

Rich LGBT Program at the World Social Forum 2007 in Nairobi, a Milestone for the Kenyan LGBT Movement

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http://www.ilga.org/news_results.asp?

The World Social Forum (WSF) is an annual meeting held by members of the anti-globalisation movement to coordinate world campaigns, share and refine organizing strategies, and inform each other about movements from around the world and their issues.

It is an open meeting place where civil society groups and social movements engaged in building a society centred on people can come together to share experiences, debate ideas, build networks and create possibilities. It tends to meet in January when its "great capitalist rival", the World Economic Forum is meeting in Davos, Switzerland. This is not a coincidence. The date was chosen because of the logistical difficulty of organizing a mass protest in Davos and to try to overshadow the coverage of the World Economic Forum in the news media.

The 7th edition of the World Social Forum brings the world to Africa as activists, social movements, networks, coalitions and other progressive forces from around the world and all corners of the African continent converge in Nairobi, Kenya from January 20 till the 25th. Some 150,000 delegates are expected at the Moi International Sports Center Kasarani, Nairobi where over 1,000 activities will take place in the 106 spaces provided at the venue.

During the Methodology and Content commissions meeting in Nairobi, nine terrains of action were identified. The 4th terrain aims at "ensuring dignity, defending diversity, guaranteeing gender equality and eliminating all forms of discrimination".

A Feminist Forum is taking place right before the WSF and, as in previous editions, LGBT issues will also be present at the Forum despite the fact Kenya does criminalize same sex with 14 years imprisonment.

This edition of the World Social Forum is likely to be remembered as the climax of a memorable year for the LGBT movement in Kenya. This year, eight Nairobi based groups joined forces to create GALCK, the Gay and

Lesbian Coalition of Kenya, KEGALE (Kenya Gay and Lesbian Trust), initially named Gay Kenya was the first ever LGBT group to be officially registered by the Kenyan authorities and a handful of brave activists marched in the streets of the capital and held a booth during World Aids Day.

Activists from the LGBTI-movement in Kenya have prepared a rich program of LGBT initiatives in cooperation with allies from all over Africa and beyond.

ILGA, the International Lesbian and Gay Association, IGHLC, the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission, the South South Dialogue, the Dutch Development agency Hivos will be organising panels. In addition, the Q spot, a safe meeting point for all people interested by sexual and LGBT rights will propose poetry readings, exhibitions, performances, film screenings every day from 10 AM. Hiv counselling and testing will also be offered on the spot.

Kenyan LGBT Social Forum Resources

<http://gaykenya.com/>

[Click on the above link for date-specific workshops at the WSF]

GALCK—The Gay and Lesbian Coalition of Kenya

January 16, 2007

<http://gaykenya.com/news.php?key=120>

GALCK - Gay and Lesbian Coalition of Kenya is a coalition of LGBTI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersexed people) and LGBTI-friendly organizations in Kenya. GALCK was formed in 2006. The coalition main aim is to promote the recognition, acceptance and defend the interests and rights of LGBTI organizations and their members. The vision is to ultimately create a safe and enabling environment for LGBTI organizations and individuals in Kenya.

In December 2006 GALCK consists of 8 LGBTI member organizations and one associated LGBTI-friendly organization. You will find a presentation of them in this folder.

The main objectives of the coalition is

- * Mapping and coordination of the activities of member LGBTI organizations.
- * Providing a safe environment for the LGBTI community in Kenya.

- * Sensitization of the public on LGBTI issues.
- * Formation of strategic alliances with relevant institutions and organizations.
- * Promotion of human rights for the LGBTI.
- * Enhancing the political visibility of the LGBTI community and organizations

Working to improve the situation for LGBTI people in Kenya obviously includes health issues. The fight against HIV/AIDS is a top priority for the member organizations that form the Coalition.

GALCK is pleased to be included among the stakeholder organizations that work with the National Aids Control Council (NACC).

GALCK's member organizations:

****Minority Women in Action (MWA).**

Minority Women In Action is an organization for lesbian, bisexual and transgender (LBT) women in Kenya. MWA's primary agenda is to form a network where we are able to give support and voice to LBT women. We want to promote and advocate for LBT women's political, sexual, cultural and economic rights. Our very first aim is to create awareness in Kenya of our existence.

We also aim to:

- * Provide a forum where lesbians from different walks of life can share experiences, challenges exchange ideas and information
- * Identify and understand lesbian health needs, and create programs that can meet them.
- * Engage with national and international allies to fight for our rights
- * Build and strengthen our voices through research, media and literature through participation in local and international foras.

minoritywomen mail2kenya.com

****ISHTAR MSM**

ISHTAR is a registered community based organization working with men who have sex with men (MSM) in Nairobi, Kenya. Currently our organization deals with HIV/AIDS awareness and substance abuse among its members. ISHTAR was started in 1997 through an outreach program targeting men who have sex with men. ISHTAR now has a board of seven, and 75 active members. Our mission is to empower the sexual minority against stigma and discrimination.

ishtarsgl yahoo.com

****GALEBITRA (Gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people of Kenya)**

Motto: "Sexual freedom and rights"

GALEBITRA is an organization that was formed with a sole mandate of advocating and championing the rights of GLBTI in Kenya.

The main activities are:

- * Sexual health and rights for GLBT, through legislative and policy development and mobilization of health providers.
- * Promotion of sexual freedom of GLBT through the media and public education.
- * Political and economic empowerment of bisexual women to access leadership roles.
- * Mobilization of regional and international information network surrounding GLBT people. And seek policy influence.
- * National conferences and workshops on sexual rights through capacity building.
- * Research and development of GLBTI participatory effort on reduction of homophobia and criminalization of GLBTI people.

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****Kenya Gay And Lesbian Trust (KEGALE)**

The Kenya Gay And Lesbian Trust (KEGALE) was started in the year 2004. The main aim was to bring together likeminded people to address acceptance, stigma and HIV among men who have sex with men. We have so far managed to bring together more than 2000 people through our website www.gaykenya.com. We have also had a success with building awareness on sexual and health rights, but feel that more has to be done. We want to particularly mention the support we have received from the National Aids Control Council. Our main hindrance in regard to the fight against HIV has been the stigmatizing cultural believes and discrimination laws that make it hard to address HIV among same gender lovers.

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****Diverse Outing**

We are a gay and lesbian organization working with the same in the peri-urban areas of Nairobi. Diverse Outing strives to offer medical support through its own physician to its members. Diverse Outing has a mission to inculcate a culture of acceptance of gays and lesbians in our society, without which we cannot grow. We have a membership of 20 persons and intend to surpass this. Diverse Outing has undertaken to create HIV/AIDS awarenss in its area of operation which is primarily

Kangemi (a slum area in Nairobi's catchments.)

diveout gmail.com