORTUNITY OF RE-CREATING MY SENSE OF BELONGING TO A COMMUNITY FOR ME. TO KNOW THE DIFFERENT MEANINGS OF BEING SEXUAL OR GENDER MINORITIES IN VARIOUS CULTURAL AND POLITICAL SITUATIONS OPENED A NEW DOOR. IT WAS A REAL EDUCATION TO ME TO HAVE A CHANCE TO LISTEN TO AND TALK DIRECTLY TO FRIENDS FROM UGANDA, ZIMBABWE, MOZAMBIQUE, VENEZUELA, ECUADOR, ARGENTINA, BHUTAN, ALBANIA, KOSOVO, BULGARIA, TAJIKISTAN, LEBANON AND SYRIA...

Impact:

Kaoru Aoyama

*Professor, Contemporary Culture
and Society, Graduate School of
Intercultural Studies, University of
Kobe, Japan*

... I FELT REASSURED THAT MY BELIEF AS AN EMPIRICAL SOCIOLOGIST WAS PROVEN: IT IS ALWAYS BETTER TO MEET ACTUAL PERSONS WHO GO THROUGH THAT EXPERIENCE TO GET A SENSE OF WHAT’S GOING ON IN A SOCIETY, HOWEVER THIS IS A SMALL INITIAL STEP TO KNOW MORE. THIS WAS ALSO SERIOUSLY THE FIRST TIME FOR ME NOT TO SEE ANY ANTAGONISMS BETWEEN GAYS AND LESBIANS, BETWEEN TRANS- AND CISGENDERS OR BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN IN AN ‘LGBT’ GATHERING!

I WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER ONE OF THE SEMINAR’S CONCLUDING REMARKS: ‘IF YOU WANT TO MAKE ALLIES, YOU SHOULD BE AN ALLY TO OTHERS,’ WITH THE UNDERSTANDING, THE TRUST AND THE CARE THE FRIENDS IN THE SEMINAR GRANTED ME.”

4.6

Laia Ribera:

LGBT and feminist awareness through theatre



Eager to use the arts to discuss women's issues, in 2011 Salvadorian theatre actress Laia Ribera Cañénguez set out to write a play summarizing debates within lesbian and feminist issues. The play – *AFUERA* – was first performed by Guatemalan lesbian theatre company Siluetas in front of a small crowd in Guatemala and saw great success. The play was later performed across Central and South America to audiences ranging from incarcerated women to indigenous groups.

Laia Ribera Cañénguez is a Fellow of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum, having participated in the 2013 session – *LGBT and Human Rights: New Challenges, Next Steps*.



Speaking at the 2013 inaugural session of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum, Ribera explained:

"It was a very difficult process where we spent five months discussing, trying things, getting people to see small sketches. It was sometimes very frustrating. But in the end we ended up with a piece in which we talk about a lot of different issues, some of them

like lesbophobia and the role that the church place in the control and oppression of sexualities, the binary system of gender identities, and other questions in our community that are more intimate, about lesbian relationships and the problems we have there; about our fear of loneliness.

"We have had a lot of lessons taken from the play. One of them – for me the most important – is how we can do political activism without losing the joy, without seeing that we are sacrificing ourselves, and also to use art to find other ways to express ourselves."

Also recognizing the power of theatre, lawyer and keen amateur dramatist, Danish Sheikh, draws inspiration from a man widely regarded as the greatest playwright in history, William Shakespeare. Sheikh attended the Forum in 2015 and 2016, where he not only shared his legal expertise but also performed Shakespearean monologues during the Open Forum. He was struck by the contemporary take on love and sexuality in Shakespeare plays such as *Measure For Measure*, in which fornication is prohibited, drawing similarities to Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code, introduced by the British empire during colonial rule, which criminalized homosexuality in the country. This fascination with Shakespeare's work led the lawyer to perform adaptations of Shakespeare's plays, focusing on the intersection of love and law, in a popular Bangalore park, later adapting the plays to star queer characters.

"I was always confused by the idea of love in Midsummer Night's Dream where a love potion makes Helena fall in love with Demetrius. Later, I realized that Shakespeare was saying how irrational the idea of love can be. It is an important point because of how law tries to regulate love (with Section 377) and how it comes up short," he explained to the *Times of India*.



Laia Ribera Cañénguez
on LGBT awareness through theater



Impact:

Palitha Vijaya Bandara

*Coordinator,
Positive Hopes Alliance, Sri Lanka*

“I HAVE SEEN, CONDUCTED AND EXPERIENCED MANY WORKSHOPS AT COUNTRY LEVEL, BUT I CAN WHOLE-HEARTEDLY SAY THIS WAS ONE OF THE MOST UNIQUE AND FULFILLING EXPERIENCES IN MY LIFE. I WAS ENAMORED BY THE EVENT FROM THE POINT OF CONCEPTION ITSELF, HOWEVER, THE USE OF DISTINCTIVE METHODOLOGIES AND TECHNIQUES CREATED A PLATFORM WHERE I FELT COMFORTABLE ENOUGH TO FREELY EXPRESS MY OPINION AND GROW IN A PROGRESSIVE MANNER...

...WE ARE NOW CONNECTED THROUGH SALZBURG GLOBAL LGBT FORUM FACEBOOK GROUP. IT IS VERY GOOD OPPORTUNITY EVERYONE SHARING THEIR OWN COUNTRY SITUATION THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA, CONTINUE TO EXCHANGE IDEAS AND LEARN ABOUT PROGRESS AND DIFFICULTIES IN OTHER COUNTRIES. I LOOK FORWARD TO TRANSLATE THIS KNOWLEDGE AND IMPLEMENT OUR FUTURE WORK TO GROUND LEVEL INITIATIVES IN SRI LANKA.”

4.7

A Global Network of Storytellers

Storytelling is a major tool of expressing of who we want to be – and of changing hearts. Our Forum cooperates with and amplifies the work of writers, filmmakers and photographers, from all over the world, who portray the complexities of our lives. Here, we profile just some of the vibrant international storytellers in our network.

Photographers



Álvaro Laiz, Spain

With a commitment to shed light on marginalized communities, Spanish photographer Álvaro Laiz travels to remote locations around the world telling visual stories of exclusion. His work, featured in *The New York Times*, *National Geographic* and the *British Journal of Photography*, has won numerous awards. In 2015, the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum mounted an exhibition of two of his projects documenting two very distinct LGBT communities: *Transmongolian*, which brought him to Mongolia to capture the secret lives of

its LGBT communities, and *Wonderland* that narrated his travels to the Orinoco River delta in Venezuela documenting the lives of the Warao Indian communities, including its transgender individuals called Tida Wena by the Warao (in English, “*The Twisted Women*”). Their inclusion in Warao society goes back to pre-Columbian traditions. According to investigations, 40 to 80 percent of the Warao tribe are infected with HIV, due to outside influences.

“Photography for me is a tool to promote social change. And this drives my ideas.”

On his project in Mongolia: *“My main idea was to take pictures of them in their traditional queen dresses, deep in the desert. We drove around for a week to find the right shots. I*

learned that since my departure, they decided to dress up as queens in the desert one a year. So they began a sort of pride parade. They definitely inspired me and I hope it was mutual.”



Lyno Vuth, Cambodia

Cambodian artist, curator and photographer Lyno Vuth had his first European exhibition at the inaugural session of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum. One group of photos that Vuth showed and discussed in Salzburg – a collection called *Thoamada*, which means “normal,” “everyday” and “commonplace” – consisted of portraits of nine Cambodian men

who have sex with men, all disguised by having their faces covered in paint. For the project, Vuth invited a group men to discuss issues related to sex, gender and sexual orientation. At the end of the workshop he asked the men to pose for a photograph, but they were reluctant for fear of being identified. Vuth thus proposed that they paint their faces, and they were happy to do so – some with more paint, some with less. Although they were still recognizable once they finished painting, they were then willing to be photographed, signaling a transformation that had occurred, according to Vuth, as a result of the workshop.

“I wanted to share to the audience that there are different possibilities and realities; you can still define your own family, regardless of being gay, transgender, bisexual, or lesbian, and people have different ways to define that.”

A second group of Vuth’s photos also shown in Salzburg, from the exhibit *Thoamada II*, explores the family contexts, dynamics and memories of LGBT people in Cambodia. *“I interviewed people together with their families, inviting them to share their stories and journey. After the conversation, I*

asked them to pose for two different photographs. One was a simple family portrait inside their house. They decided on their dress and pose. For the second photograph, I asked them to collectively choose a memory to re-enact, improvised with their belongings and surroundings.”

In addition to the image, a narrative is offered to audiences in the titles and texts accompanying the images. In *The Salt Seeker* the text reads:

“I met my wife during the Pol Pot regime when we were digging a canal opposite each other... During rice transplanting month, I went to ask for some salt from her, but she refused... During harvest month, we met again and started to talk, and we fell in love... This love is difficult, because they didn’t let us meet... After 1979, we didn’t get married properly but we created wedding rituals. I play the role of head of the family, as husband and with her as a wife, and we have adopted three children—two daughters and a son—and have six grandchildren. My children call me dad, and my grandchildren call me granddad.”



Vuth Lyno on how artists shape our conversations on LGBT human rights



Photographer from Bangladesh

In 2017, as well as Bradley Secker’s work (see interview on page 122), the Forum also showcased the work of a photographer from Bangladesh. His name does not appear in this report for safety concerns, but his work has been guided by a desire to give voice to the alternative families built by Bangladesh’s Hijra communities. Hijra, he explains, *“is a traditional group and they have long back history. Basically they are biological male and they do gender change as woman... but traditionally Hijra don’t like to call themselves trans woman. They have their own subculture, language and alternative family system. They love to stay together in a group. They have strong leader and follower systems.”*

Filmmakers



Sridhar Rangayan, India

Sridhar Rangayan wears many hats: he is a gay rights activist; co-founder of India’s first gay NGO, the Humsafar Trust; co-founder of the Kashish Mumbai International Queer Film Festival; and an award-winning filmmaker. Among his accolades, Rangayan was selected through a worldwide nomination process to be part of the British Council’s inaugural *“fiveFilms4freedom”* Global List in 2016. The list consists of 33 inspiring people from 23 different countries who are changing social perceptions about LGBTQ communities throughout the world. Rangayan’s works include *Breaking Free*, a documentary aimed at exposing the harsh legal punishments gay people face under India’s Penal Code, and *Gulabi Aaina* (in English, *“The Pink Mirror”*) a widely-celebrated Bollywood-like film starring two drag queens and a gay teenager. The film, originally banned in India, was released on Netflix in early 2017.

“As a filmmaker, my main aim has been to use cinema as a tool for greater awareness, combining entertainment with advocacy. I have seen change in my lifetime, and I’m really happy that many things around me have changed for the better for the LGBT community.”



Lola Amaria, Indonesia

As the founder and program director of Kresna Duta Foundation, filmmaker Lola Amaria strives to raise visibility for human rights through audio visuals in all areas of her work. Amaria has conducted research and starred and directed films on LGBT rights, trafficking and women’s issues. She contributed a short film to the LGBT “omnibus” film production, *Sanubari Jakarta*, which received its European première at the inaugural session of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum in 2013. The film is a compilation of 10 films by 10 directors – the majority of whom are heterosexual and cisgender – each lasting around 10 minutes long. Each part of the film portrays a different LGBT life and experience, and collectively the directors

aim to reduce violence towards LGBT people in Indonesia.
"Love belongs to everyone."



Popo Fan, China
 Chinese filmmaker and writer Popo Fan is determined to show the positive side of LGBT people and their experiences despite facing occasional questions on his portrayal of the happier side of LGBT lives. Fan's dedication to visibility of LGBT rights has led him to pen *Happy Together: Complete Record of a Hundred Queer Films*, the first book published in mainland China about queer films. His films primarily focus on same-sex marriage, transgender individuals, and LGBT families, and the documentarian has recently branched out into feature films. Fan made history in a landmark case against state censorship after successfully suing the Chinese government following the removal of his film *Mama Rainbow*, profiling LGBT families in China, from the internet. Fan is the director of the Beijing Queer Film Festival and has received accolades such as being

included in *Advocate* magazine's "40 Under 40" list. His films have been shown at festivals around the world, and the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum was proud to show his groundbreaking documentary *Pink Dads* shortly after its release at its film festival during the 2016 session in Thailand.
"I am sometimes criticized because my films are too happy, but I am determined [to] tell positive stories about LGBT people and their families."



Su Su Hlaing, Myanmar
 Myanmar-based filmmaker Su Su Hlaing has witnessed the power film and art can have once the cameras are turned off. After making the documentary, *Love and Other Matters*, profiling LGBT people from humble rural backgrounds, she was shocked to see her subjects' families come from far away to see the film's premier. The film was shown at the fourth session of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum as part of the impromptu Chiang Rai LGBT Film Festival.

"To my surprise, families came from far, far away to show support for their sons and daughters."



Cha Roque, The Philippines
 Cha Roque may have established herself as filmmaker dedicated to social change, but she has another equally important role as a mother. Her film *What I Would've Told My Daughter if I Knew What to Say Back Then*, her most personal work to date, made its European debut at the fifth session of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum in May 2017. The film takes viewers on a personal journey of Roque's relationship with her daughter Kelsey and her difficulty in coming out to her. It was part of the official selection of Hanoi International Queer Film Week, founded by Salzburg Global LGBT Forum Fellow, Bao Chau Nguyen.
"As a filmmaker and as a lesbian I believe I have the responsibility to tell the stories of fellow LGBT people in our community and to make other people understand what we are going through, and help LGBT people become accepted by society. It might not always be my

own story, or my daughters story, but as a filmmaker I think I can use my voice in helping other people tell their stories, especially those who are not yet open about it."



Cha Roque on being a lesbian filmmaker



Klaus Mueller, Germany
 Klaus Mueller has worked for decades on the plight of gay and lesbian survivors of the Holocaust and engaged in film as a tool to widely share his conversations with them. He was the initiator, research director and associate producer of the award-winning American documentary film *Paragraph 175* (2000) that profiled gay survivors of Nazi persecution and won many international prizes, including from the Berlin and Sundance film festivals. He was assistant director of *But I was a Girl* (1999) that is based on his eight hour interview with lesbian Dutch resistance fighter Frieda Belinfante and director of *Just happy the way I am* (1998) on LGBT youth. In 2017, his documentary with

Salzburg Global Seminar on *Family is...? A Global Conversation* premiered at the fifth session of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum in Salzburg and Berlin. He has taught film history at the University of Amsterdam and shared his enthusiasm for blockbuster movies in many film reviews.

“Going through and weaving together the many interviews conducted over three years with our LGBT fellows on their understanding of family for me was a long journey coming to fruition. The film portrays deep and global connections between our various different stories. It felt like coming home. And I felt protected to talk about my own family.”



Klaus Mueller on cultivating global voices for global conversations



Nilu Doma Sherpa 1985-2017

The LGBT Forum family suffered a great loss in 2017, with the passing of Nepalese filmmaker and Forum fellow Nilu Doma Sherpa. Nilu was a participant at the fourth session of the Forum in Chiang Rai, Thailand, in 2016. A leading member

of the mainstream Nepalese film industry, her work included main choreographer for *Jholay* (2014), producer for the films *Anaagat* (2017), actor for *Punte Parade* (2014) and director for the highly praised films *How Funny* (2016) and *Kagaj* (2016). She was also part of the LGBT digital short documentary series *Stories of Being Me* by the social entrepreneurship platform B-Change, for which she directed the heartfelt autobiographical film *The Story of Nilu*, which she shared with Fellows at the session in Thailand. As described by B-Change, Nilu's film “explores the universality of love with the help of some of Nepal's leading women.”



The Story of Nilu

Writers



Fadi Zaghmout, Jordan

Widely celebrated for his commentary on Arab society in his novel *The Bride of Amman*, Jordanian writer Fadi Zaghmout has secured a reputation for being outspoken on issues including women's rights, religious coexistence

and sexuality. His book, which centers around four women and one gay man in Jordan's historic capital, particularly attracted a lot of attention for addressing homosexuality in Arab societies. Zaghmout is the founder of the blog the *Arab Observer*, covering social issues unaddressed by traditional Arab media outlets, and with over 350,000 Twitter followers, remains one of the most prolific online voices in Jordan.

“It has been a wonderful experience for me to be here, in 2017, at Salzburg Global LGBT Forum for the second time. In 2013, when I joined for the first time, I had just published my book in Jordan and was encouraged by the Forum to do a reading of one chapter in English that a friend helped to translate. It was great then to get so many responses and I felt encouraged. Now I returned as a writer, with my book ‘The Bride in Amman’ having been translated in English, having published two more books and working on the fourth. I had the chance to meet activists, writers, journalists, artists, politicians and filmmakers from all over the world and listen to their stories and how each one of them is making change. I was able to share my story as a writer and present my book ‘The Bride

of Amman’ to this big audience. The connections I have made in this week are priceless, not just in terms of strengthening my knowledge and empowering me as an activist but also as human connections and life-long friendships.”



Shereen El Feki, UK / Egypt

Like many who straddle East and West, writer and former journalist Shereen El Feki, a Muslim woman raised in Canada, wanted to learn more about her Arab roots. Her work in HIV research led her to choose sex as her lens, spending five years traveling across the Arab region speaking to people about their views on sex and sexuality. Her non-fiction book *Sex and the Citadel* explores populations outside what she refers to as the “citadel,” in the context of marriage – typically the only socially accepted context for sexual activity in the Arab region – including LGBT communities. El Feki served as vice-chair of the UN's Global Commission on HIV and the Law, representing the Arab region.

“Sexuality, which also brings in values and beliefs, is an incredibly

powerful lens in which to understand any society because it tells you about politics, about economics, about religion and tradition, about gender and generations. "It's important to realize that LGBTQ populations within the Arab region are part of a spectrum of exclusion. What I discuss in my book is how we are going to find ways to bring people 'inside the citadel.'"



Shereen El Feki on sexuality in the Arab world and the shifting borderlines between halal and haram



Danny Ramadan, Syria / Canada
Named one of Canada's "top immigrants" of 2017, Syrian refugee Danny Ramadan has used his personal experience to evolve his voice as a storyteller and writer. His novel *The Clothesline Swing*, which tells the story of two lovers fleeing the aftermath of the Arab Spring, features the stories of fictional refugees, some of which are inspired by stories Ramadan heard as a Fellow of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum, and many of which are based on his own personal experiences of fleeing war-torn Syria. With his advocacy based around refugee rights specific

to the Syrian culture, Ramadan plans to continue sharing insights into the lives of LGBT refugees through his storytelling. *"Understanding how unique every person I met here is [has] helped me form bits and pieces of every character I included [in 'The Clothesline Swing']. What I noticed about my writing is that it's evolved and instead of having one or two outcomes – whether you stay home or you leave – I started to imagine other outcomes that could happen. Other chosen families that could be created, other connections that could come between characters. That, in itself, has enhanced my storytelling abilities."*



Travis Kong, Hong Kong
Associate dean and sociology professor at the University of Hong Kong, Travis Kong presented a short video on older Chinese gay men during the inaugural session of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum 2013, with a very lively and supportive discussion, and has continued working on this topic, among many others. One year later, he published *Oral History of Older Gay Men in Hong Kong* that documents

twelve life stories of such men. The book captures how the complexity of their lives is interwoven with the Hong Kong history, as well as the difficulties and hardships they have encountered especially due to their sexual orientation, through colonial to contemporary times.

"I became an academic because it offered a way for me to theorize experiences through writing. This 'gay and grey' project is my dream project as I found older gay men have been absent in LGBT studies, aging studies and social history studies in Hong Kong. They are the missing puzzle of local gay history and also the 'minority of the minority' in LGBT social services and aging services."



Travis Kong on the lives of older LGBT men in Hong Kong



Elizabeth Khaxas, Namibia
Poet Elizabeth Khaxas is the director of the Women's Leadership Centre, an organization that promotes feminist leadership among young women from marginalized sectors of Namibia's society and a founding member of Women's Solidarity and

Sister Namibia. Through her love of poetry, Khaxas emits a voice for LGBT rights, using words to fight against gender barriers and sodomy laws, and express pride in the fight for LGBT visibility. At the inaugural session of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum, Khaxas shared a number of her poems with participants.

*Hella...hella
Our daughter has come home
Hella...hella
The one who has been cast away is home
let us dance and rejoice today
Shame on those who do not acknowledge
my daughter's homecoming
The African!
Shame on those who treated my daughter
as the stepchild of this continent
Lesbian, gay, transgender, transsexual, bisexual, heterosexual...
The image of the goddess, all of them...
Sons and daughter of Africa
Gods and goddesses!
Much beloved, know that nothing will separate you
from the love which is you
No homophobic dictators
No rejecting parents and siblings
No religion
No sodomy law
What took you so long to find your way home, daughter?
We have prepared a feast for you
Let all the world behold
Our daughter has arrived
The lesbian
The African lesbian
Sela...sela...
Africa
rejoice!*



Elizabeth Khaxas reads "My Love Knows No Boundaries"



Impact:

Juan M. Pigot

Chairman, PAREA, Suriname

“IT WAS OBVIOUS THAT EVERYBODY FELT AT HOME AND SAFE. THE FIVE DAYS WENT BY IN A BLINK OF AN EYE. I’M NOW BACK HOME WITH GOOD MEMORIES I WILL HAVE FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE, NEW FRIENDSHIPS BUT ABOVE ALL POSITIVE ENERGY. YES, WE CAN LEARN FROM ONE ANOTHER...

...YES, WE CAN INSPIRE ONE ANOTHER.
AND YES, WE CAN CHANGE THE WORLD IF WE WANT TO.
THAT’S WHAT I BROUGHT BACK FROM SALZBURG. I HOPE THAT THE SUCCESSFUL SALZBURG GLOBAL LGBT FORUM WILL LIVE ON AND WILL KEEP INSPIRING MORE PEOPLE FROM AROUND THE WORLD.”

4.8

Bao Chau Nguyen:

“I have become the leader of something”



Bao Chau Nguyen is a two-time Fellow of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum, having participated in 2016 and 2017 in Chiang Rai and Salzburg.



At 19, Bao Chau Nguyen is the youngest Fellow of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum, but he's already a key change-maker when it comes to LGBT visibility in his country. Inspired by conversations with Fellows at his first session, Nguyen founded Hanoi International Queer Film Week, the first legal queer film festival in his home country of Vietnam.

Under the theme *“Pride Journey,”* Nguyen and his team compiled 23 films and documentaries from eight countries around the world, including films from LGBT Forum Fellows Cha Roque, Popo Fan, and Su Su Hlaing. The premiere event took audiences through a series of sub-themes, each designed to tell a different side of the queer experience; from questions of identity and discrimination, to love and acceptance.

Crediting the Forum for allowing participants to focus on their own role within the LGBT community, Nguyen said, *“At other*

conferences I've attended, they always ask ‘What is your name?’ and ‘What is your organization?’ But here people ask me in the morning: ‘How are you?’

“Everything started here. I got the idea here in this Forum. I have done it with my friends. The film festival started here, it started not from ‘What organization are you [with]?’ but from ‘Good morning,’” he said.

Nguyen, an independent filmmaker currently attending the Hanoi Academy of Theatre and Cinema, has been involved in LGBT activism for three years, focusing on development within his community, gender identities and reducing gender-based and sex-oriented discrimination and violence. As a trans man, Nguyen openly discusses his journey as a branch of his activism, sharing personal stories of his gender identity on social media.

For the young activist, participation in the Forum and the subsequent successful launch of the film festival have had an immeasurable impact on his self-development and self-confidence.

“Every experience I have here is personal, and, I think, the film festival itself is a big development for me. I was always the one who follows, I was never the one who leads. But after this, I have become the leader of something,” Nguyen revealed. *“That’s very encouraging.”*

Nguyen will continue to work as a member of NextGEN, an organization working for the LGBT community in Vietnam, with an aim to expand their network into the border Asian region. He also plans to continue to serve as program director of Hanoi International Queer Film Week for the foreseeable future.

“I would really like to have a fifth anniversary, like this Forum,” he laughed. *“Cinema is something that’s so powerful and it can have a lot of impact on the audiences. I don’t want to change anyone with movies – it’s not something impossible but not something I really want to do – I want to give them a new point of view. Queer film festivals aren’t about LGBT – they are about diversity.”*



Bao Chau Nguyen on how the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum inspired him

4.9 Impromptu LGBT Film Festivals

LGBT and Human Rights: New Challenges, Next Steps

* **Gay and Grey – a short documentary film**

Produced by Travis S.K. Kong

I Am You: I Am A Picture Of You

Presented by Thilaga Sulathireh

The Riddle

Featuring and presented
by Tamara Adrián

Pink Mirror

Directed by Sridhar Rangayan

** **Sanubari Jakarta**

Co-Directed by Lola Amaria

Being Scene

Directed by Zanele Muholi

Strengthening Communities: LGBT Rights and Social Cohesion

The Story of Iron – part of the documentary Stories of Being Me

Directed by Popo Fan

CCTV Breaking News from a Homosexual China

Directed by Popo Fan

** **Tamara**

Presented by and based on the life
story of Tamara Adrián

Harvest

Directed by Benjamin Cantu

Stories of Being Me

Presented by Laurindo García

Mama Rainbow

Directed by Popo Fan

New Beijing, New Marriage

Directed by Popo Fan

* **Because of Who I Am**

Benjamin Cantu and Nils Boekamp

The Many Faces of LGBT Inclusion

Family is... Highlights

Presented by Klaus Mueller

Stories of Being Me

Presented by Laurindo García

Weekends

Presented by Jong-Geol Lee

Lam: Inside Out

Directed by Bao Chau Nguyen

The video 11, part of the art project “Save The Date”

Presented by Wanja Kilber

Olympic Dreams

Presented by and featuring
Kasha Nabagesera

Pink Dads

Directed by Popo Fan

Love & Other Matters

Directed by Su Su Hlaing

The Story of Cha – a part of the film series Stories of Being Me

Directed by Cha Roque

The Story of Nilu – a part of the film series Stories of Being Me

Directed by Nilu Doma Sherpa

Toms:

The Complex World of Female Love in Thailand

Directed by Watsamon Tri-yasakda

Home: Safety, Wellness and Belonging

I love you as you are

Presented by Jaewon Shin

* **Visibility**

Presented by Ta and directed by
Helena Eckert

** **What I Would Have Told My Daughter If I Knew What To Say Back Then**

Directed by Cha Roque

The Fox Exploits The Tiger's Might

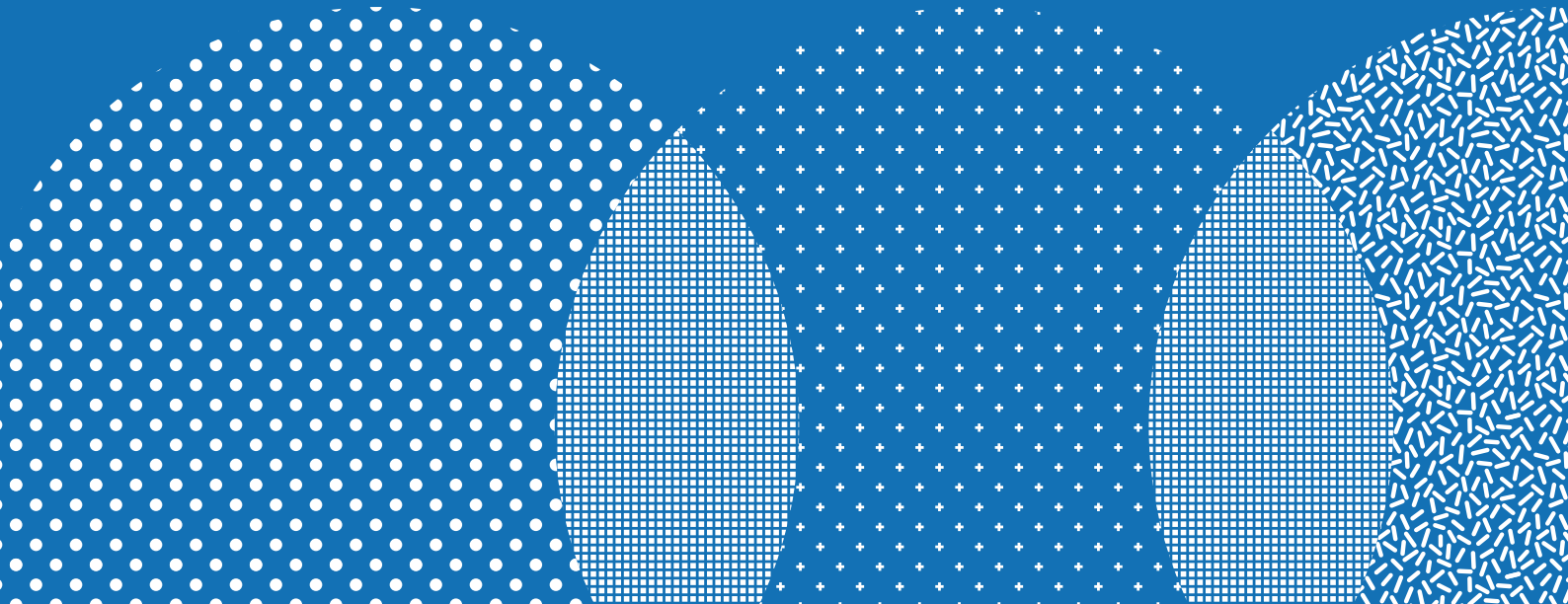
Presented and co-produced by
Tunggal Pawestri

* **Family is? – A Global Conversation**

Presented by Klaus Mueller

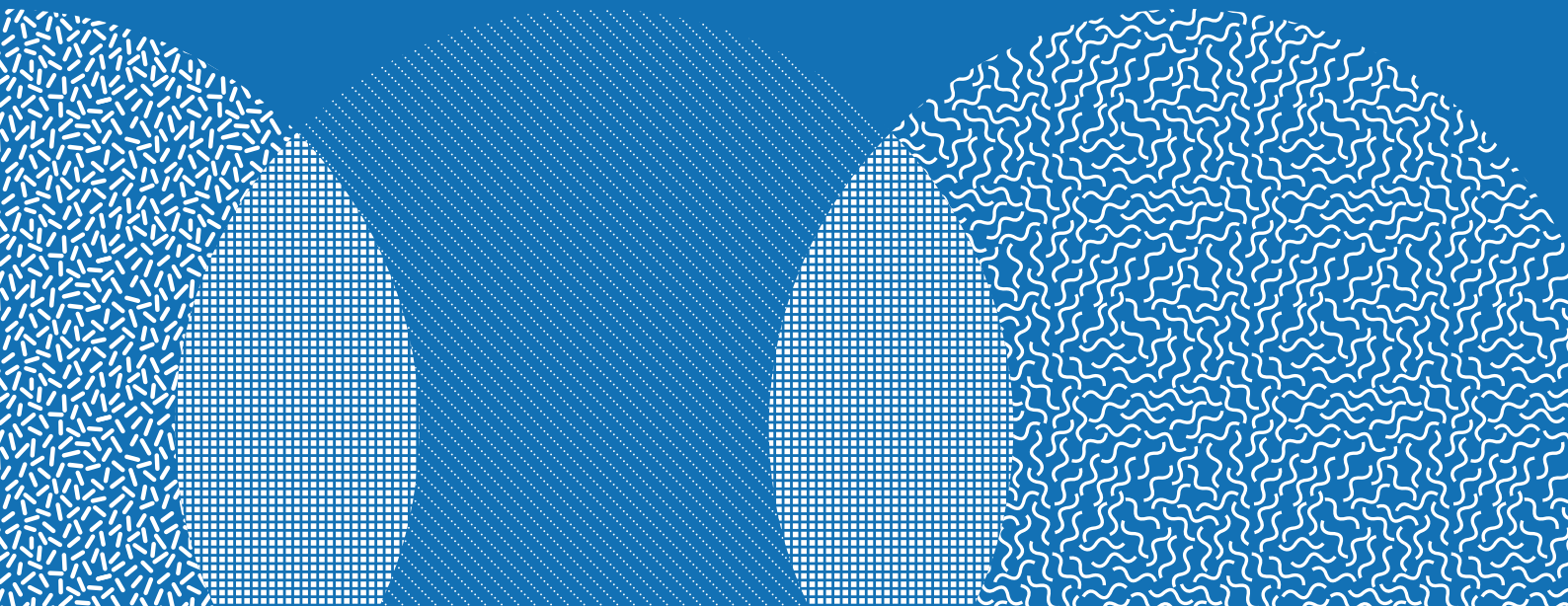
* Denotes a World Première

** Denotes a European Première



05

BUILDING INTERNATIONAL CONNECTIONS & ALLIANCES



“I came here alone, but I am back to Korea with global networks of LGBT organizations/individuals. I was very inspired by the participants’ stories, energy, idea and intellectual discourse. I will work to keep these connections alive and use them, so that Korean LGBT rights organizations can communicate with the world, embrace global movements that are suitable for our society, let global networks know the situation of Korea, and share our progress with them.”

— Hyun Kyung Kim,
Researcher, Korean Society of Law and Policy on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity,
Korea

At our fifth session in Salzburg in 2017, we celebrated the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia (IDAHOT), together with the president of IDAHOT, trans activist Tamara Adrián from Venezuela. Through video, the World Bank and the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum joined forces to call for inclusion and equality for families and their LGBT children – uniting both behind IDAHOT’s message of family inclusion.

The Salzburg Global LGBT Forum deeply believes in making these connections, in extending our network and creating new lines of communication and cooperation. Within the ongoing global, yet strongly Western-dominated discourse on LGBT equality, Asian voices and perspectives are underrepresented. Convening the 2016 session of the Forum in Chiang Rai, Thailand, we came to listen and learn, using the gathering as a platform to amplify the voices of Asian leaders. With its booming demographics and economies, and resultant

growing international importance, much global progress on equality for LGBT people will depend on advancements in Asia. As of 2017, the largest proportion of our Fellows come from Asia.

The discourse on LGBT rights might be becoming increasingly global, but progress and subsequent backlash are felt locally. By bringing together so many global voices to learn about each other’s local contexts, we hope to mitigate these negative responses.

To multiply its impact, the Forum regularly attracts the participation of leading human rights defenders including many transnational human rights organizations such as the Arab Foundation for Freedoms and Equality, the Asia-Pacific Transgender Network, the East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project, Front Line Defenders, HIVOS International, the Human Rights Campaign, Human Rights Watch, Open Society Foundations, Transgender Europe and the World Association for Sexual Health.



5.1

Two Sides of the Same Coin: Global Advances, Local Backlashes

The discourse on LGBT rights might be increasingly global, but progress and the subsequent backlash are frequently felt locally. By bringing together diverse global voices to learn about each other's local contexts, the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum hopes to mitigate these negative responses and advance LGBT rights worldwide.

With support for anti-LGBT legislation in Uganda growing thanks to American preachers, Sexual Minorities Uganda (SMUG) have taken legal action in the US, explains Dennis Wamala, vice-chair of the SMUG board.

That we are currently seeing huge advances in the recognition of LGBT rights in countries across the world is indisputable. But progress is by no means certain nor is it without its negative responses. In 2011, the first UN Resolution on Human Rights, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity was supported by over 40 countries – yet in 76 states, governments continue to legitimize and sponsor violence against their LGBT citizens.

Increased global visibility of local LGBT communities has in some cases fueled further scapegoating and persecution, but on the flipside of the coin, as prominent African LGBT

activist Kasha Nabagesera reminds Fellows, this approach *“is helping us progress. Now you can't say that we don't exist.”* She describes international networks as *“our strongest weapon.”* Local activists can work with international organizations to remind hostile governments of their obligations under international law.

Diverse voices

However, the key issues facing LGBT communities are not the same across the world. In the West, there is currently a push for marriage equality, adoption rights and legal recognition of gender identity. Yet in countries where homosexuality remains illegal, decriminalization is far more pressing than marriage rights. Speaking at the inaugural session of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum in 2013 – and echoed across sessions over the following five years – Fellows have expressed concern that the vocal Western campaigns for rights like marriage are distracting from other, for them more urgent campaigns regarding the protection of LGBT people from discrimination, persecution and violence. The Forum engages in ethical listening to develop a fuller understanding of different challenges and encourage joint learning.

At each session, Fellows open up about their personal experiences. From growing up gay in a religious family in Hong Kong, to the struggles of family relationships post-coming out as transgender in the UK; from empowered lesbian theater performances in El Salvador to harrowing tales of “corrective” rape in South Africa. Some Fellows are able to be completely open about their stories and identities, having already publicly spoken out before arriving in Salzburg; some have to speak strictly under the condition of anonymity for fear of reprisals once they return home.

Listening to each other helps us to explore and extend the diversity of approaches that are needed to address inequality the world over. We might live in an increasingly interconnected global world, but a global approach, without taking account local contexts, may not be the answer.



Public support from international organizations for LGBT rights in countries with a colonial past can be counterproductive as they are seen as a further Western imposition, warned Paola Amadei, head of the delegation for the European Union to Jamaica.

Unintended consequences

When in 2014 the UK declared it would make its foreign aid to Uganda conditional on its compliance with human rights norms, including abandoning its then-pending legislation on the further criminalization of homosexuality, many, especially in the West, thought this was a great advance in how to encourage the globalization of human rights. But these conditions did not take into consideration the local LGBT community. As Nabagesera explained in Salzburg, following the UK's declaration, a gay man in Uganda was attacked by his neighbors



Dennis van der Veur on the EU Fundamental Rights Agency's survey of LGBT discrimination



Monica Pisankaneva on the LGBTI community as a scapegoat in Bulgaria



Ana Chacon on the "big steps to go" in realizing LGBT rights in Costa Rica

who blamed him for the death of their daughter due to the lack of medicine in hospitals, which had previously been supplied thanks to UK aid. Good global intentions can lead to devastating local consequences if not guided by local leaders.

The stoking of the anti-gay fervor that led to the introduction of the Anti-Homosexuality Bill in Uganda was in part due to the global influence of another group: American evangelical Christians. In response, as Dennis Wamala, vice-chair of the board of Sexual Minorities Uganda (SMUG), explains, SMUG have taken one particular prominent anti-gay evangelical preacher to court in the US (where he is based) for his role in the persecution. The case is ongoing. Within the Forum, we discussed how Western LGBT human rights organizations can confront such post-colonial export of hate by extremist religious congregations in their own countries.

In Jamaica, a country where homophobia is rife and the sodomy law a colonial adoption of British buggery laws, many dismiss advocacy for LGBT rights as "colonial," and thus public international support for local organizations can be counterproductive, explained Paola Amadei, Head of the Delegation for the European Union to Jamaica.

In many ways, the Forum breaks away from simplified notions of a North/South divide and recognizes that progress has been led by many countries in the Global South. The



Find allies to strengthen your cause was the key piece of advice from Ian Southey-Swartz from the Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa at the session *LGBT and Human Rights: New Challenges, Next Steps* in 2013.



Michael Kirby on globalism with a reality check



Sudeshan Reddy on cautious optimism for LGBT human rights globally



Louise van der Laan on how civilizations are measured by how they treat (sexual) minorities

groundbreaking 2006 Yogyakarta Principles on the Application of International Human Rights Law in relation to Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity have inspired National Human Rights Commissions in Indonesia, Mongolia and the Philippines to review their legislation. In 2010, South Africa spearheaded the first UN Resolution on Human Rights, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (supported by Brazil and 39 other countries); Argentina passed ground-breaking legislation that recognizes the right to gender identity based on an individual's own feelings; South America became the first continent where a majority of its inhabitants have access to marriage equality; and, in 2015, Nepal introduced passports for a third gender – to name but a few landmark cases. These national and regional advances greatly inspire advances globally.

Alternative approaches

National narratives are frequently misleading, as Dutch sociologist Saskia Wieringa cautions. Societies and governments may take pride in their LGBT inclusion, or in their homo- or transphobia repackaged as “*traditional values*” but history shows there have been profound societal shifts in the treatment of LGBT communities. For example, while their national narratives might now have reversed, historical accounts show episodes of homosexual-targeted

executions in the Netherlands and acceptance of trans people and same-sex relations in Indonesia. Deconstructing these narratives and presenting accurate local histories that show LGBT people have long been part of their communities can be a powerful step forward in reclaiming the place and impact of LGBT people and communities in their respective cultures.

Other approaches proposed at the Forum have included: find allies and adopt a different language. As Ian Southey-Swartz, LGBTI program manager for the Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa, somewhat controversially said in 2013: “*LGBT organizations need to get over themselves!*” Despite that sounding hostile on paper, his advice that followed was sound: strengthen your cause by allying yourself with other causes than can, in turn, advance your own. This approach was successful in the initial repeal of India’s sodomy laws, which was achieved through a broad-based coalition of interests including women’s, children’s and LGBT rights groups.

Another suggestion was: If LGBT groups are not making progress with human rights arguments, then they should instead present the economic argument for their greater freedoms. “*The language of economics is more universal,*” suggested one Fellow. Global, cross-border collaborations on research in this area can help support local arguments. In his explanation of how LGBT groups in Lebanon had successfully

overturned the violating “anal tests” that were being carried out to “check” for homosexuality, multi-time Fellow Georges Azzi, co-founder of Helem, a Lebanese non-profit organization working on improving the legal and social status of LGBT people in the region, said their target had been the medical legitimacy of the tests, rather than campaigning on a human rights violation platform.

Global learning

In 2016, in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)’s Being LGBTI in Asia program, the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum met for the first time in Asia in order to learn from rising voices and better understand the unique challenges and progresses in the region. In Chiang Rai, Thailand, Fellows agreed that the lessons that different cultures and experiences provide should be harnessed to advance LGBT inclusion on the global stage.

The Salzburg Global LGBT Forum convened in Asia for the first time in 2016 in partnership with the UNDP’s Being LGBTI in Asia program.



“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 Tamara Adrián, president of IDAHOT and multi-time Forum Fellow, drawing parallels with Asian advances. While many LGBT people on the continent are enjoying growing rights and protections, Adrián’s own country has lagged behind. The widespread influence of military and evangelical groups in the state has kept Venezuela from following Latin American trends. *“Opportunities to exchange best practices... across regions are tremendously beneficial for those working on the protection of transgender health and citizenship rights but also broader LGBT advocacy efforts,”* she added.

The Salzburg Global LGBT Forum is global in its very nature (and name) but it highly values regional and local insights. By bringing together human rights defenders of many sectors, backgrounds and countries, the Forum seeks to encourage a trust-building and learning environment where Fellows can hear candidly what the situation is like on the ground for local activists, helping Fellows realize that there is no one-size-fits-all approach when advancing LGBT rights around the world and avoid unintended negative consequences.



Laurindo Garcia on the diversity and complexity of LGBT lives in Asia



Klaus Mueller on why the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum gathered in Asia



Thilaga Sulathireh on progress for LGBT communities in Asia



Saskia Wieringa on creating a more human world

Lithuanian athlete, Ieva Ruzgite, who is now based in Norway, left the 2017 session of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum feeling re-energized. "It feels like we became one big family," said the international judoka.



5.2

M.V. Lee Badgett:

“I take a vow of never being a helicopter researcher again!”



The Salzburg Global LGBT Forum doesn't only bring together activists. The Forum seeks to build broad alliances that include LGBT rights defenders and supporters across multiple spheres including law, politics, the arts and academia.

M.V. Lee Badgett is a professor of economics whose research focuses on LGBT poverty and employment discrimination, and she is writing a new book on the economic case for LGBT equality. A two-time Fellow of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum, her past work has helped debunk the myth of gay affluence and examined the positive experience with regards to marriage equality for same-sex couples in the US and Europe. Her research also discovered that homophobia costs the Indian economy \$31 billion per year. Badgett's third book *The Public Professor: How to Use Your Research to Change the World* gives practical advice to academics about engagement in public debates.

What has been your experience at the LGBT Forum?

It's a little clichéd, but it's opened up the world in terms of LGBT activism. I had met lots of activists at more ordinary conferences, but I never had the chance to get to know them as friends, to play ping pong, to dance and drink and have intense conversations over a meal. And everybody just wanted to engage, and I felt like I made a lot of connections and close friends over a short period of time.

Did this inspire your work?

For one thing, it made it possible for me to take a vow of never being a helicopter researcher again! I have no excuse now for doing a project on a country and not talking to someone I

know from that country first.

The other thing was that I had a couple of projects and trips come directly out of conversations here. One involved working with UNDP to start an LGBTI Inclusion Index. I met Cliff Cortez here, who was then with UNDP [Cortez is now with the World Bank], and we had conversations in Salzburg about the need for better data and more research on LGBT people, and a few months later we started working together on aspects of that index. And we're still working on it.

Someone I met here – Hyun Kyung Kim – wanted to translate a book [*When Gay People Get Married*] I had written into Korean, so she and a few colleagues worked on that and I ended up going to Korea for a book launch and did a bunch of public speaking there. On that same trip, another Fellow, Wei Wei invited me to speak at his university in Shanghai and arranged another talk at Renmin University in Beijing. The Beijing visit also included a tour of the LGBT Cultural Center with Xin Ying and a wonderful lunch with some of the other LGBT activists in their building. So Salzburg creates a web of connections — one always intersects with another!

What other action have you taken with Forum members outside of Salzburg?

There was a Ugandan activist [Stella Nyanzi, an LGBTQ theorist and research fellow at Makerere University, Kampala] who had been jailed for about a month, so I reached out to Kasha [Nabagesera, Ugandan LGBT activist and Fellow of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum] just to see if there was anything I could do, and she recommended a petition and more pressure from international bodies. So a colleague and I launched a petition campaign and got at least 500 other academics to say this was a violation of academic freedom.

How would you describe the Forum to someone who has never been?

I get to hear people talk about the work that they do, and I get to know them as human beings at the same time — and that's just something that doesn't happen at other conferences.



Impact:

Martin Vidaurre Vaca

*National Chief, Iguales ante la Ley
(Equal before the Law),
Casilla, Bolivia*

**“THIS EXPERIENCE HAS GREATLY
SUPPORTED ME IN THE WORK
I DO IN BOLIVIA IN FAVOR OF
THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE
LGBT POPULATION AS ONE
CONSEQUENCE OF THE MEETING
IN SALZBURG...”**

**... I INFORM YOU THAT WE HAVE
HELD IN BOLIVIA A MEETING WITH
DIPLOMATS FROM EMBASSIES
OF COUNTRIES THAT HAVE MADE
PROGRESS ON HUMAN RIGHTS
OF LGBTI PEOPLE, SUCH AS THE
EUROPEAN UNION, THE UNITED
STATES, ARGENTINA, URUGUAY,
COLOMBIA, AMONG OTHERS.”**

5.3 Fellows' International Connections

The Salzburg Global LGBT Forum was formed in 2013 to establish a truly global space to reflect upon and advance LGBT and human rights discussions around the world. Its signature is the international representation of leaders from diverse fields – including human rights, legal, artistic and religious backgrounds. Through participation in the Forum, Fellows are encouraged to share their personal experiences and expertise of their local context, bringing these to a global audience – and to take these shared learnings back to their home communities.



Nana S. King
Project Manager,
Deutsche Welle Akademie, Ghana

“I believe one of the most important aspects of the Forum was that we were given a fantastic opportunity to network. I have now contacts to more or less every part of this world! In fact, Bisi [Alimi], from Nigeria, and I have discussed the possibility of establishing a West African support network. Obviously, this is not something that can be done overnight, but I am confident that we can create something good,

one step at a time. Apart from that, we are looking into the option of an LGBT film festival, either here or in Nigeria, or maybe even both.”



Dennis Wamala
Director of Programs,
Icebreakers Uganda

“When I came and saw the diverse nature of this Forum, and the diverse nature of the information coming in and the discussion, I got very interested, so I wanted to be part of it in the longer term... The Forum

allowed me to highlight the advocacy work in my organization; to create networks in which we use for advocating our work. To add a voice to the general advocacy of LGBTI around rights in Uganda.”



Danish Sheikh
Advocate & Researcher, Alternative
Law Forum, India

“When you bring so many diverse individuals together for a five-day period, how deep can your insights go? Quite significantly, as I found. I go back quite overwhelmed

by the ideas I've picked up. To name a few: I realize how strongly I need to focus on evidence building vis-à-vis discrimination particularly when it comes to making an economic argument on exclusion. The radical possibilities of this argument have really opened up for me after the conversations we've had around it at Salzburg. I also see the need for broadening my activism to focus on solidarities across movements – discussions here have helped me think through how I can re-frame my positions in a manner to get more people on board. Finally, I must say I'm quite enchanted by the possibilities of using storytelling in my work in a more creative manner. I've also been gratified by seeing the manner in which academia can be integrated into activism, a personal ambition of mine which I now see new routes to achieving.”



A Fellow from Russia

“Apart from the high-estimated opportunity to spend time away from the daily work and routine, which actually works as a burn-out prevention mechanism, this Forum brought practical

assistance to the activities that I implement within Russian LGBT Network. Several sections of the Forum were dedicated to the topic of LGBT allies. Within the mingles, we discussed approaches to attract new allies, different categories of the supporters or social groups that could be regarded as potential allies for the LGBT movement, and also how cooperation between the labor unions and LGBT movement is arranged (if any) in other countries. That helped me to generate new ideas for the future projects that focus on reciprocity development. I also had a chance to speak out on the fact of state-orchestrated mass atrocities in Chechnya in a safe forum, applying to some individuals directly to exercise concrete tasks for facilitation of the crisis resolution.”



Tamara Adrián
Human Rights Lawyer; President,
IDAHOT Committee, Member,
National Assembly of Venezuela

“This program is unlike any other program or space for the exchange of opinion and experiences about the LGBT population and for addressing – in a global Forum – the problems affecting LGBT people in

various continents and environments. We see a clear link between equal rights and citizenship. Through our exchanges we learn that hostile environments are affecting not only those directly targeted by hateful acts, but also the country in which such acts occur. Diaspora, lack of equal opportunities, bullying and discrimination have clear repercussions on the economy of the country in which such acts occur. I would therefore encourage you to continue to organize this kind of event, in order to promote a better world for us all.”



Mariano Ruiz
IDAHOT Committee, Latin
America & Caribbean Outreach
Communications Officer, Argentina

“Getting to know advocates, researchers, film producers, photographers, members of government agencies and professors from 38 different countries was a deeply profound experience for me. Seeing how the advance of LGBT rights and equality can be so much more powerful and effective when we all work together, with shared objectives and strategies that involve advocates and allies in every field of study, gives me such renewed focus, determination

and enthusiasm. For example, stronger bonds with activists from Bolivia and Jamaica, particularly, fostered developing new collaborative projects that we apply for funds together.”



Marko Karadzic
Former Serbian State Secretary
for Human and Minority Rights,
Belgrade, Serbia / USA

“Even though I had a chance to participate at many different international forums and conferences this one was exceptional... They were media representatives, professors, NGO activists, politicians and individuals who defend the idea of equality and justice for LGBT minorities. In addition, it was a group of people where each person had a personal story from which generations should learn.”



Sudeshan Reddy
Communication Specialist, UNICEF,
South Africa

“The Forum is truly a special gathering of some of the bravest and most committed people one can encounter anywhere.”



Rooi Teve
Human Rights Activist & Writer,
Russia / UK

“This was my second time at Salzburg Global Seminar, and I feel a stronger connection to the global movement. As a writer, a big perspective is one of the most important things to me. Hearing so many different personal stories was an inspiration. I hope I will be able to work with some of my friends and Fellows at Salzburg Global to capture their stories in writing one day. As an individual activist in a complicated political environment it makes a big difference to have friends and networks who can offer help and support. It was also very precious to learn from others of their strategies around security issues. The session also gave me a clearer picture of myself and my own expertise which is a big boost to continue with my work here.”



M.V. Lee Badgett on
the reinvigorated
state of LGBT activism
in the US



Dennis Wamala on
how empathy and
faith inspire him
to work against
persecution of LGBT
people

5.4

IDAHOT – A Landmark Day to Raise Global Awareness

The International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOT) was first marked in 2004 to raise global awareness of the discrimination, persecution and violence faced by LGBT people around the world.

Observed every year on May 17, IDAHOT is the single most important date for LGBT communities to mobilize on a worldwide scale. In its fifth year, the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum marked the day by joining forces with the World Bank to call for inclusion and equality for families and their LGBT children around the world.

While 2017 was the first year that the Forum has come together to mark the day, it has had a long association with its organizers: IDAHOT president, Tamara Adrián has attended every session of the Forum since 2013, and in 2015 outreach communications officer for Latin America, Mariano Ruiz joined for the first time and has volunteered his expertise time and again to the Forum to further its own outreach, especially in Latin America.

“May 17 is the day where no matter what part of the world you are, you know that someone is taking action in [over 130] countries today,” says Ruiz.

For three years, the Forum has led the project *“Family is...?”* and the Forum unveiled the short film *Family is...? A Global Conversation* on May 17 to

coincide with this year’s IDAHOT theme of “Family.” The film weaves together personal testimonies from Forum members from more than 25 countries about their families of birth, their families of choice and the families they raise.

As Adrián explained in Salzburg, *“The choice of IDAHOT committee to celebrate families this year was largely because we talked about families during the last [Salzburg Global LGBT Forum session] in Thailand.”*

The video message from the World Bank’s IDAHOT celebration in Thailand, featuring Clifton Cortez, Salzburg Global Fellow and the World Bank’s Global Adviser for Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI), and Ulrich Zachau, World Bank Country Director for Southeast Asia, united both the World Bank and the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum behind IDAHOT’s message of family inclusion and reflects ongoing conversation between Cortez and Klaus Mueller on a closer cooperation on strengthening LGBT equality through education and economic inclusion.

The World Bank’s Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) team has a long-standing relationship with the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum. In addition to Cortez, who attended in both 2015 and 2016, several other members have participated in the Forum, including social development researchers Dominik Koehler (2017), Phil Crehan (2015) and Marko Karadzic (2013). Kristalina Georgieva, CEO of the World Bank, also shares a deep relationship with Salzburg Global Seminar, crediting her participation in 1990 with changing her career trajectory, from a researcher in Bulgaria going on to work with the World Bank and previous to that with the European Commission, where she was Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Air and Crisis Response.

To celebrate these growing closer connections, and in the spirit of IDAHOT, LGBT Forum Fellows shared the message of *“Family is Love”* with the World Bank, in support of its efforts to support greater inclusion of LGBT people around the world.



World Bank and Salzburg Global
LGBT Forum mark IDAHOT



Mariano Ruiz on IDAHOT and
an international call to action

A portrait of Clifton Cortez, a man with a beard and glasses, wearing a white button-down shirt. He is seated at a table with a glass of water and a smartphone in front of him. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

Salzburg Global LGBT Forum Fellow Clifton Cortez was instrumental in establishing the partnership between Salzburg Global Seminar and the UNDP's Being LGBTI In Asia program. He is now at the World Bank – and building connections with the Forum there also.

Salzburg Global LGBT Forum Fellows mark the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia on May 17, 2017. The theme for the year was "Family is Love."







06

ENGAGING WITH GOVERNMENTS & INSTITUTIONS



“Strengthening human rights across the world is a priority of Germany’s foreign policy. To achieve this goal, building sustainable networks of human rights defenders is of course of central importance. These can be formalized networks in the form of human rights organizations like those that many of you represent, but also more fluid networks, such as the one you are building with the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum.”

— Christoph Straesser,
Commissioner for Human Rights and Humanitarian Aid, German Federal Foreign Office,
Berlin, Germany, May 2014

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 interconnected at a previously unseen scale. While equal rights for LGBT people are increasingly understood as fundamental human rights, we also witness a rise of homo- and transphobia as a marker of cultural identity, national sovereignty or religious purity. More often than not, homo- and transphobia also work as tools to discredit the notion of universal human rights in general. Hate, bullying, legal discrimination, rape, or murder due to sexual orientation or gender identity occur around the world. In 78 countries, governments legitimize and sponsor violence. But even where LGBT people benefit from legal protection and growing acceptance within society, history still looms large, as there also, they were seen as dispensable only decades or years ago.

Since its inception in 2013, the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum has closely worked with governments through both public and behind-the-scenes conversations and partnerships.

Through targeted consultative meetings and publications, the LGBT Forum has provided advice to and learned directly from those designing national policies and initiatives. Our Ambassadors Night event has become a strong feature of our sessions, convening ambassadors and law makers from a growing number of countries on the advancement of LGBT equality. Engaged countries include Austria, Bhutan, Canada, China, Costa Rica, Germany, the Netherlands, Nicaragua, Sweden, South Korea, Ukraine, the UK, the US and Venezuela. Intergovernmental organizations whose representatives actively support the Forum’s work include UNAIDS, UNDP, UNICEF, the European Union, the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, the European External Action Service and the World Bank.

The challenges confronting the LGBT and human rights movements are no longer only national or regional but are influenced by a multitude of factors at the global level. The Salzburg Global LGBT Forum is continuing to strengthen (in)formal connections between human rights groups, embassies, government agencies and international development agencies to advance civil dialogue.



6.1

Engaging Governments

Human rights defenders are the vanguard in advancing LGBT rights but securing progress necessitates building broader coalitions beyond just the frontline. To this end, the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum has sought to establish a truly global space to reflect upon and advance LGBT and human rights discussions around the world. The Forum brings together leaders from diverse fields – including human rights, legal, artistic and religious backgrounds. An important voice (and ear) in those discussions is that of governments.

On the invitation of the German Federal Foreign Ministry, the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum convened in Berlin in 2014 to meet with German, Dutch and European Union officials, including Christoph Straesser, German Federal Government Commissioner for Human Rights and Humanitarian Aid.

As the inaugural Salzburg Global LGBT Forum gathered at Schloss Leopoldskron in June 2013, the United States Supreme Court was hearing cases for and against the Defense of Marriage Act; in Hong Kong, the Court of Final Appeal had ruled in favor of a trans-woman seeking the right to marry her boyfriend, ending her three-year long legal battle; and France had just signed both gay adoption and gay marriage into law.

Conversely however, many regressive laws were also being considered, most noticeably Uganda's Anti-Homosexuality Act, which originally proposed the death penalty for anyone found to be having same-sex relations, and Russia's LGBT propaganda law, which made distribution of (extremely loosely defined) "propaganda" among minors in support of

"non-traditional sexual relationships," a criminal offence. Both pieces of legislation were blamed for increased violence towards the countries' LGBT communities.

Even in the European Union, where homosexuality is fully decriminalized and many, but not all countries have enacted gender identity laws, an EU report published on May 17, 2013 – IDAHOT, the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia – found that nearly half of the 93,000+ respondents in the 28 EU member states had "felt personally discriminated against or harassed on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity." A month later, the EU Fundamental Rights Agency presented this largest survey of LGBT discrimination ever undertaken at the Forum's inaugural session. The survey revealed that 91 percent of the respondents had witnessed homo- and transphobia in schools and that 43 percent of transgender persons reported having been attacked more than three times in the past year.

It is against this backdrop of growing rights, yet persistent persecution that the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum seeks to convene a broad coalition of LGBT human rights defenders to advance the global conversation on LGBT rights.

Stigma and discrimination are widespread in key aspects of LGBT lives including employment, education, housing and health care. While there has been significant progress, LGBT people continue to face both legal and social barriers to equality and inclusion, and consequently are marginalized. Attention to their needs, especially by governments, are essential if countries are to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, as set by the United Nations.

Representatives from multiple levels and sectors of governments, including parliamentarians, public servants and diplomats, working on the local, national or international stage, have taken part in all of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum's sessions since 2013. Two of these gatherings have been held at the behest of German Federal Ministries. In 2014, the Forum was invited to advise the

Foreign Office on how its embassies can better engage LGBT organizations [see page 167]. In 2017, the Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, invited Fellows of the Forum to present their learnings from the three-year long *“Family is...”* project that the ministry supported [see page 33] at a dedicated event in Berlin.

Since 2013, the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum has seen participation from current and former elected officials in Bhutan, Costa Rica, the Netherlands, Serbia and Venezuela; public servants and diplomats from Australia, Austria, Canada, Germany, the Netherlands, Nicaragua, Korea, Sweden, the UK, the US, Ukraine and the European Union; and representatives from multilateral organizations including the UNDP, United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the World Bank, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights and the Council of Europe.



Dennis van der Veur presented findings from the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights’ LGBT survey — the largest of its kind — at the inaugural session in 2013.

All sessions have hosted panel discussions with diplomats and legislators. In Chiang Rai in 2016, a panel of ambassadors and lawmakers from the UK, Sweden, Canada, Venezuela and Bhutan ultimately declared that government and civil society from across the globe must work together to identify strategic opportunities and leverage each other’s strengths to further advance the human rights and inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people.

That panel agreed on the importance of building coalitions — be they within the LGBT community; between the LGBT community, governments and development partners; or with other civil society organizations that deal with other marginalized populations. Building these bridges, particularly with governments and state structures, can contribute greatly towards turning advocacy into much-needed legal reform and policy change.

“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 Ugyen Wangdi, Member of Parliament from Bhutan. *“This opportunity [the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum in Asia] gives us a unique chance to learn about the needs and issues concerning the LGBT community, and how us, as lawmakers, can make a difference to improve their wellbeing.”*

The challenges confronting LGBT persons are not only national or regional, but also global. Developing an understanding of how countries’ and regions’ 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 LGBT inclusion on the global stage.

As Klaus Mueller underscored following the 2016 session, held in partnership with the UNDP’s Being LGBTI in Asia program, in Chiang Rai, Thailand: *“Continuously bringing LGBT human rights groups and government agencies together is vital for a better understanding of how both can collaboratively and independently advance equality and inclusion of LGBT people and communities.”*

“

We work with the
Salzburg Global LGBT Forum in
order to establish a global space to
reflect upon and advance the LGBT
and human rights discussions
around the world.

”

Christoph Straesser

May 2014

Austrian and German government officials Stefan Scholz and Ralf Kleindiek pose for photos with Klaus Mueller and Fellows of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum from the Philippines, Russia, China, the US, Australia and Bhutan.







6.2

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

As sympathetic governments gradually adopt LGBT-supportive foreign policy strategies, local LGBT organizations can provide essential “on the ground” insights and advice. In turn, embassies can offer support through wider networks, funding and protections to vulnerable human rights defenders. To help explore and strengthen this burgeoning relationship, the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum was invited by the German Federal Foreign Office to meet representatives in Berlin in 2014.

As Geeta Misra explained at a meeting with the German Federal Foreign Office in 2014, civil society in India had yet to realize engagement with embassies as a possibility for cooperation and advancement of LGBT rights.

Following its inaugural session in 2013, the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum was invited by the German Federal Foreign Office to bring together a select group of human rights leaders from across the world to Berlin for three days of consultations in May 2014 as part of the session *Creating Long-Term Global Networks to Sustain LGBT Human Rights Organizations*.

The Federal Office arranged for Klaus Mueller to meet in advance with a range of key personnel whose inputs ensured that the

meeting was as wide and relevant in scope as possible. The primary objective of this session was to look at the specific ways in which LGBT issues are addressed by the German Federal Foreign Office and their embassies across the world, but especially in the Global South and East. The session was also designed to assess how German governmental support for human rights issues can help ensure that LGBT and other human rights organizations, embassies and other actors build closer networks and more effective relationships.

Placing the issues into context, Christoph Straesser, the German Federal Government Commissioner for Human Rights and Humanitarian Aid, noted that: *“The question before us, as societies, organizations and persons wishing to protect and promote human rights, is how to halt negative developments, and further advance positive developments. There is no simple answer to this question.”* Conceding that also in Germany, the process of recognition of the rights of LGBT persons has been a slow one, Straesser called on the Fellows of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum *“to help us identify answers.”*

Having commenced his work in this position in January 2014, Straesser gave a clear message: *“Strengthening human rights across the world is a priority of Germany’s foreign policy. To achieve this goal, building sustainable networks of human rights defenders is of course of central importance. These can be formalized networks in the form of human rights organizations like those that many of you represent, but also more fluid networks, such as the one you are building with the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum.”* Straesser also stressed that Federal Foreign Office policy is based on the basic truth that *“LGBT rights are human rights.”*

Over the course of three days, the group of Salzburg Global LGBT Forum Fellows from China, India, Germany, Lebanon, Russia, South Africa, Syria, Uganda and Venezuela reflected on the progresses and setbacks in their own countries before meeting with and advising representatives from the German Foreign Office, the Dutch ministry of Foreign Affairs, the European External Action Service, German and international human rights NGOs, as well as security experts, German parliamentarians,

and representatives from the German Ministry of Family Affairs and the Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. Fellows had the opportunity to share experiences, ideas and concerns with key stakeholders in the German government as well as with diplomats from the embassies of Argentina, Brazil, Norway, Romania, South Africa, Spain, the US and the European Union. Besides encouraging embassy staff to engage more closely with local activists and integrate them in their outreach to civil society, the activists were encouraged to pro-actively seek and maintain contact with respective embassies. To this end, Fellows were also offered valuable insights into the operation and procedures of the German Foreign Office,

including internal hurdles such as small staffs with multiple portfolios and high turnovers – challenges faced by many other sympathetic countries' diplomatic missions.

The Forum Fellows emphasized that on-the-ground activists provide valuable information for embassies representing LGBT-friendly countries. Well-intentioned actions – including fast-tracking asylum applications or posing for solidarity photos with local activists – can have both positive and negative consequences. Economic aid sanctions against hostile governments, such as those levied against Uganda in face of its 2014 Anti-Homosexuality Act, or boycotts of international events in hostile host countries, such as the

German Secretary of State for Family Affairs, Ralf Kleindiek meets with Salzburg Global LGBT Forum Fellows from Kazakhstan and Russia at the German Federal Foreign Office in Berlin in 2014.



Speaking at the public event for the 2014 session, Riccardo Serri of the European External Action Service informed the audience that the EU member states viewed the passing of the homophobic laws in Uganda as a very serious issue.



2014 Winter Olympics in Russia, among many other examples need continuous and close communication between embassies and human rights groups to help prevent backlash and advance shared goals. Greater engagement with local activists can not only better inform embassies and international organizations of the LGBT situation in specific countries, but also when support should be discreet or public: the diplomatic pressure on the Serbian government

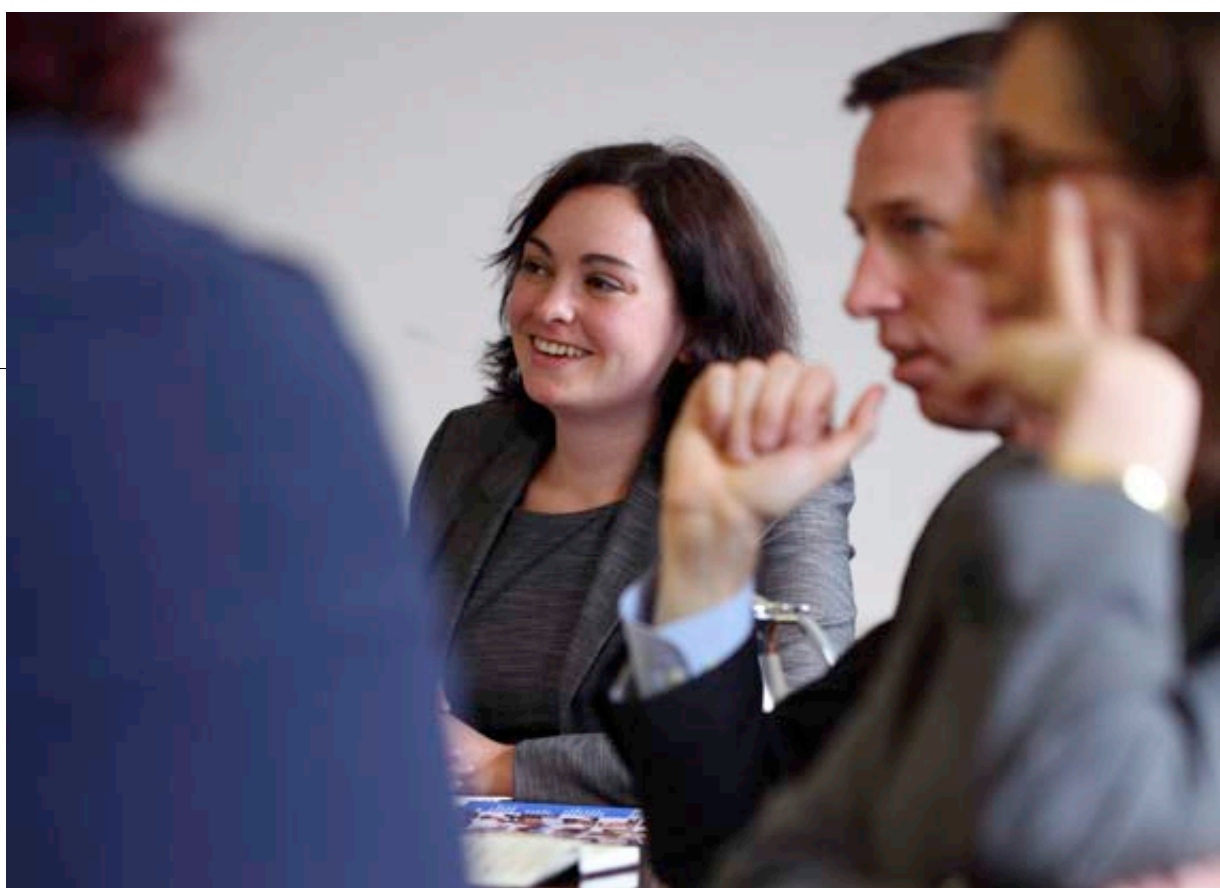
that helped to secure freedom of assembly and Pride March in Belgrade, was discussed as one successful example. Diplomatic intervention by EU members, Germany included, led to integrating LGBT rights into the general human rights framework in some Balkan countries.

The session in Berlin culminated in the issuing of eleven concrete recommendations [see page 170]. The meeting provided an invaluable opportunity to build on the foundations laid in Salzburg in 2013. *“The opportunity to engage in dialogue and debate in an open, conducive environment cannot be overestimated,”* said Mueller. A consensus was established that this *“fluid network”* can make a meaningful contribution towards creating long term global networks and sustaining LGBT human rights organizations.

“The combined expertise of the German Federal Foreign Office and the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum as well as the diverse range of participants collectively contributed to an enriching, mutually-beneficial experience,” added Mueller.

“For a network to truly live and thrive, there is no substitute for face-to-face interaction. The momentum of Salzburg was sustained in Berlin through the processes of discovery, empathy and learning. It must now continue.”

Silvia Heer, in her then role as desk officer in the Human Rights Division at the German Federal Foreign Office, was instrumental in arranging the high-level meetings with ministry officials for the 2014 session, *Creating Long-Term Global Networks to Sustain LGBT Human Rights Organizations.*



Fellows' recommendations on creating long-term global networks to sustain LGBT human rights organizations

There are no easy answers and no “short-cuts” to supporting, enhancing and sustaining LGBT rights. What does make a difference is ongoing networking, engagement and dialogue between diplomatic missions and LGBT human rights organizations. Some of the concrete recommendations resulting from the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum include:

01. Roundtables and dialogs between donors and activists to discuss LGBT strategies should be increased, not only in countries where LGBT rights are under threat, but before they are under threat. For example, the EU-supported NGO Forum in Lebanon works well in this regard and could be replicated elsewhere.
02. Donors and supporters of LGBT groups should focus on a multiplicity of issues, not only hate speech or physical violence. In many contexts the major challenges faced by LGBT communities relate to labor, health, housing, family and educational policies.
03. International groups need to focus on mainstreaming LGBT rights in accepted rights like freedom of expression, assembly and association.
04. In countries where LGBT activists are facing persecution, imprisonment, and even the death penalty, the international community should consider creating systems for travel visas and protection programs in support of human rights activists.
05. Training and capacity building for LGBT activists and groups plays a critical role in many places and support for these kinds of activities needs to be increased.
06. Capacity building is critical to advancing the ability of civil society and activists and to building a common thread in countries affected by this issue. However, this support needs to move beyond capital cities to expand work in rural areas and secondary cities.
06. In countries where LGBT communities are being persecuted, international sanctions should best be leveled against individual politicians – not aid budgets in general. A global reduction in development aid or development support creates a tool for governments to suggest that LGBT communities are to blame for reductions in international support.
07. International donors should not only support human rights activists, but also the communities and individuals affected by LGBT repression (evictions,





Salzburg Global LGBT Fellow Dan Zhou presents the Fellows' recommendations on creating long-term global networks to sustain LGBT human rights organizations at a public event in Berlin, alongside Pooja Badarinath and Tamara Adrián.

job losses, etc.). It is critical to build support for programs that address special circumstances where communities are affected but where support is going to activists themselves.

08. Diplomatic missions should carefully manage public and non-public tools and engage with local civil society partners in order to ensure that the correct tool is chosen.
09. Overseas diplomatic missions should, wherever possible, attend Gay Pride parades and other LGBT events, as they can provide a critical safety mechanism for activists and communities.
10. More international pressure needs to be brought to bear on the people and organizations that are funding the politics of hate and anti-democratic movements.

11. The international debate needs to be shifted away from talking about the “developed” and “developing” world, and toward a discussion focusing on countries that protect the human rights of LGBT communities and those that do not. For example, countries like Argentina, Brazil and the Philippines can play a significant role in changing the dynamics of the North vs. South debate.

Following their meeting in 2014, many of these recommendations from the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum are now being implemented by the German Federal Foreign Office and have since been developed further through our regular discussions with foreign ministries in our subsequent sessions.

6.3

Strengthening International Connections

In October 2016, the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum was held in partnership between Salzburg Global Seminar and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and its Being LGBTI in Asia program in Chiang Rai, Thailand. As part of the session, a dedicated “Ambassadors Panel” was convened with the ambassadors to Thailand from Canada, Sweden and the UK, and two lawmakers from Bhutan and Venezuela. Together they discussed how activists can build coalitions, improve communications and solve issues with donors, agencies and governments.

Salzburg Global LGBT Forum invites its Fellows as individuals, not just as institutional representatives, and encourages them to share both their expertise and life experiences. Moderating a panel of ambassadors and legislators, Sir Michael Kirby, former Justice of the High Court of Australia invited the eminent speakers to open the panel by sharing their personal reasons why LGBT issues are of importance to them. Aside from their role as representatives of states or governments, each spoke movingly as parents of LGBT children, as open members of the LGBT community or as individuals that support equality.

Moving back into their professional roles, the 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.

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 rural 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 Donica Pottie, Canada’s ambassador to Thailand. *“This requires strong partnerships between government, international organizations, civil society and other stakeholders.”*

Panelists warned that in recent years there is less money and more competition for civil society projects. It was discussed how groups can draft realistic plans that might be successful in applying for support from specific government and agencies.

Panelists encouraged Fellows that indeed 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 land-mines. *“An active civil society will likely further necessary progressive social and legal change that will advance LGBT peoples’ rights, health and wellbeing,”* said Staffan Herrström, Sweden’s ambassador to Thailand. Although topics such as homosexuality, sex workers or gender might be unfamiliar or uncomfortable for policymakers, it is crucial to inform politicians of LGBT issues in ways and a language they understand. Often government officials perceive LGBT issues as a distant topic because they lack accurate information or statistics.

Many questions were addressed: Where are the potential entry points that civil society can use to further engage with governments and donors? How can they improve access to policymaking processes? How can we facilitate LGBT participation in human rights reporting mechanisms? The discussion also highlighted

how some governments currently address LGBT issues within their development and social protection priorities and identified where further opportunities exist.

"It was great to have such a wide ranging discussion from such a diversity of perspectives. Engagement across the three pillars of civil society, government and the donor community is essential to developing effective agendas for economic and social inclusion," said Brian Davidson, Salzburg Global Fellow and the UK's Ambassador to Thailand. *"I will be taking back the lessons from today to inform the approach of my own Embassy in supporting the work of LGBTI groups in Thailand."*

"This conversation builds on a series of meetings and engagements of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum with numerous foreign offices and other government ministries and agencies," commented Klaus Mueller. *"Continuously bringing LGBT human rights groups and government agencies together is vital for a better understanding of how both can collaboratively and independently advance equality and inclusion of*

LGBT people and communities."

With the diplomatic participants coming from Western governments, it was 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 UN level, more countries are joining coalitions or voting in favor of UN decisions supporting LGBT rights.

"Today's conversation between ambassadors, lawmakers and civil society highlighted that governments remain key partners in promoting and protecting the inclusion of LGBTI people," said Edmund Settle, Policy Advisor for UNDP Bangkok Regional Hub. He echoed the sentiments of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum by saying: *"We look forward to continuing to work together to ensure that marginalized groups, including LGBTI people are not left behind."*

Donica Pottie, Canada's ambassador to Thailand joined ambassadors and legislators from Sweden, the UK, Bhutan and Venezuela for the 2016 "Ambassadors Conversation."



6.4 Happiness and Harmonization – LGBT Laws in Bhutan

In the land of happiness, LGBT people are still largely invisible and criminalized. But constitutional change is leading to legal harmonization and eventually greater LGBT equality in Bhutan.

As the country that originated the concept of “Gross National Happiness,” a Buddhism-inspired alternative to Gross Domestic Product, the tiny mountainous country of Bhutan has a reputation for peace and harmony. Prominent Bhutanese Buddhist teacher, Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche, has spoken positively on LGBT rights, saying:

“Your sexual orientation has nothing to do with understanding or not understanding the truth. You could be gay, you could be lesbian, you could be straight, we never know which one will get enlightened first... Tolerance is not a good thing. If you are tolerating this, it means that you think it’s something wrong that you will tolerate. But you have to go beyond that – you have to respect.”

Despite this positive Buddhist declaration and its peaceful reputation, Bhutan, like much of the region, still maintains colonial-era anti-sodomy laws, effectively criminalizing homosexuality. The marginalization that Bhutanese LGBT activists and Salzburg Global Fellows have shared at the LGBT Forum points to a distinctly unhappy existence [see page 66].

However – this is slowly changing, as a harmonization of another kind is taking place.

At the turn of the century, the former king of Bhutan initiated a process to write the country’s first written constitution. When it was enacted in 2008 by the country’s first democratically elected government, a long process was launched to harmonize all of Bhutan’s existing laws with the new constitution that guaranteed many fundamental human rights.

Under such rights, trans men and women can now gain official identification aligned with their gender identity – as one LGBT Forum

Ugyen Wangdi was one of two members of the National Assembly of Bhutan who participated in the 2016 session of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum. He was joined by his colleague, Madan Kumar Chhetri on a fact-finding mission as they help their country rewrite their laws pertaining to LGBT rights.





Passang Dorji on coming out on TV in Bhutan and progress made

Fellow from Bhutan was able to gain this year.

With the harmonization process still ongoing, in 2016, two Bhutanese National Assembly members took part in the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum, held in Chiang Rai, Thailand, alongside two Bhutanese LGBT rights activists. Parliamentarians Madan Kumar Chhetri and Ugyen Wangdi attended the Forum as part of a fact-finding mission because, although there are clearly LGBT Bhutanese (the country has been represented at two of the five Salzburg Global LGBT Forum sessions), they are not prominent in society, as trans activist Ugyen Tshering had shared with the Forum in 2015.

Passang Dorji, one of the Bhutanese LGBT activists who also attended the Forum in 2016, has sought to change this by publicly discussing his homosexuality on national television in the country. However, despite his and others' efforts to gain visibility, this was the first time that Chhetri and Wangdi had ever (knowingly) met anyone who identifies as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender. In the course of the five days of listening to panel discussions, taking part in working groups on the importance of family, and speaking privately to other Fellows from around the world, the two parliamentarians met dozens of members of a community they barely had known existed.

Bhutanese LGBT rights activist Passang Dorji led a knowledge café discussion on the ongoing legal harmonization process in his country at the 2016 session, *The Many Faces of LGBT Inclusion*.



When asked on the last day what were the most important insights they had gained through their participation in the Forum, Wangdi noted three things: the importance of terminology, the challenges faced by LGBT people with regards to families and marriage and state-sponsored LGBT extremism.

“That struck me most because anything can happen if law is not correct and right and it can affect the community, society and country as a whole,” he reflected.

Once the session was over, Wangdi and Chhetri planned to work with both their colleagues in parliament and their newfound colleagues from the Forum: “When we go back we will brief our unit about the nature of the LGBT community, and what are the challenges, and we will share with them the legal barriers in our system. Of course, we will talk about how we can really change that,” explained Wangdi.

“Also, we have talked to our two colleagues from the community that it has to be from their side. The initiative has to be taken from their side so that we can support it. We told them that they can write to the parliament saying that there are certain provisions of law that restrict them, or criminalizes them, so request parliament can make the necessary amendments. Also, they can request to share their views with members of the parliament.”

For his part, Dorji was grateful to have had the two politicians take part in the session: *“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.”*

The process of changing the laws affecting LGBT people will be slow – the harmonization process is expected to continue beyond the next round of parliamentary elections, to be held in 2018. But Wangdi is positive that change will come and that Bhutan's LGBT community will finally be more visible.

“Currently [homosexuality] is something criminal, but if you remove that then naturally the community will come up and slowly it will get into mainstream like any other countries.”

6.5 Our Donors

The Salzburg Global LGBT Forum is proud to partner with a diverse range of supporters from around the world who share our desire to see LGBT human rights upheld. Independent foundations, government ministries, agencies of international organizations, and private individuals have all provided their financial resources, their personal expertise and time, and the best of their respective networks to achieve our shared goals.

German Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth

On the occasion of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum's annual session in 2014, hosted at the German Federal Foreign Office in Berlin, the group of attending Fellows were also invited to speak to the human rights officer at the Dutch Embassy, and to State Secretary Ralf Kleindiek at the German Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Seniors, Women and Youth. At the Ministry, the Fellows reviewed with the State Secretary the complexities and diversity of LGBT families and, as a result, the concept for the three-year "Family is...?" project was born. This project was piloted in 2015 with a grant from the Ministry, and expanded in 2016-2017. In May 2017, the Ministry premièred the Forum's film "Family is...? A Global Conversation," with Kleindiek delivering the opening remarks.



Ralf Kleindiek,
German State Secretary for Family
Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women
and Youth

"For our ministry it has been very important to support the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum financially, and this is true especially of the "Family is...?" project and its various forms of outreach regarding LGBT families. For most people, family is a crucial part of their lives and of their identities and so it is important that we have a very wide interpretation of what family is. For us in the German Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, family is where people of different generations stay with each other, look after each other, and support each other. It's not dependent on if you are married or not married, or if you are homosexual or heterosexual. It's not important which sexual or gender identity you have. It is a very serious matter of discrimination if we define family as a closed unit.

"We think it is necessary to make the situations of people in different countries visible and to show what situations people are living in, especially when people, because of their sexual identity, are living in different ways. They also

need this sphere of family, they also need the support of other people, of their families.

"For us it is important to make visible these different situations as they exist in Europe and in other parts of the world, and this includes discussing the problems too. We learn from the LGBT Forum how discussions in Germany influence other countries, and how their discussions in other countries influence us in Germany. I am looking forward to the results of this project and I am very happy that we can support it."



Ralf Kleindiek
spricht über LGBT in
Deutschland und das
Salzburg Global LGBT
Forum

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Since its founding, the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum has benefited from the active participation of individuals from multiple United Nations agencies including UNAIDS, UNICEF, and OHCHR. In 2015, with the recommendation of the UNDP's Global LGBT Team Leader, Salzburg Global Seminar was introduced to UNDP colleagues at the Bangkok Regional Hub responsible for their program, "Being LGBTI in Asia." Thanks to this connection, in 2016, UNDP hosted the fourth session of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum in Chiang Rai, Thailand and ensured the participation of key policymakers at both this and the subsequent session in 2017.



Edmund Settle,
Regional Policy Advisor,
UNDP Bangkok

"For UNDP and for the Being LGBTI in Asia program, it is important that we are connected to a global human rights advocacy platform which has a network beyond Asia. For us it is important that we are able to support Asian voices, and not only the well-known and established ones but also to help identify new leaders that are emerging. At the same time, we need to be connected to the global process. One of our key objectives is partnership building – in the Asia/Pacific region and beyond, with

governments and other UN agencies, civil society, global advocacy platforms, research institutes, global human rights platforms, etc. We see partnership with Salzburg Global as an important part of this strategy.

"The original agreement between Salzburg Global

Seminar and UNDP was to hold the first LGBT Forum outside of Europe. Collaboratively we held this Forum in Chiang Rai, Thailand [in 2016]. For the Forum, some of the benefits of convening outside of Europe is it was able to engage more voices, more individuals from other regions, specifically East and Southeast Asia. The meeting that we had in Chiang Rai, two thirds were actually from the region. Therefore, gay men, lesbian women, trans men and women from 17 Asian countries were able to participate in the Forum, and conversely the Forum was able to get more visibility.

"In addition, in holding the event outside of Europe, we had the opportunity to more easily engage with governments from that region including Members of Parliament from Bhutan.

In Chiang Rai this also included ambassadors from major donor countries that are based in Thailand, and this was able to increase exposure for the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum in governments like Canada, Sweden and the United Kingdom and others.

"This [year, 2017] is my first time here in Salzburg and the experience has been fantastic. Taking part in the conversations and understanding the main topics not only globally but in Africa, and Latin America, and understanding how they relate to Asia has been invaluable – not only for me, but for the participants from Asia."

Staff of the UNDP's Bangkok Regional Hub and Salzburg Global Seminar pose for a photo at the closing of the 2016 session.



Open Society Foundations

Open Society Foundations (OSF) is a founding supporter of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum and, as such, is a source of inspiration for its activities. As with others mentioned here, Michael Heflin has personally attended multiple events and contributed valuable expertise to the Forum's capacity and network-building.



Michael Heflin,
Director of Equality, OSF

"Open Society Foundations has a relationship with Salzburg Global Seminar that precedes the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum. In the past, we have supported different sessions focusing on human rights issues or important global topics, but we thought it was great

when Salzburg Global decided to specifically focus on LGBT rights. Salzburg Global has been a really important place to talk about emerging issues in human rights around the globe, and to bring people together working on those issues from different regions of the world. So we have supported the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum since the beginning.

"For us, it's an important

decision whether to fund these global gatherings or seminars, because ultimately most of our funding goes to LGBT groups on the ground in the Global South and East that are trying to change laws, policies, and public attitudes in their own countries. We think it's important that those activists have opportunities to come together at a regional level and a global level, but we know every time we provide a grant for someone to attend a seminar, that in essence, is money we could have given to a group on the ground.

"But what we have found so far is that Salzburg Global Seminar is different – I think it's the way that it's been set up, it really is set

up as a discussion format. A lot of times you go [to conferences] and the whole program is very formal, people giving speeches, and I think here, Klaus and others who have supported the Seminar really have done a good job of creating a format where you do hear from people who have expertise in particular areas of the work, but also to facilitate a conversation among the activists and others present.

"At other kinds of convenings that I've seen, one really only meets activists. Here there has been an effort to try to bring in people who would define themselves as activists but also other cultural change leaders: lawyers, filmmakers, photographers, people who are working on this issue, but coming at it from a slightly different angle.

That creates a conversation that is different because often those people meet with others like them. With human rights issues generally, but with LGBT rights specifically, in most places in the world you are challenging embedded attitudes and what would be seen as cultural norms. Combining the discussions of legal advocacy with questions about how to build broader public understanding help us reach different audiences, and so that combination is particularly important."

"Salzburg Global LGBT Forum, in conjunction with UNDP: eloquent evidence of the power of international dialogue, relationship building and trust."

Todd Larson,
Senior LGBT Co-ordinator,
USAID

UNDP's "Being LGBT in Asia" is underwritten in part by the US Agency for International Development (USAID). Todd Larson attended the 2016 session of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum when it was held in Chiang Rai, Thailand.



Austrian Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs

The Salzburg Global LGBT Forum is also grateful to have homegrown support for its activities. From its earliest days, Ambassador Stefan Scholz (whose father is also a Fellow, having first attended a session in 1960) has been instrumental in drawing together support both from the Ministry centrally and also from across disparate Austrian embassies, primarily from across the Global South. He made the following comments regarding the importance of the Forum at its fifth convening in 2017.



Ambassador Stefan Scholz,
Former Director for Planning
and Programing of Development
Cooperation*

“Starting in 2014, Austria has become an emerging donor to the human rights-specific ‘LGBTI rights and development nexus.’ Linking strategic programming for the ‘LGBTI rights and development nexus’ with forward-looking policymaking has fostered a culture of cooperation in our Ministry of Foreign Affairs between different departments of the political section, the human rights office and the development directorate, and reaching out to local voices. “The Salzburg Global LGBT Forum is the first LGBTI-specific project that we

have run, and as part of it we brought ten individuals from our priority countries to Salzburg to participate in this meeting. Our embassies and our cooperation offices were involved in selecting the individuals, and this has been our first step towards networking and outreach. We have to build on this network further in the future.

“The human rights defender EU guidelines and the EU LGBTI guidelines are the key policy documents for the promotion and protection of all human rights of LGBTI persons on the basis of existing international legal standards. I think the time has come to review their country-level implementation critically. So I myself will take this meeting as an opportunity to redistribute, together with our human rights



Stefan Scholz discusses the role of embassies in supporting LGBT rights groups with Lukas Hendriksen of HIVOS, an organization that has also supported the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum.

director, these guidelines to the Austrian embassies and country offices, and instruct them to invite the Forum participants together with local human rights defenders and other stakeholders to a feed-back meeting.”

* Scholz was appointed Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Iran in July 2017.

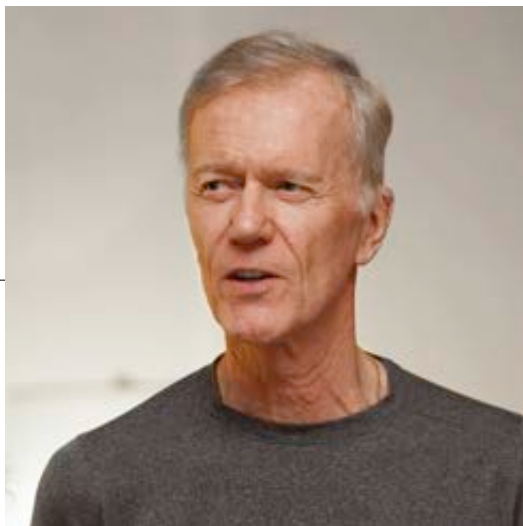
6.6

Michael Huffington



As well as institutional and governmental donors, the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum has been supported by generous individuals. Michael Huffington has long been a supporter of Salzburg Global Seminar; in fact, he follows in his father Roy's footsteps. The elder Huffington was a long-term patron of the organization and served as chair of the board of directors for well over a decade. The Huffington Centennial Fund and the Huffington Family Foundation Endowment Fund continue to provide general financial support to Salzburg Global Seminar, and like his sister Terry, Michael has also chosen to give targeted funds for causes close to his heart. The Salzburg Global LGBT Forum was seeded thanks to a generous initial donation from Michael Huffington. At the fifth session of the Forum, held in May 2017, Huffington shared his life story as part of the long-running "Truth and Transformation" series, shedding light on why LGBT and human rights are such important issues for this philanthropist.

Michael Huffington generously provided seed funding to the first session of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum in 2013. He joined the Forum as a guest speaker at the fifth session – *Home: Safety, Wellness and Belonging* – in 2017.



Michael Huffington grew up in 1950s Texas, USA, at a time when there were few openly LGBT people around, and when homosexuals were referred to with offensive slurs. He went through high school and college believing he was only attracted to girls. It wasn't until he was 27 years old that he realized he also had an attraction to men. It was then that he had his first same sex experience. He recalls that he enjoyed it, but also that he couldn't really understand what had just happened.

After his first experience with a man, Huffington mainly had girlfriends and only occasionally met guys during the next seven years. His experiences with men left him feeling guilty.

When the 1980s arrived, the AIDS epidemic came with it. The confusion and fear surrounding the virus led Huffington to stop having sex with men – something he would not do again until 18 years later. During this time, he fell in love and married Arianna Stassinopoulos in 1986, and he joined the Greek Orthodox Church during their marriage. He told her about his experiences with men before they married.



Michael Huffington's family have long supported Salzburg Global Seminar. A wing of the Meierhof is named in honor of his father, Roy Huffington, a long-serving chair of the board of directors.



Michael Huffington on his coming out, bisexuality and being created by God

She accepted him for who he was, and in their eleven years together they had two wonderful daughters.

In the early 1990s, Huffington rose to national prominence as a Republican congressman, particularly during his 1994 US Senate campaign which he narrowly lost. His was the most expensive non-Presidential election campaign in American history at that point. A couple of years later, he and his wife decided to divorce. By 1998, at 50 years old, he decided to come out as bisexual. He was a renowned public figure in California, but his decision went beyond politics, and instead was spiritually based.

His coming out made the national news, something that Huffington hopes was helpful for many others struggling with their sexual orientation.

"So when I knew that God created me in his image, I said 'OK, I need to love myself and not be concerned about anything else but to live a truthful life and be honest.' That's when I decided to publicly come out. I didn't realize how extensive the publicity would be. I did it because I wanted to help other

younger people, because I had suffered through stages of being guilty about my own sexuality and it made a huge impact."

He began supporting LGBT causes such as the work of the Annenberg School of Communications (University of Southern California) on "sexual orientation in the news" to influence a positive shift of LGBT portrayals in the media, and the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum to foster global conversations on and advance the struggle for LGBT rights.

Now, years after his coming out, Huffington feels happier than at any point of his youth. He considers himself to be truly bisexual, and he admires the younger generation's use of the word "fluid." To him, this is a beautiful concept that reminds us that the soul is genderless, and it is simply poured into a body that becomes irrelevant after our death.

For the philanthropist, coming out has been a crucial and necessary step in building the world as a place of love. For him, making this possible begins by loving and accepting ourselves, and over time, this love will spread to those around us.

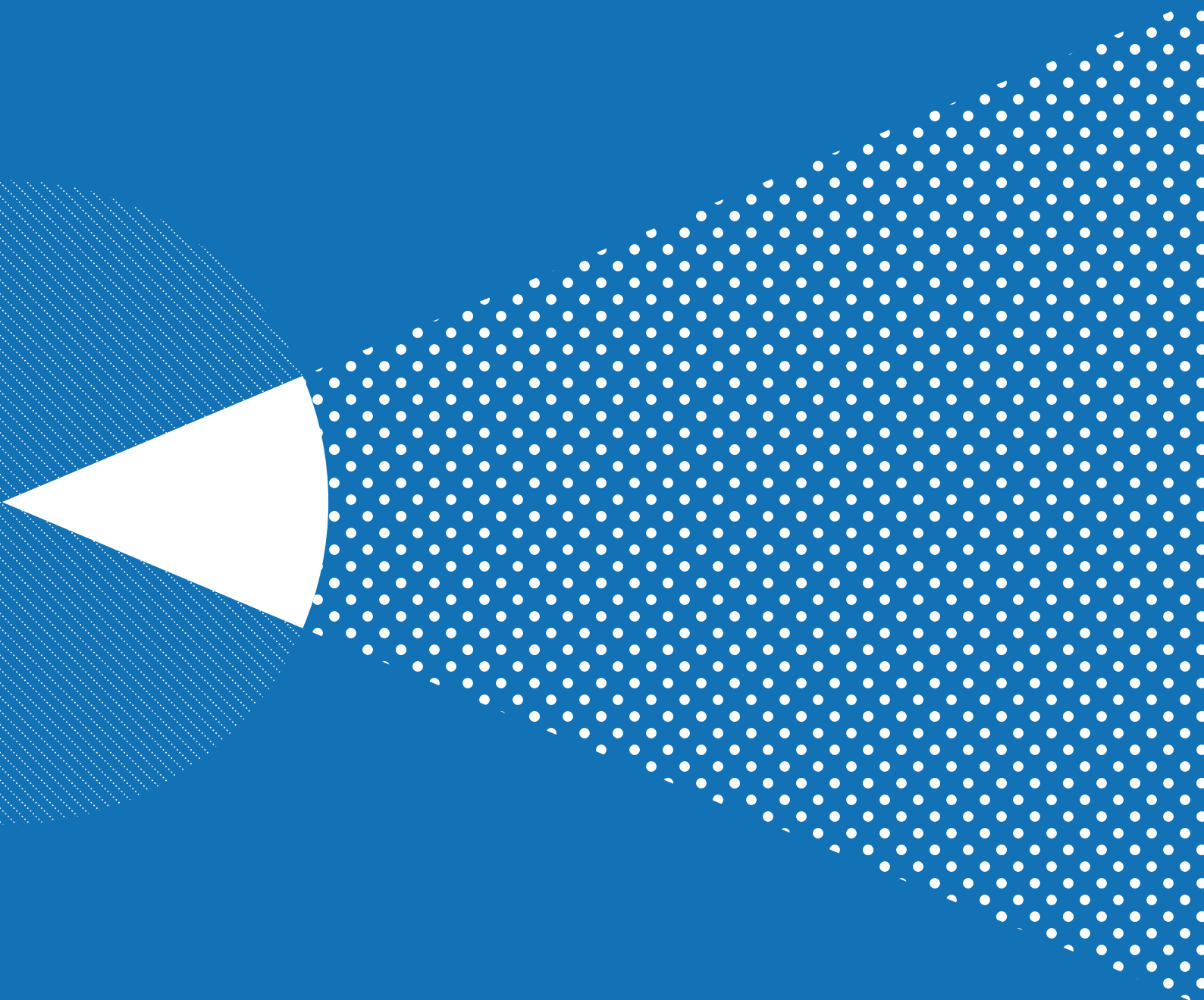




Salzburg Global Vice President Clare Shine and Geeta Misra of CREA take advantage of the good weather to lead a discussion on the role of philanthropy in supporting LGBT rights on the terrace of Schloss Leopoldskron.

07

LOOKING FORWARD



“As president of an institution founded 70 years ago to bridge divides, I am extremely proud of how the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum has advanced human rights under the leadership of its Founder and Chair, Klaus Mueller. As a young public television manager in New York City almost forty years ago, I supported the airing of a groundbreaking documentary, ‘Word Is Out,’ which brought the lives of LGBT people to a nationwide audience in the United States. Public understanding and public policy have advanced considerably since then, but the challenges across the world remain great. The Salzburg Global LGBT Forum is a place where they can be addressed.”

— Stephen L. Salyer,
President and Chief Executive Officer, Salzburg Global Seminar

Since 2011, the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum has grown from nascent idea to a globe-spanning network of 154 Fellows in 70 countries across six continents. Over the course of five sessions, the Forum has held 42 panel discussions, 32 working groups, four “knowledge cafés” on 25 different topics, six exhibitions, four film festivals showing 29 films including four world premières, and two public events in Berlin. The Salzburg Statement co-created by the Fellows of the inaugural 2013 session – *The Statement of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum: Advancing human rights for LGBT people and communities* – continues to guide all aspects of the Forum’s work and impact.

With support from rapporteurs, videographers and photographers in four countries, Salzburg Global Seminar’s small and dedicated in-house communications team has produced for the

Forum five session reports, over 100 articles, more than 80 video testimonies (viewed on Salzburg Global Seminar’s YouTube channel and Facebook page over 30,000 times), a 20-minute short film, and now this 50,000-word report. Fellows of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum continue to connect regularly, both online – using dedicated email Listservs, an external periodic newsletter, and a secure member-only Facebook group – and through personal connections built during our meetings that nurture and generate transnational projects, including in their own communities.

As the Forum reaches its fifth anniversary in the year that we celebrate Salzburg Global Seminar’s 70th anniversary, Founder and Chair, Klaus Mueller and Salzburg Global Seminar Vice Presidents, Benjamin Glahn and Clare Shine take stock and consider the road ahead.



7.1

Outlook and Next Steps for the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum

After five successful years of convening sessions, sharing stories and building a global network, Founder and Chair, Klaus Mueller and Salzburg Global Seminar Vice Presidents, Benjamin Glahn and Clare Shine, consider the impact the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum has had and how it will move forward over the next five years.

Fellows of the 2014 session *Creating Long-Term Global Networks to Sustain LGBT Human Rights* gather for the traditional group photo in front of the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin.

Salzburg Global Seminar remains committed to advancing dialogue and collaboration for LGBT equality as a key attribute of civic societies that no longer tear families, communities or societies apart for reasons of sexual orientation and gender identity or expression. We believe that the Forum's signature – the truly global representation of diverse leaders across human rights, law, arts and culture, and religion – is and will continue to be of vital importance for inclusive and tolerant societies.

As this report highlights through concrete examples, the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum can point to many areas of achievement since it was founded in 2013:

- Establishment of a pioneering Forum that enables and promotes greater understanding of the interconnectedness and impact of global developments, campaigns and voices on LGBT equality, both globally and locally.
- Adoption of the jointly-written Salzburg Statement – *The Statement of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum: Advancing human rights for LGBT people and communities* – to guide intersectional action and projects.
- Advancement of institutional agendas, including through issuing key recommendations on creating long-term global networks to sustain LGBT human rights organizations, which have been implemented and further developed by the German Federal Foreign Ministry.
- Development of a network of Fellows that connects cultures, generations and geographies, and forms a diverse community with mutual trust and wellbeing embedded as core values for meetings and collaborations.
- Promotion of cultural voices and products in the advancement LGBT human rights.
- Creation of a secure and dynamic online platform on which Fellows can ask for advice, continue discussions and respond to initiatives from members and partners.
- Wide dissemination of expertise and achievements through social media, a periodic newsletter and dedicated website → lgbt.salzburgglobal.org.
- Global communication of our Fellows' work through films, interviews, publications and online campaigns.
- Transformation of personal lives and life chances.

The Forum's major interconnected themes already include family, storytelling, migration and human security. In the future, we plan to expand this focus to include the role of history in better understanding how societies in- or exclude the lives of LGBT people and communities in their portrayal of cultural, national or religious identities.



Fellows of the inaugural session in 2013 – *LGBT and Human Rights: New Challenges, Next Steps*.

Expanding on the Forum's first five years and the vibrancy of its network of LGBT human rights defenders and supporters, we have identified key priorities for the next phase of its development. Over the next five years the Forum will seek to: a) leverage its independence, diversity and inclusiveness and harness its strengths in interdisciplinary convening and collaboration; b) enhance its contribution to global storytelling and cultural expression; and c) identify and support the next generation of human rights advocates and change-makers who are advancing LGBT equality.

By catalyzing and leading collaborations around the globe, the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum aims to drive change in three areas:

01. Tipping point issues and policy levers, specifically around issues of equality, decriminalization efforts, and the wellness and wellbeing of LGBT human rights defenders and their communities;



Fellows at the first Salzburg Global LGBT Forum session to be held in Asia – *The Many Faces of LGBT Inclusion* – in Chiang Rai, Thailand in 2016.

Fellows of the fifth session – *Home: Safety, Wellness and Belonging* – in 2017.



Fellows of the third session – *Strengthening Communities: LGBT Rights and Social Cohesion* – in 2015.



- 02. Understanding and communicating an inclusive definition of family in all of its forms (families by birth, families by choice and the families we raise); and
- 03. Supporting efforts for the full inclusion of LGBT refugees, migrants and those at risk of “double-marginalization.”

Building on its strengths, the Forum will combine outreach and concrete projects for three objectives:

- 01. Create and distribute mindset-shifting stories through publications, video testimonials and social media campaigns to reach and influence specific audiences.
- 02. Build awareness among policy- and decision-makers (including governments, international development agencies, foundations and business) of the positive/negative impacts that specific policies and practices can have on the health and wellbeing of LGBT families and individuals, enabling them to influence a wider positive shift in attitudes, strategies and investments.
- 03. Enable next-generation LGBT leaders to extend their awareness-raising and support activities and forge collaboration with other stakeholders.

While continuing larger gatherings to extend and deepen the Forum’s global network, we also aim to create, support and facilitate smaller meetings and explore new formats to share our expertise and connections with stakeholders from diverse fields. We have built a strong basis, but remain a “fluid network” that responds to initiatives from our members and partners and grows through evaluation and cooperation.

As we embark on the next five years, we thank our Fellows, partners and donors who have made the first five years of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum so successful. In the years to come, we look forward to deeper and broader collaboration, and to doing our part to realize the full and equal human rights of LGBT people and communities around the globe.





08

APPENDIX

Salzburg Global LGBT Forum Participants

Founder and Chair

- **Klaus Mueller**
Founder and Chair, Salzburg Global LGBT Forum, Berlin, Germany

Fellows

- **Tamara Adrián**
Human Rights Lawyer; Member of the National Assembly; President, IDAHOT Committee, Caracas, Venezuela
- **Mark Agrast**
Executive Director, American Society of International Law, Washington, DC, USA
- **Asfinawati Ajud**
Human Rights Lawyer, Religious Freedom & Belief Alliance, Jawa Timur, Indonesia
- **Bisi Alimi**
LGBT Rights Activist; Vlogger; Executive Director, Bisi Alimi Foundation, London, UK (Nigeria)
- **Alina**
*Russian Federation**
- **Paola Amadei**
EU Head of Delegation in Jamaica, European Union, Brussels, Belgium (Italy)
- **Lola Amaria**
Filmmaker, KRESNA DUTA Foundation, Jakarta, Indonesia
- **Milan Antonijevic**
Director, YUCOM, Belgrade, Serbia
- **Kaoru Aoyama**
Professor, Kobe University, Kobe, Japan
- **Georges Azzi**
Executive Director, Arab Foundation for Freedom and Equality, Beirut, Lebanon

- **Pooja Badarinath**
Program Coordinator, Advocacy & Research, CREA, New Delhi, India
- **M.V. Lee Badgett**
Professor of Economics; Director, Center for Public Policy and Administration, University of Massachusetts Amherst, Amherst, MA, USA
- **Karen Beale**
Associate Professor of Psychology, Maryville College, Maryville, TN, USA
- **Abha Bhaiya**
Executive Director, Jagori Rural Charitable Trust, Dharamshala, India
- **Justin Bionat**
Member, Youth Voices Count – Asia, Iloilo City, Philippines
- **Cynthia Burack**
Professor, The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH, USA
- **Benjamin Cantu**
Film Director & Producer, Berlin, Germany (Hungary)
- **Ana Chacón**
Second Vice-President of Costa Rica, San Jose, Costa Rica
- **Mary Audry Chard**
Manager, Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe (GALZ), Harare, Zimbabwe
- **Madan Chhetri**
Member of Parliament, National Assembly of Bhutan, Thimphu, Bhutan
- **Ty Cobb**
Senior Legislative Counsel, Human Rights Campaign, Washington, DC, USA

- **Clifton Cortez**
Advisor on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, World Bank Group, New York, NY, USA
- **Philip Crehan**
Grant Coordinator; Researcher, World Bank Group, Washington, DC, USA
- **Danilo Da Silva**
Executive Director, Lambda Mozambique, Maputo, Mozambique
- **Patricia Davis**
Director for Global Programs, Human Rights & Labor, United States Department of State, Washington, DC, USA
- **Rangita de Silva de Alwis**
Associate Dean for International Affairs, University of Pennsylvania Law School, Philadelphia, PA, USA
- **Manisha Dhakal**
Executive Director, Blue Diamond Society, Kathmandu, Nepal
- **Passang Dorji**
HIV rights advocate, LGBT Network Community Member, Ministry of Health, Samchi, Bhutan
- **Pema Dorji**
LGBT Activist, Punkha, Bhutan
- **Popo Fan**
Filmmaker, Writer & Activist, Beijing Queer Film Festival, Beijing, China
- **Irene Fedorovych**
Chair, Coordinative Council, Anti-Discrimination Coalition, Kyiv, Ukraine
- **Elle Fersan**
LGBTQ Activist, Middle East & North Africa, Glendale, CA, USA (Lebanon)
- **Laurindo Garcia**
Founder, B-Change, Manila, Philippines
- **Negede Gezahegn**
Co-Founder & Executive Director, DANA Social Group, Salzburg, Austria (Ethiopia)
- **Chinzorig Gochoo**
Manager, "Through Democracy" Project, Winds of Change, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia
- **Estela González**
Associate Professor, Middlebury College, Middlebury, VT, USA
- **Michael Heflin**
Deputy Program Director, Open Society Foundations, Washington, DC, USA
- **Lucas Hendriksen**
Programme Officer for LGBT Rights, HIVOS International, The Hague, The Netherlands
- **Cheyleaphy Heng**
Communications Officer, Rainbow Community Kampuchea, Phnom Penh, Cambodia
- **Yuko Higashi**
Professor, Osaka Prefecture University, Sakai, Japan
- **Su Su Hlaing**
Independent Filmmaker, Yangon, Myanmar
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