

2023

Annual Report

   @ILGAAasia
ilgaasia.org

ILGA
ASIA



Annual Report

2023

Coordinated, Authored, and Edited by Pukar Bista
Design by Kelko Carsasig

● info@ilgaasia.org

● Spring Tower, Floor 11, Suite 132,
Phayathai Road, Phayathai,
Ratchathewi, Bangkok 10400,
Thailand

ilgaasia.org

ILGA ASIA

f X @ILGAAsia

International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual,
Trans and Intersex Association



**Advancing
LGBTIQ human
rights across
Asia**



ILGA

ASIA

Table of Contents [→](#)



1	EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S FOREWORD
3	MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE BOARD
5	MEMBERSHIP MAP
6	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
15	GLOBAL ADVOCACY
19	CAMPAIGN
23	COMMUNICATIONS
27	RESEARCH
31	AFGHANISTAN HUMANITARIAN PROGRAMME
39	STRENGTHENING THE CORE AND ORGANISATIONAL SYNERGY
42	LOOKING AHEAD: OUR DEPARTMENT'S KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR 2024
45	STRATEGIC INSIGHTS: REFLECTING AND PROGRESSING
49	OUR STAFF
50	OUR BOARD
51	FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
52	OUR DONORS AND PARTNERS

Executive Director's Foreword ↘

Dear members, partners, allies, and beloved community,

As we reflect on 2023, a year defined by both adversity and progress, I write with deep humility and immense pride in our collective journey. In a world torn asunder by the festering wounds of escalating conflicts—where the ongoing horrors of war rage from Gaza to the Levant—our LGBTIQ communities stood resolutely resilient and courageous, living in solidarity of one with others.

In these pages, you will find more than a record of achievements. You will find stories of survival, resistance, and ultimately, hope. Despite the repression, discrimination, and violence that many of our community members faced, we rose together. Our diversity was a strength, but our unity is the most powerful weapon against hate and division. So, we stand for peace, and for a future in which all our differences will be celebrated by every LGBTIQ person and in which they can live free and proud.

From landmark legal advocacy to pioneering, innovative campaigns against inhumane practices such as 'conversion therapy,' this report highlights remarkable progress. We've provided vital support to LGBTIQ individuals in conflict zones, especially in Afghanistan, and through our research and advocacy, we've influenced policies that are reshaping the narrative of what it means to be LGBTIQ in Asia.

But these are not just victories on paper; they are milestones in a broader, ongoing movement—a movement built on the collective will of activists, allies, and partners who believe in the vision of a more just and inclusive Asia.

Looking into the future, we will continue to push boundaries, advocate for critical legal reforms, and build capacity within our communities. We move forward—not just in defiance of those who oppose us—but in celebration of the vibrant, diverse community that makes us stronger.

Each success, each stride forward, has been powered by you — our community, our supporters. Together, we are more than the sum of our parts. Your commitment, your courage, and your unwavering belief in our shared cause are what turn hope into reality. This report is a testament to the impact we make when we stand united.

The road ahead will indeed be fraught with challenges. The struggles we face are real — from state-sanctioned violence to increased harassment of our activists. But we forge ahead resolute, knowing that our shared strength will build the freedom we all deserve to live together. We strive for a future in which all LGBTIQ people in Asia can live a life with dignity, freedom, and joy.

Thank you for your solidarity, your tireless service, and for walking this journey with us.

Together, we will build a future where freedom truly belongs to all.

In service and solidarity,



A stylized, handwritten signature of Henry Koh in white ink.

Henry Koh
Executive Director
ILGA Asia

Message from the Executive Board

2023 was a year that reaffirmed the resilience and collective efforts of our LGBTIQ communities across Asia. Despite severe challenges, including state-sanctioned violence, discriminatory laws, and the rise of anti-gender movements, our communities have stood strong. Genocide in conflict zones specifically targeted LGBTIQ individuals with brutal persecution, forcing many to seek asylum. Digital harassment and surveillance intensified, leaving activists and human rights defenders as frequent targets of online abuse, censorship, and state-led crackdowns, putting their safety and work at grave risk. Compounded by legal repression and a lack of access to essential services, these challenges underscored the urgent need for sustained global solidarity and urgent action.

As co-chairs of ILGA Asia, a membership-based organisation dedicated to advancing the rights and dignity of LGBTIQ people across the region, we are proud to present our 2023 annual report. This report highlights our collective accomplishments and the significant ongoing challenges that our communities continue to face.

In 2023, we have seen key achievements in advocacy, campaigns, communications, research, and humanitarian support, all of which have built greater momentum for LGBTIQ rights in our region. However, this

progress has been made amidst heightened adversity for LGBTIQ individuals in Asia. Our advocacy on international platforms, from the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) to the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF), has brought LGBTIQ issues to the forefront, ensuring that the commitment to 'leave no one behind' is fulfilled. From fighting conversion therapy to empowering local activism through seed funding, our campaigns strengthened the capacity of LGBTIQ communities to advocate for legal reform, raise awareness, and fight against conversion therapy across the region. With over 101 digital postings, our communications efforts have centered on increasing visibility and our lived experiences to foster solidarity. Research remains a cornerstone of our work. It provides evidence-based advocacy and illuminates the unique legal and social challenges faced by LGBTIQ communities in Asia. Our research on indirect legislation that criminalizes LGBTIQ identities has shaped policy dialogues and contributed to meaningful legal reforms at regional and global levels. Lastly, our humanitarian support, particularly through our Afghanistan project. In one year, the programme reached out to 724 LGBTIQ individuals, providing essential support in evacuation, resettlement, and mental health services.

As we reflect on the past year, we are deeply proud of the strength and courage of our community members, partners, and secretariat. Our accomplishments are a testament to the power of solidarity, collaboration, and collective action.

Looking ahead, we will continue to amplify the voices of our communities and advocate for critical legal and policy reforms, as well as build the capacity of activists to drive lasting change amidst the ongoing challenges.

As we commence a new year, we remain resolute in our commitment to promoting a more equitable and inclusive future for LGBTIQ communities across Asia. Despite existing hurdles, the tenacity of our members, the dedication of our partners, and the steadfast work of our secretariat instill faith in our collective power to effect meaningful change. Together, we shall persist in opposing oppression, championing our rights, and guaranteeing that no individual is marginalised in our pursuit of equality and dignity for all.

With utmost gratitude and solidarity,



**Chitsanupong "Best"
Nithiwana**
Co-Chair
Executive Board
ILGA Asia

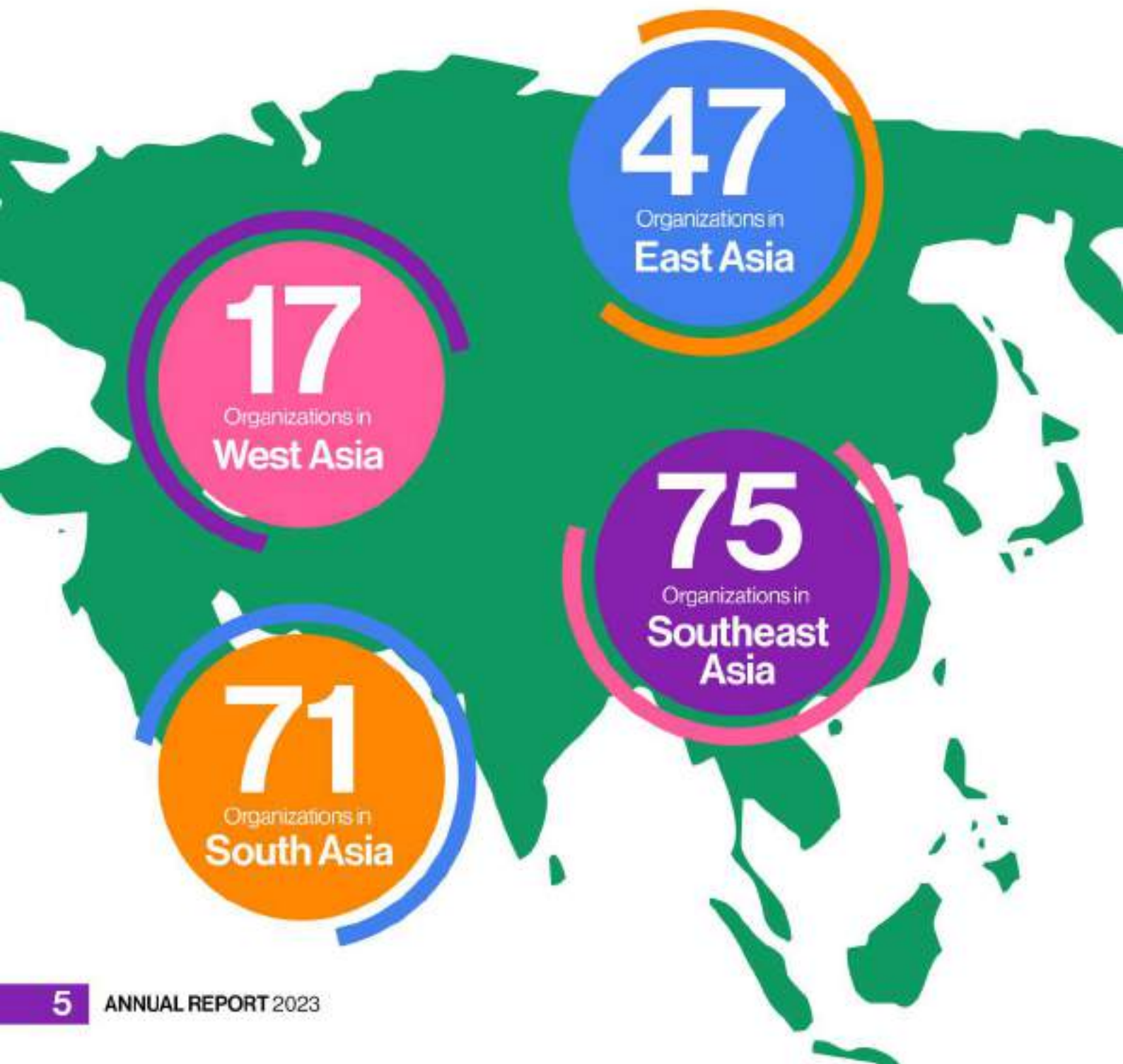


Dr Charbel Maydaa
Co-chair
Executive Board
ILGA Asia

Our Members

2023
Annual
Report

Our membership is strong and growing, with 215 members spread across Asia. Among them, 75 are based in South East Asia, another 76 in South Asia, 47 in East Asia, and 17 in West Asia. Together, they form a united force working tirelessly to advance the rights of the LGBTIQ community throughout Asia.





● Executive Summary

Global Advocacy

Our advocacy made a powerful impact by putting LGBTIQ rights front and center in critical forums and discussions. At the Asia Pacific Regional Seminar on Sustainable Development and the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, we championed the inclusion of LGBTIQ communities in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). We pushed governments and UN agencies to honor their commitments to "leave no one behind" by recognizing that true progress happens only when all voices are heard and valued. Our work wasn't just about being present; it was about making sure that LGBTIQ issues are part of the larger story of human rights and sustainable change. Our policy advocacy extended to the Asian Development Bank, where we pushed for the inclusion of SOGIESC in safeguard policies.

In our region where activism carries severe risks, we provided direct support to three LGBTIQ activists by providing digital security advice, and psychological support, and securing US\$11,700 for mental health support and emergency relocation. We enabled three activists from China, Jordan, and Malaysia to advocate at UPR sessions in Geneva and the Society of Transsexual Women Advocates of the Philippines (STRAP) at Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), securing trans-inclusive policy recommendations for the Philippines. We further strengthened local advocacy capacity through programmes such as the West Asia Advocacy and Leadership Programme. Moreover, our influence reached global human rights reports as well, including submissions to the UN spotlighting the unique intersection between LGBTIQ rights and colonialism.

The December 2023 Human Rights and Sustainable Development Mechanisms training empowered 21 Southeast Asian activists to demystify UN systems, build strategic advocacy skills, and strengthen collaborative networks that will lay the foundation for long-term, transformative impacts on LGBTIQ movements and human rights advocacy across the region.

Campaigns ➤

Our campaigns supported grassroots activism across Asia and achieved remarkable strides in LGBTIQ rights advocacy through targeted actions and local partnerships.

- **Empowering Grassroots Movement for Sustainable Change:**

By providing targeted seed funding and capacity-building support to local organisations, we empowered nine organisations to address urgent LGBTIQ issues within their community. These projects, spanning from legal reform to educational inclusivity, demonstrate our commitment to developing and building community-driven, sustainable change.

- **Anti-conversion Therapy and Leading Campaigns Against Harmful Practices:**

We led impactful campaigns against conversion therapy partnering with 22 local organisations, documenting survivor stories and collaborating with local activists to push for policy reforms. In a sweeping effort across Asia, we documented the harrowing stories of six survivors from Bangladesh, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, and Sri Lanka, produced five video testimonies of those who endured conversion, and mobilized 66,512 online signatures demanding an end to conversion therapy. Our work extended into challenging social spaces — such as schools and religious communities — where we provided tools and training to promote understanding and protect the dignity of LGBTIQ people.

- **Strengthening Regional Networks for Lasting Impact:**

Our sustained support for ongoing campaigns in Bangladesh, Mongolia, and India ensures that grassroots efforts not only persist but grow stronger, reinforcing a resilient, interconnected LGBTIQ rights movement across Asia.

Communication



This year we championed visibility and advocacy for LGBTIQ communities across Asia, using Pride events and digital campaigns to elevate vital issues. At Bangkok and Manila Pride, and through a month-long Pride campaign, we amplified topics like anti-LGBTIQ violence and sex work recognition, reaching a broad audience through personal stories shared on social media. Our digital advocacy expanded the conversation further, with over 101 social media posts tackling human rights and SOGIESC, helping to build a digital regional movement.

In addition, our quarterly newsletters and ILGA Asia Conference recaps strengthened connections within our network, keeping allies and members engaged. Our campaign against conversion therapy underscored our commitment to human dignity, mobilizing 150,000 people and galvanizing support for legal reforms to end this harmful practice. Through these initiatives, we built community, sparked dialogues, and broadened support for LGBTIQ rights across Asia.

Research and Policy

With our research department, we drove impactful legal reform and global awareness initiatives, advancing LGBTIQ rights across Asia. Through direct engagement with the UN and co-facilitating discussions on legal challenges for LGBTIQ individuals, we laid the foundation for broader decriminalization efforts. Our research, backed by expert consultants, promises credible data on laws indirectly targeting LGBTIQ people.

Internationally, we presented at Sydney World Pride and RightsCon, where we highlighted the unique digital and legal struggles of marginalized groups, including trans and queer sex workers. Our IDAHOBIT webinar engaged over 35 rights defenders, bridging voices from Asia and beyond. Capacity-building partnerships, such as our work with India's Trans Law and Justice Clinic, aim to empower local advocates with a forthcoming "Know Your Rights" manual. Additionally, in response to humanitarian crises, our briefing on Afghanistan's LGBTIQ community urged immediate global action, underscoring our commitment to amplify vulnerable voices in the face of adversity.

Afghanistan Humanitarian Programme ➤

Our Afghanistan-focused humanitarian project took vital steps to protect and empower vulnerable LGBTIQ communities under extreme conditions, delivering impactful, multifaceted support with care and rigor:

- **Humanitarian Aid and Lifeline**

Support: Reaching 724 LGBTIQ Afghans, we provided emergency assistance to 258 of them, providing food, shelter, and safe passage for those escaping danger. Our Safar platform efficiently tracked and categorized 134 completed cases, with 82 requests actively in progress and 402 scheduled for further evaluation, ensuring that every need is met with care and rigor.

- **Driving Change and Global Awareness:**

Two targeted social media campaigns spotlighted our Safar platform and Afghanistan Briefing Paper, amplifying the challenges facing LGBTIQ Afghans and mobilizing international support. Collaborative media efforts, including coverage on Afghan refugees deported from Pakistan, reached new audiences and called global attention to the dire needs of the community.

- **Building Partnerships and Sustaining Impact:**

Eight strategic partnerships and 12 sustainability initiatives were launched to secure long-term support for Afghanistan's LGBTIQ community, with programmes ranging from e-learning courses to staff capacity building. Our evidence-based interventions, through 10 policy briefs and 18 high-level dialogues, laid critical groundwork for future policy change, reinforcing our commitment to a safer future for LGBTIQ Afghans.

Strengthening the Core and Organisational Synergy ➤

We strengthened ILGA Asia's organisational foundation by expanding capacity, deepening cross-regional collaboration, and refining global advocacy. Focused on leadership development and strategic alignment, we nurtured core strengths to amplify LGBTIQ rights across Asia and globally. Highlights include:

- **Empowering Activists through Capacity Building:** We conducted focused programmes with five intersex activists for intensive training in advocacy and strategic planning. An advocacy workshop provided in-depth training for four intersex leaders in pursuit of rights for intersex people at regional and international levels, raising social awareness and promoting changes in attitudes related to intersex issues.
- **Fueling Cross Regional Collaborations:** Our Theory of Change Workshop in Bangkok, co-hosted with COC Netherlands, brought together 15 activists from Asia and Africa. This workshop honed alignment across the Power of Pride alliance, with each detail meticulously planned—from logistics to facilitation—to build an impactful, uninterrupted experience for participants. Collaborations like this, alongside the "Most Significant Stories of Change" project, enriched partnerships with COC Netherlands and Pan Africa ILGA, strengthening our shared vision.

- **Global Engagement and Crisis**

Response: At Sydney World Pride, we highlighted LGBTIQ refugee struggles, underscoring the need for global solidarity. In collaboration with Rainbow Railroad Canada, we co-hosted a Strategic Convening on Afghanistan, coordinating responses among 29 organisations to address humanitarian gaps. These works reflect our commitment to resilience, adaptability, and a lasting impact on LGBTIQ rights in Asia and beyond.

- **Reaching our Strategic Goals:** In 2023, our strategic actions strengthened LGBTIQ communities' solidarities and advocacy. This has enhanced a united regional network at international forums. Cross-regional workshops, such as the Theory of Change Review Workshop, which brought activists from Asia and Africa together in a mutual learning and sharing of strategies. On the ground, seed funding supported campaigns from India to Bhutan, nurturing grassroots action on issues of conversion therapy. Meanwhile, specific training, such as the West Asia LGBTIQ Advocacy and Leadership Programme, prepared activists for leadership and advocacy. Reports to UN bodies feature policy briefs that underpin evidence-based advocacy, further amplified by digital campaigns. These have, in turn, crystallized into an effective movement that stitches together diverse communities, bringing Asian activists center stage as important contributors in the human rights landscape.

2023



● Department Achievements: A Year in Review

Global Advocacy





Engagement with International Bodies and Forums

In 2023, we utilized global platforms to influence the international human rights agenda. Our participation in the Asia-Pacific Regional Seminar on Sustainable Development enabled us to emphasize the importance of including LGBTIQ rights in the SDGs, ensuring that the commitment to "leave no one behind" is truly inclusive. Furthermore, our active participation in the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) 2023 and the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development provided critical opportunities to advocate for the inclusion of LGBTIQ rights in the larger human rights debate. Together with COC Netherlands, we coordinated the delivery of two video statements at the 53rd and 54th Human Rights Council.

We also coordinated support for three activists—one each from China, Jordan, and Malaysia—to attend Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Advocacy Week and the 45th UPR Pre-session in Geneva, advancing LGBTIQ rights recommendations for their countries. We also supported STRAP's Brenda Alegre at CEDAW's 86th session, where she advocated for trans-inclusive policies, resulting in three recommendations on transgender rights for the government of the Philippines.



Advocacy and Lobbying for Policy Inclusion

This year, we were particularly forthcoming about our steadfast commitment to incorporating LGBTIQ individuals' rights into regional and international policies. We advocated for the inclusion of sexual orientation, gender identity, expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) in ADB's safeguard policies through strategic consultations with the US Ambassador to the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and collaborations with international non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Despite initial opposition, we persisted, collaborating closely with key stakeholders such as the ADB secretariat and Outright International. Our continued advocacy demonstrates our commitment to advancing inclusive policies, despite opposition.



Empowering Southeast Asian Activists Through Training

The December 2023 Human Rights and Sustainable Development Mechanisms training brought together 21 activists from Southeast Asia for a three-day session. The training's comprehensive focus on demystifying UN mechanisms and strategies for engaging with state and treaty bodies was taken positively by participants. Participants welcomed the comprehensive approach of the training, stating it de-mystified UN mechanisms and strategies for engaging with the UN state and treaty bodies. Evaluations completed at the end of the training demonstrated a significant increase in the level of empowerment and confidence, averaging 4 out of 5 on a confidence scale. Many participants are now planning to utilize these skills in producing shadow reports, collaborating with NGOs, and advocating for LGBTIQ rights both nationally and internationally.

Feedback also highlighted the programme's success in strengthening collaboration and networking, with all participants affirming that the training encouraged peer engagement to strengthen LGBTIQ movements across Southeast Asia. Participants expected long-term community-wide benefits, such as increased leadership, sustainable action, and strategic advocacy. Recommendations included extending the training hours so that more complex topics may be covered in greater depth, while minor logistical improvements were suggested. These recommendations notwithstanding, the training was described as a life-changing opportunity, inclusive, responsive to participants' needs, and key to the advancement of human rights advocacy.



Supporting LGBTIQ Human Rights Defenders

Our work in the region to support LGBTIQ human rights defenders remains imperative, especially given that advocacy work is fraught with danger in many parts of Asia. In 2023, we assisted a Qatar-based and two Chinese LGBTIQ activists by providing digital security advice, psychosocial support, and cross-regional consultations. This assistance, which enabled the activists to receive \$11,700 for emergency relocation and mental health care, demonstrates our dedication to ensuring the safety and well-being of those who bravely advocate for LGBTIQ rights in difficult situations. Our efforts in this area are critical to providing human rights defenders with the resources they require to continue their important work.



Capacity Building and Leadership Development

We are deeply committed to building the capacity of LGBTIQ activists throughout Asia. Our projects, such as the West Asia LGBTIQ Advocacy and Leadership Programme and the Southeast Asia Human Rights and Sustainable Development Training, are intended to provide activists with the skills needed for effective advocacy. These programmes aim to develop leadership skills and prepare activists to participate in regional and international advocacy work. By providing targeted training and promoting support networks, we are developing a strong cohort of leaders capable of driving positive change in LGBTIQ communities across Asia.



Strategic Contributions to Global Human Rights Reporting

Our contributions to global human rights reporting contributed to guarantee that LGBTIQ issues are prominently represented on the international stage. This year, our submissions to the UN Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing and the Independent Expert on SOGI's report on "colonialism and SOGIESC" shed light on the unique challenges that LGBTIQ communities face in Asia. These contributions have had a significant impact on global human rights dialogues, policymaking, and raising awareness of the intersection of LGBTIQ rights and broader human rights issues. Through these efforts, we continue to raise global awareness and advocacy for LGBTIQ issues.



Legal and Asylum Support

Our legal advocacy efforts have been critical in protecting LGBTIQ people from persecution. This was especially evident in our creation of an affidavit for a US court that was submitted to support an Afghan LGBTIQ asylum applicant. The affidavit contained critical evidence that could help secure asylum, ensuring the individual's safety and security. This work demonstrates our commitment to promoting policy change and taking direct action to protect the rights and save lives of vulnerable LGBTIQ individuals.

Campaign





Empowering Local Activism Through Seed Funding

One of the central themes of our work has been to empower grassroots organisations through seed funding. We provided critical financial support to nine local campaigns, allowing them to launch impactful LGBTIQ rights initiatives tailored to the specific needs of their respective communities. Organisations in Bangladesh, Bhutan, Pakistan, India, Mongolia, Hong Kong, Thailand, Malaysia, and Philippines, have pushed for legal reform, increased awareness, and provided community support.



Photo from QMI (Queer Malaysian Indians)



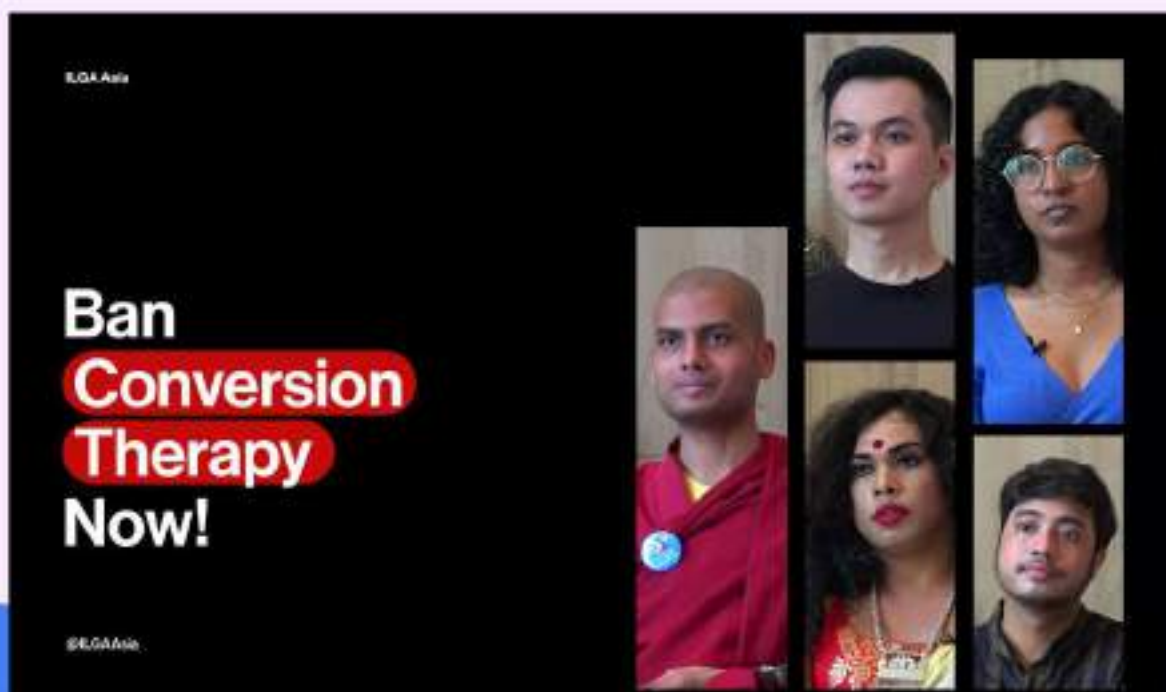
Building Capacity for Effective Advocacy

Capacity building has been at the heart of our strategy for increasing the effectiveness of LGBTIQ advocacy in Asia. Through our several online training programmes, we've provided activists the skills they need to design, execute, and manage campaigns that have a global impact. The second edition of our campaign training provided 12 campaigners from various regions with the knowledge and tools they needed to boost their voices and implement effective advocacy projects. These initiatives demonstrate our commitment to providing activists with the resources they need to drive meaningful change in their communities.



Advocacy Against Conversion Therapy

A large portion of our work has focused on advocating against harmful practices such as conversion therapy. Our campaign to end conversion practices in Asia has raised awareness, documented stories of six survivors from Bangladesh, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia and Sri Lanka, produced six video interviews of conversion therapy survivors, collected 66,512 online signatures for the anti-conversion therapy petitions, and advocated for the cessation of these harmful practices. We have amplified the voices of those affected by producing video interviews and collaborating with local partners, moving the conversation forward on the need for legal and social reforms to protect the dignity and rights of LGBTIQ individuals.





Promoting Inclusivity in Educational and Religious Contexts Through Sub-granting

Our sub-granting initiatives have also focused on the creation of inclusive environments in educational and religious settings. In India, the QKnit Foundation used our funding to provide sensitivity training in schools, fostering a more accepting environment for LGBTIQ students and faculty. Similarly, Inclusive Bangladesh organised religious community dialogues to bridge gaps and foster understanding of LGBTIQ issues. These initiatives demonstrate our commitment to promoting inclusivity in settings where acceptance can have a significant impact on social attitudes and behaviors.



Amplifying Marginalized Voices Through Storytelling

Storytelling has been an effective tool of our campaign work, particularly with GDot TV in Hong Kong. By teaching LGBTIQ community members how to share their stories, we have helped to amplify marginalized voices and increased media visibility and understanding of LGBTIQ issues. This theme of storytelling as advocacy emphasizes the role of personal narratives in promoting social change and challenging stereotypes.



Sustaining Momentum Through Ongoing Campaigns

Our ongoing support for local campaigns, particularly through our second cohort of funding consisting seven organisations from **Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Mongolia, Philippines, Vietnam, and Hong Kong**, has been important in maintaining momentum for LGBTIQ advocacy. These initiatives ensure that grassroots efforts continue to thrive, even in difficult circumstances, by providing the financial and technical support required to effect meaningful change. This theme of ongoing support reflects our long-term commitment to developing a stronger, more resilient LGBTIQ rights movement in Asia.

Communications





Promoting Visibility and Celebrating Pride

In 2023, we promoted the visibility of LGBTIQ communities by actively participating in Pride events within Asia. Our participation in Bangkok and Manila Pride, as well as our 2023 Pride Month campaign, demonstrated our commitment to inclusion and solidarity. These events were more than just celebrations; they were also platforms for advocacy, where we raised critical issues such as recognizing sex work and combating anti-LGBTIQ violence. By engaging with participants and sharing personal Pride stories via social media campaigns, we increased the impact of these events, creating a more inclusive environment and strengthening the voices of LGBTIQ people.



Digital Advocacy and Strategic Communication

In an increasingly digital world, our communications team has been indispensable for advancing our mission. With over 101 digital postings, including social media reels, infographics, and event recaps, we have consistently raised concerns about SOGIESC and human rights. These digital advocacy campaigns are intersectional, addressing related issues while fostering solidarity among allies. Our efforts in this area have made a significant contribution to the Power of Pride (POP) goals, as well as increased regional support for LGBTIQ rights. By utilizing digital platforms, we ensured that our message reached a large and engaged audience.



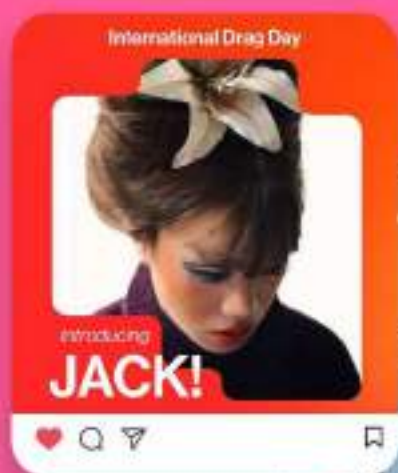
Building Community and Strengthening Connections

We maintain strong connections with our members, subscribers, partners, and allies through outputs such as our quarterly newsletters and the 2022 ILGA Asia Conference recap videos. These communications have been important in keeping our community informed and engaged, building connections that are necessary to our overall success. The visual documentation of our conference, in particular, serves as a long-term resource for advocacy and community-building, ensuring that the event's insights and discussions continue to inspire and inform long after it has concluded.



Combating Harmful Practices and Protecting Human Rights

Our campaign against harmful practices such as conversion therapy demonstrates our solid commitment to protecting the rights and dignity of LGBTIQ people. We have raised significant awareness about the harmful effects of these practices by sharing survivors' stories, creating educational content, and mobilizing support through petitions. Our efforts reached over 150,000 people, demonstrating our capacity to reach a wide audience and the widespread support for a ban on conversion therapy. This campaign not only highlighted the need for legal reform, but it also formed alliances and strengthened our network of support throughout Asia.



Research and Policy





Focusing on Legal Reform

This year's efforts were robust and multifaceted, with a focus on both direct and indirect legal reform. From co-facilitating critical discussions to submitting detailed reports to the UN Special Rapporteur on Myanmar, we have consistently pushed the envelope in raising awareness of the legal challenges that LGBTIQ people face. Our work in recruiting research consultants to investigate indirect legislation that criminalizes LGBTIQ people throughout Asia is expected to produce credible evidence that will aid in broader decriminalization advocacy. These efforts, combined with our ongoing research into access to justice, highlight our strategic priority of dismantling legal structures that perpetuate discrimination.



Raising Global Awareness and Fostering International Dialogue

We've made major strides in raising global awareness of LGBTIQ issues by participating in high-profile international forums. Our presentations at Sydney World Pride and RightsCon 2023, which focused on the intersection of digital rights and LGBTIQ rights, especially for marginalized groups like trans and queer sex workers, highlighted the multifaceted challenges these communities face. In addition, our IDAHOBIT 2023 webinar brought together over 35 rights defenders from across Asia to discuss current trends and challenges, highlighting the disparities between the Global South and North. These platforms have been extremely useful in cultivating international dialogue and ensuring that LGBTIQ voices from Asia are heard and respected.



Capacity Building and Knowledge Sharing

This year, we emphasized capacity building. Our collaboration with the Trans Law and Justice Clinic at Jindal Global Law School in India exemplifies our commitment to providing activists with the knowledge and tools they need to effect change. Through this collaboration, we engaged in national-level knowledge sharing on transgender rights jurisprudence, and we are on track to create a “Know Your Rights” manual that will be a valuable resource for queer rights activists. These initiatives aim to educate and empower individuals to become advocates in their own communities.



Strategic Research and Evidence-Based Advocacy

Our work has been supported by a commitment to evidence-based advocacy, which ensures that our efforts are founded on rigorous research. This is evident in the series of briefing notes we created, which covered critical developments such as the Supreme Court’s decision on forced surgeries for intersex people in India and changes to Malaysian police guidelines. Each briefing note was designed to support ongoing advocacy by providing stakeholders with the data and analysis they need to advocate for significant legal and policy changes. By conducting and disseminating this research, we lay the groundwork for long-term advocacy that is informed, strategic, and effective.



Responding to Humanitarian Crises

We also remained vigilant in our response to humanitarian crises affecting the LGBTIQ community. Our briefing paper on the need for immediate humanitarian action in Afghanistan urged the international community to acknowledge the dire situation of LGBTIQ Afghans and to act decisively by allocating resources and assistance where they are most needed. This effort was part of our overall strategy to ensure that the plight of LGBTIQ people in crisis situations is not overlooked and that their voices are heard on a global scale.



Afghanistan Humanitarian Programme



Afghanistan Briefing Paper

Too Many to be Given Safe Passage,
Too Few to be Part of Humanitarian Response

ILGA Asia
Stonewall



What's Happening in **AFGHANISTAN**

*We call for the protection of
women, children, LGBTIQ
people and others facing
peril in Afghanistan*



Building Trust and Providing Lifeline Support for LGBTIQ Communities in Afghanistan

In Afghanistan, where reaching vulnerable LGBTIQ communities is difficult, we restructured our communication strategy to ensure LGBTIQ people know they are not alone. The Komak response mechanism was at the heart of this effort. We updated the auto-reply message to be available in both English and Dari, making it more accessible to a greater number of people who need our support. Our auto-reply message does more than just inform; it also assures those seeking assistance that their requests are being reviewed, giving them a much-needed sense of security.

Our process did not end there. Each request is meticulously logged and categorized on the Safar platform, a secure system that allows us to manage and track the status of each case. Whether a request is new, qualified, in progress, or completed, it is treated with the diligence it deserves. For example, requests that qualify for support are marked as "In-Progress," indicating that we are actively working to assist. This systematic approach has streamlined our operations and reinforced our commitment to supporting the LGBTIQ community in Afghanistan, even during difficult times.



A Humanitarian Commitment to Supporting LGBTIQ Refugees in Afghanistan

The humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan demanded more than just a response; it necessitated a comprehensive, coordinated effort to save lives. In collaboration with Stonewall and other key partners, we launched an ambitious and multifaceted support system for LGBTIQ people facing immediate threats. The process began by verifying the identities and claims of those in need, and each case was meticulously documented on the Safar platform to ensure secure and accurate management.

We then moved quickly to provide critical humanitarian aid, ranging from financial assistance to basic necessities such as food, shelter, and clothing. But our help didn't stop there. Recognizing the imminent danger that many Afghan refugees faced in neighboring Pakistan, we facilitated safe passage, where we obtained visas, travel documents, and flights for those in need. For resettlement this assistance was a lifeline.

Beyond physical safety, we recognised the value of mental health support. We addressed the profound psychological impacts of trauma faced by Afghans under terrible conditions by providing online psychosocial therapy, assisting individuals in rebuilding their resilience. For example, one evacuee who had faced severe persecution received therapy sessions, which were critical in helping them recover.





Strategically Driving Global Engagement in Afghanistan

Secure and effective communication is the foundation of our work in Afghanistan. Our social media campaigns for the Safar platform and the Afghanistan Briefing Paper were developed with accuracy and impact in mind. Before launching, we rigorously tested and refined the campaign to ensure it met our high engagement expectations.

Once launched, the campaign increased awareness and sparked meaningful conversations across our platforms. For example, a series of posts detailing the Safar platform's functionality drew a lot of attention, resulting in more inquiries from potential partners and stakeholders. This campaign was more than just a communication effort; it was an important part of our advocacy strategy, designed to mobilize support and spread our message globally.



Elevating Voices of Resilience and Courage in Afghanistan

Storytelling is an effective tool in the field of human rights, as evidenced by our project to document the experiences of LGBTIQ individuals evacuated from Afghanistan. We started by carefully selecting people who were willing to share their stories—voices that had previously been silenced by fear and repression.

Interviews were conducted remotely, with questions written in both English and Dari to ensure clarity and sensitivity. These narratives were then translated, carefully scripted, and brought to life by ILGA Asia and Stonewall.

The final video was a moving story that emphasized the resilience and courage of those forced to flee their homes. This video, which appeared as the first section of the Afghanistan Briefing Paper, informed the struggles of LGBTIQ people. This project raised awareness and reinforced the need for ongoing international support and protection.



Advancing LGBTIQ Inclusion in Global Peace and Security at the UN Women Regional Conference

Our participation in the UN Women Regional Conference was an important part of our broader advocacy efforts. As the situation in Afghanistan deteriorated, it became critical to include LGBTIQ perspectives in global discussions of peace and security. We carefully planned for this intervention, consulting with our team to fine-tune our messaging and conducting extensive research to ensure our points were both relevant and effective.

Our discussion at the conference focused on the intersectional challenges faced by LGBTIQ people in conflict zones, particularly in Afghanistan, where the crisis has disproportionately affected these communities. By participating in this forum, we were able to raise awareness of these issues, and advocate for the allocation of resources and funding specifically for LBQ women in Afghanistan.



Mobilizing International Response for the Decriminalization and Protection of LGBTIQ Rights in Afghanistan

In response to the worsening situation in Afghanistan, we created a briefing paper that serves as a critical document in our advocacy efforts. This paper did more than just outline the challenges that LGBTIQ people face; it made a compelling case for the immediate decriminalization of LGBTIQ identities, as well as the urgent need for international intervention.

The paper detailed how indirect laws are being used to target and oppress LGBTIQ people and urged global stakeholders to take action. By documenting these systemic abuses, we hoped to mobilize a coordinated international response, ensuring that LGBTIQ people's humanitarian needs were not overlooked.



Advocating for Urgent Action: Elevating LGBTIQ Voices at the Human Rights Council

During the 52nd session of the Human Rights Council, we collaborated with Stonewall UK to present a powerful video statement that directly addressed the urgent needs of LGBTIQ people in Afghanistan. Our message was clear: the international community must recognise and address the unique challenges that LGBTIQ communities in Afghanistan and Afghan refugees face, particularly those related to climate change and housing.

This statement was part of an interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Afghanistan, during which we emphasized the critical need for asylum and resettlement assistance for LGBTIQ people. Our participation in this session raised awareness on the issue and sought to influence international policy to ensure that LGBTIQ people's voices are heard at the highest levels of global governance.



Championing Inclusive Atrocity Prevention: Integrating SOGI Perspectives into Global Security Frameworks

During the UN General Assembly's High-Level Week, we participated in an important debate about incorporating sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) perspectives into mass atrocity prevention. As panelists, our role was to highlight the specific risks that LGBTIQ people face in conflict and post-conflict settings.

Our contribution was needed in advocating for a gendered approach to atrocity prevention—one that recognises and addresses the unique threats that LGBTIQ people face. This discussion was an important step in our ongoing efforts to ensure that international frameworks for preventing violence and persecution are truly inclusive and protect all individuals, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

By the Numbers

Enabled Accessibility of Humanitarian Aid



724
LGBTIQ
individuals

were provided essential support in areas such as evacuation, resettlement, and mental health services.

Among these, **258 individuals** received emergency aid, underscoring the programme's capacity to respond effectively during crises.

The programme processed

134
completed
requests

This includes **82 cis men, 24 cis women, 3 trans men, 21 trans women, and 4 individuals with undefined gender identities**. Additionally, **36 requests** were delegated to partner organisations, and **82 requests** are currently in progress, with **45 cis men, 22 cis women, and 19 trans women** receiving attention.

402
new requests

have been scheduled for evaluation, with the majority (**304 individuals**) still awaiting further assessment. Despite the challenges, the programme also identified **67 non-qualified requests**, showing a strong commitment to targeted support.



Through these efforts, the programme initiated

3 **significant**
actions

to create robust support systems, contributing to a safer and more resilient environment for the LGBTIQ community in Afghanistan.

Evidence-based Advocacy

Throughout 2023, the programme was instrumental in shaping policy and public discourse by producing

10
policy briefs,
reports, and
articles

These contributions included significant input to the United Nations Secretary-General's report on Afghanistan, ensuring that the specific needs and challenges of LGBTIQ persons were brought to the forefront.



**18 advocacy
initiatives**

were conducted, engaging with key stakeholders such as government agencies, UN organisations, and humanitarian assistance donors. These efforts laid the groundwork for future policy changes, even though no new LGBTIQ-inclusive laws or policies were adopted during this period.

Partnership Building & Sustainability

8 strategic
partnerships

were formed, aimed at enhancing resource mobilization and developing timely responses to challenges faced by LGBTIQ individuals.

12 sustainability
initiatives

were undertaken. These included submitting proposals, building staff capacity, and developing e-learning courses, all of which contribute to the ongoing viability and effectiveness of the project.

Strengthening the Core and Organisational Synergy

In 2023, we strengthened our organisational foundation by increasing internal capacity and encouraging cross-departmental collaboration to support and expand our impact. By emphasizing leadership development of LGBTIQ people, cross-regional collaboration, and strategic advocacy, we ensured alignment with our strategic goals. These efforts focused on three key themes: capacity building and leadership development, strategic collaboration and cross-regional learning, and strengthening global engagement and crisis response, all of which contributed to ILGA Asia's core strength and reinforced our role as a nurturer of LGBTIQ movement in Asia and beyond.



Capacity Building and Leadership Development

We prioritized providing activists with the skills needed to champion LGBTIQ rights across Asia. Notably, we implemented targeted leadership programmes to improve the strategic planning and advocacy skills of five intersex activists. In addition, our specialized advocacy workshop trained four intersex activists to raise intersex issues at regional and international platforms. These capacity-building efforts raised awareness of LGBTIQ rights with an aim to gradually shift societal attitudes toward intersex issues and lay a solid foundation for movement building.



Strategic Collaboration and Cross-Regional Learning

In order to facilitate cross-regional collaboration, we organised several key initiatives that promoted mutual learning and strategic alignment among LGBTIQ movements. The Theory of Change (ToC) Review Workshop in Bangkok, co-organised by COC Netherlands, brought together 15 activists from Asia and Africa to refine Power of Pride alliance's Theory of Change.

Organizing such a large event requires meticulous planning, extensive collaboration with partners, and cross-functional coordination. We supported on all fronts, including detailed logistical arrangements such as identifying and coordinating with the hotel, lodging, transportation, and catering, as well as the creation of workshop materials, session facilitation, and participant involvement. Every detail was carefully planned to ensure an uninterrupted and impactful experience for all attendees.

This workshop, along with the "Most Significant Stories of Change" documentation project, emphasized the importance of contextualizing strategies and emphasizing project impact on LGBTIQ communities. These activities strengthened our partnerships with COC Netherlands and Pan Africa ILGA, and aided in understanding unique challenges and opportunities that exist in various country contexts across the globe.



Strengthening Global Engagement and Crisis Response

Our participation in global events such as Sydney World Pride (SWP) and EuroPride 2023 demonstrated our public leadership in promoting inclusive policies. At SWP, our emphasis on the plight of LGBTIQ refugees highlighted the critical need for global solidarity—a message strategically crafted through careful internal coordination and organisational planning.

Our dedication to effective crisis management was exemplified by our co-hosting of the Strategic Convening on Afghanistan LGBTIQ Human Rights and Humanitarian Responses, in collaboration with Rainbow Railroad Canada. This meeting, the result of careful internal planning, brought together 29 representatives from various organisations. The collaboration sought to map existing Afghan human rights and humanitarian responses, identify gaps in current programmes, and improve interagency coordination.

These activities demonstrate our adaptability and strategic foresight, as the organisation continues to strengthen its internal capabilities. By improving cross-departmental collaboration and refining crisis response strategies, we have increased our impact in Asia and beyond, as well as laid a robust groundwork for long-term progress in advancing LGBTIQ rights.

2023 Annual Report

Looking Ahead: Our Department's Key Takeaways for 2024

Our Department's Key Takeaways for 2024



Global Advocacy

- **Streamlined Focus and Enhanced Support:** To prevent burnout and ensure impactful outcomes, we must reduce the number of activist engagements and project activities until proper administrative support is in place. Prioritizing fewer, more strategically aligned initiatives will allow for deeper focus and more effective implementation.
- **Strengthening UN Engagement:** Building stronger linkages with regional processes and initiating activist support at the national level will elevate our UN engagement efforts. This approach will aid in building more robust and meaningful participation, ensuring our advocacy aligns with both regional and global objectives.

Campaign

- **Strengthening Project Management and Networking:** To enhance the effectiveness of our campaigns, providing additional training in project management for key staff and increasing opportunities for international networking are essential. These initiatives will effectively improve operational efficiency, as well as aid to secure future funding and partnerships.
- **Leveraging Partnerships for Success:** The importance of maintaining strong relationships with international partners and local members cannot be overstated. These connections have proven critical to our success, and continued collaboration will be key in executing future projects with precision and impact.

Communications

- **Tailored Content Strategies for Maximum Engagement:** To optimize our social media impact, we will focus on posts that resonate most with our audience—specifically those centered around social justice and opportunities. By strategically posting in the evening on Facebook and early morning on Instagram, and leveraging high-quality visuals and interactive content, we can sustain engagement and continue to grow our reach, particularly on Instagram.
- **Dynamic Approach to Platform Performance:** As Facebook engagements decline and Instagram posts show significantly more traffic, it's crucial to adopt new strategies. Regular performance analysis will guide us in refining content, utilizing Reels and Stories, and exploring paid promotions to maintain and promote our digital presence across platforms.

Afghanistan Humanitarian Programme

- **Holistic Safety and Support:** The past year has underscored the necessity of a comprehensive approach that combines immediate safety measures with long-term resettlement, psychosocial support, and community building. Moving forward, strengthening secure communication channels and safe havens for LGBTIQ Afghans will be very important.
- **Strategic Engagement and Advocacy:** A Queering Resettlement Taskforce, paired with sustained engagement with resettled individuals, will enhance the effectiveness of resettlement strategies. Simultaneously, advocating for LGBTIQ rights through media and direct engagement with UN agencies remains crucial in shaping global narratives and ensuring equitable treatment.
- **Collaborative Capacity Building:** The challenges of rapid situational changes in Afghanistan call for improved resource allocation strategies and capacity building within teams. Establishing forums for UN collaboration, alongside mentorship programmes, will ensure that support efforts are both compassionate and strategically sound, keeping pace with the evolving needs of those we serve.

2023 Annual Report

Strategic Insights: Reflecting and Progressing

2023 marked significant milestones for us, as we achieved a number of goals. Our primary efforts are always centered on four pillars:

- 1. Capacity Strengthening,**
- 2. Solidarity and Effectiveness,**
- 3. Mobilizing Movements and Activating Allyship,**
- 4. Strategic Information and Knowledge.**

Centered around these pivotal domains, we've meticulously crafted a visionary statement, underpinned by two long-term objectives. These objectives revolve around the empowerment of LGBTIQ organisations, enabling them to adeptly advocate for their rights, fortified with enhanced sustainability, resilience, and performance.

Throughout 2023 years, we gained key insights from our four dynamic departments, taking us closer to our strategic goals.



Long-term Outcome 1: Enhanced and committed solidarity of LGBTIQ communities in Asia through networking and collaboration.

In 2023, the strategic efforts made to strengthen collaboration and solidarity among LGBTIQ communities have been robust, particularly through engagement with networks and partnerships that span our diverse region. The participation in global forums, such as the Asia-Pacific Regional Seminar on Sustainable Development and the UN Women Regional Conference, created visibility and knitted together a broader, cross-regional movement. These platforms allowed for the exchange of ideas and the alignment of strategies across diverse communities. Moreover, the Theory of Change (ToC) Review Workshop, which brought together activists from Asia and Africa, exemplifies the organisation's role in co-creating mutual learning. This commitment to cross-regional collaboration has strengthened the collective advocacy power of the LGBTIQ movement in Asia, leading to a more cohesive and unified front in their push for inclusivity.

Additionally, through seed funding provided to local campaigns from India to Bhutan, and collaborations with organisations like Inclusive Bangladesh and Youth Lead Mongolia, we created strong grassroots connections. These projects allow for the development of locally relevant solutions to systemic challenges, while the continued investment in campaigns around conversion therapy and inclusivity in education and religious contexts has helped build bridges among communities working toward shared goals. This bottom-up approach has been vital in enhancing long-lasting solidarity within the movement.



Long-term Outcome 2: Strengthened capacity of LGBTIQ civil society to work towards conducting effective advocacy for the respect, protection and fulfilment of their human rights.

Capacity building has been at the heart of the organisation's strategy, with a variety of initiatives designed to strengthen the advocacy and leadership skills of civil society actors across the region. Training programmes such as the West Asia LGBTIQ Advocacy and Leadership Programme and the Southeast Asia Human Rights and Sustainable Development Training provided activists with essential skills in advocacy and leadership, empowering them to navigate both regional and international arenas. Furthermore, the specialized workshops for intersex activists focused on elevating intersex issues, further broadening the advocacy focus and sharpening the skills of underrepresented groups within the larger LGBTIQ movement.

The strategic use of research and evidence-based advocacy has also been a hallmark of the organisation's approach. The submission of reports to bodies like the UN Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing and the production of policy briefs demonstrate how civil society's advocacy is informed by credible data and meticulous research, strengthening the organisation's advocacy efforts and positioning Asian activists as a critical player in shaping global human rights policies. Campaigns against harmful practices, such as conversion therapy, backed by survivor stories and multimedia content, have helped to educate the public and policymakers alike, demonstrating the power of well-researched, evidence-based advocacy in driving change.

Our digital advocacy has expanded its reach, using social media campaigns to boost marginalized voices and mobilize support. These digital strategies have helped LGBTIQ civil society broaden their audiences and engage new allies, ensuring that their message reaches far beyond traditional boundaries.

Through these comprehensive and sustained efforts, we have both strengthened solidarity within the LGBTIQ communities and equipped civil society with the necessary tools to advocate effectively for the protection and fulfilment of their rights.

Our Staff

2023
Annual
Report

2023



Henry Koh
Executive
Director



Khine Su Win
Strategic
Development Director



Omair Paul
Senior Global
Advocacy Officer



Thae Su Su Thwe
Finance
Manager



Yarinda Srisutat
Finance and
Admin Officer
(Until Sept)



Zohra
Afghanistan
Programme
Coordinator



Bechara Samneh
Afghanistan
Programme
Coordinator



Ajita Banerjee
Senior Research
& Policy Officer



Shima Es
Research
Assistant
(Until April)



Bilguun Batjargal
Campaign
Coordinator

NEW HIRES



Ryan Ong
Communications
Officer
(Until June)



Keiko Carasig
Design
Associate



Venus Aves
Communications
Intern
(Until May)



Pukar Bista
MEL Officer
(From July)



Nadine Hassan
Communications
Officer
(From Aug)



Benjie Aquino
Advocacy
Intern
(From Jan)



Mai Herras
Communications
Intern
(From May)



AJ Agrawal
Research
Intern
(From Sept)



Chenyong LEI
Advocacy
Intern
(From Nov)



Sam
Afghanistan Program
Case Worker
(From Nov)

Our Board Members

2023
Annual
Report

Co-Chair



Youth Representative

Chitsanupong "Best" Nithiwana
Young Pride Club
Thailand



West Asian Representative

Charbel Maydaa
Mosaic MENA
Lebanon



Bisexual Representative

Candy YUN
Korean Sexual-minority Culture & Rights Center
South Korea



Trans Representative

Chu Thanh Ha
Asia Pacific Transgender Network (APTIN)
Vietnam



Intersex Representative

Esan Regmi
Campaign for Change
Nepal

Southeast Asian Representatives



Phong Vuong
The Institute for Studies of Society,
Economy & Environment (ISEE)
Vietnam



Lini Zurlia
ASEAN SOGIE Caucus/ASEAN
Feminist LGBQ Network
Indonesia

South Asian Representatives

Alternate Co-Chair



Tashi Tsheten
Queer Voices of Bhutan
Bhutan



Aisha Mughal
Wajood Society
Pakistan

East Asian Representatives

Alternate Co-Chair



Jennifer Lu
Taiwan Equality Campaign
Taiwan



Sean Sih-Cheng Du
Taiwan Tongzhi (LGBTQ+) Hotline Association
Taiwan

Finance Statements

2023
Annual
Report

Revenue

Grant	46,603,848.87	THB
Interest	54,225.47	THB
Others	-	THB
Total	46,658,074.34	THB

Expenditures

Activities	11,559,127.51	THB
Administrative	17,132,456.03	THB
Others	-	THB
Total	28,691,583.54	THB

Revenue over expenses before tax	17,966,490.80	THB
Tax	(5,422.55)	THB
Revenue over expenses - Net	17,961,068.25	THB

Our Donors and Partners



Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the
Netherlands



Ministry for Foreign
Affairs of Finland



Australian Government
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office



Women's Fund Asia

With sincere appreciation, we extend our deepest thanks to the ILGA Asia community, encompassing our dedicated members, the Executive and Thai Boards, our diligent Secretariat Staff, and our supportive allies, for their invaluable contributions to this annual report.



PUBLISHED BY ILGA ASIA FOUNDATION

Spring Tower, Floor 11, Suite 132
Phayathai Road, Phayathai, Ratchathewi
Bangkok 10400 Thailand

ILGA FOUNDATION © 2024