



LEGABIBO 2016

EXPANDING THE STRUGGLE

2016 LEGABIBO Annual Report



Table of Contents

Chief Executive Officers Note	2
Team LEGABIBO	4
LEGABIBO Office	7
Court of Appeal and Registration Case	8
Decriminalisation Work In Progress	10
Community Building	11
Meet Our Focal Persons	11
Meet Our POWs	13
Meet Our Peer Educators	14
Health Interventions	15
MSM	15
WSW Conversations	15
KP Health Campaign	16
The Autonomy Project	16
Treat All	17
A New Coalition Of LGBT/MSM/WSW	19
2016 Advocacy Successes	21
IDAHOT	23
The Pastor Anderson Petition	25
Francistown DIC	26
Dipolelo Tsa Rona	27
Billboards	28
Artivism – Art And Advocacy	29
Batho Ba Lorato Film Festival	31
World Aids Day	33
Human Rights Day	35
LGBTI Support Group Case Study	37
Working With Religious Leaders	39
Engaging With Media	40
PFLAG	40
Conferences	41

Glossary of Terms

BBC – British Broadcasting Corporation
BBL – Batho Ba Lorato Film Festival
BOFWA – Botswana Family Welfare Association
BONELA – Botswana Network on Ethics, Law and HIV
CAL – Coalition of African Lesbians
CARMAH – Center for Applied Research for Men And Community Health
CEO – Chief Executive Officer
DIC – Drop in Centre
HART – Highly active antiretroviral therapy
IDAHOT – International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia
KP – Key population(s)
ILGA – International Lesbian and Gay Association
LEGABIBO – Lesbians, Gays and Bisexuals of Botswana
LGBTI – Lesbian(s), Gay(s), Bisexual(s), Transgender, Intersex
MOH – Ministry of Health
MSM – Men who have sex with men
MSMGF – Men who have Sex with Men Global Forum
NACA – National AIDS Coordinating Agency
PAI – Pan African ILGA
PFLAG – Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays
POW – Peer Outreach Worker
SALC – Southern African Litigation Centre
SOGI – Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity
SRHR – Sexual and reproductive health and rights
UNDP – United Nation Development Programme
UPR – Universal Periodic Review
WAD – World Aids Day
WSW – Women who have sex with Women

Text edited by: John McAllister www.endotica.org

Chief Executive Officer's **Note**

Ladies, Gentlemen and Non-Conforming, on behalf of the LGBTI community, LEGABIBO members and board, I am proud to present to you our first annual report since LEGABIBO was registered as a society. I am honoured to serve as the first CEO of an independent LEGABIBO and to report on a very successful inaugural year for the organisation.

"We started the year 2016 in a state of uncertainty but also of excitement and anticipation due to the long-awaited Court of Appeal final decision on the LEGABIBO Registration case"

Anna Chalmers

I am also honoured to introduce you to the first LEGABIBO secretariat and board, a dynamic team of colleagues, board members and volunteers dedicated to making a positive difference in our community and our country through the services that LEGABIBO provides.

2016 was a great year for LEGABIBO. This report can only give a snapshot of the exciting initiatives that LEGABIBO embarked on this year. More detailed information can be found at the LEGABIBO website (<https://legabibo.wordpress.com/>) and on our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/LeGaBiBo-204201474250/>).

LEGABIBO 2016: Expanding the Struggle is a celebration of LEGABIBO's first year of independence and a synthesis of LGBTI stories and realities in Botswana as we use our registration to expand the struggle for LGBTI equality in our peaceful and progressive country.

We started the year 2016 in a state of uncertainty but also of excitement and anticipation due to the long-awaited Court of Appeal final decision on the LEGABIBO Registration case. While the decision of the Court of Appeal was looming over our heads, my ever-enthusiastic and optimistic Team LEGABIBO and board prepared for a positive judgement and the possibility of being registered.

When on 16 March 16, 2016, the five judges unanimously ruled in favour of LEGABIBO, we promptly submitted the registration documents to the Registrar of Societies and a month and a half later, on April 26, LEGABIBO was officially registered as a society.

This precious blue document was the culmination of years of courage, patience and dedication and stands as a symbol of the sweat, suffering, hopes, fears, victory and pride of the Botswana LGBTI community. The struggles and achievements of the registration case are echoed in our commitment to protect, promote and defend the human rights of all LGBTI persons in this country. Our experience of struggle has made us who we are and has shaped our advocacy and outreach programming around the lived realities and most pressing needs of our LGBTI community.

Since registration, Team LEGABIBO (Team Gladiators, as they are affectionately called) has grown rapidly to a total of 11 staff members who dedicate their time and lives to challenging injustices and struggling against the lack of recognition of LGBTI in Botswana. As the CEO of LEGABIBO, I am very proud and privileged to work with this group of young creative minds. They continually amaze me with their energy, commitment and creativity.

Ladies, Gentlemen and Non-Conforming, I am delighted to

inform you that in this reporting year LEGABIBO successfully opened a second chapter in Francistown through the support of FHI360 and Linkages program. The space operates as a drop-in centre for MSM/LGBTI to hang out, hold discussions, access HIV services and just be themselves without fear of being discriminated against. So make sure to visit our DICs both in Gaborone and Francistown to be with the people who understand you and, for our allies, to learn more about the LGBTI community and LGBTI issues in Botswana. We are grateful for the support from FHI360.

Thanks to our newly registered status, LEGABIBO in 2016 has been able to achieve unprecedented progress in making a name for herself regionally. We now host The Autonomy Project, a regional program managed by the Coalition of African Lesbians (CAL), and we have also been nominated to host the 2018 Pan African ILGA Conference. We are proud of these developments and cherish every relationship we have created this year.

With that I present to you LEGABIBO 2016: Expanding the Struggle!



Team

LEGABIBO



Anna Chalmers
CEO

BA (UB), Med (UB), MSc Human Rights (Essex). Human Rights Defender



Botho Maruatona

Gender and Youth Department Manager
ISO 14001-Environmental Management Systems, BAH (UB)

The Gender and Youth Department is a fairly new sector in the organisation and was established to address the interests of the youth, who form the majority of our membership, and at the same time to ensure visibility of lesbian and bisexual women and trans* persons, whose interests have tended to be overshadowed by MSM programming.



Caine Youngman

Advocacy and Communications Department Manager

Bachelor of Arts in Social Sciences (University of Botswana), Diploma in Human Rights, MSc PM (Sunderland) in progress.

Kgalagadi District

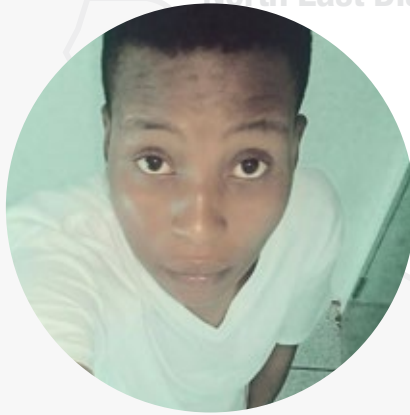
Central



Augustus Mokabedi

Health and Advocacy Department
Manager
Safety Management Training
Course (NOSA), BSc in
Environmental Health (UB)

North East District



Kephologile Onneng

District Coordinator, Francistown
Region
Diploma in Social Work (UB),
Agent of change, Lesbian of note



Oaitse Shabba Tshiping

Project Coordinator
Diploma in Occupational Health
and Safety and Environmental Law
(Gaborone University College),
Diploma in Health Care Auxiliary
Nursing (Boitekanelo College)

Kgatleng District

South East District

Southern District

Team LEGABIBO



Bradley Fortuin

Communication and Documentation Officer

Diploma in Computer Science (NIIT), BA in Information Systems (University of Botswana) in progress



Albertino Ratanang Chawilane

Community Liaison Officer

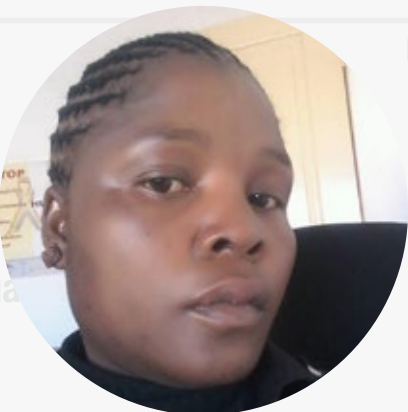
Bachelor of Science management in HIV/AIDS and Psychology - International University Of Management - Namibia



Bachidzi Kwele

Finance Officer

Diploma in ACCA through Botswana Accountancy College.



Ratanang Baloor

Office Assistant

Certificate in Introduction to Computer Studies (Gaborone Technical College)

Central District

Lobatse/Kgalagadi

Kgatleng District

Kgalema District

South East District

Southern District



WORLD AIDS DAY COMMEMORATION
THEME
Hands up for #HIVprevention
1 DECEMBER 2016
VENUE
GABORONE SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL GROUND
Guest of Honour
His Excellency The President Lt. Gen. Dr. Seretse Khama Ian Khama
Entertainment
Gaborone District's Choir
Traditional Dance
Poem

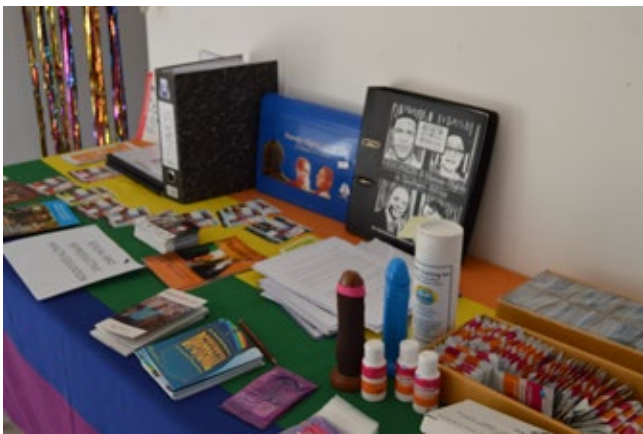



LEGABIBO Office

After eight years of being hosted by other organisations, first by Ditshwanelo (The Botswana Centre for Human Rights) and then by BONELA (The Botswana Network on Ethics, Law and HIV/AIDS), LEGABIBO acquired its own office space shortly after registration.

We identify as a community organisation. Therefore the LEGABIBO space functions as both an office and a drop-in centre for the community. It is a safe space where members of the community can access LGBTI-friendly sexual health services, use the Internet, learn about LGBTI issues, engage with #TeamGladiators, or simply hang out. The office and drop-in centre are located on Setsau Street in Block 8, Plot 34296, Gaborone.

Current Services



a. Clinical services



b. Psychosocial support



c. Legal services



d. Training

Court of Appeal and Registration Case

On 16 March, 2016, the Botswana Court of Appeal ruled that the government's refusal to register LEGABIBO violated the fundamental human rights of people who want to associate with the organisation.

The judgement made the following key points:

1. The Constitution of Botswana does not discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation. The reference to "all persons" in Section 3 of the Constitution is inclusive of all sexualities.
2. Being a homosexual in Botswana is not a crime.
3. The criminal provisions prohibiting consensual sexual acts between persons of the same sex do not extend to criminalising LGBTI persons.

Following this historic judgement by the Court of Appeal, LEGABIBO was formally registered on 29 April, 2016, and now operates as an independent LGBTI organisation.



Highlights

Highlights of the Court of Appeal judgement

"Members of the gay, lesbian and transgender community, although no doubt a small minority, and unacceptable to some on religious or other grounds, form part of the rich diversity of any nation and are fully entitled in Botswana, as in any other progressive state, to the constitutional protection of their dignity."

"All persons, whatever their sexual orientation, enjoy an equal right to form associations with lawful objectives for the protection and advancement of their interests."

"Fundamental rights are to be enjoyed by every person ... To deny any person his or her humanity is to deny such person human dignity."

"It is not, however, and never has been, a crime in Botswana to be gay."

"There is nothing unlawful about advocating for a change or changes in the law. That is the democratic right of every citizen."



REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

REGISTRATION OF SOCIETIES REGULATIONS

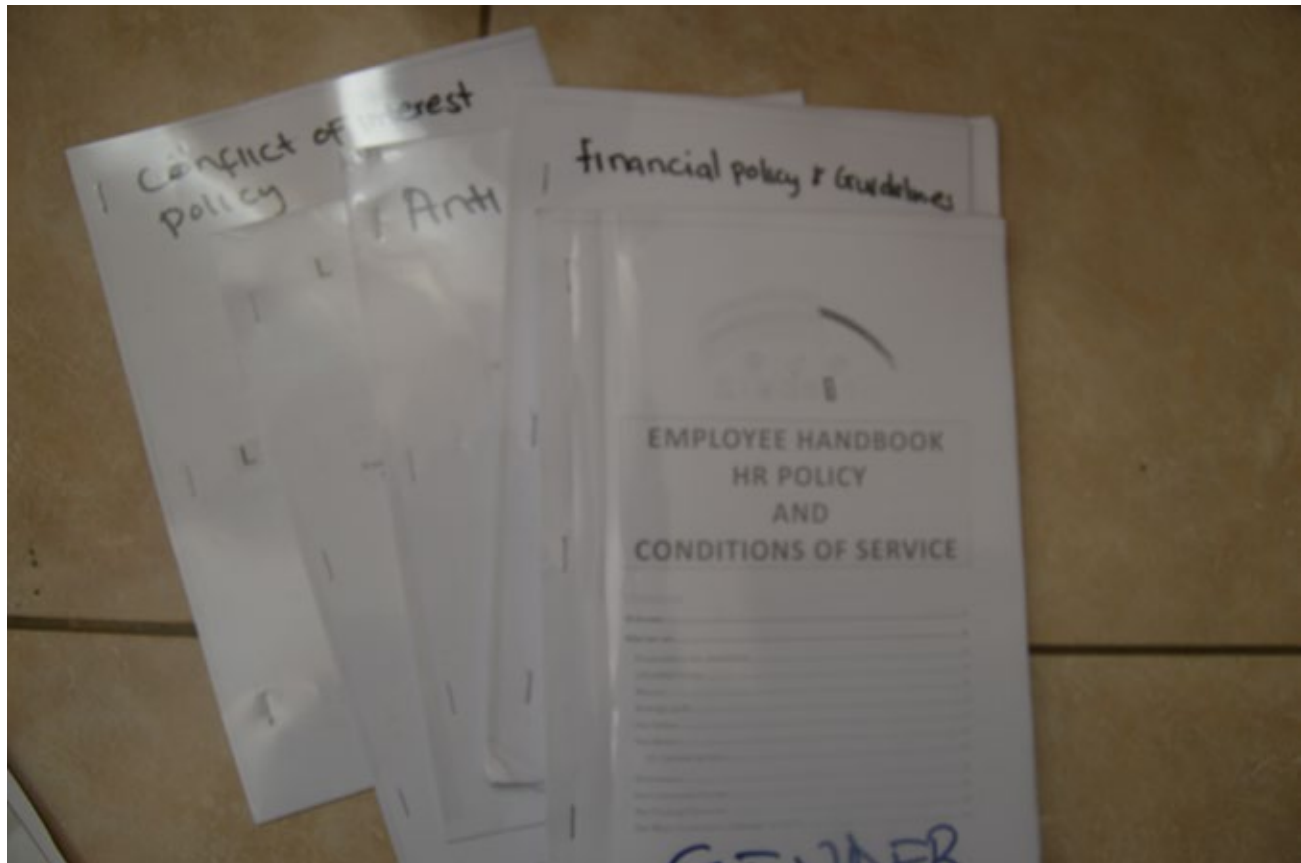
FORM B
(Reg. 4)

CERTIFICATE OF REGISTRATION

I HEREBY CERTIFY that **LESBIANS, GAYS AND BISEXUALS OF**

..... **BOTSWANA (LEGABIBO)** has this day been

registered under section 6(1) of the Societies Act. **CR 12253**



Decriminalisation Work In Progress



Clr Sgt Yellowman Kgosietsile

Immediately after registration, in May 2016, LEGABIBO began working with a coalition of seven Gaborone city council members led by Marulamantsi Ward councillor, Sgt Yellowman Kgosietsile, to pass a motion requesting the Parliament of Botswana to decriminalise same-sex sexual acts in Botswana in order to strengthen the fight against HIV and AIDS. The motion was successful, and the challenge is now one for Parliament to take up. LEGABIBO will continue to lobby both MPs and voters to support the full equality for LGBTI citizens

Meanwhile we have started the groundwork for a comprehensive legal environment audit, which is a necessary first step in systematically addressing the various legal and constitutional issues relating to LGBTI rights in Botswana.

The audit is in two parts. LEGABIBO is conducting its own legal audit, and a national Legal Environment Assessment is also being carried out by MOH.

Community Building

Solidarity and community spirit are the keys to sustaining a strong, successful human rights movement. Much of LEGABIBO's work therefore focuses on building and strengthening the Botswana LGBTI community. In this effort, our team of focal persons is the most important element.

Meet Our Focal Persons Persons



Wandipa Omphile Chabe,

Focal Person, United Souls, Francistown

United Souls has 45 members, mostly LBT, with 15 gay men and MSM. The group is made up largely of young people who began by meeting informally at a park. LEGABIBO now supports the group to hold more formal meetings where members can plan and strategise to strengthen the Francistown community and especially to encourage more LGBTI to join up and benefit from mutual support. For an LGBTI person in Francistown United Souls offers a space to associate, to know they are not alone, and to build an enabling environment for movement building.



Shathani Baloki,

Focal Person, Pink Triangle, Maun

Pink Triangle was one of the first support groups in LEGABIBO. It has about 30 members, mostly in the 20-35 age group. Over the years Pink Triangle has done a lot of community work in Maun and surrounding villages. Substance abuse linked to stigma and discrimination is an important issue for the LGBTI community in Maun, and Pink Triangle has formed partnerships with healthcare workers and community leaders with whom they engage as allies on various platforms to address these and other issues.



Onkagetse Present,

Focal Person, Love Bites, Mahalapye

Love Bits was established in 2016 and has 15 members so far. They are working on finding their space in Mahalapye and connecting with other community-based organisations to form partnerships and build the capacity of members.

Focal persons have always been a very important part of LEGABIBO, whose purpose from the start has been to bring the LGBTI community together. They act as a link between LEGABIBO and the community by forming and sustaining LGBTI support groups in their respective areas. As the pillars of our outreach work, focal persons are now officially recognised in LEGABIBO's strategic plan.

Focal persons in different districts work with their support groups to mobilise LGBTI community, partners, liaise with local PFLAG groups, monitor human rights violations, enable access to HIV and AIDS interventions, and generally raise awareness of LGBTI issues in rural areas.



Donald Tikologo,
Focal Person, Ghanzi Support Group, Ghanzi

Situated in western Botswana in an area mostly populated by people of indigenous origin, Ghanzi Support Group is a very important initiative because of the culture they are deeply rooted in, one that is quite different from what has previously informed LEGABIBO programming. LGBTI persons in this area are more accepted and face less stigma from their families and the general community. Ghanzi Support Group was therefore created as a structure to enhance and expand the already existing space for LGBTI people. The group currently has a membership of about 30, all in their twenties.



Kesaobaka Kemolathe
Focal Person, We Are One, Lobatse

We Are One has about 25 members and is currently working on establishing partnerships with the Lobatse Town Council to access a regular space for their meetings. The group is focused on building a movement in the community by engaging local entrepreneurs to support them in raising awareness on stigma and discrimination around LGBTI identities.v



Zenzeni Moatshe
Focal Person, Limehood, Mochudi

With a membership of 20 including PFLAG, Limehood works to mobilise community leaders, health care workers and teachers to raise awareness on LGBTI issues, document human rights violations and refer members of the community for psychosocial support and clinical services.

Meet Our POWs

Through our Linkages program and the support of FHI360, six Peer Outreach Workers were trained to provide HIV services to MSM in three districts. Here are some of our POWs.



Abo



Thabo



Benjamin



Clay

"Being a POW presents many challenges. One is threats of being used sexually or materially. There is also a lot of emotional burden, and we sometimes face threats of being assaulted because of our sexual orientation. As a POW I am a volunteer, but I face challenges – lack of security, lack of protection from physical harm and being emotionally used. Even so it is the greatest opportunity to learn about things such as case management, tracking, and referral" - Disho

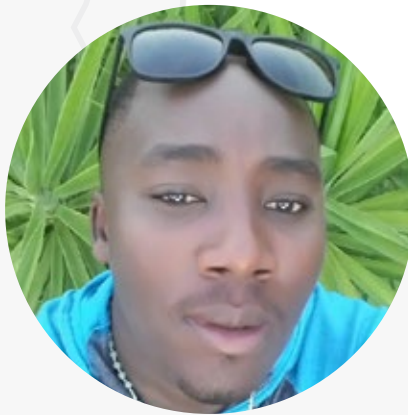
Meet our Peer Educators

Central

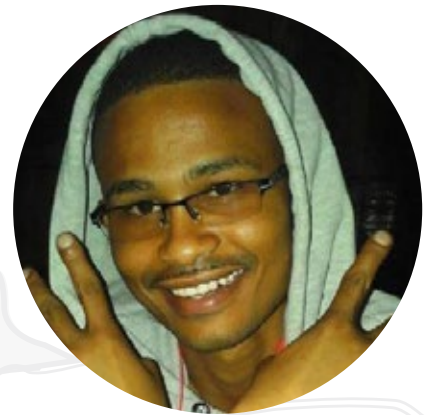
North East District



Kaisara



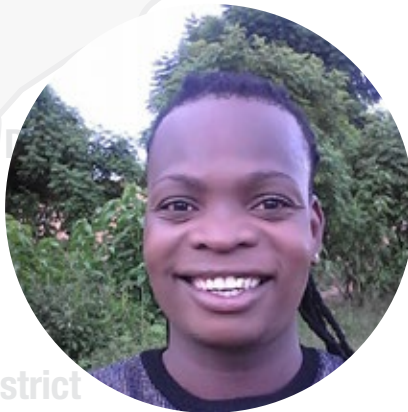
Shangano



Lesley



Mmoloki



Ookeditse



Botshelo

Southern-District

Health Interventions

MSM

For the past two years LEGABIBO has operated the Linkages health programme for MSM which focuses on HIV prevention, HTC services and linking beneficiaries to non-discriminatory healthcare services. The programme works through fully trained Peer Outreach Workers who contact MSM at different hotspots, and through social networks and snowballing. Those reached are enrolled into the programme and linked to services. The process involves developing an individualised care plan for clients that enables them to access prevention commodities and quarterly testing. Access to services is strengthened by a referral system to various partners that provide services.

By the end of 2016 the program had reached around 1500 MSM in five high-yield districts in Botswana. One beneficiary commented:

"Linkages has been helpful with giving me awareness on the importance of knowing my health status. I have also been exposed to ways of assessing symptoms that relate to sexually transmitted diseases and infection. And of course free lube and condoms ☑" Anonymous beneficiary

WSW Conversations

"When people speak about a revolution in the future, they will talk about women like us who met in garages and under trees to talk about themselves and for themselves."

This intervention stemmed from the realisation that a lot of focus is on MSM and that LBT needed a space to speak about their challenges. The idea to build a movement of women who understand their bodies but feel excluded and are dealing with various challenges that queer women face in a heteronormative society. We talk SRHR, power dynamics, sexuality and pleasure. We explore the intersectionalities that exist for women which include discrimination and oppression from the wider LGBTI community: Too many people still define "woman" as someone who is married to a man, has a child, is feminine and submissive, wears a skirt and adheres to other heteronormative notions. The theme of WSW Conversations is "No Good Women Here." We are dismantling all those beliefs and showing that being a woman is not defined by society but by the woman herself and that the decisions she makes about her body are her right and should be respected.



KP Health Campaign

The KP Health Campaign was an intensive ongoing intervention aimed at scaling up services for MSM and transgender women who have sex with men. The campaign site was a one-stop-shop where sexual health services were provided to the target group for four weeks in a friendly, flexible, targeted and affordable style using a coupon system.

The Autonomy Project

The Autonomy Project is a collaboration with the Coalition of African Lesbians and two other local partners – Her and Higher Heights for Girls. It is based on the autonomy of women’s bodies and the agency that women should have over decisions about their sexual and reproductive health.

The aim of the project is to raise awareness on these issues and create a feminist approach to talking about women’s issues, especially with LBT, sex workers and young women, who are the target of this project.



Treat All

LEGABIBO is participating in a national campaign known as Treat All to ensure that all persons who test positive must be immediately enrolled on HART. This strategy is important the LGBTI community because it gives us a chance to access services without intrusive questions being asked. We participated in the Treat All launch in Oodi as partners with Mochudi 1 Clinic through our Proud to Serve campaign. The clinic accentuated the gaps that exist in targeting LGBTI to show that, if HCW are open to LGBT issues and address stigma and discrimination, Treat All will be successful.



A New Coalition of **LGBT/MSM/WSW**

In 2016, a number of organisations led by and working with LGBTI/MSM and WSW put their heads together and agreed to form a coalition that will function as a taskforce to advocate for access to HIV/AIDS services for the community that are in line with international human rights norms and approaches.

With the support of KP Connect through Positive Vibes, COC and MSM/GF, five organisations began conversations about working as a coalition and by the end of 2016 the group had defined the coalition as a think-tank to share evidence and issues emerging from programming and for strategising together. The coalition will thus be a space for building and furthering the movement and members' shared agendas. The group agreed that LEGABIBO will be the convener and that to begin with the group will limit itself to a small core group of organisations focusing on LGBTI/MSM/WSW issues. In time, this will be expanded.

The coalition ostarted functioning in October, but already it has held several collaborative activities including consultative meetings with NACA, sensitisation sessions with Members of Parliament and World AIDS Day Collaborative events.

These activities made a great start, and LEGABIBO looks forward to leading the coalition further and making LGBTI advocacy a collaborative agenda.

#StopHomophobiaCampaign 2016 Advocacy Successes

Last year LEGABIBO engaged in multiple interventions to respond to homophobia. The year began with the success of our registration case, which among other things was an anti-homophobia intervention for freedom of association .



IDAHOT

The 2016 theme for International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia was mental health and well-being. It highlighted the fact that LGBTI are faced with mental health challenges related directly to stigma and discrimination and that manifest through suicidal attempts, depression, isolation and bullying.



The Pastor Anderson **Petition**

In September 2016 the founder of the US-based Faithful Word Baptist Church, Steven Anderson, revealed an interest in opening a branch of the church in Gaborone. This alarmed the LGBTI community because the church is well-known for its extreme anti-gay doctrines. Anderson preaches hatred of LGBTI people and is on record praising the massacre of 49 people in an Orlando LGBTI nightclub last year.

LEGABIBO took action and initiated a petition calling on the Government of Botswana to stop pastor Anderson from setting up his church here. The petition was signed by over 2,000 people and was handed to the Minister of Labour and Home Affairs by LEGABIBO and a representative of the Botswana Council of Churches Rev. Dumi Mmualefe. Thanks to this pressure, the Pastor and his delegation were declared prohibited immigrants and deported.



Francistown DIC

Through the support of FHI360, LEGABIBO has been able to open a regional office in Francistown which also functions as a drop-in-centre and has greatly boosted the morale of LGBTI community in Francistown and participation in group activities.

"Now it is easy for me to tell people where I work and where the office is. I am motivated to work, retain volunteers and achieve visible results" - Kepp

"Because we have a safe space, I know who to come to when I need services, information or advice. I can get schedules for activities, easily access sexual health commodities, and I am comfortable telling other people about LEGABIBO. It's great to have a reliable meeting space."



Dipolelo tsa Rona

Using our personal stories and lived realities to advocate for change, this year we produced the first-ever booklet of Botswana LGBTI life stories. The book became popular and has been reviewed by local newspapers and online blogs. One of the stories was also made into a video.



The stories in Dipolelo tsa Rona are powerful, honest, down-to-earth accounts of the actual experiences of LGBTI Batswana from various parts of the country. They give a fascinating insight into the struggles and hopes of our community. A free copy of this groundbreaking publication can be downloaded from: <https://legabibo.files.wordpress.com/2016/10/dipolelo-tsa-rona.pdf>



Billboards



LEGABIBO has put up five large billboards in four prominent locations in Botswana as part of LEGABIBO's branding and the stop homophobia campaign. The billboard features five well-known human rights activists – a religious leader, a lawyer, a healthcare worker, the UNAIDS Regional Director and a popular gay activist – endorsing the idea of inclusion and equality for LGBTI Batswana.

Artivism Art and Advocacy

We use art to communicate our stories and experiences creatively and emotionally. Words are often not enough to capture fully how we feel as LGBTI in Botswana, but those feelings of confusion, anger, rejection or pride need to be expressed. Painting and drawing allow us to share those feelings and, if need be, to shed the unshed tears and represent the pride we feel as LGBT. Art helps us to extend our advocacy work without fear of being silenced.

Artistic pieces created in 2016 by gifted LGBTI individuals helped LEGABIBO to access public spaces and show what it means to be young and LGBTI in Botswana. Our artwork was shown at "Chill-step" – a social contemporary arts exhibition which happens at the end of every month. The feedback was positive and enabled LGBTI to be open about their sexuality.

"I am a proud supporter of gay rights and not a closeted supporter! I really appreciate what you are doing and telling Botswana about the various sexualities using your art" – Artist and LEGABIBO supporter.



Batho Ba Lorato

Film Festival

The fifth instalment of our pioneering annual Batho ba Lorato LGBTQ film festival opened in Gaborone on February 22. With a lineup of African and African-American queer features and shorts headlined by the continental premiere of multi-Oscar contender Moonlight, this year's festival set new audience records and put the festival right at the centre of African queer cultural activism.

This year's BBL was held in a regular cinema for the first time and featured a powerful lineup of local, regional and international LGBTI-themed films, including *The Story of Sebonta*, the first locally produced film on an LGBTI theme and the Oscar-winning coming-of-age drama *Moonlight*.

The festival was also proud to host the producers and cast of *"My Name is Rose,"* a South African film focusing on LGBTI acceptance in the church. This award-winning film deals with the conflicts faced by religious leaders who are LGBTI but are not able to support LGBTI rights publicly. The cast joined us at the Court of Appeal hearing in a strong show of support for the community here. Some members of the cast are LGBTI, but others are heterosexual. This helped audiences identify with the theme and reflected the realities of a world where LGBTI and heterosexual share a common struggle for justice and fairness.





World AIDS Day

This year's WAD theme was "Hands up for HIV prevention." It was the first time an independent LEGABIBO participated in WAD events and partnered with government. We used our colourful art to attract the public to come to the stall, because our aim was to use the platform to educate the public, brand LEGABIBO and create visibility. We were partners in that space and aggressively ensured that LGBTI/MSM issues were visible. We answered questions about LGBTI realities from students, government officials and the general public. Our strategy of openness was successful, and the stall was one of the most visited at the event.

A group of people, including a traditional dance group in Tswana attire, standing in front of Main Mall in Pie City, Gaborone, for Human Rights Day. The dance group consists of women wearing traditional beaded jewelry and headbands. They are surrounded by other people, including a woman in a bright orange patterned dress and a man in a red shirt. The background shows the entrance to Main Mall with signs for 'PIE CITY' and 'MAIN MALL'.

Human Rights Day

We celebrated Human Rights Day openly and enthusiastically at Gaborone's busy Main Mall to continue to maximise the public visibility of LGBT issues. We partnered with a traditional dance group to debunk the myth that being gay is not part of Tswana culture and to close the distance between LEGABIBO and the general public.



LGBTI Support Group Case Study

United Souls

United Souls is an LGBTI support group based in Francistown, the second largest city in Botswana, located in North East District. The group was founded in 2013 by a group of mostly Lesbians and bisexual women.

In the beginning the group remained mostly women. Men were not comfortable sharing the space with women because they felt that their issues were not the same. When the group started, they also did not have a proper, safe meeting space. They met under the trees in a park or sometimes in one of the member's homes. Their most popular forms of engagement are picnics, social gatherings, soccer games and braais.

The group faces many challenges from the community, ranging from attacks by thieves to verbal abuse, especially by men towards "tomboys." Members have been name-called, harassed and even threatened with rape. The leaders of the group have to hide the prevention commodities such as lubricants and dental dams that they keep for distribution so that parents and family members will not find them.

A particular challenge has been the lack of understanding of their rights by members of the community themselves. This has resulted in women not being able to respond properly to threats. Some have abused alcohol because they had difficulties accepting themselves. Some had children only so they could hide their sexuality from parents and the community. Now, thanks to United Souls, they are able to access psychosocial support, enjoy some freedom of association, and have their voices heard.

Working with Religious Leaders

During 2016 we created alliances with six Botswana religious leaders who have been at the forefront of pushing for LGBTI rights and raising awareness of LGBTI issues in their churches. We were also lucky to be invited to the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa (UCCSA) 2016 Annual General Meeting in Mahalapye, where we sensitised the congregation on sexuality and called for inclusion and acceptance of LGBTI within the church.



"If God thought homosexuality was a sin than he would not have created gays and lesbians. We are all children of God and created in His image." – Rev. Thabo Mampane (Lutheran Church)

Engaging with Media

“From my standpoint as a journalist, I think you guys have been very helpful, highly responsive and aggressive in implementing your programmes.” – Tefo Pheage (Mmegi Newspaper)

In November 2016 LEGABIBO participated in an important workshop on SOGI, LGBT rights and religion organised by Religion News Service in Cape Town. Journalists and media officers from across sub-Saharan Africa met for a week-long reporting workshop on the theme “Covering religion and sexual and gender minorities” in the region.

The workshop trained participants on informed and responsible reporting of SOGI issues, focusing on religion, to combat the homophobic reporting that currently predominates and to enable journalists break down the homophobic barriers to equality being fuelled by many religious organisations and their media allies.

The training was very enlightening for me as an ally for the LGBT community here in Botswana. I hope the skills and tools gathered will help in informing the public and creating an enabling environment for all.” – Rorisang Mogojwe (Yarona FM & Echo Newspaper)

During the workshop LEGABIBO developed effective working relations with five journalists whom we had trained and who had been reporting on LGBTI issues. We identified individual champions to write positive online articles on LGBTI themes to promote tolerance and acceptance. The articles also addressed common myths on homosexuality as a Western “import” and on

the relations between religion, culture and sexuality. The articles have been published on the LEGABIBO website and shared on our Facebook and Twitter pages. Interaction with social media users regarding these articles has been very positive and a lot of people “liked” them on Facebook and retweeted them on Twitter.

PFLAG

Our PFLAG volunteer does great work in referring people to clinics, getting psychosocial support, liaising with dikgosi (traditional leaders) and providing care for LGBTI who face mental health issues as a result of stigma and discrimination. The PFLAG group in Mochudi has grown and the number of allies is increasing. This is a great supportive structure for the LGBT community in certain areas.

Conferences



Botswana Clinicians Conference



World AIDS Conference

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