



**RAINBOW IDENTITY
ASSOCIATION**
BOTSWANA

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RAINBOW IDENTITY ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



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SOCCER&GENDER TOURNAMENT

The participation of transgender and intersex persons in soccer has faced criticism including world cup. There has been typical argument that some have unfair physical advantages over those who are born cis gender due to hormonal therapy. History has made at the 2023 women's world cup as the Canadian footballer Quinn became the first and only known transgender to compete at a FIFA world cup.

Through creative mind project, Rainbow Identity Association came up with an initiative called soccer and gender in 2011. These initiative was born out of the interest and talents of transgender and intersex persons in sports particularly soccer.

This year transgender day of remembrance was on Monday 20th November and RIA commemorated the day on the 25th November in a different way. The soccer and gender tournament which brought 12 teams battled. The aim of the tournament was to increase awareness and creating visibility of transgender and intersex persons in soccer. The tournament was officially opened by Former chairperson of National women's football committee Ms Morby Disang.

In her speech she applauded RIA for the good initiative and recognition of the talent within the minority group. The day is used to raise awareness and to bring public attention to the exclusion of transgender, gender non-conforming and intersex persons in sports. For the first time in the history of soccer, the Rainbow Identity Association is reaffirming that the full realization of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all is an essential element in the global response to **Human Rights**. Hence the theme **Diversity creates a community**.

"I must acknowledge that there has been ignorance towards transgender and intersex persons in sports especially in football as the sport in Africa has not engage more on issues of gender identity or sex characteristics" said Ms Disang.

Through partnerships 2023 tournament attracted 7 social teams, even though one of the rules of the tournament was no professional players allowed as the objective of the tournament is about learning and fun. The social clubs that took part were: Letloa, Mangwanda, Bosele, Thuba Rabele, Monate, City pillars and HVAC 808, while NGOs were: RIA, BONELA, LeGaBiBo, Captive Eye and BOFWA.

The tournament was divided into 4 groups stages: Group A (BONELA, BOFWA & ThubaRabele), Group B (Captive Eye, HVAC 808 & City Pillars), Group C (LeGaBiBo, Bosele & Monate) & Group D (RIA, Mangwanda and Letloa). Each team played 2 games and the winner in each group went through to the semi-final.

The tournament was tough as the teams were all aiming at the price which was BWP 5000 for the champions, BWP 3000 for the second position and BWP 2000 for the third position. The teams that went through were BOFWA, Monate, Letloa and HVAC 808. Like in any tournament there were hiccups and misunderstandings which lead to City pillars team with drawing from the tournament and demanded their registration fee.

Rainbow Identity Association uses soccer and gender to reach greater population who do not affiliate to any institution as most of the workshops exclude them. Soccer bring different people together irrespective of sex, age, gender identity/ expression, body type, sexual orientation and ability.

We are grateful Monate Social club scooped the 2023 championship, followed by HVAC 808 by scooping position 2 and lastly BOFWA position 3



2023 Champions Monate Social club

RIA COMMEMORATE INTERSEX DAY

Intersex Awareness Day is a powerful reminder that our world is beautifully diverse and every individual deserves respect, acceptance and understanding. Intersex people are born with innate variations in their sex characteristics. These variations are natural part of human diversity and they should be celebrated not stigmatized. Often we like to categorize nature and our bodies into binaries of male and female. Today, we stand in solidarity with Intersex individuals, commit ourselves to raising awareness about their experiences and remind ourselves and others that nature is not binary. "For far too long, intersex people have been left out of the conversation when discussing inclusivity, health equity, and equality for all. Today and every day we must uplift members of the intersex community and recommit to ensuring the government is prioritizing the needs of the intersex community," said the Director of Rainbow Identity Association Skipper Mogapi.

Many people associate being intersex with being LGB, today Rainbow Identity Association Intersex project manager Kagiso Bannye went on radio to clarify the difference and also sensitize the general public on issues of intersex and human rights. "Growing up I noticed the difference when I was still in my primary school years," he says. "But I never knew anything about intersex, as I was raised as a girl. This was because I was operated while I was still young and because my mother believed what the doctors and nurses told her, that if she does not agree to the operation I may get cancer. When researching and trying to find answers, I was lucky to find Rainbow Identity Association who made me understand that I was intersex and there are people like me.

Motivation to persevere and create positive change for his community comes from Kagiso's own lived experiences and supportive family. "Like they always say nothing for us without us. Some people think we just create stories and say there are no people born like this. We are not surprised because intersex people have always been made to feel ashamed of their bodies and identity" said Kagiso.

As part of his job, Kagiso tries to understand the needs and promote the human rights of intersex people. Working with Rainbow Identity Association has helped Kagiso to self-accept and motivate others to come out. For legal reform there is need for visibility of intersex person and parents' needs to accept their children the way they are.

"The Intersex Management Protocol is very crucial in that when an intersex person is born the first contacts are with

medical practitioners, and we've come to understand that in most cases. Having this protocol will assist medical professionals to know how best to work with intersex persons and it will serve as a guide for them", reveals Skipper Mogapi Botswana needs to conduct a policy review on legal recognition for intersex people, which will examine the challenges faced by this community and make recommendations for policy reform. Intersex people sometimes do not identify with the sex they were assigned at birth and can find it difficult to access basic social services and fully participate in society as a result.

"Being able to legally change the sex marker on our Omang identity documents will have a significant impact towards reducing the social exclusion that we face," says Kagiso.

SEEKING INCLUSION

One of Rainbow Identity Association strategy in tertiary institutions have been to ensure learners are equipped with knowledge in order to serve diversity. Project also aimed to raise awareness among public health students on a number of health issues and experience by transgender and intersex persons in accessing health services and disseminate information about existing health services targeting the transgender and intersex community. Three main areas focused on in the project related to sexual health, mental health and the services of the Gender Re-Affirming.

Globally, people who identify as transgender suffer severe disparities in healthcare provision, especially in developing countries such as Botswana. A major reason for this is lack of access to providers who are well-trained in trans-health. Adding trans-health to the medical curriculum in developing countries could help reduce this barrier and educate doctors who are skilled enough to cater to the needs of people who identify as transgender. Participants talked about specific provider behaviors that ranged from extreme forms of mistreatment to supportive acts of advocacy. This domain captured both specific actions performed by providers and when providers refused to take action. Negative provider behaviors included reports of misrepresented test results, malpractice, neglect, withholding of information or treatment, tendency to conflate gender identity with unrelated presenting concerns, and mistreatment from supporting staff such as auxiliaries.





Mental health & Wellness in work-place

In the fast-paced corporate world, where stress and burnout are all too common, it is essential to prioritize employee wellness. Many organizations have recognized the importance of fostering a healthy and supportive work environment, leading to incredible stories of transformation, resilience, and happiness. Investing in employee wellness is not only the right thing to do but also a crucial step towards creating a thriving and compassionate corporate culture. By prioritizing employee well-being, organizations can foster a healthier and happier workforce, leading to increased productivity, creativity, and overall satisfaction.

Rainbow Identity Association staff members took a day off to the Big Valley, just few kilometers away from Lobatse. Although staff members needed two days to debrief and relax, members left Gaborone early in the morning.

Skipper, director and the founder of the organization. Facing burnout due to overwhelming work demands. He often found himself working long hours, neglecting his personal life and well-being. There is need to introduce initiatives such as counseling, mindfulness sessions, and flexible work arrangements. These would help staff members by regain control of their life and find a healthy work-life balance.

Kagiso the intersex project officer, he felt a void in his personal life, longing for a deeper sense of purpose and fulfillment. As Kagiso dedicated his time and expertise to volunteering, he discovered the immense joy and satisfaction that came from helping others.

Max, creative mind program officer. Recognize the importance of mental health in the work place and has initiated mental health breaks. The program includes therapy sessions, stress management workshops and day out of work. He has anxiety which is often hindered his professional growth and overall happiness. Embracing mindfulness practices, such as meditation and deep breathing exercises, became a crucial part of Max's daily routine. These practices helped him cultivate a greater sense of self-awareness and allowed him to better manage his anxiety triggers.

Tudu, admin and finance officer. She is always mindful of her body weight and worry about colleagues weight gain. Recognizing the impact of employee well-being on performance, Rainbow Identity Association needs to introduce a wellness program that focused on nutrition, fitness, and support.



Remember, the success of any organization lies in the well-being of its employees. Start your journey towards a healthier and happier workplace today, and witness the transformative power of employee wellness.





AMPLIFYING VOICES OF INTERSEX ACTIVISTS

In February 2023, 35 Intersex activists from several African countries met in Kenya's capital city Nairobi. The 3rd regional gathering was to share information and experiences with one another and collectively explore strategic directions towards reorganizing post COVID epidemic under the theme: Reconnecting and shaping our Narrative. One of the objectives of the gathering was to prove that intersex people exist in all African countries despite that intersex live in a society that perpetuates violence and killings of intersex people by cultural, religious, traditional and medical beliefs and practices. During the three day meeting the activists came up with a statement which highlighted the following:

To put an end to infanticide and killings of intersex people led by traditional and religious beliefs.

To put an end to mutilating and 'normalising' practices such as genital surgeries, psychological and other medical treatments through legislative and other means (such as education, policy and treatment protocol change). Intersex people must be empowered to make their own decisions affecting their own bodily integrity, physical autonomy and self-determination.

To ensure that sex or gender classifications are amendable

through an easy administrative procedure at the request of the individuals concerned. All adults and capable minors should be able to choose between female (F), male (M), intersex or multiple options. In the future, sex or gender should not be a category on birth certificates or identification documents for anybody.

To ensure that intersex people have the right to full information and access to their own medical records and history.

To ensure that intersex people are able to participate in competitive sport, at all levels, in accordance with their legal sex. Intersex athletes who have been humiliated or stripped of their titles should receive reparation and reinstatement.

To recognise that medicalization and stigmatisation of intersex people result in significant trauma and mental health concerns.

To acknowledge the suffering and injustice caused to intersex people, and ensure reparation.

The activists were able to elect the committee to lead the movement and the following were appointed:

Mphatso Sakala-Zambia (Co-chair) & Obioma Chukwuike-Nigeria (Co-chair), Ronnie Zuze- Zimbabwe (Co-Secretary) & Tsitsi Ndadambi-Zimbabwe (co-secretary), Shone Edem- Ghana (Treasurer), Karol Amollo- Uganda & Frankie Kibagendi-Kenya (Kwash) Add members

DIRECTOR'S DESK



It is a reality that we are diverse, that we are distinct in the beings we thrive to be, and that we are not a mirror image of each other. It is a reality that intersex persons have suffered greatly for the beings they were born, where human rights have been violated and trampled upon. Where they have suffered mental anguish laced with stigma, where they have suffered violence in the hands of the many who are ignorant of the fact that intersex are humans too. It is a reality that many intersex persons, have seen their lives ruined through the said 'corrective' surgeries. It is a reality that many have had to lead with an identity they do not conform to, one that does not tell the true tale of who they are. It is a reality that the laws and policies that are in existence are not intersex conscious, and as such, to a great extent, in my opinion, have seen the advancement of the violation of rights of intersex persons.

It is a reality that there is a need to have recognition of intersex persons, this in my opinion, will be a stepping stone in righting the wrongs that have been occasioned to them. It will see the advancement of their rights in a society in which they belong to as human beings. One does not need to wear the shoe to know where it pinches, living the difficult life of intersex person, through their eyes, it is compelling to stand up for a group that has long suffered and champion for their rights.

There is a need for the recognition of intersex persons, there is need for their rights, which are human rights to be respected, upheld and safeguarded. Time is now that there needs to be change in the law, policies and other administrative processes that have been a catalyst to the violation of intersex rights.

It is important that we start honest conversations in relation to intersex, where all shall be informed and educated on the topic, where many more will and champion for the rights and recognition of intersex persons. Being alive to the fact that we are all different, and diverse as we come should be the foundation of accepting that intersex are human beings abiding to the strict definition of the term.

Bearing in mind that intersex persons are born the way they are, that is their truth and it should be respected. There is a need to expel backward beliefs anchored on ignorance and unsubstantiated superstitions cemented by ignorance and have an informed citizenry on the topic, one that will see their knowledge advanced, propelling a more accepting and tolerant society.

Time for change, I believe is now, and this change is not only for the few that champion for a cause, but for all. There is a need to recognize intersex persons, preserve their dignity for a better tomorrow.

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