



A!GENDA

RAINBOW IDENTITY ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

WHO IS RAINBOW IDENTITY



“This is my identity, not a trend.”

(RIA) is a non profit making organization based in Gaborone, Botswana. It is an organization of transgender (trans women, trans men, transsexuals, gender non conforming and queer) and intersex persons. The organization aims at exploring ways of challenging trans phobic laws and trans phobia in Botswana.

MISSION

To advocate for the inclusion of transgender and intersex people across all spaces and to challenge the stigmatizing and discriminatory social treatment of transgender and intersex bodies, identities and people as unjust.

VISION A world with gender equity and justice in which transgender and intersex persons possessing all genders and diverse identities feel safe, valued and respected.

VALUES

Respect – for yourself and for others

Botho - humanity, cooperation, mutuality

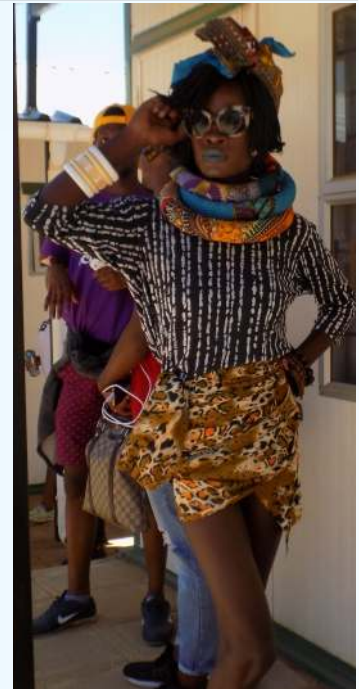
Valuing diversity and difference – that gender is not binary- it is a continuum on which there are endless possibilities for gender expression. We also value difference in opinion since when harnessed properly, will progress our movement and initiate innovation. We also value sexual difference and diversity; racial and ethnic; age; class etc.

Norm critical and self-critical – we engage in transgender and intersex issues through a critical and analytical lens which does not seek to always justify ourselves and our decisions, but we also seek to critically reflect on the movement, on the decisions of RIA. Equality, Equity – we believe in equality and in equitable consideration of our members, beneficiaries and stakeholders at large. This encompasses being a non-discriminatory organization.

Safety and security of transgender and intersex community and others in relation to them (e.g. staff members, family and friends as it relates to transgender relative etc)

Ownership- we hope to build a culture of ownership over the organization, its activities, successes and challenges by its staff and board, as well as our membership.

Representative - we strive to be representative of all transgender and intersex people, their issues and their contributions in our decisions and work.



Quing Komane, Poet

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Movement building is important as it can be used as a tool to sensetise the community on Trans and intersex issues.

- Transgender and intersex rights are human rights.
- No one chooses to be transgender or intersex one is born like that.

HI-TEE

On the 16th of March RIA organized a Hi Tee at Cresta President Hotel specifically for women in marginalized groups and the organisations that deal with marginalised women. It was basically to discuss issues that affect them and how those issues and problems can be addressed so that the discrimination they suffer or have suffered can be entirely illuminated. The Hi Tee was attended by sex workers joining us, women in politics, teachers, transwomen and women living with disabilities.

Skipper Mogapi was leading the dialogue and we started off with Shirley, a women living with disabilities is explaining how their experiences dealing with discrimination. She mentioned that it is a struggle because apart from people looking at them differently there are no laws that specifically speak to their needs and the resources in hospitals and schools hardly cater or include people living with disabilities. In responding to this Fify who is a teacher at Gaborone Senior School said that at their school they are working as hard as they can to make sure that people living with disabilities are catered for and included in the teaching methods as well as interact with other students without stigma.

Kesaobaka, who is a transwomen raised her concerns on how transgender is associated with sexual orientation or regarded as sexual orientation." Being trans or intersex is complex in a way that for example if you are intersex or trans it's a medical diagnosis, we have a women like me who has gender dysphoria and you find out that there are laws that there are laws that oppresses me when I want to change my gender" she said. She mentioned that our laws are favoring the society mind set up yet the society discriminates against transwomen. She said that maybe they are a lot of trans people out there and scared to come out because they do not know what transgender is.

The discussions went on as trying to find a way forward for the marginalised women to survive and be treated equally in the community. Some of the suggestions was RIA should have more dialogues like this to strengthen women empowerment and alliance with other organisations, and for the women in the country should be encouraged to support each other.

MEDIA TRAINING ON T & I REPORTING



LtR Tudu, Urbenia (RIA officers) Sharon (The Voice journalist) Phio (RIA officer), Yvonne (Midweek Sun journalist)

Media plays a very big role in one of our key services which is advocacy, RIA found it important to have this dialogue on transgender and intersex reporting as RIA believe if they are hoping for positive and accurate reporting they need to engage with the media and introduce them to RIA services, vision and mission. RIA have had in the past journalist reporting on transgender and intersex and in most cases the news were not accurate entirely which they figured was because of the lack of/ limited knowledge. It is through the training that RIA would like to map a way forward for better stories, ones that will be for the greater good for both the society and the transgender and intersex community and how RIA can work hand in hand in the future.

It is vital that journalist and editors have an insight and understanding of transgender and intersex people, their challenges and achievements and the effect of media has on Transgender and intersex issues. Journalists are the watchdogs of the community and voice of the voiceless they have the power to bring positive change or negativity in the society, being aware of the power you hold RIA saw it fit to have this dialogue and training.

Kicking off the training the media practitioners voices their expectations and they were as follows. The media wanted to know what they are doing right and what they are doing wrong in reporting Transgender and Intersex issues. To understand what RIA is and does and the challenges they experience. To build a relationship between the media and RIA. To know

how the Trans and Intersex feel about talking to the media. The media to leave the training being able to teach others about RIA. The purpose of this workshop was to. To sensitize the media on transgender and intersex issues. To build a working relationship between RIA and media. To have media reporting positively and accurately about transgender and intersex.

The discussions went on as it came to light that the reason why the trans and intersex people do not go to the media with their stories is because they do not trust the media for accurate reporting, they just believe the reporter will spin the story and put them in danger and expose them to further discrimination and stigma. It is important for the people to trust the media to not do more damage than good in the community to not encourage further discrimination. They are the watchdogs of the community so they should do their jobs I thought humiliating anyone and making their lives difficult.

It was recommended that, RIA come to newsrooms and have workshops, if the media won't come to them they should go to them. Speak to editors and ask for a column. That journalists should research more and expand their scope. Have a working relationship (partnership). Keep constant communication between RIA and the media. For RIA not to be scared to give the media stories and advice the trans and intersex community to do the same. Always invite the media present in RIA workshops and meetings especially membership meeting. Use the media. The media will start using the correct language and wording.

IDA HOT 2018



IDA HOT 2018 group photo

Every year the global community of sexual and gender minorities identifies one specific focus issue for the celebrations around May 17th. This focus issue is of course only a suggestion and it is left for everyone to see how this is relevant for their strategies. This year, the proposal is to focus attention on **ALLIANCES for SOLIDARITY**.

Indeed, no battle can be won in isolation. RIA and other organisations and the community need to keep strengthening alliances, especially when RIA needs to ensure safety, fight violence, lobby for legal change, and/or campaign to change hearts and minds. Putting the focus of the Day on Solidarity and Alliances can create a valuable opportunity for all of RIA to reach out to their current partners to reinforce their bond, RIA reached out

to new partners to raise awareness of their commonalities, and to engage in collective action around the Day. The commemoration was attended by the G-West Village Development Committee, the councilor for the area (Gaborone West), Mr Obusitswe Montwedi from Botswana National Front (BNF) and councilors from different areas and political parties including (Councilor for Bontleng Mr Kemelo from BNF, Gaborone West Councilor Manki Sekete from Botswana movement for Democracy (BMD), Phase 4 Counselor Kgosietsile from BNF, and Gaborone Bonington South parliamentary candidate Christian Greeff from the ruling party Botswana Democratic Party (BDP)). RIA also invited other civil societies to commemorate this day with them and try to build partnerships as nothing can be achieved in isolation.

The commemoration included guest speaker, open discussion by different marginalized groups on discrimination and stigma and map the intersectionality with stakeholders to ensure ending violence against different diverse communities and lobby for legal reform as collective

LGBTI AND MEDIA USE

Social media now sits at the very heart of our daily routines. But while it's a great way to keep in touch, share our feelings with friends and loved ones, and stay up to date with news and current affairs (gossip to you and me!), what you post online can really harm your chances of getting your next job or how people treat you especially if you belong to a minority group. Transgender and intersex people have in the past and today been bullied using social media and most of them have suffered from mental health problems to an extent of some committing suicide and abusing drugs and alcohol to cope.

Due to the rise in cyber bullying earlier this year on the 17th of February Rainbow identity conducted a LGBTI and the use of social media and media at The University of Botswana. The guest speaker or rather key note speaker was Brian Mutimbanyoka, a Media lecturer from Limkokwing University of Creative Technology. The purpose of this workshop was to educate the LGBTI appropriate use of media, to educate the LGBTI on the advantages and disadvantages of the media and to figure out the legal implications of cyber bullying.

Brian explained that the media is there to both entertain and educate. He went on to say "as much as people use the media for entertainment e.g. movies, music and more it is also there to enhance knowledge on everything we may be interested in knowing. One can choose how they want to use the media however it should be used progressively. None the less it brings with it certain issues depending on how one uses it, if used correctly it will serve its purpose. The media has however posed as a threat due to its misuse, because it is vital for daily use as a means of disseminating information thus multitudes use it both trained and not." Implying that some people who have not been trained to be media practitioners use it harmfully both aware and unaware and this poses as a threat to other human beings who suffer abuse from others. Media is an information broadcasting tool.

One of the questions asked was that is there a legal backing to one screenshotting conversation between two people and making it public. The answer to this was that "saying or disseminating anything to tarnish someone through media is taken as an offence legally" said a police officer. She went to say you can be fined and sent to jail for up to 6 months (general offence). A new law is coming up soon to fight off cyber bullying charges will be based on the degree of damage caused by the incident.

The procedure will include presentation of evidence of cause so as to open a case. In case of ghost accounts the necessary investigation will be carried out to

bring the perpetrators to justice e.g. identifying the IP address of the technological device the message was sent from.

Living in a country that discriminates and stigmatises the LGBTI what they write and post on social media can contribute to the level or amount of discrimination and stigma they face. So the LGBTI was cautioned to be careful of what they say and post on social media. Yes everyone has freedom of expression but free-



Brian Mutimbanyoka media lecturer, facilitating media use as advocacy

dom comes with responsibility something Rainbow Identity through this workshop wanted to emphasise. The workshop was insightful as the LGBTI openly shared their experiences with cyber bullying and how they should not be the ones discriminating against others especially in issues of gender identity, expression, sex and sexual orientation.

In shaping a way forward the LGBTI said they will use the media especially social media to highlight more issues; by creating hubs and forums to address LGBTI issues through collaboration. Focus on self-control, as a person, how you portray yourself. All in all introspect yourself when considering what to post on social media. Make action against cyber bullying, report the posts or pics so the perpetrators accounts can be deactivated so as to show them that nothing bad should go unpunished. Be the change that you want to see in the world. Be exemplary because you are an advocate for the LGBTI at large. Whatever you do affects everyone else.



Soccer and gender 2018 Pula sports complex, Bontleng



LGBTI and the media training UB 2018



Trans and Intersex Pride march 2017 start off point G-West streets



Bobela Stas self identity training Kanye '18



Urbenia Kgwarae giving a self identifying talk to BTU member in Molepolole 2018



Councilor Manki Sekete and Rev Mampane @ the GBV sit-down protest 2018



MidWeek Sun and Botswana Guardian articles with Skipper Mogapi on the Hands Off our Genitals campaign



RIA Annual General Meeting 2018 UB



BTU AGM at Oasis Motel 2017



LGBTI workshop 2017



Councilor Montwedi giving a speech at IDAHOT 2018



GBV sit down protest, Main mall 2018



High-Tee participants engagement 2018

WHAT IS TRANSGENDER

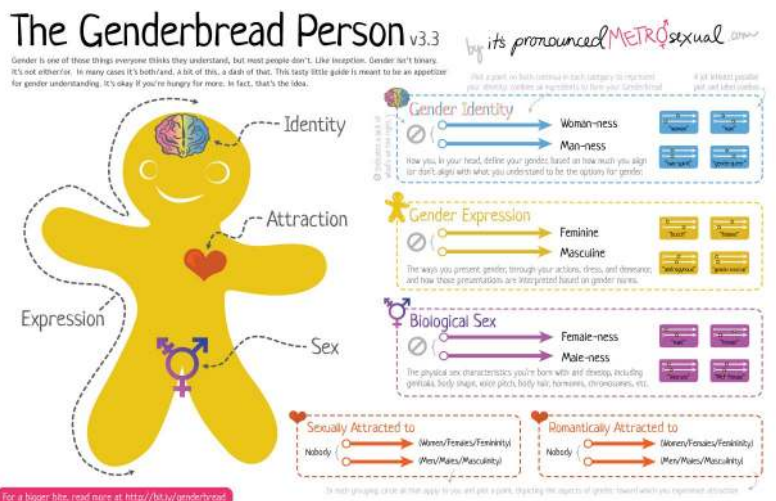


Some people feel that the sex they were assigned at birth doesn't match their gender identity, or the gender that they feel they are inside. These people are often called transgender. Transgender is about gender identity.

Transgender is a term that includes the

many ways that people's gender identities can be different from the sex they were assigned at birth. There are a lot of different terms transgender people use to describe themselves. For example, sometimes the word transgender is shortened to just trans, trans*, or trans male/trans female. It's always best to use the language and labels that the person prefers.

Transgender people express their gender identities in many different ways. Some people use their dress, behavior, and mannerisms to live as the gender that feels right for them. Some people take hormones and may have surgery to change their body so it matches their gender identity. Some transgender people reject the traditional understanding of gender as divided between just "male" and "female," so they identify just as transgender, or genderqueer, gender fluid, or something else.



DO YOU KNOW?

Gender-based stereotypes about masculinity and femininity – on how every person should act and look according to their assigned sex at birth – can vary between regions and cultures, but everywhere these norms lead to discrimination and exclusion of those who don't fit into the rigid framework and, very often, who transgress binary gender systems.

This is why most Trans people experience social exclusion at an early stage: at home, where they face physical violence are often forced to undergo harmful 'therapies'; at school, where they are exposed to bullying and sexual harassment by students and teachers and/or excluded from lessons, and in many other social spaces. In such hostile contexts, it is challenging for trans young people to finish school education, which results in hugely high dropout rates amongst trans students.

Aside from not being able to finish school education, trans people also face prejudice in seeking jobs. Even in the few countries which

include sexual orientation in their anti-discrimination laws in regards to labor, trans communities are mostly not explicitly addressed. As a result, trans people are more likely to be affected by unemployment and a disproportionately high number of trans people live in situations of poverty and homelessness. In a great many countries, these circumstances push a high number of trans people into marginal labour sectors, such as night-time industries and sex work, which in turn puts them at a higher risk of being exposed to violence, criminalization and health risks, including exposure to HIV/AIDS and other STIs.

In many countries including Botswana, changing someone's gender in official documents is not possible and almost all countries or provinces that do permit legal gender change in documents require conditions such as sterilization, divorce, 'full' gender reassignment surgery, psychiatric diagnosis, and selective (i.e. discriminatory) notions of informed consent. These requirements are a blatant violation of many basic human rights, such as the right to a family, the right to physical integrity, the right to health, the right to private life, and the right to freedom of expression.

Trans people are highly vulnerable to discrimination, harassment and violence due to their social isolation and the lack of legal protection.

In many cases, survivors of transphobic violence do not report assault. When they do, authorities often neglect to conduct effective investigations; leaving a large percentage of cases unsolved, even in countries with clear anti-discrimination or protection laws. Trans sex workers are specifically vulnerable, as their activity is almost systematically criminalized, on top of being highly stigmatized. Furthermore, state officials and institutions are often themselves directly involved in the violence and harassment of trans people.

Inappropriate documentation in police reports and the fact that many authorities lack the correct understanding of the difference between sexual orientation and gender identity (e.g. defining trans women as gay men) leads to arbitrary detention, leaving trans women exposed to sexual violence in male prisons or, in various instances, being locked up in solitary confinement. All too many reports and testimonies provide documentation of police officers and other state agents being involved in cruel treatment of trans people.

Trans people often face stigmatization at health clinics and hospitals from staff members and other patients. Many trans patients report experiences of public humiliation, inappropriate examinations and even denial of treatment. This stigma, so often combined with poverty and social exclusion, leaves many trans people unable to access their right to health.

These experiences in the general healthcare system lead many trans people preferring not to use the medical services and to self-medicate, which has a dramatic impact on their bodily and psychological health.



BOBELA TRADITIONAL GAMES

Bobela Stas is an LGBTI support group based in Kanye, it was created in 2017 and launched the same year at a traditional games event. Bobela Stas is a member of Rainbow identity, after the traditional games went well last year they then decided to make it an annual event. This year they hosted their traditional games at BOFWA grounds in Kanye on the 1st of September. They use this traditional games as a way of community outreach as the games are hosted in a public and accessible area and open to the whole community. They invited different community leaders such as, political leaders and others. Usually they have a registration fee as a means of fundraising for their support group. At this year's traditional games Registration was P6.00 individuals for outdoor games, P7.00 for indoor games and P10.00 teams for both indoor and outdoor games. The games were successful and the turn u better than last years. The winners (position 1) are awarded medals donated by RIA every year. In closing the games officially counsellor Pelekekae thanked everyone for coming and advised them to do so in the coming year. "we are hoping to speak to the committee of the support group so that next year me and other councillors can be the ones sponsoring this games, we would like it if it started off in dialogue about LGBTI issues as most people do not know anything about the LGBTI, we will invite other political leaders and after the dialogue that is when the traditional games can start. That is if you guys are ok with us doing so" he said. The community was pleased to hear this and were open to the counsellor's suggestion.



Bobela Stas Support group members playing chama

WHO AM I (POEM BY QUING)

I stand unshaken with pride

And say I am the pillar of hope

I am the rainbow that sparkles with bright colours

On a bright sunny day

After a few rain drops

No lightning frightens me

No giant shakes me

I loose no battle

I am the gigantic baobab tree

I am the bright sun that dries the hay

I am the diamond

That keeps men underground for days

I am the best that ever happened to life

I am the new definition

The talk on every men's lips

History repeats itself over me

I live a true life

I am the fact that is believed

To be a myth and a western culture imitation

I feed the hungry

I dress the naked

I pave the way for the upcoming

And light a candle for them on a dark night

And give a shoulder when requested

BEING INTERSEX

Many people have heard of the outdated term hermaphrodite but are unfamiliar with the term intersex, widely used today to refer to people who do not have typical male or female physical characteristics. Get a better idea of what being intersex is with this definition of the term and review of the effects this condition has on the individuals born with it.

The term intersex is used to describe people who are born with characteristics (chromosomes, genitalia and hormones) of both male and female or ambiguous genitalia, rather than people who have changed their sexual anatomy through surgery, hormones or other treatment (transgender).

There is a wide variation in the extent to which people are affected by being intersex as well as the degree to which intersex characteristics are problematic for them. Obviously, social acceptance plays a major role in how negatively hav-

ing intersex characteristics affects people. Because medical professionals are not consistently well trained in understanding intersex issues, they do not always provide the best advice for the parents of a newborn with intersex characteristics.

Some of the ways people can be affected by being intersex include appearing to have a small penis (micro penis) – either on a "boy" or a "girl" with a larger than usual clitoris. In addition, the person may appear to have a scrotum that is divided so that it looks like a labia or a labia that does not have a vaginal opening.

The urethral opening may not be in the usual place or may not have developed naturally at all, and the testes may be undescended so they are inside of the body rather than in the scrotum. This may affect people who appear either male or female. Also, breasts may or may not develop as expected from

the person's presumed gender.

Some people are born intersex because they have unusual combinations of the X and Y chromosomes that typically determine gender. Moreover, some people's bodies don't respond to the messages of the sex hormones in a typical way, so they don't develop sexual characteristics in the usual way as a result.

Although rare, intersex characteristics can sometimes indicate underlying medical concerns, so if you or your child has any of these characteristics, it is important to see a doctor before problems develop. As a sexual minority people with intersex characteristics may be at increased risk of drug abuse and addiction problems. They may be subject to shunning, ridicule or other negative behavior from bigoted people or those who simply do not understand the condition.

OUR TEAM



Director

Skipper Mogapi

Finance Officer

Tuduetso Suwe

Media and Advocacy Officer

Urbenia Unaswi Kgwarae

Community Mobilis- ing Officer

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Rainbow Identity

WHY IS TEAM BUILDING IMPORTANT?

Team building brings people together by encouraging collaboration and teamwork. ... One of the most important reasons for team building is to get results. Through a series of planned team bonding events that are fun and motivational, teams build skills like communication, planning, problem-solving and conflict resolution. you can organise team building activities that have a purpose and objectives behind the planning then your organisation can reap a range of benefits.

Improve productivity

Increase motivation.

Increased collaboration.

Encourage creativity.

Positive reinforcement.

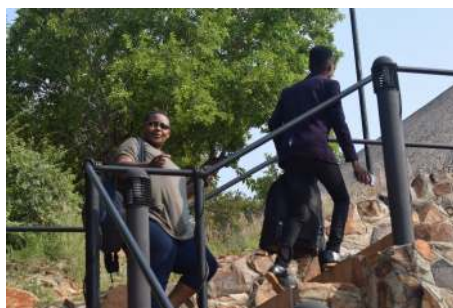
Improved communication.

What is the main purpose of team building?

The success of most organisations depends on the ability of individuals to build effective teams. The main goals of team-building are to improve productivity and motivation. Taking employees out of the office helps groups break down political and personal barriers, eliminate distractions, and have fun.

How is teamwork helpful?

Fosters Creativity and Learning. Creativity thrives when people work together on a team. Brainstorming ideas as a group prevents stale viewpoints that often come out of working solo. ... Thus, teamwork also maximizes shared knowledge in the workplace and helps you learn new skills you can use for the rest of your career.



Onica and Buffy team building



Tro (RIA chairperson) team building



Lr Buffy, Tro, Tudu, Tefo, Skipper, facilitator, Urbenia at RIA team building 2018, Mmokolodi