

A vertical rainbow flag graphic with six stripes of equal width: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple. The flag is positioned on the right side of the page, extending from the top to the bottom. The background is black with a faint, repeating pattern of white geometric shapes (circles and squares) arranged in a vertical column on the left side.

2021

Legabibo Media Analysis
& Training Guide for Quarter 1

Legabibo Media Analysis & Training Guide for Quarter 1 2021

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INTRODUCTION

This analysis will seek to have a comprehensive look at the report of media thus far as well as to hopefully provide valuable insights. This includes appropriate key phrases and terminology that media professionals can use when referring to people within the LGBT+ community. This report will dive into some of the reporting that has taken place over the first quarter of the year, what are some of the highlights and what are some of the oversights. Media outlets are key in disseminating information into key groups, thus reviewing how these stories are portrayed allows us to examine the progress that we are making or perhaps lack thereof. It's not secret that the LGBT+ population of Botswana fall into the vulnerable section of the society. Media outlets are sometimes the first encounter of the existence of queer people and their struggles. The path they take into showcasing these vulnerabilities needs to be clear and intentional, an aspect that we hope to cover in this paper.

1. Basic Concepts for Media Professionals & Students

When it comes to queer issues and media reporting in Botswana the general trend tends to be geared towards sensationalism and at times fear mongering. In September of 2020 for example, The Voice Newspaper published a story with the headline “Gay Rapist on the loose in the Tonota” . The way that the title is structured only aides in the further demonisation of what is an already an ostracised group. Previous articles by the same publication had not previously added the sexual orientation of other perpetrators, therefore the intention here is highly questionable.

There are a lot of core factors that one can consider when addressing issues among the LGBT+ population but we can start by highlighting a few below:

- **Sensationalism:** This point need is essential as a lot of what drives discourse around issues may often start with a sensational or attention-grabbing headline involving a queer person. The intention is rarely genuine and only aides in maintaining negative connotations about the community, something the media seeks to avoid.
- **Authentic storytelling:** Drafting narratives that seek to mirror the actual lives of the group in question. The question of whether this is an honest portrayal of the queer people in question should always be in mind.
- **Nuance:** Realising that LGBT+ people lead lives that are just as complex, diverse as that of heterosexual people, at times even more. As such it is important to detach from the idea that all queer people are homogenous and think, talk, act as well as live the same lives.

1. <https://news.thevoicebw.com/2020/09/gay-rapist-on-the-loose-in-tonota/>



2. Anti-LGBT+ Hate crime, hate speech and discrimination

2.1 What is a Hate crime?

A hate crime can be defined as a “criminal offence committed against a person(s) or their property which is motivated in whole or in part by the suspect/offender's hate/bias towards a group identifiable by race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or disability, etc”

An act of violence based solely on prejudice can also be categorised as a hate crime. This goes on to include the deaths of queer people as a result of homophobia. In South Africa, the hashtags #JusticeforSpha and #JusticeforLuLu began trending as a result of outrage by the public over the death of queer people. These can easily be categorised as hate crimes as both deaths can be attributed to homophobia. In both cases, the victims are believed to have been targeted as a result of their orientation.

2.2 What is Hate Speech?

With regards to hate speech, we are mostly referring to language often discriminatory or defamatory towards a certain group of people. This can be any use of words that may be used to incite violence towards a certain group of people based on their race, gender, sexual orientation.

2.3 What is Discrimination?

According to Amnesty International, discrimination refers to an individual being unable to enjoy the rights owed to them based on an unjustified distinction made by policy, law or treatment. It goes on to add that with discrimination it can either be direct, indirect or intersectional.

2. <https://www.queensu.ca/humanrights/initiatives/end-hate-project/what-hate/what-hate-crime>

3. <https://www.timeslive.co.za/news/south-africa/2021-04-13-justiceforlulu-heres-what-you-should-know-about-andile-ntuthelas-murder/>



3. Use of appropriate terms and language for Media professional

Below are just some of the terminologies that are used within the larger LGBT+ community

Agender:

A person who does not identify with any gender, or intentionally doesn't follow expectations of gender; does not determine gender expression.

Ally:

A term for people who are supportive of LGBTQI+ social movements and rights but do not identify as LGBTQI+.

Androgynous:

A person with both masculine and feminine qualities.

Aromantic:

People who do not experience romantic attraction.

Asexual:

An adjective used to describe people who do not experience sexual attraction. (For more information, visit asexuality.org.)

Assumed gender:

The gender a person is assumed to be by society, based on their sex assigned at birth and/or their gender presentation,.

Bisexual:

A person who has the capacity to form enduring physical, romantic, and/or emotional connections with those of the same or another gender. People may experience this attraction in differing ways and degrees over their lifetime. Bisexual people need not have had specific sexual experiences. In fact, they need not have had anysexual experience at all to identify as bisexual. Do not use a hyphen in the word "bisexual," and only capitalise bisexual when used at the beginning of a sentence.

Biphobia:

Fear of bisexuals, often based on stereotypes, including inaccurate associations with infidelity, promiscuity, and transmission of sexually transmitted infections. Intolerance, bias, or prejudice is usually a more accurate description of antipathy toward bisexual people.

Butch:

Someone who identifies and presents themselves as masculine. While it's most often used to talk about masculine lesbians, butch can also describe masculine queer men or queer people of other genders.

Cisgender:

A term used by some to describe people who are not transgender. “Cis-” is a Latin prefix meaning “on the same side as,” and is therefore an antonym of “trans-”. A more widely understood way to describe people who are not transgender is simply to say non-transgender people.

Closeted:

Describes a person who is not open about their sexual orientation. Better to simply refer to someone as “not out” about being LGBTQI+. Some individuals may be out to some people in their lives, but not to others, due to fear of rejection, harassment, violence, losing a job, or other concerns.

Coming out:

A lifelong process of self-acceptance. People forge an LGBTQI+ identity first to themselves, and then they may reveal it to others. Publicly sharing one’s identity may or may not be part of coming out.

Cross-dresser:

While anyone may wear clothes associated with a different sex, the term cross-dresser is typically used to refer to men who occasionally wear clothes, makeup, and accessories culturally associated with womxn. Those men may identify as heterosexual. This activity is a form of gender expression and not done for entertainment purposes. Cross-dressers do not wish to permanently change their sex or live full-time as womxn.

Dead name:

The name given to a transgender person at birth, which they often change when they transition. It should not be used to refer to them. Use the person preferred name instead.

4. How can you be an ally to LGBTQ+ persons

Before one can understand the question perhaps we must first be clear on what exactly is an ally or allyship.

Allyship usually is centred around trying to make sure that the ideals and rights of the LGBTQ+ community are protected and their needs are adhered to as well as respected, by people who don't identify as a part of the LGBTQ+ community.

Allyship can be described as active, consistent efforts by a group of people who hold more systemic power to end the oppression in solidarity with those who have been systematically disempowered. Perhaps it is in the words "active" and "consistent" that one can also find the key aspects of the role.

To be an ally is not a once-off endeavour, but rather a supportive role that is continuous and permeates different areas of our lives such as personal, social and even our work lives.

More often than not, harmful acts towards the LGBTQ community are not sudden occurrences but rather a result of a high degree of homophobia that has been existing within a society. Allies work to intercede this homophobia in spaces that may not necessarily be heavily occupied by members of the LGBTQ+. Some of these acts can include:

- defending LGBTQ+ persons even when they are not in the room.
- not laughing at jokes made in homophobia.
- using correct pronouns.
- interrupting conversations that are laced in prejudice.
- be ready to be met with new information on a particular topic and act accordingly.
- Practicing unconditional solidarity. : Practicing solidarity regardless of whether or not someone is your friend/acquaintance is also key.
- Support of the community without the constant need to be thanked or congratulated.
- Supportive initiatives and movements that seek to fight the oppression of Queer lives.

4. definition adapted from www.ocadsv.org/sites/default/files/resource_pub/allyshipdefinition_handout.pdf

5. https://www.ocadsv.org/sites/default/files/resource_pub/allyshipdefinition_handout.pdf

4.1 Performative Allyship

Perhaps while we are discussing allyship, it may be wise to briefly touch on the aspect of performative allyship. True allyship lies in playing a supporting role, intention followed by action to a marginal group of people. Performative allyship is when an individual seeks to acquire the title of ally, without any of the necessary action that is required of it. It can also be based on the idea of self-gratification, without any responsibility and is disingenuous. Some may seek the title only to be exempt from being labelled homophobic, in some notion with the additional hope they maybe given a clean slate. An ally that is only looking for a safety blanket cannot be in the same box as those that go above and beyond; those that are willing to have the difficult conversations with peers; those that may attend a protest or too. In truth, true allyship may not be whether you attend Pride, rather it lies in asking oneself the question “Am I doing enough”. It lies in the seeking information and confronting individual personal biases. It is being aware of the privilege that one holds in a society and using that privilege to uplift those that are disempowered.

6. <https://pennstatelaw.psu.edu/news/effective-allyship-part-one>



Part B Media Analysis and Review

A snapshot look at LGBT stories reported in local media during quarter one

Beyond the Rainbow: Why Hate the Queer Community, not even Jesus hates us?

Date: 03 February 2021

Publication: The Midweek Sun

Context: In this opinion piece, the reader is given a look into the layers of marginalisation of Queer people in the country. It unpacks the multiples layers of oppression, from the burden of dealing with Church and family to resistant that one can meet once they leave their home. It also talks about the lack of progress that country has made in the aftermath of the landmark ruling on decriminalisation in 2019. An excerpt from the piece reads;

“Queer people, activists and civil society are once left again to do all the work with little to no impact”.

This quote perhaps is a telling description of the situation at large. Often the weight of the absent government intervention is left to be picked by NGOs, shelters, pockets of good Samaritans sometimes unequipped to deal with the mass issues the community at large have to deal with.

The Importance of Teaching about Diversity an article by Gaborone International School

Date: 05 February 2021

Publication: The Patriot on Sunday

Context: In this piece, the need to craft an inclusive experience for children was delved into, a conversation that is not discussed enough. The article even wrote about the role that parents often play in shaping their child's perspective of the world; how using mindful language and “kind action” are key factors in influencing your child to do better. Within this piece one can find the reminder that our society can often overlook, the perspective of the young child especially when they maybe the ones whose diversity can make them more vulnerable. When it comes to thought patterns and behavioural change, the focus tends to lean more on adults, often leaving behind children. Perhaps the lesson here is not changing kids but writing the wrongs the generations before are still fighting.

‘An exploration of Genderfluidity and Queerness through fashion’

Date: 08 February 2021

Publication: Setabane.com

Context: The article assessed the state of Queer people in this country in particular, how fashion can be a beautiful celebratory expression of ones identity. It further reiterated how on the other side of that expression, can be strain that can come with being visible in such a restrictive society.

URL: <https://setabane.com/post/642556242439585792/the-exploration-of-genderfluidity-and-queerness>

'Queer Tribe Yearn for Acceptance'

Date: 04 March 2021

Publication: The Patriot on Sunday

Context: The article highlights a number of key issues that exist for LGBT people, mainly problems arising trying to access public health and emergency services. Communication officer for Legabibo, Matlhogonolo Samsam, gave an insight that LGBT people still experience prejudice even when accessing health services. This prejudice follows them even in police stations, when its time to report on GBV cases and the decency that is owed to members of the community is not there. The article is a portrayal of the struggles and challenges of Queer people, challenges that are yet to be eased by the decriminalisation ruling in 2019. It details the ways in which LGBT+ people have been disappointed by these services and the mismatch policy vs reality.

URL: <https://thepatriot.co.bw/queer-tribe-yearn-for-acceptance/>

In Review of the Media

If the role of media reporting is to reflect what is happening on the ground and if the life of LGBT+ people is rife then the depiction seems to go hand in hand. The existence of platforms such as Setabane however remind us of one question that ought to be asked is, who are Queer people beyond the pain and the hardship. In keeping in line with the need for more nuance especially where mainstream media is concerned, bringing to the forefront stories that are not always marred with tragedy helps the public, especially Queer people that there is hope on the other side. So the take away here is: balance. Across the board, let the lens on the LGBT+ people on the community be an accurate description of their desires. Even in moments where they are facing challenges, let it not use language that is demeaning; language that depicts them as asking for ideals that are far fetched. If for nothing else, let's strike a balance to remind those that may be without community, that may be trying to build that community within themselves that their pain is valid just as much as their happiness and autonomy.



 **BEYOND
THE
RAINBOW.**

